

Sermons

St. Vincent Ferrer

SERMONS

St. Vincent Ferrer, O.P.
1350-1419

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Introduction

By a stroke of luck, some years ago, I came into possession of a 3-volume edition of the sermons of St. Vincent Ferrer, O.P. The 1570 edition, in Latin, contained approximately 400 of his sermons, spanning the entire liturgical year and including sermons on some saints and other general themes. St. Vincent Ferrer was an accomplished scholar, theologian, and advisor to the Avignon anti-pope Benedict XIII. In mid-life he came to the decision to take to the highways of Europe as a parish mission preacher. For twenty years he trod the roads of Spain and France and even beyond. He was known all over Europe. He was the "Billy Graham" of the early 1400's.

His sermons, as recorded in the Antwerp edition, are profoundly scriptural. The presentation is based on the "literal" meaning, the analysis of the theme text, usually the daily gospel. He doesn't hesitate, however to search out the "moral," or practical application of the text to his listeners. We ask your patience with our translations if they seem awkward and unfinished, for so they are. We are learning how to render the Latin text into a readable modern English version. Suggestions are welcomed.

I pray that listening to a Dominican preacher addressing his hearers six hundred years ago will help you come to the realization, as I have, that the faith of that age is recognizable as the faith of the church today. The mystery of the gospel remains awe-inspiring on the lips of a Valencian friar, even though he is long gone.

The Biblical Latin text of the edition is the classical Vulgate. Our English translation of scripture is borrowed from the early Douay version, which was based on the Vulgate. We have modernized some of the thee's and thou's for easier reading.

[Fr. Albert G. Judy, O.P.](mailto:aljudyop@svfsermons.org), St. Vincent Ferrer Priory, River Forest, IL
aljudyop@svfsermons.org

Advent and Christmas

A398. On the Last Judgment

Mt 25:32-36

32 And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.

34 Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in:

36 Naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.

And he shall set the sheep on his right-hand Mt 25:33

For the explanation of this text, approaching the material to be preached, you should know, that Christ speaking of his coming for judgment said, "And when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left." (Mt 25:31-33). Note, "in majesty," for in his first coming, to accomplish the redemption, he did not come in majesty, but in humility and poverty. But in the second coming when he will come for rendering repayment, he will not come in humility and poverty but in such majesty and power that the whole world will tremble.

You know how? Note by a comparison to a tree with birds, many birds singing and flitting about [saltantes]. But when the falcon comes, they tremble and are frightened. So this world is like the tree bearing wicked fruits, of vanities, of pomp and delights, and some wish to fill their lap or stuff their mouth, and some search everywhere for these mundane things. In this tree all creatures, like the birds, are playing, like the Sun, and Moon and Planets; their motions and eclipses, etc. Also the elements. Sometimes

the earth produces herbs, plants, flowers and fruits, and at another time lets them all go, in autumn. Water sometimes flows etc, sometimes not. The same of air. So now the birds in truth sing [in vere cantant], and mate [faciunt matrimonium] , for each wants his own, so that all creatures seem to be playing. But when the falcon comes and circles, the great eagle, the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole world shall fear. For the Sun shall stand still in the East, and the Moon in the West, so that they will not move themselves, nor also the stars, and all the mountains will melt etc. For this reason, the church in the person of an individual Christian prays, "Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death,"(from the Requiem Mass). If therefore the heaven and earth and other sinless creatures which have never violated the precept of God should fear, what shall you do, who sin often, how many oaths, how many corrupt deeds have you done etc. Then the sinners would prefer to be in hell than to face the angry judge. So, Job says in the person of the sinner, "Who will grant me this, that you may protect me in hell, and hide me till your wrath passes," (Job 14:13). Then they shall say "to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," (Rev 6:16).

But those of good life, who in this world lived according to divine commands, and not according to their own inclinations, then they shall not fear, but they shall rejoice saying, "Lord I have desired this day; I now shall be glorified in body and soul," and so they say, "Glory to thee O Lord," etc., therefore Christ said, "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads," Gloss: rejoice in your hearts, "because your redemption is at hand," (Lk 21:28).

Second, he says, "then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty," (Mt 25:31), because a judge passes sentence sitting. So he, as the universal judge of all shall sit in judgment, not on the earth, but in the air, so he may be seen by all. The wicked shall see his humanity, the good, however, the humanity and divinity. And the Virgin Mary shall sit with him, and the apostles, and all those who held to the apostolic life. Authority: "Behold we have left all things, and have followed thee: what therefore shall we have? And Jesus said to them: Amen, I say to you, that you, who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Mt 19:27-28). O how much should we strive to obtain this honor. Also, "all nations

shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left," (vv 32-33). Thus the theme [text] is clear.

And I am in the moral material, therefore on that day only the sheep shall be on his right hand, when he says, "And he shall set," etc. Therefore, on that day it will be better to be a sheep of Jesus Christ than to have been a pope, or king, or emperor. Now, I see in sacred scripture that a man becomes and is revealed to be a sheep of Jesus Christ from five virtues, even if he had been the devil's goat before, namely by:

- Simple innocence,
- Ample mercy,
- Steadfast patience,
- True obedience,
- Worthy penance.

Simple Innocence

First, the first virtue is when a man lives simply, nor hurts anyone in his heart, by hating, nor by defaming in speech, nor striking with hands, nor by stealing, and so such a life is called simple innocence, which makes a man a sheep of Christ. Reason: For just as a sheep does not strike with horns like a bull, nor bite with its teeth like a wolf, nor strike with hooves like a horse, but lives simply, so also if you wish to be a sheep of Christ, you should strike no one with horns of knowledge or of power, for lawyers strike by the horns of knowledge, jurists, advocates, or men who have great knowledge. Merchants too, by deceiving others. Lords and bullies strike with the horns of power, plundering or injuring, and extorting, using calumnies and threats, and the like. Listen to what the Lord says by the mouth of David, "And I will break all the horns of sinners: but the horns of the just shall be exalted," (Ps 74:11).

Also you should not bite with teeth as wolves do. By defaming you bite the reputation of your neighbor, by saying such and such happened. To defame someone is nothing else but to bite. Therefore, defamers are not the sheep of Christ, but wolves of hell. So the Apostle [Paul], "For all the law is

fulfilled in one word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another; take heed you be not consumed one of another," (Gal 5:14-15). Note the difference between biting and devouring, because to bite is to take a chunk, to devour is to swallow it all. They bite, who on one hand praise a man or woman, and on the other defame them by saying: "Do you know something. O, he is a good man and a good woman, but he has this defect." See, a bite out of his reputation. They devour when they say nothing good praising someone, but only the bad. See why the Apostle says, "If you bite."

Also, you should not kick with your feet like horses. For they kick with their feet when they despise someone. Therefore children, do not hate your parents; nor parents, children; nor young people, old folks; nor the healthy, the sick; nor rich, the poor; nor masters, their servants; nor prelates, their clergy; and vice versa, but like sheep, everyone should bear themselves innocently toward all. So Christ said, "See that you despise not one of these little ones," (Mt 18:10). It is clear, then what is simple innocence. Innocent, as if not-harming.[non nocens], for such shall be the sheep of Jesus Christ, and they shall be on his right hand with the angels of God.

Note here the story of David who although he had been the most holy, nevertheless sinned in counting the people, on account of which God sent a plague on the people, so that in three days seventy thousand men had died, twenty years old and up, besides the women and children, who were about the same number. David seeing the people dying, in whom he was punished, was more willing to die himself said, "It is I; I am he who has sinned, I have done wickedly: these that are the sheep, what have they done? let your hand, I beg you, be turned against me, and against my father's house," (2Kg 24:17). Behold, here is simple innocence!

Ample Mercy

The second virtue, ample mercy, is when goods, both temporal and spiritual given to you by God, are given out and distributed to the needy. This is how one becomes a sheep of Christ. Reason: Because among all the animals a sheep is the most beneficial of animals. For the sheep by growing wool, shows us mercy and benefits of mercy, because how many poor people does a sheep clothe? For none of us would have been clothed in wool unless the

sheep had given it to us. Also it gives us milk, and lambs to eat, etc. Therefore if you wish to be likened to it, you shall be the sheep of Christ, by giving wool, i.e. external and temporal goods, bread and wine, money and clothes and the like. If you have poor in your town or village, give them this "wool." Second, by giving "milk," that is, interior and spiritual goods, by giving good teaching to the ignorant, as I am giving to you now. If you have the milk of knowledge, of devotion, or of eloquence, you should give to those not having them. Remember the story of the gospel, for he says, "For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; .Naked, and you covered me," (Mt 25:35-36). Note also in the legend of St. Martin we read that once, on the road, wondering at a sheared sheep, the disciples questioned, "Father, why are you amazed?" Replying, he said: "This sheep fulfilled the precept of the gospel which says, 'He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner,'" (Lk 3:11).

Steadfast Patience

The third virtue is steadfast patience, and this when a man suffering from injuries inflicted or spoken to him does not want to concern himself with taking revenge. Rather he loves everyone in general, and prays for them all. This virtue makes a man a sheep of Christ. Reason: Because a sheep is a most patient animal, for if harassed while eating, or if struck, it does not defend itself, but goes elsewhere, nor does it avenge itself like a dog or a goat would do, but humbly yields. O blessed is the person, man or woman, who has such patience, and takes no vengeance for injuries, but forgives, as God forgives him. Therefore the Apostle Paul writes: "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Defend not yourselves," the Gloss has "revenge not.," "my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath, for it is written: Revenge is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. But if your enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink," (Rom 12:18-20), like a sheep. Note: "Revenge is mine." And so a man ought not to usurp the rights of God, otherwise etc.

Temporal lords and judges can inflict and ought to inflict juridical vengeance with due process, because justice is enforced without sin. Also

the remission of injuries is meritorious. For the patient ones are likened to Christ, about which Isaiah 53 said: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth," (v. 7). So the apostle [Peter], "you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not," (1Pt 2:21-23).

True Obedience

The fourth virtue is true obedience, when a man in his life does not do anything neither in thinking, nor speaking, nor acting according to his own will and inclination but according to the divine will and ordination, such a one is a sheep of Christ. Reason: For already you see how sheep are obedient to the shepherd. For a boy or girl with a small staff can easily guide thirty or forty sheep; it is otherwise with goats or kids, because a shepherd is needed for each one. If therefore on the day of judgment you wish to be a sheep of Christ, you will be obedient to the shepherd, namely to him who said: "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me," (Jn 10:14).

Let us see now, what this shepherd commanded. First that we live humbly. Matthew 11: "learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart," (Mt 11:29). "Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God," (1 Pt 5:6), namely of your shepherd etc. Whoever therefore wishes to go by the path of pride, is not a sheep of Christ but a goat of the devil.

Second, that in giving we take the way of mercy and generosity. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful," (Lk 6:36). Also by lending, in the same citation,: "Lend, hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Highest; for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil," (Lk 6:35). Therefore whoever disobediendly goes by the way of avarice by committing usury, robbery, theft etc, is not a sheep of Christ, but a goat of the devil.

Third, that we walk by the way of cleanness, of chastity etc. Matt. 19: "[There are those] who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it." (Mt 19:12). And 1 Thess 4: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification;...That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification," (vv. 3-4). Whoever

therefore goes by the way of uncleanness and the filthiness of lust and carnality, such is not a sheep of Christ but a goat of the devil, to whom Christ said, "But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice:" obediently, "...and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting," (Jn 10:26-28).

Worthy Penance

The fifth virtue is worthy penance, for sins committed. Because no one can be exempt from sins. And so it is said: "For there is no just man upon earth, that does good, and sins not," (Eccl 7:21). Therefore worthy penance is necessary, by sorrowing for sins and proposing not to relapse, confessing, and making satisfaction. And in this way penance makes a man a sheep of Christ. Reason: For a sheep and goat differ. Because a sheep covers its private parts with a tail, but not so a goat. Rather it shows everything. Now you know who is a sheep and who a goat. All— how many we are — have "private parts" of sins, which, although they are not now apparent, nevertheless on the day of judgment all evils and sins will be out in the open. Just as the enormous sins of those who are condemned are made evident, and placed on the scale with the parchment, on the face of which the sins are pictured. O how many hidden evils the dish reveals. Many men and women who now are believed to be good people, who, when they are then seen, it will be said, "Who is he? and "Is not he the one so religious?" O for the hypocrite traitor. Same for clergy, laity and women. But if the private parts of sins are covered here with the tail of penance, then they will not be revealed to your confusion, nor to your shame.

And note here the example of the squire who confessed in a stable who covers his sins with confession, you understand with the tail of penance. For thus he covers sin, so the devil will not remember. And it is no wonder then if they are forgotten by the devil, because they are also forgotten by God. Authority: "But if the wicked does penance for all his sins which he has committed, and keeps all my commandments, and does judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he has done," (Ez 18:21-22). So David says in Psalm 31: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," (Ps 31:1), namely, by the tail of penance.

A goat, however, which shows all, stands for the notoriously shameless person, because everyone knows his wicked life and sins, like wicked clergy, and other notorious cohabiters [concupinarii], nor do they wish to cover it up with the tail of penitence; they are impenitent. Therefore we should do penance. Now you see why the theme says, "He shall set the sheep on his right hand," (Mt 25:33). Thanks be to God.

A001. First Sunday of Advent.

The seasonal winter sermons of the preacher and proclaimer of the divine Word, interpreter of sacred scripture and most subtle professor, Saint Vincent, confessor of Valencia, of the Order of Preachers, happily begin.

Part one -The theme

Mt 21.9

And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," (Mt 21:9). We have prescribed for today's gospel this text from Mt 21. This Sunday is one of the greater Sundays of the entire year, because it is the first Sunday of the Coming (Adventus) of the Lord. Holy Mother Church sets aside the ordinary texts of the office and begins the office of the Advent of the Lord. So, wishing to conform myself to holy mother church I propose now to preach about the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, how he shall come at the end of the world to judge the good and the wicked, rendering to each according to his works. God willing, we shall have many good thoughts. But first let us salute the Virgin Mary.

"Blessed is he who comes," etc. The words proposed is a short song which was sung by the children and the crowd at the coming of Christ into the city of Jerusalem, saying "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." To more fully introduce these words and as an introduction to the matter to be preached, it must be known that there are found in sacred scripture clearly and manifestly three comings [adventus] of the Lord in this world, solemn and notable. general and principal.

First was in virtuous humility. [de humiltate virtuosa]

Second in gracious charity,[de charitate gratiosa]

Third in rigorous majesty. [de maiestate rigorosa]

The first advent is already past, the second is present, the third is yet to come. From these three advents corresponds three weeks of Advent, and the theme is understood principally of the third and last coming, and the greater, because then the good shall say, "Blessed is he who comes...etc."

Virtuous Humility

The first advent of the Lord was in virtuous humility, and this already is past, when he wished to descend through incarnation, conversation, captivity, scourging and passion, that those believing in him and obeying might ascend into heaven. The reason why he came in such humility was the pride of Adam and Eve, because they preferred not to obey God, but rather their own will. The sin of Adam was pride, as St. Thomas says II Sent. Dist. 22, q. 1, a.1 and [II-II, q163, a.1](#). And, as St. Thomas says, "Disobedience in him was caused by pride," and so Augustine says To Orosius [Dial. QQ. lxxv, qu. 4), " man puffed up with [pride](#) obeyed the serpent's prompting, and scorned [God's](#) commands." Truly also in the sin of the first parents, as St. Thomas says, II-II, where above in the solution [ad 2m](#), gluttony has its place. It is said in Genesis 3, " And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat," (Gn 3:6), but it was not its goodness and beauty that was the first motive for sinning, but rather the argument of the serpent who said: " your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods,"(v. 5), and it was by coveting this that the [woman](#) fell into [pride](#). Hence the [sin](#) of [gluttony](#) resulted from the [sin](#) of [pride](#). Therefore the first sin was pride rather than gluttony.

And pride is the foundation of all sins. V.g. Why is someone avaricious? It is from pride, because he does not wish to obey the precept of God saying, "You should not lust," or "not commit thefts" etc. Why is someone lustful? Is it not from pride, because he does not wish to obey the precept, "You shall not commit fornication?" Same for gluttony and the other sins. Authority: "Pride is the beginning of all sin," (Sir 10:15). Therefore Christ comes in great humility to reform us, like a servant in administering to us the works of redemption through human incarnation.

But you wish to understand well this lesson taught by the humility of Christ, imagine that there were many great lords and some gathered at dinner, and they did not have a servant waiter. Imagine that the son of the king, having taken off his royal clothing and dressed simply had come to serve them all, first by offering them water for their hands and second, by serving the food. Would this not have been by the son of the king an act of great humility? The humility of the Son of God is incomparably greater. All nations of men were gathered in the room of this world, awaiting the sublime dinner of celestial feasting, but we did not have a waiter who would serve it to us. For this purpose the Son of God exchanged, or rather hid the clothing of his godhead, and putting on the apron of humanity comes to wait on us, although he was changed in no way by the incarnation. Of this see in III Pars of the Summa of St. Thomas, [q. 1, a.1 ad 1](#), and [q. 2, a.6, ad 1](#) and in III Sent., dist. 2, q, 1, a.1, ad 1. Authority: "Who being in the form of God," namely with the clothing of deity, "...emptied himself, " that is, humbled himself, "taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man," (Phil 2:6-7), namely to serve and minister to us.

And first he gives us water for our unclean hands, because all were conceived, born, and nurtured in sins. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 5: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned," (v. 12). And we have in *De confess. d 4, c 2, firmissime tene*: On this account he first ordained the holy sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is ordained as a remedy against original sin; it is a certain spiritual regeneration and the gates of the sacrament. Whence and children lacking all actual sin, are baptized, because of the infection of original sin in which they have been conceived. "We were," the Apostle Paul says, "by nature children of wrath," (Eph 2:3) This sin through the act of nature or through a vitiated origin from the parent is passed down to the offspring, about which St. Thomas richly and subtly treats, II Sent., dist. 31, q. 1, a.1 & 2, and also [I-IIae, in q81](#).

Next he serves the food saying, "I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat,"

(Mk 8:2), and he gives spiritual foods, namely evangelical and celestial teachings. Second he gives the food of miracles, by curing the sick and raising the dead. Third he gives the foods of the virtues. Note how tasty and nutritious [confirmabiles] they were. Finally, he again gives warm water for the hands and feet after dinner, even warm water at supper, because from his side poured out blood and water. The first water was of baptism, the second of penance which by the passion of Christ has its power and efficacy of washing the filth of sins from souls.

Of this service of humility Christ himself spoke, " the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many," (Mt 20:28). And he speaks of the first coming, already past, about which it is necessary to eat him, and praise him. One way of speaking the theme with a change is to say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of a servant."

Gracious Charity

In the first coming Christ came as a servant, but in this second coming he comes as a friend [socius]. Reason: because it is the fashion and manner of a friend [socius] to stand with, to go with, to converse with, to eat and drink with [us], and so the Lord Jesus Christ comes from heaven to our home to simultaneously dine with us in communion. O what a dinner [refectio] it is for the devout soul when a man, prepared, receives communion, the intellect is fed with the enlightenment of a clear faith, the memory with the best remembrances, the will with good and holy desires. The mouth with devout prayers, and finally the whole body is fortified for penance and continuing a good life. Nor does he withdraw from us after communion, unless we should plan [congerium] for mortal sin, because otherwise it does not recede, so this association is so greatly pleasing. So he himself said, "and my delights were to be with the children of men," (Proverbs 8:31). Note "with the children of men," namely of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and doctors who have begotten us in the Catholic faith. See how he is our companion. Authority. "The Lord is faithful in all his words," (Ps 114:13), namely by fulfilling his promises, because the words being

pronounced, whether by a good or a bad priest, immediately he comes to the host.

The second coming is of gracious charity, and this is present, because every day in the sacrament of the altar in the consecrated host he is really there just as he came in the first coming in the womb of the Virgin, when the Virgin Mary said the words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," (Lk 1:38). Thus in every mass, when the priest says the words of consecration Christ comes to the host. And so we adore him in the sacrament of the altar. Of this coming we should eat him and praise him saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the friend." In this way he does not show his dominion.

Rigorous Majesty

The third coming shall be in rigorous majesty [*de maiestate rigorosa*], when he shall come for judgment, for judicial retribution. Although when a man dies the soul immediately goes to judgment, and the Lord returns to it according to his deeds which he did here, because if here he had done fitting penance for his sins, immediately he gives him eternal glory. If however he did evil and impenitent, he gives him the punishment of hell. If, however, he was lukewarm, because neither wholly good nor bad, but mediocre, if because he had confessed, made satisfaction and forgave injuries etc, but had not done fitting penance, he gives him retribution of the punishment of purgatory, but these retributions are only of the soul, because the bodies both of the good and of the wicked which aided the souls does not yet have retribution, but they are turned to dust [*incinerata*].

Thus the Lord shall come for the general judgment and shall render retribution not only to the souls but also to the bodies according to their works. The general judgment of the future is at the end of the world, as St. Thomas says with three arguments in IV Sent., dist. 47, a.1.

First that just as God in the beginning created all things together, so he shall judge all things together, and so the universal judgment shall correspond in

being the match of the first production of things.

Second because as St. Thomas says, where above in the solution for a.2, man can be considered in two ways, as a singular individual, and as part of a multitude, whence a twofold judgment is due to him. One singular, which happens to him after death, when he shall receive according to those things which he did in the body, although not totally, because not with respect to the body, but just with respect to the soul. The other judgment ought to be of him as he is a part of the whole human race, and so judgment shall come to him in the universal and general judgment, nor does God judge twice in the same matters, because he does not assess two punishments for one sin, but the punishment which had not been completely inflicted before, in the last judgment will be completed, when the wicked and evil ones are punished simultaneously in body and soul.

Third it is clear because although everyone who is damned is certain of his damnation, and the blessed of their glory, nevertheless not to all is the damnation or reward made known, nevertheless what is fitting that is known by all, so that the justice of God is apparent to all, and this commonly happens in the general judgment where all are gathered together.

Of this coming he himself says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works," (Mk 16:27). Then he shall not come in humility, in poverty and simplicity, as in the first, nor as a companion as in the second, but he shall come as Lord which such majesty and power that the whole world shall fear and tremble.

He shall come like the most powerful of kings, who comes to his castle or city rebellious or disobedient to him with armed troops, with bombs and catapults etc. So shall the Lord come to the castle or city of this world in which there are many rebels and disobedient to Christ the King, that he wishes and commands humility and they are proud, vain etc. He commanded mercy and generosity and they are the worst, avaricious, extortionists, thieves and robbers. He commanded chastity, they are lustful.

The same with the rest. Belief without obedience will not save a man, no king or lord would be content with the belief of his subjects without obedience, on this account Christ shall come to the city of this world not as a servant, nor as a companion, but as Lord with many soldiers [cum multis gentibus], because on that day the heavens will be emptied. Because no human nor angelic creature shall remain there, for all shall come with the king for judgment. The horn or trumpet shall sound, thunder and lightning etc., to the extent that heaven and earth shall shudder. Note. If heavens and earth and the creatures which never have sinned against God are not able to stand up to his coming, what will it be for sinners, who have committed so many sins against God? Then it would be better to be in hell than to see God.

About this Job said, in the person of a sinner, "Who will grant me this, that you may protect me in hell, and hide me till your wrath passes," (Job 14:13). But on that day the good shall stand secure, nor shall they fear. Therefore holy mother church praying for all the faithful says, "Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that fearful day, when the heavens and the earth are moved, when you come to judge the world with fire." Then Christ shall show himself as Lord and all peoples will recognize him as Lord, David [says]: "The Lord shall be known when he executes judgments: the sinner has been caught in the works of his own hands," (Ps 9:17). Then the blessed and the good rejoicing shall proclaim the theme in its proper form, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." The theme now is clear.

A061. Second Sunday of Advent: On the Last Judgment

From: *Angel of the Judgment: A Life of Vincent Ferrer*, by S.M.C., Ave Maria Press. Chapter XI, pp. 102-117. This entire chapter consists of the third of the sermons given on the second Sunday in Advent; on the last judgment.

Douay Translation of Luke 21:25-28

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves;

26 Men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved;

27 And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty.

28 But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand.

Our sermon will be on today's gospel, which consists entirely in the doctrine and instruction of Jesus Christ Himself. In this gospel He warns us of the great evils and tribulations which are to come at the end of the world, and tells us of the signs which will precede His coming in judgment. This subject will, I think, be of service to us. Let us begin with the Hail Mary.

"There will be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars." By study of Holy Scripture and by factual experience we know that when any great and heavy affliction is about to come on the world, often some warning sign is shown in the sky or in the upper air. And this happens by the mercy of God, so that people forewarned of impending tribulation by means of these signs, through prayer and good works, may obtain in the tribunal of mercy a reversal of the sentence passed against them by God the judge in the heavenly courts; or at least by penance and amendment of life, may prepare themselves against the impending affliction.

So, before the coming of any great mortality, phantom battles are seen in the sky; before famine there are earthquakes; and before a country is laid waste dreadful portents are seen. We are told of the terrible signs shown to the Jews for a length of time before the destruction of Jerusalem under Antiochus. "And it came to pass that through the whole city of Jerusalem for the space of forty days there were seen horsemen running in the air, in gilded raiment armed with spears like bands of soldiers. And horses set in ranks, running one against another, with the shakings of shields, and a

multitude of men in helmets, with drawn swords, and casting of darts, and glittering of golden armor, and of harness of all sorts," (2 Macc 5:2,3). After this, Antiochus plundered the temple and slew the Jews. Therefore we read in Exodus: "And shall multiply signs and wonders in the land of Egypt," (Ex 7:3).

Now among all afflictions, three of the greatest and most terrible are shortly to come upon mankind: first, the affliction of Antichrist, a man but a diabolical one; second, the destruction by fire of the terrestrial world; third, the universal judgment. And with these tribulations the world will come to an end. Therefore, according to the rule of divine Providence, as set out above, before these three, there will be warning signs in the heavens, in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, as is set out in our text.

The first affliction to come on the world in a short space of time is the advent of Antichrist, a diabolical man, who will bring distress on the whole world as is implied in today's gospel where it is said: "And upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves."

In my text there are four clauses in which we are warned of the four ways in which Antichrist will deceive Christians. The first clause is this: "There will be sign, in the sun." You must know that in Holy Scripture Christ is called the Sun, and this is because, by the evidence of your own eyes, the sun is among the most beautiful of the creatures made by God. Taking the word etymologically, we have: S-O-L (Super omnia lucens), "Shining above all things." In the same way, Christ is more beautiful than all the saints, and shines above them all in the brightness of glory, not only inasmuch as He is God, but also as man. And as all the stars receive their light from the sun, who depends on nothing for its own brightness, so all the saints receive from Christ the brightness of glory, strength, sanctity, wisdom, understanding and influence. This is the reason why Christ is called the Sun, and under the same name of "Sun" God the Father sent Him into the world, saying: "But unto you who fear my name the Sun of justice shall arise" (Mal 4:2). This is not said of the natural sun. For the Church says in praise of the Virgin Mary: "For thou art happy, holy Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise, for out of thee has arisen the Sun of Justice, Christ, Our Lord."

The first clause tells us that there will be signs in the sun in the time of Antichrist; that is, there will be signs in Christ, and the precise sign is given by Saint Matthew saying: "The sun will not give its light." Such darkening does not happen with regard to the sun itself, for it is not in the nature of the sun to be darkened in itself. But by the interposition of clouds and vapor between the sun, and the earth the sun appears to be obscured. In the same way, in the time of Antichrist, the Sun of justice will be obscured by the interposition of temporal goods and the wealth which Antichrist will bestow on the world, inasmuch as the brightness of faith in Jesus Christ and the glow of good lives will no longer shine among Christians. For, lest they should lose their dominion, temporal rulers, kings and princes will range themselves on the side of Antichrist. In like manner, prelates for fear of losing their dignities, and religious and priests to gain honors and riches, will forsake the Faith of Christ and adhere to Antichrist. Now he will be a veritable man, but so proud that, not only will he desire to have universal dominion in the whole world, but will even demand to be called a god, and will insist on receiving divine worship. This we may gather from the second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians (2:3): "For unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, spewing himself as if he were a god."

This will come about because Antichrist by the ministry of demons will possess all the gold and silver of the earth and seas, and pearls and all the precious stones that are in the world. As we read in Daniel (11:43): "And he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver and all the precious stones of Egypt." With this wealth he will gather together in arms all the nations of the world, to fight against those who oppose him. As we read in the Apocalypse (20:7): "He shall go forth and seduce the nations which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog; and shall gather there together to battle the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

Observe that he will seduce the peoples, that is, with gold and silver and honors; Gog which signifies "hidden," and Magog which signifies "that which is disclosed," because both hidden and open evil are on his side. Then temporal lords and ecclesiastical prelates, for fear of losing power or

position, will be on his side, since there will exist neither king nor prelate unless he wills it. For the same reason, religious, priests and laity will also uphold him. "There will indeed be signs in the Sun of justice, for then it will be obscured in the hearts of Christians, since from those hearts it will not give forth the light of Faith; all preaching of a better life will cease, owing to the interposition of the vapor and clouds of temporal goods. As we are told in Daniel (11.39): "He will multiply glory and will give them power in many things and divide up the earth at his pleasure."

I am asked why God permits this error among Christians, since He is God and the strongest cannot stand against Him? I answer by a dictum of theology taken from the Book of Wisdom (11:17): "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented." How do the peoples of the world sin against God today? They sin in order to gain honors, dignities and riches. Therefore, by honors, riches and dignities, God permits that Antichrist shall deceive them. If therefore you do not wish to be deceived, now with all your hearts contemn and despise all earthly goods, and long for those of heaven, considering that the goods of this world are transitory and empty, while heavenly and celestial goods are eternal. In this way you will be strong. Saint John gives this counsel: "Love not the world nor the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world the charity of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth and the concupiscence thereof" (1 Jn 2:15-17).

The second clause says that there will be signs in the moon. You must understand that in the Holy Scriptures the moon signifies our holy Mother the Universal Church, which implies the world-wide union of Christians; for when men speak of the Church, they do not speak of the material building, or the stone and the walls which compose it, but of that gathering of the faithful under one Head, which is the Church in reality. The Church is signified by the moon and its five phases: first there is the new moon, then the waxing moon, next the full moon, to be followed by the waning moon, and lastly the old moon.

The Church passes through these phases. The new moon signifies the Church of Christ in His own time; and as the new moon when first seen is like a bow-shaped thread with two horns following the sun, so the Church in the time of Christ had at first only two horns: Andrew and Peter who

followed Christ. The waxing moon typifies the twelve Apostles, then the seventy-two disciples, then the three thousand converted by Peter on the day of Pentecost and so on. The full moon typifies the acceptance of the Gospel of Christ in every part of the world, in every kingdom and province. David says (Ps: 18.5): "In the whole world their sound is gone forth, and their words to the ends of the earth."

The waning moon typifies the inability of men to preserve what the Apostles had acquired. In the first place, the Church was lessened by the loss of the whole of India, by means of him they called John the Presbyter; the second, Assyria by means of one of their tyrants; the third, Africa by means of Mahomet; the fourth, the Greeks under their Emperor Constantine; the fifth, the Armenians with their king; the sixth, the Georgians with a certain pseudo-prophet; the seventh, the bad example of the Christians led by a certain heresiarch [*Probably the Waldenses whom Vincent evangelized in the Alpine countries. We do not know the name of the individual heresiarch*]; the eighth, the Italians with Bartholomew of Bari; the ninth, the French with Peter of Candia.

The old moon, because the horns are reversed, typifies that the Church is no longer in the state in which Christ founded it. Christ founded the Church in great lowliness and poverty; now all this is turned round to pride, pomp and vanity, as may be easily seen in every rank of the Church. Mercy and liberality are changed into simony, usury and rapine; chastity becomes licentiousness, uncleanness and corruption; the brightness of virtue is changed into envy and malignity; temperance has become gluttony and voracity; patience has given place to anger, war and divisions among the peoples; diligence is superseded by negligence. Nothing is now left to make matters worse but an eclipse which is caused by the interposition of the earth between the sun and moon such as only occurs at full moon. As Isaiah says in 59:2: "Your sins have put a division between us." In the time of Antichrist, the Church, typified by the moon, will be eclipsed; because then she will not give her light, since Christians will no longer work miracles by reason of their sanctity; but Antichrist and his followers will work miracles, not true miracles, but false ones having the appearance of true miracles, in order that they may deceive the people. As Saint John says in the Apocalypse (13:13): "And he did great signs, so that he made also fire to come down from heaven unto the earth in the sight of men," that is, balls of

fire, such as it is within the power of the devil to send down, if God should permit this and does not prevent him; as we read in Job (1:16): "And while he was yet speaking another came and said: A fire of God fell from heaven and striking the sheep and the servants hath consumed them." O! The wonder of the people, this will be the downfall of many.

You must know that Antichrist will perform other prodigies by the power of demons, and these will be true miracles according to the nature of things in themselves, but false in regard to the definition of miracle (i.e. by the power of God). For he will cause both images and babes of a month old to speak. The followers of Antichrist will question these statues or babies, and they will make answer concerning this lord who has come in the latter times, affirming that he is the savior. The devil will move their lips and form the words they utter when they declare Antichrist to be the true savior of the world; and in this way he will cause the destruction of many souls.

And the Church, typified by the moon, will perform no miracles.

Some say that such phenomena are not real miracles in the sense that raising the dead to life is a real miracle. I can give concrete examples of the dead being apparently raised to life, but such are only phantoms. For instance, in the same way as Christians raise dead people in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so your dead father or mother may appear to speak to you; but in these latter times Christians will not be able to work similar miracles. Christ has warned us of these false miracles and signs, saying: "There will arise false christs and false prophets." That is to say, the sons of Christians who have already made shipwreck of their faith owing to the gifts of Antichrist. As Saint Matthew says (24:24): "And they will show great signs and wonders in so much to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Behold I have told you beforehand."

Suppose someone should ask: Why does Christ permit these works of destruction of Christianity by the devil? I answer according to the rule of Theology: "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented." Since the people of the world sin against God by having recourse to the works of the devil, such as divination and fortune telling in their necessities—for instance, in order to find things they have lost, or to obtain health or children, instead of laying their needs before the

omnipotent God—therefore God permits them to be deceived by the works of the demons.

If you do not wish to be deceived, then place the whole of your faith and confidence in the name of Jesus Christ., and refuse to acknowledge any miracle unless it is worked in that same name; and so you will be strong against seduction. David says (Ps 39:5): "Blessed is the man whose hope is in the name of the Lord; and who hath not regard to vanities and lying follies." The name of the Lord is Jesus. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus," (Lk 2:21). If you should receive any wound or hurt you should sign it devoutly with the Sign of the Cross.

Antichrist arrogates to himself every other name of Christ, but as many of the saints tell us, he flies from the name of Jesus. Therefore, for that reason, the name of Jesus should receive the greatest respect from all Christians. Moreover, all the names of God, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, should be honored in a sevenfold manner. Because the name of God is great it is to be feared; because it is holy it should be venerated; because it is sweet it should be savored in meditation; it is strong to save; rich in mercy; efficacious in impetration; and hidden in order to be discovered and known. He says also that the name of the Son of God is also the name of the father in a threefold way: for by it he is honored, invoked and manifested. He also says that in all the names given is also signified the name of Jesus, which is the sign of salvation, and therefore exceedingly to be honored.

The third clause says that there will be signs in the stars. In the Sacred Scriptures "star" signifies "light-giving"; and so it is the appellation of Masters, Doctors, and Licentiatees in Theology. This signification is found in Daniel (12:3): "And they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity." In these stars, that is learned men, there will be signs in the time of Antichrist; because, as Christ says in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (24:29): "Stars shall fall from heaven"; and this is the third combat waged by Antichrist, that of disputation. Then stars, that is the learned, shall fall from heaven, that is, from the truth of the Catholic Faith. The disputations of Antichrist with the learned will be based entirely on the text of the Old Testament, and these doctors, so far from being able to answer him, will not even be able to speak. Then the stars, the masters, will fall from heaven, that is from the

heights of the Faith. For, according to Daniel (11.36): "And the king, Antichrist, will do all according to his will and will lift up and magnify all against God, and against the God of Gods he will speak great things;" that is, the matter of his blasphemies will be insoluble so far as men are concerned.

You may ask again why Christ allows this, that those who defend the Faith should fail so utterly? I answer that Christ allows this for two reasons: first, according to the rule of theology: "By what things a man sinneth, by the same is he tormented;" and this follows from the fact that masters and teachers no longer care for study of the Bible, but prefer the study of the poets and other profane works.

The second reason why Christ permits this, is because of the scandalous and wicked lives and the many sins of learned men; for in the case of many of them, the greater their knowledge the greater also is their sin and the worse their consciences; for they are proud, puffed-up, wine-bibbers and the rest. He who can bind a lioness can easily bind a sheep; if therefore the devil can hold in chains the minds of the learned by reason of their evil lives, how much easier is it for him to bind the sheep that is their tongues—so that they cannot speak. The ignorant are in much better case, for knowledge puffeth up, if therefore you wish to be strong, embrace the counsel of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 2:5): "That your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men but on the power of God." Reasoning and disputation are good for strengthening the intellect, but not for fortifying belief, since faith must be held from the motive of obedience, because Christ Himself has commanded us, announcing the gospel which the Apostles preached and Holy Mother Church has ordained. Therefore, O Lord, I believe.

The fourth clause tells us: "And on earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves." Behold these are the tortures which Antichrist will inflict, and on the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves. That is the preparations for battle, the sanding of the arena before the combat, which will be the work of the lords who are already on the side of Antichrist; because then no one will dare to name Christ nor the Virgin Mary under pain of death; and the waves are those of torments which have never in the past been so dreadful as those which will be inflicted by

Antichrist. In Saint Matthew, Christ warns us (24:21): "For there shall then be great tribulation such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened." We read in the Apocalypse (17:10): "And when he shall come he must remain a short time," The Doctors in general say that Antichrist will reign for three and a half years only; which is the measure of a thousand and two hundred days and ninety days; "and from the time when the continual sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination unto desolation shall be set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days" (Daniel: 12:11).

If I am asked why Christ permits the Christians to be so terribly persecuted, I answer: "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented." Because now, at the present time, people are offending God by wars, divisions and false flattery, by feuds and duels, so Christ permits them to be torn in pieces and slain by Antichrist. If therefore, you do not wish to be slain and destroyed, be at peace and concord now with everyone, according to the counsel of the Apostle: "Have peace with all men; revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place to wrath, for it is written : "Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" " (Rom 12:18).

The second evil or retribution will be the conflagration of the earthly world which is mentioned in the second part of the gospel of this Sunday: "Men withering away for fear and expectation of what is to come on the whole world; for the powers of heaven will be moved."

After Antichrist has been slain by lightning on Mount Olivet and his death has been made widely known throughout the world, this our earth will exist for forty-five more days; I do not say years, but days. This is clearly to be seen in Daniel (12:11): "And from the time when the continual sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination of desolation shall be set up, there shall be one thousand, two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh unto the one thousand, three hundred and thirty-five days."

The Doctors say that these forty-five days will be given by God for the conversion of those who have been seduced by Antichrist, but Antichrist

will have left behind him so great riches and pleasure that hardly any of the nations will be converted to the Faith of Christ. For there is no savior but Christ, and yet they will not be converted.

Then in the four parts of the earth, east, and west, and north, and south, fire will blaze forth by thee divine power, and as it presses forward, the whole world in succession will be set on fire until nothing of the other three elements will remain. Then, when men are made aware of the tumult and the fire and see the lightnings bursting forth from it, they will wither away for fear of the fire, and expectation of eternal damnation. The Apostle Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews (10:27) says of this: "But a, certain dreadful expectation of the judgment and the rage of a fire shall consume the adversaries."

"For the powers of heaven shall be moved." This is said to imply that the fire has no natural cause, as some people erroneously imagine, for they say that for forty years before the consummation of the world it will not rain. This fire, however, comes from the rigor of divine justice and acts through the ministry of angels, as it is shown in the saying: "For the powers of heaven shall be moved." This fire comes down, likewise, for the purification of the other three elements—earth, air and water—which have been infected and corrupted by the sins of men. Concerning this, David says (Ps 96:3): "A fire shall go before him and shall burn his enemies round about. His lightnings have shone forth to the world; the earth saw and trembled. The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the Lord of all the earth."

You understand how sinners are the enemies of Christ; but why do they say, "and shall burn his enemies round about," when the good as well as the bad will be destroyed by the fire? The good and the friends of God will die in the fire it is true, but they will die without pain or suffering; but the wicked and God's enemies will die in the greatest pain and torment. Therefore, the enemies of God are named.

Saint Thomas Aquinas speaks beautifully of this when he says that this last fire, inasmuch as it precedes the Judgment, will act as an instrument of God's justice. It will also act like natural fire, inasmuch as, in its natural power, it will burn both wicked and good and reduce every human body to

ashes. Inasmuch as it acts as an instrument of God's justice, it will act in different ways with regard to different people. For the wicked will suffer intensely through the action of the fire, but the good in whom nothing is found which must be purged away will feel no pain from the fire, just as the three children felt nothing in the fiery furnace, although the bodies of these others will not be preserved as were those of the three children. And this will come to pass by the divine power, that without pain or suffering their bodies will be resolved into ashes.

But the good in whom there is some stain to be purged away will feel the pain of this fire, more or less according to the merits of each. But they will be swiftly purged for three reasons. The first reason is that in them little evil is found, for they have been already in great measure purged by the preceding tribulations and persecutions. The second is that the living will voluntarily endure the pain; and suffering willingly endured in this life remits much more quickly than suffering inflicted after death. This is seen in the case of the martyrs, for if, when they came to die, anything worthy of purgation was found, it was cut away by the pruning knife of their sufferings. And the sufferings of the martyrs were short in comparison with the pains of purgatory. The third reason is that the heat of the fire gains in intensity what it loses through the shortness of the time. But in so far as the fire is active after the judgment its power only extends over the damned, since all the bodies of the just will be impassible.

"This is a serious thought for those who will not do penance. In that last day, how greatly the temporal lords and prelates of the Church will desire to do penance when they see the fire. But then such repentance will avail them nothing, because they are acting not from charity, but from servile fear. Therefore, do penance now, forgive injuries, make restitution of any ill-gotten goods, live up to and confess your religion; and let priests obtain breviaries. If it were certain that in a short time this town was going to be destroyed by fire, would you not exchange all your immovable goods for something that you could take away with you? So it is with the world, which in a short while is to be destroyed by fire. Therefore place your hearts in heaven, and your lips by speaking with reverence of God, and your works by doing good. This is Christ's counsel, saying: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth where the rust and moth devour and thieves

break in and steal." Notice the word "rust," which is Antichrist, and "moth," which is fire, for these will devour all.

The third evil will be the tribulation of the universal Judgment which is mentioned in the third part of this gospel. "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and majesty." After the destruction of the world by fire, Christ the Lord Judge, with the Virgin Mary and all the saints, will come to the judgment seated on a throne in the air. And the Archangel Michael will cry with a loud voice, saying: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment."

Then suddenly, by the divine power, all the dead, both good and wicked, will arise, children will rise with grown people and all will be gathered to the judgment. Even those who died in their mother's womb will be there, as Saint Thomas teaches, to accuse those through whose fault they died without Baptism. And the age at which all will rise will be thirty years.

Christ Himself says concerning the General Judgment: "When the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His Majesty. And all the nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left" (Mt 25:31-33). And the creed of Saint Athanasius: "At Whose coming all men must rise with their own bodies; and it will be rendered to every man according to his own deeds; those who have performed good works will go into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire."

The sheep are the good and the goats are the wicked. Christ will say to the sheep on His right hand: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess ye the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the goats on His left He will say: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels."

The wicked will go into eternal punishment, the just into eternal life. But for the rest, no one will dwell in this world, because those things which are transitory and finite have passed away in their finite condition; movement has passed away.

Therefore, the Church in the person of every Christian makes petition in the Office for the Dead: "Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death, in that tremendous day when the heavens and the earth are moved, when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire."

A131. Four Sunday of Advent, on John the Baptist

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness," (Jn 1:23).

The text proposed is of St. John the Baptist replying to the Jerusalem messengers saying, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness." In explaining this text and introducing the material to be preached, I take on two short questions.

First why does Holy Mother the Church in this holy time of advent, in which the whole interest ought to be about Christ makes such a great mention of St. John the Baptist in today's gospel, and also on the past Sunday? Are not the two feasts of St. John which the church observes sufficient, namely his birth and his passion?

For this response I find in St. John four excellences greater than other saints. First is his gracious birth, because he already was holy before his birth. Second is his painful passion, because he was decapitated because of the dance of a young girl. Third is his virtuous life because when he was five years old, he immediately left the world and entered the wilderness. Fourth is the fruitful doctrine of announcing and preaching the coming of the Messiah. From these four excellences God has exalted John above all saints saying, "There has not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist," (Mt 11:11), For this reason Holy Mother the Church celebrates feasts of St. John four times. First of his birth. Second of his suffering. Third of his virtuous life. And fourth of his fruitful preaching, and about this we read in today's gospel. For no other saint is there a feast four times a year, only St. John the Baptist. Of the apostle Peter we have three feasts. Of St. Paul, two, but of St. John, four. And of this feast today he himself says, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness," (Jn 1:23), namely from the efficacy of preaching and his teaching. The first question is clear.

The second question is more subtle. Why does St. John, wishing to promote his teaching, call himself "a voice," saying: "I am the voice of

one crying out ...etc.?" Wouldn't it have been better [to say], "I have a voice"? Response: St. John calls himself a voice for two reasons.

First in excellently demonstrating his office, with respect to the first reason. The proper office of the voice is to manifest and show the purpose of the heart, or the concept of the mind. The Philosopher [Aristotle] says: "Spoken words are signs of the passions which are in the soul, " (*Perihermeneias*, 1). Properly speaking there is a great difference between a word and a voice, although commonly speaking they are taken for the same thing, because a word is the concept of the mind before it is expressed by the mouth, but voices are what are brought forth. So logic says, a voice is a sound coming out of the mouth of an animal, properly speaking. Christ is the eternal Word, because he had been hidden in the divine mind: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," (Jn 1:1), hidden and secret. But God the Father sent a voice, John the Baptist, to manifest and show forth the divine Word, as he did when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God," (Jn 1:29). Behold John says that he is the voice, by showing the difference between the Word and the temporary voice.

As for the second reason. The skill of a preacher is that he preaches with all his members and powers. Not only the mouth of the preacher should preach, but also his life, his morals and reputation. Also the intellect by studying, the memory by contemplating, the heart, hand, gestures, all used continually and skillfully. So a good preacher ought to be a voice in every way. The logicians say that a voice is homogeneous, because each part of the voice is a voice. So every aspect of a diligent preacher ought to be a voice. Jerome: "Everything of a priest ought to be vocal." On this account St. John, in responding to the messengers sent to him said: "I am the voice," which is to say whatever is in me, is wholly a voice, because all of it preaches. The theme is clear.

About this voice I find a wonderful prophecy of David, who allegorically prophesying about St. John says:

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of majesty has thundered, The Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars: yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of

Lebanon. And shall reduce them to pieces, as a calf of Lebanon, and as the beloved son of unicorns. The voice of the Lord divides the flame of fire: The voice of the Lord shakes the desert: and the Lord shall shake the desert of Cades. The voice of the Lord prepares the stags: and he will discover the thick woods: and in his temple all shall speak his glory," (Ps 28:3-9).

Here John is called a voice seven times because of seven teachings, which St. John was preaching.

The first was the teaching of baptism. [doctrina baptismalis]

Second was the teaching of penance. [doctrina poenitentialis]

The third was authoritative teaching [doctrina magistralis]

The fourth was rebuking teaching [doctrina increpativa]

The fifth was corrective teaching [doctrina correctiva]

The sixth was blaming teaching [doctrina reprehensiva]

The seventh was instructive teaching [doctrina instructiva]

Baptismal Teaching

First of all, I say that the first teaching of St. John was baptismal. All the evangelists say that when St. John came out of the desert in which he had lived for twenty-five years, as Hugh says, doing severe penance, when at age thirty he came out of the desert, in his exit he began to preach a baptism of repentance around the region of the Jordan. Lk 3: "And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins," (v. 3), saying, " but there has stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not," (Jn 1:26), but I shall show him to you, therefore you will receive his teaching. The people said to him, "And what ought we to do that we might receive him worthily? He responded to them that they should receive a sign of baptism in water. He baptized them under this form, "I baptize you in the name of the one who is to come." This baptism of John was a sign of Christ, just as the cross is a sign of the crucified. From this preaching of the baptismal teaching St. John is called the "voice of the Lord upon the waters," (Ps 28:3) that is, the Jordan. Gloss: He was preaching one baptism, and he was giving another, because he gave the baptism of water, and was preaching the baptism of grace for the remission of sins.

About this scripture: "I baptize you in the water unto penance, but he who shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire," (Mt 3:11). Note "fire" [igni] is in the ablative case according to the old grammar. But why does he say "fire" [igni]? Note the error of those who say that some are baptized by fire [igne]. But "of fire" [igni] is said for two reasons. First in the primitive church in baptism the Holy Spirit descended visibly in the form of fire, and this exposition is more common for showing that the Holy Spirit was given and showed himself exteriorly by the sign of visible fire. A second reason, because just as the world had to be washed and purified through water, namely in the time of Noah, because the peoples were exceedingly heated by lust, and so the water of the flood came, so it shall be purified through fire at the end of the world because of the charity of the multitude had turned cold. This reason is from St. Thomas Aquinas O.P., in *IV Sent.* So also God ordained two floods for purifying souls, namely the flood of baptismal water to cool the sinful tendencies [fomite] (Cf. [Summa, III, q.27, a.3](#)) of original sin. The second flood of the fire of purgatory, because after baptism we cool and become negligent, and are stained by sins, therefore God ordained the fount of purgatory, where the baptized soul is baptized by a good angel, as St. Thomas determines, because the devil has already been conquered by him who is led to purgatory, therefore the conquered ought not to incarcerate the victor. This baptism is hard and terrible. About which the soul can say who ought to be baptized there. "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened..." (Lk 12:50). See why it is said, "The voice of the Lord over the waters." And because then John baptized Christ, therefore it is added, "the God of majesty has thundered, The Lord is upon many waters," (Ps 28:3).

Penitential Teaching

The second teaching which St. John preached was the teaching of penance, Mt 3: "And in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the desert of Judea. And saying: Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Mt 3:1-2). After he had baptized them he gave them a penance saying, "From the fact that you have received my baptism as a

sign, therefore lest sins keep you from knowing and receiving the Messiah King, you should do penance. St. Matthew says, ch. 3, that they were confessing their sins generally saying, "I was proud, vain, pompous, etc." And St. John gave them a penance of a humble prayer. John was teaching his disciples to pray, (cf. Luke 11: 1). Others were confessing generally saying, "Clearly I was greedy, usurious, etc.," to whom John gave a penance of restitution, lest the dust of avarice cloud their eyes so they could not recognize Christ. Another came and he said, "Father, I am lustful etc." to whom he gave a penance of abstinence from food and affections [affectionum]. Mark 2: "And the disciples of John ... used to fast," (v. 18). The same for the other sins. See how John was preaching the teaching of penance. Therefore it is said, "The voice of the Lord is in power," (Ps 28:4), namely indicating penance. Note "the voice of the Lord in power;" he does not say in the sacrament. Note how the holy doctors of theology distinguish the two-fold penance, namely of the sacramental penance, and of virtual penance. [poenitentia virtuali]. Sacramental penance is when a man confesses his sins, and is absolved. Such a penance is called a sacrament. The sacrament of penance has three parts, which are contrition, confession and satisfaction. Virtual penance does not have parts, just as none of the other sacraments, as St. Thomas says in Summa, III, q.91, and IV Sent., dist. 16, q. 1, a.1, ql. 1 & 4. And when John was preaching, this sacrament had not yet been instituted, nor the power of forgiving sins granted to men, therefore John is not called the voice of God in the sacrament. The other is voluntary virtual penance, and virtuous, which is not a sacrament, like fasting, to make a pilgrimage, to discipline oneself and the like. And of this kind it is said, "the voice of God in power, etc." because St. John enjoined not sacramental penance but virtual, and David agrees saying elsewhere: "Behold he will give to his voice," namely to St. John, "the voice of power," (Ps 67:34) he does not say, of the sacrament. Note as St. Thomas, [III, q.85](#); IV Dist., 14, q. 1, a.1, because penance as it is a sorrow of the will, with right choice is a virtue or an act of virtue, it is not just an emotion. And penance is a special virtue because it has general matter under a special aspect for its object, namely all sins as fixable [emendabilia] by an act of man, as St. Thomas states [III, q.85, a.2](#). And it is a moral virtue, not a theological, and it is a part of justice.

Authoritative Teaching

The third teaching is authoritative, because just as a good master for diverse children has diverse lessons, so St. John for the diverse conditions of men gave diverse instructions. St. Luke says in ch. 3 that various kinds of people were coming to him, interrogating him and saying, "Master, what ought we to do?" He replied: "He that has two coats, let him give to him one who has none; and he that has meat, let him do in like manner," (Lk 3:11), Two tunics: one is necessary, the other is superfluous, which rots, and the poor die of cold. How many poor women there are who because of the lack of a shawl are not able to go to mass, and you rich cling to your surplus clothing etc. Same for meat etc.

Next the publicans came saying to him, "Master, what shall we do?" (Lk 3:12), The Gloss says at this place that publican is here taken for someone who has public office, because either he is a baliff or a lawyer or a witness etc. To whom John replied, "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you," (v.13) If they were leaders he was saying, "Remember what you are obliged to do by the oath which you took when you received your office, namely that you should do justice and correct the people and notorious sins, and should regard in all things the common good. Therefore so do; beware of anything else.

Third the soldiers and guards [scutiferi] came to him saying, "And what shall we do? And he said to them: Do violence to no man; neither calumniate any man; and be content with your pay," (v. 14). Behold the rules and teaching for the soldiers. Note, "Do violence to no man." It is said against those who are quick draw their dagger or sword in their hand to threaten beggars [pauperes] and the wretched who cannot defend themselves. Also "neither calumniate" your subjects demanding from them monies and their goods in many ways, and they deceive the ordinary folks by saying that they are gracious in demanding, since they nevertheless include those in the castle or in the church as long as they shall give, and they too are bound to restitution. Also "and be content with your pay," as salary, of the return you receive for the defense of the people. Don't pursue superfluties, or vanities, but reckon what you have and as much as you can spend, and from your goods give for your soul a

fourth or at least a fifth part out of love of God. You should never give it all to your belly, to mules and to armed ruffians etc. See why he says, "The voice of the Lord in magnificence," (v. 4), namely of giving counsel and a manner of living to each, "His work is praise and magnificence," namely St. John, "and his justice continues for ever and ever." (Ps 110:3).

Rebuking Teaching

The fourth teaching is rebuking [inrepativa], by denouncing vices and sins, saying, "You brood of vipers, who has showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance," (Mt 3:7-8). Note "brood of vipers;" the Gloss says here that vipers draw venom from the womb of their mother and are naturally poisonous. Such is the condition of the Jews, so John calls them a brood of vipers, saying, "You brood of vipers, who has showed you to flee from the wrath to come?" as if to say, no one. "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance," that is you should do penance measured against the quality and quantity of your sins. Note how the Jews are deceived just as now many Christians are deceived saying, "Has not God promised to Abraham and to his offspring his blessing? (Gen 22). But God was saying this because of the Messiah, the son of Abraham according to the flesh. Therefore Christ said to the Jews: "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham," (Jn 8:39). Many Christians of wicked life are victims of this blindness and error, who do no penance for their sins, and when they are rebuked they reply, "He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved," (Mk 16:16). Do you want to know how stupid this is? The Lord is preparing a wedding banquet which he has proclaimed through the whole earth. "Whoever has been faithful to me and shall have clean hands, shall dine with me." There is told the story of the peasant etc. Same for the Lord and our king Jesus Christ, on behalf of whom it has been proclaimed. "He who believes etc." If then a man at the moment of death, believes, and has clean hands, he goes to the banquet. He is OK. Otherwise, there remains the pitchfork of hell, because these words, "He who believes and is baptized," does not refer to the past time, but to the conjoined future. You have believed and have been purified in baptism. But since then you have been dirtied etc. It is necessary therefore that

when the man goes to the banquet he believe and have clean hands. Therefore Isaiah said: "Wash yourselves, be clean," (Is 1:16). Put down that vain confidence. From this rebuking teaching St. John is said to be the "The voice of the Lord breaking the cedars," (Ps 28:5), that is, the proud.

Corrective Teaching

The fifth teaching was corrective in correcting and refraining the envy of his disciples. The disciples of John, out of zeal for their master, envied Christ, because when Christ began to preach and baptize he was drawing people to himself and they were leaving John. No wonder. About this the disciples of John said, "Rabbi, he that was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you gave testimony, behold he baptizes, and all men come to him," (Jn 3:26). Behold the flame of the fire of envy which John quenched by his corrective teaching saying, "This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above, is above all," (Jn 3:29-31). From this St. John is said to be, "The voice of the Lord dividing the flame of fire," (Ps 28:7). O and how this voice would be necessary among us that it might extinguish the flame of the fire of envy which burns too much in the world, not only of envy of temporal goods, but also of a certain envy which is a sin against the Holy Spirit, namely the envy of fraternal grace. For example, if some religious wishes to keep the rules etc., immediately the others, envying, murmur and impugn him calling him a hypocrite and singular etc. And so the flame of the fire of envy burns brighter. Not so if he is a ruffian [ribaldus]. He is even praised saying, "O how welcome is that brother, etc." Also if he has the grace of devotion or of preaching or such. Same for clergy, laity and women. Note for this, the cry of the prophet: " To thee, O Lord, will I cry: because fire has devoured the beautiful places of the wilderness, and the flame has burnt all the trees of the country," (Joel 1:19). Note that "wilderness" signifies religious life because of the harshness of life in which religious ought to live, but the fire of envy devours all. Trees of religion are the worldly whom already the flames of envy have ignited.

Blaming Teaching

The sixth teaching is blaming, by blaming and convicting King Herod of concubinage. He had a wife, but because she was not as fair [alba], or beautiful, or bejeweled and made up [composita] as he wished, nevertheless she was the daughter of a king, and, despised. So Herod took on a mistress. Seeing this, John the Baptist came to him and reprehending him said: "[Herod,] it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife," (Mk 6:18). From this St. John is called: "The voice of the Lord shaking the desert," (Ps 28:8).

Morally. If only many houses of this city were not deserted, like Herod, through lust by despising wives and taking on mistresses. But this desert is provoked not by John but by Christ the just judge on the day of judgment, therefore there is added: "And the Lord shall shake the desert of Cades," (Ps 28: 8), that is the changed, namely the lustful who change themselves to another woman.

Instructive Teaching

The seventh teaching is instructive, like a good father when he doesn't know how or is unable to instruct his sons, he sends them to a master that they be prepared by him. So St. John did for his disciples whom he was not able to instruct so that they might believe in the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. For this reason, when he had been imprisoned and near death he sent them to Christ as to a teacher that they might be instructed by him in the truth. Matthew 11: "Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ: sending two of his disciples he said to him: Are you he who is to come, or should we look for another?" (vv. 2-3). From this St. John is called, "The voice of the Lord preparing the stags," (Ps 28:9).

Note that good Christians are called "stags" because of the great leap which they take from earth to heaven, therefore David, in the person of Christ says: "Who has made my feet like the feet of harts: and who sets me upon high places," (Ps 17:34). The feet by which we leap to Paradise, are true belief and obedience. The right foot is true belief [vera credentia]. The left, obedience. But some err by leaping, who believe they can ascend into heaven and descend into hell, but they have a broken right or left foot or both, because they neither have faith nor a

good life. Those who doubt in faith have a broken right foot, therefore they are not able to leap into heaven. Those with a broken left foot, are those who have true belief, but do not have obedience nor good life. However the disciples of John, only limped on their right foot, because they did not believe, but not on their left, because they were living well. Therefore John sent them to Christ that he might cure them. To whom, having been cured, Christ said, "They who were limping, etc.," now follow. After he said, "The voice of the Lord prepares the stags: and he will discover the thick woods," namely Jesus Christ by his miracles which he did which John's disciples saw, "and in his temple all shall speak his glory," (Ps 28:9). Behold why St. John the Baptist said to the messengers, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness," (Jn 1:23).

C166. On the Incarnation

Luke 1:26-38, Douay transl., especially:

- Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus (v. 31).
- And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age (v. 36).
- And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word, (v.38).

"Ecce, ecce, ecce." Behold, behold, behold. The words of this theme are gathered from today's gospel of the feast, which is originally found in Luke 1:31. Today's solemnity is totally about the most holy Incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of the Virgin, and so is my sermon. To honor the Son of God and his mother, and for the comfort of our souls, we humbly offer our greeting to the Virgin, the same which was spoken today by the angel Gabriel etc. [Hail Mary, etc.]

Some might wonder where this theme is found. It seems that it is not in the gospel, nor in the epistle. I say that it is sifted out of the gospel, in which "behold" is said three times, not without deep secrets and mysteries.

The first is when the angel announced to the Virgin that she would be the mother of God saying "Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and give birth to a son." (Lk 1:31).

The second is when he announced to the Virgin that Elizabeth had conceived, saying, "Behold, Elizabeth your cousin, has conceived a son in her old age." (v. 36)

The third is when the Virgin finally consented and said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word," (v. 38)

Here is where we get the proposed theme. It calls for a demonstrative sermon. Grammaticus [[Donatus, Ars minor](#)] says, "[Words] of demonstrating, like: See!, Behold!" And it is also exhortative. "Behold" is said three times, because magnitude, height and depth – all three – must be contemplated acutely and astutely in the Incarnation:

- I. Divine kindness [Divinalis benignitas]
- II. Human utility. [Humanalis utilitas]
- III. Virginal humility. [Virginalis humilitas]

Open, then, the ears of your heart to contemplate with great devotion and affection these three aforesaid topics.

Divine Kindness

First, the divine kindness is acutely contemplated from this blessed incarnation which God has shown us in this holy incarnation. That God, out of love of us has become man, is greater than if gold had turned to dirt, or mud into lead. The Creator has become the creature; the king, the servant; and the Lord, the slave; the rich man, the pauper; the almighty, the weak; the eternal, temporal; the infinite, out of love for us has become finite; and tiny like an ant, in humanity; the immense one, confined to the Virgins womb; the invulnerable, vulnerable. No mind can handle or comprehend this kindness. He does all this to help our weakness. Behold, the divine kindness. For this reason almost all the prophecies speaking of this matter begin with the word: "Behold." David says: "For behold God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul," (Ps 53:6).

About this help, remember the story of a great king, who had a vineyard alongside of his palace. He sent farmhands there, promising them a big salary if they could finish the work that same day, otherwise they would get nothing. The laborers worked furiously, but as evening drew near they still had about half left to do. The son of the king saw through his window that they could not finish, wished to help them. He went into his room, and in disguise put on the clothes of a farmhand, and helped them, and they finished, and in the end they got their pay. Does it not seem to you to be a great kindness in the firstborn son of the king, to humble himself so much, that the workers could have the money promised to them?

Such was the humility of the Son of God. The vineyard of the king is this world. "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel," (Is 5:7), to which he sends workers: the patriarchs, and prophets. He promises them a salary if they would finish before sunset, i.e. before death. They would enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, seeing through the window of his knowledge that they could not gain the prize of glory, because our works are meritorious from the death of Christ and his merit, and before the death of Christ no one, however holy, could enter heaven. The gate was closed. So the son of the king entered the room of the Virgin's womb, today, where he was clothed with the uniform of that

farmer, Adam, so that he could help them who would work continuously right up to their death. See why he says, "For behold God is my helper," with the help of grace in the present time; "and the Lord is the protector of my soul," in eternal glory, (Ps. 53:6).

Isaiah, too, gives a sign of this incarnation and says, beginning with the word "behold:" "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel," (Is 7:14). Note: "Behold a virgin shall conceive." Although he could have assumed flesh from other women, nevertheless he assumed it from a virgin. "And bear a son," not the Father, because he never was a man, nor is, and never shall he be. Also neither the Holy Spirit. But she "bears a son." It is more fitting that the Son be incarnated, if we wish to attend to the purpose of this Incarnation, which is that sinners and enemies become the friends of God, and sons of God, and inheritors or co-heirs of the kingdom. The Apostle touches on this reason saying "For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren," (Rom 8:29). Note: "Emmanuel", "Ema," i.e. "with us." "El," i.e. "God." Thus "Emmanuel," means "God is with us," for otherwise unless he were God, man could not save himself. Therefore, among all the prophets, this one especially is to be studied.

And when the angel greeted her, she was reading this prophecy, as Mary told Elizabeth. At that moment the Virgin was thinking to herself, "O Lord, what will this virgin be like? Who would be worthy to conceive the son of God, to be the mother of God and the queen of heaven?" And she prayed to God that it not be delayed so that she might see her and be able to serve her, saying "Lord preserve my sight, that I might see her, my hearing, that I might hear her, my speech that I might speak to her, my hands that I might serve her. O blessed shall that virgin be," and she wept, unable out of humility to think about herself, that she might be the one.

And when she was thinking these things, suddenly Gabriel the archangel entered without opening the doors. Utterly radiant and beautiful, with great reverence he greeted the Virgin saying "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women," (Lk 1:28). When she heard this she was disturbed by his message, not by the vision of the angel, because Jerome says that she was accustomed to seeing angels, but she was upset by his words.

Before the coming of the angel the Virgin was thinking about that virgin and about that great grace. Suddenly the angel greeted her saying, "Hail, full of grace," which is to say, "You are that virgin full of grace."

Second, she was thinking about her great closeness with God, that she would be his mother. And so the angel said to her, "The Lord is with thee," in a greater closeness than with other creatures.

Third she was thinking of the excellence of that virgin over other women. and so the angel said to her "Blessed are you among women." And "she was troubled at his saying," [Lk 1:29] If the angel had greeted her in the usual way, as good people greet others, she would not have been disturbed. But when she heard this salutation.

[Morally] Here is an example for you, young women. If someone greets you in a usual manner, you should not be upset but return the greeting in the usual fashion. But if some fool [stultus] greets you in an unusual manner, you do not have to reply, unless by saying "What do you have to do with me etc.," because such a greeting is unseemly [iniqua], like when he says "God be with you, lily blossom, paradise flower, gracious angel, you are my life," etc. If the Virgin was disturbed by an unusual greeting from an angel with whom she cannot sin, how much more ought you to be disturbed by this unusual line from foolish men?

And the angel putting her at ease said, "Fear not, Mary," because in this greeting there is no sin, "for you have found grace with God," add "over all creatures." Now that the Virgin was at ease, the angel explained his communiqué [ambasiatam], beginning with "behold," saying,

1. "Behold you shall conceive in your womb,
2. and shall bring forth a son;
3. and you shall call his name Jesus
4. He shall be great,
5. and shall be called the Son of the most High;
6. and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father;
7. and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever.
8. And of his kingdom there shall be no end," (vv. 31-33).

See, the whole message, which has eight clauses containing the secrets of the Christian faith, which the angel then explained to her.

1. CONCEPTION

First where he says, "Behold you shall conceive in your womb," someone might say, "Why is it necessary to say 'in the womb,' when there is no conception anywhere else? Just as why is it necessary to say 'You see with your eyes,' since one does not see with other parts?" I reply, that it is not without reason that the angel said, "Behold, you shall conceive in your womb," because Mary, before the arrival of the angel had conceived God in the mind by contemplating that prophecy. But the angel, revealing to her a maternal conception said, "You shall conceive in your womb," not only in your mind, in which you have already conceived, but "in you womb," declaring to her the manner of the conception, like a hazelnut conceives its seed without breaking etc. If someone says, "Nature does this." Cannot God, who makes a virgin pregnant, do more? [Iam bene est bestia. Et numquid potest plus deus qui virginem gravidavit?] And when the Virgin Mary understood this, think how she rejoiced.

2. Birth

Second he says "And you shall bring forth a son." Behold, the birth. For you shall bring forth a Son, not a Father, because the Father neither is, nor will be a man; nor the Holy Spirit. But if someone says, "How is it possible, since the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in essence, indivisible, that the Son assumes humanity and becomes a man, since they are one entity?" It is explained by a likeness to the one sun, in which the Father can be considered generating, a substance, and the Son begotten, the rays, and the Spirit, exhaled, the heat, and yet there is only one sun, and when the rays are passing through the glass window, red or another color, the rays receive that color, and not the substance of the sun, nor its heat. So, the Virgin Mary is a window clearer than crystal. Thus the church sings "[The heaven's window you are made.](#)" And through her passes the ray of the eternal sun, the Son of God, entering to illuminate the house of this world, without breaking the window, indeed it remains even brighter. And when the angel says "And you shall bring forth a son," the Virgin understands that she would be the mother not of the Father, nor of the Holy Spirit, but of the Son.

3. Passion

The third clause is where he says, "You shall call his name Jesus." Behold, his passion. Because "Jesus," is the same as "savior", by whose passion we have been saved. Thus Gregory says, "The birth would have profited us nothing, unless there had been the advantage of being redeemed." And when the Virgin heard this name, Jesus, from the angel, I believe that she bowed down. Reason: Because the ancient prophets held him in great reverence. Isaiah says, "Your name, and your remembrance are the desire of the soul. My soul has desired you in the night," (Is 26:8-9). So it is a laudable custom to bow when "Jesus" is named. If preachers when they preach before the pope bow when the address him, how much more when the supreme Pope is named?

4 Descent

. Fourth: "He shall be great." Behold, the descent into hell. Because just as he was great in heaven before the Incarnation, he ought also to be shown to be great on earth before men through miracles, he wished also to show his greatness in hell by striving against it and by leading out holy fathers out of it.

5. Resurrection

Fifth where "[He] shall be called the Son of the most High." Behold, the resurrection. The philosophers say that the definition of man has one genus and two differences, because man is a rational mortal animal. Before the passion, however, Christ was rational and mortal, and so can be called the "Son of Man," but only after the resurrection should he be called the "Son of the Most High" because he is immortal and invulnerable.

6. Ascension

Sixth when he says, ".and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father." Behold, his miraculous ascension. Because just as the throne of David was higher by excellence and power over other kings of his domain, so Christ in his ascension was placed on a throne of glory to reign over all creatures.

7. Eucharist

Seventh where he says, ".and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever" Behold, the sacrament of the Eucharist. The church is called the house of Jacob in which there is a struggle against the devil through humility. This is with respect to men's understanding; we who do not know the last day of the world. The first day in which no Mass will be said in this world, that day shall be the last day of the world. We get this from that text of Christ. "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," (Mt 28:20). And so David says "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven," (Ps 10:5).

8. Judgment

Eighth, where he says, ".and of his kingdom," whether of glory or of punishment, "there shall be no end." Behold, the general judgment. He shall reign over the wicked and condemned with the rigor of justice, because they shall never be freed from their punishments. He shall reign over the good and blessed with the sweetness of mercy in heaven without end. Of this clause David prophesied saying, "Your kingdom is a kingdom of all ages: and your dominion endures throughout all generations," (Ps 144:13), namely of those to be saved, and the generation, namely of those to be damned. Now we have the first "behold" of this communiqué.

Human Utility

Second, its human usefulness should be acknowledged. Do not believe that he became incarnate for his own good and advantage, because he did not need our goods, as David says, but for our advantage [utilitate], because all good radically proceeds from the incarnation of the Son of God, like flowers and fruits of the tree are generated from the root, so all good, and especially those of faith and obedience, proceed from the root of the incarnation, because granting this, all the other articles of faith become easy to believe, because it is no wonder if he has been born of a woman, that he is man. Also you believe that he works a miracle. Practically speaking, no wonder from one who is God. The same can be said of all the articles of faith pertaining to Christ's humanity or divinity. It is clear therefore that the incarnation of Christ is the root or the gates of all the other articles of faith. Because of this Christ said, "You believe in God, believe also in me," (Jn 14:1), with respect to the humanity.

Also in the blessed incarnation of the Son of God, all good is from supernatural obedience. Of old there was no teacher who did not err on the way, whom we could follow, because neither Moses, because he sinned, nor others. Only Jesus, who on this day [Feast of the Incarnation], takes on humanity that he might be visible, so that we can follow him. Thus Augustine said, "God must be followed, who cannot be seen; man must not be followed, who can be seen," (Augustine Sermon on Nativity, in Aquinas, [Summa, III, q.1, a.2](#)). So then, that there might be a man who could be seen by man, and whom a man might follow. For this reason God has become man.

Also for the usefulness and good of our redemption, in the blessed incarnation, the whole beginning of our redemption was situated in the pocket [bursa] of the virginal womb, and the price was paid in the passion. So David said, "He has sent redemption to his people," (Ps 110: 9).

Also from the usefulness and good of our salvation, which proceeds from the incarnation, comes about the restoration in heaven and on earth. The reason is, like a balance, when one part goes down, the other part rises, so the Son of God humbled himself so that he might exalt us. As Gregory says, "God, who in the humility of your Son, raises the fallen world, grant perpetual joy to your faithful, eternal joy, that the number of angels be replenished."

And this the angel indicated to the Virgin when he said to her the second "Behold." "And behold your cousin Elizabeth, she also has conceived a son in her old age," (Lk 1:36) Literal sense. The Glosses and commentaries [postillae] say that the angel said this to comfort the Virgin. But spiritually it is understood thus. The name "Elizabeth" in Hebrew is composed of three Hebrew names: "El" i.e. God, "I", i.e. me, and "Zabeth" i.e. seventh. "Elizabeth," means "seventh of my God." This "seventh of my God" is human nature. In the beginning God created: 1) the earth with the trees, 2) water with the fishes, 3) air with its properties, 4) fire with its qualities, 5) heaven with the planets, and 6) angelic nature. Seventh he formed human nature. See, the "seventh of my God".

This woman was sterile her whole life, because she was not able to conceive until now, in her old age. Note that seven are the ages of the world or of mankind. First is infancy. This was from Adam to Noah. Second, childhood. This was from Noah to Abraham. Third is adolescence. This was

from Abraham to Moses. Fourth is youth. This was from Moses to David. Fifth is maturity [virilitas]. This was from David to the Babylonian captivity [transmigrationem]. Sixth is old age. From the Captivity to the incarnation of Christ. The seventh is decrepitude. This shall last from Christ to the end of the world. And in this [age] Elizabeth, i.e. human nature, conceived, merit for obtaining glory through faith, hope and charity. See why it is said, "Behold, Elizabeth your cousin," etc. Likewise Isaiah said, "In your presence, O Lord. We have conceived, and been as it were in labor, and have brought forth the spirit of salvation," (Is 26:17-18).

Virginal Humility

Third, we are reminded of the virginal humility, when the third "behold" is said. After the angel had proposed to her his communiqué, that she would be the mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, etc., with the greatest humility she responded saying: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word," (Lk 1:38).

Think how on bended knees and with tears of joy, she said these words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Note devoutly that when the Virgin Mary said the first word, "Behold" she was not immediately pregnant, nor became the mother of God; neither in the second, nor in the third, etc., but in the last, namely "[according to your] word." Then, instantly, the Virgin adored God in her womb, whom she did not see with the eyes of her body, but of her mind.

It is like this also in the consecration of the host at Mass. Not in the first word, nor in the second is the body of Christ present, but in the last, and then the priest adores the "pregnant" host. Only then should you adore and not before; So did the Virgin Mary adore. The virginal humility is well contemplated here. The angel called her Lady, Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, and she calls herself Handmaid: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," etc.

Rightly the humility of the Virgin was prefigured through that holy woman who heard the message of king David, who also wished not to become his wife, so that she would be queen, but said, "Behold, let your servant be a

handmaid, to wash the feet of the servants of my lord," (1Kg 25:41). [The name,] Abigail is interpreted to mean the "exultation of my father."

Behold the Virgin Mary who brought joy to her father, Adam who was weeping because of his sin for which we all are damned. There was no little exultation in the revelation to him of the Virgin in the curse of the serpent, when God said to the devil in the guise of the serpent, "I will put enmities between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed: she shall crush your head," (Gen 3:15).

Abigail, i.e. the exultation of my father, whom Christ the King wished in the Queen of Heaven, who responded, "Behold, let thy servant be a handmaid, to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." Note, that she might "wash the feet of the servants of my lord." That virgin washed feet.

Feet are the last members of the human body, even mystically. The status of the patriarchs was as the head of the world, the neck [the status] of the prophets; the belly [venter], of the apostles; heart and arms, of the martyrs; shins, of the doctors; thighs, of the confessors. The end of the world is the present time. We are in those "upon whom the ends of the world are come," (1Cor 10:11). And the Virgin washes us from the iniquity of our sins, and the stains, because she continuously prays for us, because otherwise we would have been destroyed. Thus the church sings to her:

Show thyself to be a Mother;
Through you may he (Jesus) receive (our) prayers;
Who, being born for us;
Undertook to be your own (Son),
(Vespers Hymn: [Ave Maris Stella](#)).

A150. Sermon for Christmas Eve

Mt: 1:18 Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost.

"She was found with child, of the Holy Ghost," (Mt 1:18)

Our whole sermon is about the impregnation of the Virgin Mary. But that you may perceive this material in your souls with the sweetness of devotion first we shall salute the pregnant Virgin, etc. [Here all recite the "Hail Mary."]

"She was found," etc. I find a great difference in sacred scripture between the conception of Christ and his birth, especially in this because the birth of Christ was not entirely hidden and secret, rather he wished that it would be announced to the world and published through the angels and through the heavens, through the star in the east, through the animals, through Eastern kings, just as it had already been prophesied. "I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations: and the desired of all nations shall come," (Hag 2:7-8). Note, "the heaven," that is, the holy angels.

But about his conception he wished that it would be hidden. To no one in this world was it revealed, not to the patriarchs, not to the prophets, nor to holy persons, but only to the archangel Gabriel and to the Virgin Mary, as it had been prophesied by Isaiah, "From the ends of the earth we have heard praises, the glory of the just one. And I said: My secret to myself," (Isa 24:16). And the prophet speaks in the person of Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Note, "from the ends of the earth." The ends of the earth are taken in two ways, either locally or temporally.

With respect to the first by calculating from the center of the earth, that which is most distant from the center is the circumference. The earth is the center, the circumference is the empyreal heaven. Behold the ends locally from which Gabriel and the Virgin Mary heard the praises of the just one,

because it is a rule in holy theology that when he is called just, it is understood absolutely, always of the savior.

As for the second, the ends can be taken temporally. There are seven temporal ages of the world. The first was from Adam to Noah. The second from Noah to Abraham. Third from Abraham to Moses. The fourth from Moses to David. The fifth from David to the Babylonian captivity. Sixth from the Babylonian exile to Christ. The seventh and last, from Christ to the end of the world. About which the Apostle [Paul] says: "[We are] upon whom the ends of the world are come," (1Cor 10:11). Behold the temporal limits, about which Gabriel and the Virgin Mary speak. "From the ends of the earth, "that is in the ultimate age of the world "we have heard praises, the glory of the just one," that is, the savior. "Tell us Angel Gabriel about these praises and the glory of the savior. Say something to us." He responds, "My secret to me," supply "I shall keep." See how the conception of Christ was hidden and secret. About which David said: "He shall come down like rain upon the fleece; and as showers falling gently upon the earth," (Ps 71:6). The difference then is clear between the birth of Christ and his conception.

Nevertheless although his conception was so secret at the beginning, nevertheless it gradually became manifest, because a pregnant woman at least in giving birth reveals her pregnancy. So it was of the Virgin whose belly and uterus had swelled, and she could no longer hide her pregnancy. On this account the proposed theme speaks, "She was found with child." The theme is clear.

And since I am concerned with the pregnant Virgin in this sermon, I find that the Virgin was found pregnant by her fiancé Joseph in three ways:

- First through sense experience, [per experientiam sensualem]
- Second through divine wisdom, [per sapientiam divinalem]
- Third through a special excellence. [per excellentiam specialem]

For each of these the theme speaks, "She was found with child," (Mt 1:18) etc.

Sense Experience

I say first, that the Virgin Mary was found pregnant by her espoused Joseph through sense experience. All knowledge is had through some sense perception. Through sight we recognize colors; through hearing, sound; through the sense of smell, odors; through taste, flavors; through touch, hard or soft, hot or cold. If you say to someone "How do you know this?" He replies: "Because I have seen or heard it," etc. It is clear therefore that all our cognition is through the senses. The Philosopher [Aristotle], "Sense is not deceived about the proper object, especially sight unless there is a defect." On account of this honorable judges make a great difference between eyewitnesses and hearsay [de auditu], or belief [credentia]. An eyewitness is greater. And so Christ rebuked the Jews who refused to believe, saying, "We speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony," (Jn 3:11). Note "what we know" namely, I and the holy prophets, "we speak," in this way, from sight. The Virgin Mary was found by her espoused Joseph to be with child. Imagine how after Mary had conceived, filled with joy she went to visit Elizabeth her cousin [literally, her related sister], who was pregnant with John the Baptist, as the angel had told her. She stayed with her for three months, as Luke says, (cf. Lk 1:56).

Her fiancé Joseph came to Nazareth to visit her, and saw her womb swollen, so he found her pregnant. Think how Joseph should have wondered, because he had not touched her. Moreover, as the holy doctors say, after they had become engaged, the Virgin Mary persuaded her fiancé, who was also a virgin, that they would take a vow of virginity together. So much the more did he wonder when she seemed pregnant. Therefore the beginning of today's gospel says, "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together," that is, to live together and have relations, "she was found to be with child, of the Holy Ghost. Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately," (Mt 1:18-19).

Think also when she was found pregnant by her parents, who did not believe that she had sinned, but they wondered what this was. On the one hand they were thinking of her great devotion; on the other hand they saw her pregnancy. Her mother said to her, "Daughter, what is this?" The Virgin Mary replied to her mother, this is that which pleases God, who can do to

his creatures whatever he pleases. "O daughter, what will people say, that my daughter got pregnant before she was married."

Think of the distress of the Virgin, who dared not reveal because "my secret to me." Think of the entanglement in which Joseph found himself, who was old and poor, and the Virgin Mary, young and stunningly beautiful. Bernard says that Joseph, on one hand was considering the holiness of the Virgin, and that it could not be that she had sinned, and on the other hand he beheld her pregnant. And since by nature a woman cannot conceive without a man, therefore like an olive, his heart was between two millstones.

Signs of a Bad Woman

And because he was prudent and wise he considered all the signs of a bad woman, which are: 1) an irreligious heart, 2) garrulousness in speech, 3) personal untidiness, 4) voraciousness in eating and drinking, 5) laziness toward work, 5) vanity of dress, and 6) contempt for her husband. Each of these signs indicate a woman is bad. But Joseph found none of these signs in the Virgin Mary. Rather, the total opposite; all the signs of a good woman.

1) The first sign of a dishonorable [inhonesta] woman is an irreligious heart toward God, disregarding masses and sermons, because she does not fear God. May God keep her from being inconsiderate, because unless a woman retains a fear of God, no other fear will hold her back from evil. Fear of God and devotion restrained Susanna lest she sin, when she said, "I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing, it is death to me: and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord," (Dan 13:22-23).

Joseph however was thinking about his fiancée whether she was devout, or irreligious, and he saw that he had never seen such a holy and devout woman, because she always wanted to pray, or read, or contemplate. And on this foundation of devotion a woman should ground herself, otherwise she will fall. "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid," (1Cor 3:10). But Joseph did not find these things in the Blessed Virgin Mary, since she was most devoted and ardent toward God. So scripture says

of her in Proverbs, "The woman that fears [God], she shall be praised," (Prov 31:30).

2) The second sign is garrulous talkativeness. [garrulatio oris loquax]. God keep her from the opportunity. Reason, because no devotion remains in the soul from words, just as no scent remains in the nutmeg jar which is left open. Authority: "Where there are many words, there is oftentimes want," namely of goodness (Prov 14:23). And so you should raise your little daughters lest they become talkative. And so, 1 Tim: "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection," (1Tim 2:11), otherwise it is a bad sign. But a quiet woman is good.

Note the signs of taciturnity of the Blessed Virgin, because she is painted with her eyes larger than her mouth, and so she is properly represented to indicate that she had a great eye of the heart for thinking and contemplating, but a mouth small for speaking little. Mary "kept all these words in her heart," (Lk 2:51). Joseph considered for himself if his fiancée was loquacious, or garrulous, and he saw that she was not. Moreover she preferred not to speak. A sign of this, as I said, that the Virgin had large eyes and a small mouth, is clear in the portrait which St. Luke painted, which is in Rome.



3) The third sign is bodily untidiness. When a woman goes about, lascivious, dissolute and vulgar, it seems that she has ants on her feet [formicas in pedibus!]. Ambrose: A man's body is an image of his soul. So Solomon says, "A woman [meets him] in harlot's attire prepared to deceive souls; talkative and wandering, not bearing to be quiet, not able to abide still at home, now abroad, now in the streets, now lying in wait near the corners," (Prov 7:10-12). And she immediately put herself at the windows etc.

But Joseph did not find this sign in the Blessed Virgin, because she never left home, unless when she went to the temple. And thus she went about totally composed. She always had her eyes toward the ground in a gesture of holiness. She never went dancing, but went about with downcast eyes. So scripture says about her, "How beautiful are you, my love, how beautiful are you! your eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within," (Song 4:1). The Holy Spirit says "how beautiful are you" to the Virgin twice, because

she is beautiful in body and beautiful in soul. Note, "Your eyes are doves' eyes," he does not say, "falcons' eyes."

4) The fourth sign is stuffing the belly with food and drink. It is a bad sign in a man and in a woman, because of those nearby parts, and stimulate each other. Hence a full belly immediately stimulates its neighbor, and because of this a gluttonous person necessarily is lustful. Holy Scripture says of the gluttons, "They shall eat . and shall lift up their souls to their iniquity," (Hos 4:8).

But the Virgin Mary ate very little, only enough to sustain the body. She was almost always fasting.

5) The fifth sign is laziness, as when some woman says, "I will not work. I have brought so much from my dowry to my husband." Therefore St. Bernard [[De consideratione](#), II, 13,22] writes, "Idleness is the mother of trifles, the stepmother of virtues," so because our body is of the earth, it has the conditions of the earth, which if left uncultivated, brings forth thorns of lust, and weeds of bad thoughts and sins. Also, about the body of the lazy, on this account Sacred Scripture says of the body, "Send him," -- the servant, that is, the body which is like a servant who is to be directed -- "to work, that he be not idle: For idleness has taught much evil," (Sir 33:28-29).

But the Virgin was never lazy, rather she was always busy about holy works. Jerome says that she would arise in the middle of the night and pray. Then she spun and wove.

6) Sixth is vanity and excess in dress [ornatus]. Women may dress themselves decently and honestly according to their status and condition, but when they pour all their time and zeal in dressing themselves, or their body and they don't care about their soul, God help them, because such women are vain and have a vain heart. So Scripture says, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity," (Eccl 1:2). Note the rule of the Apostle [Paul], "Women also in decent apparel: adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly attire, but as it becomes women professing godliness, with good works," (1Tim 2:9-10). Note "sobriety" in measure, according to the condition of their status and the ability of their husband. But there are many women with no regard, and

they should be ashamed at what they wear, like the outfit or jewelry which a prostitute wears. And so scripture says, "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: the woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised," (Prov 31:30).

But the Blessed Virgin did not care about jewelry. She washed her face well with the pure water of tears. St. Anne, her mother was adorning her with much jewelry [divers]. Out of love for her mother she wore it in the house, but not outside the house. But the daughters of today do just the opposite.

7) The seventh sign is contempt of the husband. It is a sign that she has her heart for another, when she argues with her husband about fashion [de genere?] and about other things, she immediately wants him to get it for her. According to scriptures, a woman ought to honor her husband, and so the Apostle commands, saying, "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence," (1Tim 2:11). We also read in Esther 2, that Assuerus and his people were saying, "Let all wives, as well of the greater as of the lesser, give honor to their husbands, and that the husbands should be rulers and masters in their houses," (Est 2:20,22).

Neither is this sign of contempt found in the glorious Virgin, because although she was young, beautiful, noble and rich, and her spouse old, and poor, nevertheless she honored him more than any woman in the world. All in all, Joseph found no sign of a bad woman in the Virgin Mary, but all the virtues and traits [afflictiones?, perhaps affectiones] of a good woman.

On the other hand he considered whether nature would permit a woman to conceive without a man, and he saw that it seemed not. See how perplexed he was; it was like his heart was pressed between two millstones. On the one hand he was afraid to make her condition public, because she would have immediately been stoned to death, according to the law. On the other hand, since he was a just man, lest he seem to consent, he thought about going away quietly and leaving her. And so the prophecy of David was fulfilled saying, in the person of Joseph, "Fear and trembling are come upon me: and darkness has covered me. And I said: Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?. and I abode in the wilderness," (Ps 54:6-7,8). As for his proposal: note "fear" of consenting in sin if he stayed with her, and "trembling" lest he defame an innocent one. So he proposed to

put her away. It is clear, therefore, how the Virgin Mary, "was found with child," (Mt 1:18).

Morally. You should take care, like Joseph, that there be no impediments when you wish to contract marriage, like parental [permission], or affinity, or something else. And so it is an ordination of the church that it be declared. And so scripture says, "Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled," (Heb 13:4). It is honorable when there is no impediment.

Divine Wisdom

Second, I say that the Virgin Mary was found to be with child, through divine wisdom. This is based on a rule of theology, says St. Thomas in I Pars that the mysteries of God, that is the secrets, depending on his will alone cannot be known unless through his revelation. None of you can know my heart unless I should reveal and manifest it. How much more so with God.

But that which happens naturally can be known. In this way doctors know the hour of death of a sick person, because although the effect is in the future, nevertheless the cause is already present. Not so with the will of God. And so scripture says, "For who among men is he who can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of God is?," (Wis 9:13). It is added, "And who shall know your thought, unless you give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above," (Wis 9:17). Now Joseph, when he saw that his fiancée was pregnant, could not naturally know the truth, because the conception of Christ had no natural cause. For it did not come through the celestial constellations, nor through angelic processes, nor elemental, or human, therefore it could not have been known unless through divine revelation. Think, therefore how Joseph, who was a holy man, just and good, turned to God in prayer about this, asking the good pleasure of God to reveal [the answer], according to that of James, "But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men abundantly, . and it shall be given him," (Jas 1:5). So Joseph did, when he wanted at night to retire, he first knelt down in prayer, saying, "Lord, you have given me a great grace, giving me this damsel as my fiancée, but Lord, I see that she is pregnant. How is it that a woman so holy is pregnant?" and similar words. And he wept much.

I believe also that the Blessed Virgin, on the other hand was praying to God, lovingly compassionate over her predicament, and that her saddened fiancé might be consoled. I believe that even the mother of the Virgin was praying that they not be disgraced, etc. Think how God listened to these devout prayers. The Gospel says, "But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and you shall call his name JESUS. For he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," (Mt 1:20-23). Think, how the angel spoke to him the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son," (Isa 7:14), not the Father nor the Holy Spirit. Think what kind of joy Joseph had, when he knew the truth.

From this a question emerges: Why did the Virgin not reveal it to him, when she saw his sadness, and perplexity, because he believed her – although nowadays a fiancé does not believe his fiancée. I respond that a secret entrusted should not be revealed, where the one by whom the secret is entrusted, is good, just and holy. Otherwise it can be revealed. "For it is good to hide the secret of a king," (Tob 12:7). Therefore the Virgin Mary, who had a most delicate conscience, chose not to reveal it, lest she offend the king, especially God.

Note [this is] against many vain persons who, if God gives them some grace or revelation, cannot keep silence. They immediately reveal it, and wrongly, unless about this they expressly know the will of God, especially because sometimes they believe the illusions of the devil to be divine revelations. They are like hens who can not keep quiet until they lay an egg. About such scripture says, "He who discloses the secret of a friend loses his credit, and shall never find an intimate friend," (Sir 27:17). See the reason why the Virgin Mary did not reveal the secret committed to her to Joseph or to her mother, but the Holy Spirit revealed it to Elizabeth.

Special Excellence

Third, I say that the Virgin Mary was found to be with child through a special excellence. Generally, when women are pregnant, they are thin, pale, tired and hungry for all kinds of things. But it was not so with the Blessed Virgin. Some holy theologians say that from the fact that the Virgin was pregnant, rays of splendor shone forth from her face, especially when she was close to childbirth. This can be proved in three ways, through philosophy, through theology and through experience.

As for the first, the Philosopher Aristotle says that every natural agent to the extent that it gives of the substantial form, to that extent it also gives the accidents following the form. What gives fire, gives also heat and light. So God the Father, of his substantial form, gave his Son to the Virgin Mary. That the Son of God is called "form," the authority of scriptures: "Who being in the form of God, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," (Phil 2:6-7). It is no wonder then that it conveys a radiance in the face etc. And so when pregnant, the Virgin was more beautiful and more glowing.

Second, it is proved theologically. We read in Exodus 34, that because Moses had spoken with God on the mountain, rays of splendor shone forth from his face, so much so that the people could not even gaze on him. Behold the reason. If the face was so splendorous from just a conversation with God, how much more therefore the face of the Virgin Mary from the conception of his Son. The Apostle Paul makes this point saying, "Now if the ministration of death, engraved with letters upon stones, was glorious; so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather in glory?" (2Cor 3:7-8). The "ministration of death" was the law of Moses which did not confer a life of glory.

Third, it is proved by experience, of a crystal lamp, which is beautiful in itself and bright, but if the lamp within is lighted it shall be more beautiful and even brighter. The same with the Virgin Mary. Think how her body, beautiful and pure like a lamp, and the light inside illuminating the whole world is the Son of God. No wonder therefore if the Virgin was then brighter and more beautiful, inasmuch as the text says that Joseph "knew her not," (Mt 1:25). From these rays of splendor, because eternal light was in her.

Note here how Joseph, having received the divine revelation, humbly sought pardon from the Virgin for his suspicion which he had had of her, saying, "O Blessed, why did you not tell me, because I believed you. And that she comforted him sweetly congratulating him that he would be the groom and companion of the mother of the Son of God, and his parent. O blessed family [societas]. How reverently, then, did they both adore God incarnate in the womb of the Virgin.

And so if you wish to have this association for yourself, you should do like the merchant Valentine did, who every year on Christmas, invited [to his home] one poor old man and one woman having a little child. They represented for him the Virgin with her son, and Joseph. It was revealed about him that at his death the Virgin with her son and Joseph appeared to him, saying, "Because you have received us in your house, so we receive you into our house." About this Christ says, in Matthew 25, "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me," (v. 40). And so the money which you pay out in gambling, you should for the love of Christ give to the poor. The poor however, who do not have, nor can give money to themselves, can at least present tomorrow [Christmas day] as many "Hail Marys" as days she bore him in the womb, or how many weeks, or months. Forty weeks, nine months, 277 days.

A158. Christmas

"This day, is born to you a Savior," (Lk 2:11). Our sermon will be about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Virgin Birth. But that you might sense the spiritual sweetness of this feast, we shall salute the glorious Mother of God. [*Vincent now leads his listeners in the "Hail Mary."*]

"There is born to us etc." From the beginning of the world up to the birth of Christ there has never been heard such good news, nor so useful for mankind like the news of the proposed theme, "This day, is born to you a Savior," (Lk 2:11) etc. To all who were lost and damned and sentenced to hell. The declaration of this blessed Nativity I deal with in five conclusions.

1. First, that this blessed Nativity was from of old ardently desired by the saints.
2. Second, that this blessed Nativity was cruelly unappreciated by the Jews.
3. Third, that this blessed Nativity was celebrated powerfully by God.
4. Fourth, that this blessed Nativity was humbly hidden by the Virgin Mary.
5. Fifth, that this blessed Nativity was broadcast publicly by the angels saying, "This day, is born to you a Savior," (Lk 2:11).

And anyone who, curiously, might wish to preach all five conclusions, would be excessively prolix. And all are touched in the theme, in which there are five conditions. The first, therefore, is touched by the first saying. The second in the second. The third in the third, and so on for the others.

Long Desired

I say first that this blessed Nativity was ardently desired of old by holy persons. And that you might understand better this condition listen to this story:

You should know that there was a certain great and noble city, well populated, which was cruelly under siege by enemies, attacking it with every kind of weapons, to the extent that it was already running low on provisions, the longer the siege went on, nor were the enemies willing to take them alive, or to grant any mercy, moreover they killed them at once. Aware of this, the king and lord of the city secretly sent messengers and letters to the city, telling them that he will come personally to free them when he was able. The citizens were very happy about this and were eagerly expecting his arrival any day.

Rightly so it was of this world. This great and noble city was and is human nature. Who can number how many citizens there were and how many dwelling in her, from Adam up to the birth of Christ -- since according to some teachers more than 5,000 years have passed -- who were besieged daily by cruel enemies, namely by countless demons attacking it with diverse temptations, with catapults, pains and sufferings, since they were lacking the spiritual food, about which Christ said, "Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.," (Mt 4:4). Although they had the Mosaic law, it did not give eternal life. Nor did they have drink, i.e., the promise of spiritual [gifts] which refresh souls. And when someone went out of the city, through death, immediately without mercy he was captured and imprisoned in the prison of hell. However, God, the Lord of this world, wishing to comfort the citizens, secretly sent messengers to them, the holy patriarchs and prophets, with his letters announcing to them that he himself personally would come to liberate them. Many citizens rejoiced over this and city-dwellers sent him supplications, devout prayers, that he would come and liberate the city.

First came Moses saying to God the Father, "I beseech you, Lord send whom you will send," (Ex 4:13) as you have promised. Second, David on behalf of the whole city says, "[Lord] stir up your might, and come to save us," (Ps 79:3). Third, Solomon saying in the Holy Spirit, "Send her out of your holy heaven, and from the throne of your majesty, that she may be with me, and may labor with me," (Wis 9:10) against your enemies. Note: "Send her," namely, the person of Christ in human flesh, which is sent by the Father and the Holy Spirit, in respect to humanity. Fourth, Isaiah, saying, "Would that you would rend the heavens, and would come down,"

(Isa 64:1). Others were saying, "Come, O Lord, and tarry not: forgive the sins of your people Israel," etc. (Alleluia Verse from the Advent Liturgy)

The King, however, having heard these supplications, sent a messenger secretly to the city who would say on his behalf, " [the vision]. it/he shall appear at the end, and shall not lie: if it/he make any delay, wait for it/him: for it/he shall surely come, and it/he shall not be slack," (Hab 2:3). Behold how ardently he was desired, and according to Augustine they would say, "When shall he come? When shall he be born? When would he appear? Do you think I shall see it? Do you think I shall endure? Do you think his birth will find me here? O, if only my eyes shall behold the one whom the eyes of the heart have revealed. O, if only my eyes shall see what I believe in the writings of God. And the closer he approached, so much the more was he desired.

He begins his path of coming on the day of his conception. So he was most fervently desired by the Blessed Virgin, his mother and St. Joseph who daily checked off the calendar yearning to see the day of his entry into this world. The Virgin carried him nine months and six days, which are 277 days. Thus in the person of Christ Holy Scripture says, "I myself also am a mortal man, like all others, .and in the womb of my mother I was fashioned," in the figure of man, "to be flesh. In the time of ten months," (Wis 7:1-2) Because of this the Virgin Mary and Joseph knowing his coming was near prepared themselves for receiving him devoutly. The Virgin prepared woolen and linen wrappings, as women do when they are close to childbirth. Joseph purchased an ox so that he could have a great feast on the birth of the child. But in the mean time says Luke, "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled," (Lk 2:1). So Augustus wished to enroll the world because he wanted to know how many provinces there were, how many cities, and how many people. Note the great sadness of Joseph, when he heard the edict of the Emperor, that under penalty of death everyone must proceed to the city of their birth. Joseph, who was of the city of Bethlehem, of the tribe of David, began to weep saying, "O woe, if I go to Bethlehem, I shall not see that blessed birth so long desired by the saints. If I do not go, I will be disobedient and will be killed, and too I shall not see the aforesaid birth." Sadly, he went home.

The Virgin Mary was comforting him, as a wife should do, saying, "O father, what are you worried about? You should rejoice, because the savior is about to be born soon." Then Joseph told the Virgin Mary about the edict of the Emperor and the reason for his sadness. The Virgin replied, "Father, do not weep, because for your comfort, I shall go with you, for I am also of the offspring of David. Joseph, on the one hand rejoiced, that the Virgin would wish to go, but on the other hand he wondered what people would say, that he was taking with him a young pregnant woman so near to childbirth.

Also, what if she gives birth on the way? The Virgin replied to him, "Father, do not worry about what people will say, because your intention is good. It is the will of God that we go to Bethlehem, because the savior is to be born there. According to the prophecy of Micah, "And you, Bethlehem Ephrata, are a little [place] in the kingdom of Judah: out of you shall come forth one who to be the ruler in Israel," (Mic 5:2). The Virgin Mary knew the bible better than the prophet, as Origen said.

They prepared themselves and left the town of Nazareth, the Virgin riding on a donkey, and Joseph leading the ass and ox. Behold the Queen of Paradise, and those she was traveling with. Then was fulfilled the prophecy of Haggai on this event saying, "Yet one moment [modicum], and I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations: and the desired of all nations shall come and I will fill this house with glory: says the Lord of hosts," (Hag 2: 6-7). Note, "one moment," because it was only a moment of time from the prophet Haggai until Christ, "and I will move the heaven," where he speaks of the immovable empyreal heaven. St. Thomas says in the Prima Pars [of the Summa theologica, [I, q.106, a.1](#)] that when some angel receives a revelation from God, immediately he reveals it to the others so that nothing there is kept a secret. So the archangel Gabriel in the holy court of the Trinity when he had the revelation of the incarnation and the nativity of the Son of God, about which he was the messenger, immediately revealed it to all the others, and so the heaven was moved out of joy and rejoicing and dancing because of the reparation of the fall. So, "I will move the earth," the Virgin Mary is called the virginal earth, who was to produce the fruit of life who was moved by the angel's salutation, when, "troubled at his saying, thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be," (Lk 1: 29). Then, "I shall move the sea and dry land," when from the edict of the Emperor the

peoples would proceed to their sites, some by sea and some by land. Then "shall come the desired of all the ages," (Hag 2:7). So much for the first conclusion.

Cruelly Unappreciated

The second conclusion says that this blessed Nativity was cruelly unappreciated by the Jews. History says that when Joseph and the Virgin were in the city of Bethlehem they found no hospitality nor any house nor hospice that was willing to receive them. Three reasons are alleged for this. First because they were the last to arrive and they had to go slowly on the way. So whoever comes late, often seems to be angry. Secondly although the city of Bethlehem was small, it nevertheless teemed with many in military service and citizens and nobles, all who were of the tribe of David who had been born in this city. They had made reservations in advance for their lodgings. A third reason was avarice of the hoteliers. When they got a look at Joseph, the poor man with his pregnant wife, thought that they would fill up a whole room and that there would be little profit from them. Therefore, etc.

Most likely, when Joseph entered through the gate of the city, with the Virgin riding on the donkey, he would head immediately to the first inn lest he would have to pass through the whole city seeking whether they might find a place there. When they asked who and how many were in the party they saw that there were only two, with an ox and ass, thinking, we will earn little, they told them to move on because there is no place here for you. At the next inn, the answer was that there were no vacancies. Imagine Joseph's anxiety here and the shame of the Virgin Mary, thus going from door to door. But the Virgin patiently put up with it and comforted Joseph. Finally they came to another inn where they said that all was full for such a gentleman and for expectant one etc.

Seeing that they couldn't buy lodging, Joseph searched that out of love of God some private home would take in that pregnant woman near to childbirth, but he did not find one in the whole city, and so they said to him, "Old man, you are indeed concerned about your wife, but why did you put her in this situation, so pregnant?" And the poor man wept. At which the Virgin [said], "Father let us be patient, and we shall find some hospital." So

they looked for a hospital seeing if they might be received out of love of God. The nurse replied, "You are healthy, and this house is for the sick. You are not able to be received here, and so spare us."

Since the hour was late and they had not yet found a place Joseph said, "O Lord these are my sins." Then they found a cave [porticulum] along a public road in which there was a manger, where visitors sometimes stabled their animals. The Virgin said, "Father, we shall stay here, because it is not right to go through the village at this hour." Joseph said, "O woe! We shall never find a house." The Virgin Mary said, "Father the whole world is the house of God, so let us stay here."

Then Joseph, with the greatest reverence assisted the Virgin from the donkey and entered the refuge [porticum] and Joseph rolled out a blanket [flatiatam] which he had brought on the donkey as a tent for privacy, and he went to buy some straw and charcoal because of the cold. And from a little straw he made a bed for the Queen of Heaven, saying, "O Lord what will you say to me, that I have placed your mother on such a bed," and in this place they stayed for at least thirteen days. The Gloss on Matthew 2 said that the kings from the east found Christ the King still there in that cave.

Behold the palace of the queen of paradise. Behold how that glorious birth was little appreciated by the Jews. God had revealed this to Jeremiah the prophet who, weeping, said in the person of the Jews, "We have sinned against thee. O expectation of Israel, the Savior thereof in time of trouble: why will you be a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man turning in to lodge? Why will you be as a wandering man, as a mighty man that cannot save?" (Jer 14:7-9) Thus this prophecy was fulfilled. So much for the second conclusion.

MORALITER (a moral aside)

Who of you does not say now in his heart, " Oh, if I had been there then, and had known him, I would have received him into my home," etc. Would that you would not be in the same condemnation or cruelty with the Jews. Have you ever today seen a pregnant young woman in this village with Joseph and never took them in? The consecrated host which the priest brings forth, like Joseph, is the virgin pregnant with the Son of God. Who of you receives him by communicating

devoutly? None, I believe. With sincere reflection you should prepare for yourselves the home of your conscience through contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Many excuse themselves like the Bethlehemites saying: I have to welcome a great soldier, namely Sir Chicken, Lord Kid, and Mister Pig. Another says I have to receive a great and noble lady, namely Lady Hen, another Madam Partridge, etc. but they do not receive the Lord Jesus Christ. About which John in the Gospel said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God," (Jn 1).

Mighty Birth

The third conclusion says that this blessed Nativity came about through the celebrated power of God. The Virgin Mary, stayed in that cave, as is said, between the cattle. In the middle of the night the hour for her delivery arrived. The Virgin Mary sensed this, not like other women, who before they feel the onset of childbirth, have pains, miseries and suffering in the body, and their face are distorted. But the Virgin Mary had other signs, special inspirations, consolations and heartfelt sweetness, with exquisite pleasures more than others, and her face was radiant. Joseph seeing this said, "Blessed, what is happening." She replied, "Father, now the hour of my childbirth is at hand."

Joseph got up immediately so that he might send for midwives. But the Virgin stopped him saying, "Father, just as for his conception no creature did anything, so neither for his birth." Joseph then said, "Blessed, neither you or I are expert in this." The Virgin said, "Father, don't worry, because God, the heavenly Father, will provide." And so the *Book of the Infancy of the Savior* [[Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew](#), ch.13] which states that there were women, has been condemned by the decree of Pope Pelagius. (Cf. Jerome: *On the perpetual virginity of Mary*, 8): "No midwife assisted at His birth; no women's officiousness intervened." But suddenly, like the ray of the sun passes through a glass window without breaking it, so Christ, the sun of justice passed through the gate of her virginal womb without any breaking or corruption, "like a bridegroom from his chamber," (Ps 18:6).

The Virgin received him into her own hands, on her knees, with great reverence and veneration, adoring him and saying, "O Lord, you indeed have come from heaven to earth for the salvation of men. O Lord, desired by the holy patriarchs and prophets, I adore you, because as God you are my creator, as human you are my son." And she kissed him first on his feet as God, next on his mouth as a son, then on the hands as the creator of all things, and finally on his face as her son, saying, "O Lord you have given me such a grace." And she adored him a hundred times over. And as someone has reported, she said, "You are the Lord my God, you are my redeemer, you are my beloved Son." Ambrose: "O blessed Virgin, who can open the treasures of your heart to us, as here you adore your child as God, and here you kiss him as son?"

Joseph, weeping for joy, said, "Blessed, permit me to adore your son, the long desired Son of God," etc. How he adored him saying, "O Lord you have granted me such a grace. Kings and prophets wished to see you and they did not see, and to me, a sinner, you have given such a grace that I should see you." Then the infant began to cry because of the cold. Joseph immediately warmed the blankets and the Virgin wrapped him.

Then Joseph wanted to call for a wet nurse, but the Virgin again stopped him. Joseph said, "Blessed, what are you doing, for you do not have milk?" Doctors say that from the same root comes milk and children. So a woman who does not know man, does not have milk. The Virgin replied, "Father, God shall provide. Then the Virgin, on her knees prayed God the Father saying, "God the Father you and I have one son in common, so you who provide for all creatures ought to provide some milk for him." Then suddenly her breasts were filled with milk, sent to her from heaven. So the church says, the Virgin, not knowing man, without pain, gives birth to the savior of the ages. The Virgin herself with full breasts nursed the very King of the Angels. So much for the third conclusion.

Humble and Hidden

The fourth conclusion states that this blessed Nativity happened to a Virgin, humble and hidden. History says that as soon as Christ was born, his body shone like the rising sun, and the night became as midday, and so it was light. Think how many, who were not sleeping, and wondering about such a brightness, sought to see the source of the light and ran toward such a great

spectacle of light. The Virgin sensing the excitement of the people placed the child in the manger. Jews came to see the source of the light. Some of them said prophecy says that when the Messiah will be born, "night shall be light as day," (Ps 138:12). Others asked if this might be he. Some said, be quiet; don't make much of it. If Herod finds out, he will kill us. So that out of fear of Herod they did not dare receive the Messiah King. Of this light the prophet said, "The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death," of the sin of ingratitude, "a light has risen for them, You have multiplied the nation," to see the light, "and have not increased the joy," (Is 9:2-3), because no one brought him or the Virgin a gift. Of that light it is said, it is pointed out when it is said, and it follows, "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us," not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit (v. 6).

Here the question is raised, why did the blessed Virgin place her son in the manger between the beasts? What if the ox with horns, and the donkey with teeth had attacked? St. Luke wishes to excuse the Virgin saying: "She laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn," i.e. in this cave, (Lk 2:7). But one might respond to St. Luke: "Could not the Virgin who gave birth without pain and suffering, place or position him in her arms or on her breast? Why put him between animals?" The response is, for three reasons:

- First, to fulfill the scriptural truth.
- Second, to alleviate bodily needs,
- Third, to teach us a moral lesson.

Scriptural Truth

As for the first, it was prophesied that he would be placed between the animals and humbly be adored. Think what kind of joy the blessed Virgin had when she saw her son adored by an ox and ass. And how sad when she saw him ignored by the Jews. And so was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah saying, "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel has not known me," (Isa 1:2-3).

BODILY NEEDS

As for the second reason you have already seen how cold it could be at that time. Think if the Virgin Mary was cold, because we do not read that they brought lined coats. For this reason she placed her child in the manger so that the animals might warm him with their breath, as it was revealed by Habakkuk the prophet, who said this: "Lord I have heard your voice and I have feared. Lord I have considered your work, in the middle of two animals you shall be known," (Hab 3:2, LXX transl.).

MORAL LESSON

As for the third reason the Virgin does this so that we might be instructed in good morals.

- An ox is a great animal having two big horns, which signify the temporal lords and rulers of the community. The donkey which carries burdens, signifies peasants and subjects. And the Virgin places her son in the middle, pointing out that all can indeed be saved by the saving justice of the Lord, and that not by hatred nor by love nor by fear nor by bribes they give unjustly. Vassals too by keeping faith, obedience and reverence for their lords.
- Second, the ox is a clean animal which in olden times was sacrificed to God. So it symbolizes the priests who offer sacrifice to God. The simple ass signifies the laity. The Virgin places her son between them, implying that all can be saved.
- Third, the ox, which doesn't bear burdens, signifies the rich who do not labor with their hands. The ass signifies the workers, if they be patient.
- Fourth, the ox which has horns signifies devout and holy people. Two horns are true prudence or adherence to the faith, and prompt obedience to commandments. The surly ass, signifies sinners, who if they are repentant can be saved.
- Fifth the ox, which chews the cud and has divided hooves, signifies the learned masters and doctors who ruminate by studying; and the divided hooves means they have knowledge of the old and new testament. The ass signifies the ignorant. Christ is placed in the middle etc. And the text of David confirms it: "Men and beasts you will preserve, O Lord: O how you have multiplied your mercy, O God!!" (Ps 35:7-8). Note men, both

powerful and powerless, both learned, and rich, and draft animals, i.e. crude sinners and the ignorant, shall be saved by the Lord.

Openly Proclaimed

The fifth conclusion says that this blessed Nativity was openly proclaimed by the angels when they appeared to the shepherds telling the good news: "For, this day is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David," St. Luke writes (2:11). A little story is told about the angels at the birth of Christ, that God the Father, from heaven, where he was throwing a big party over the birth of Christ, sent them to earth so that there might be a feast here also. This blessed Nativity was revealed to the watching shepherds, not to the sleeping emperor Octavian, nor, in Jerusalem, to the masters and teachers, nor to the priests, but to shepherds singing their songs.

Why this? Bernard says that shepherds have five qualities in which it is shown to which persons God reveals his secrets and gives his glory.

- First, the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks etc. In which it is shown that shepherds both temporal and ecclesiastical ought to watch over the flock committed to them, lest they be devoured by the wolves of especially notorious sin, because the community is not punished for secret sins. To such shepherds God reveals his glory and grace.
- Second, they play their flutes harmoniously, in which is shown that to devout and peaceful persons who play music through their prayers and supplications, God reveals his grace and glory.
- Third, because they were in the desert, in the harshness of penance, etc. where eating and drinking and sleeping was hard, etc. In which it is shown, that to those who live in the rigors of penitence etc., [God reveals his grace and glory].
- Fourth, because they were poor men, etc. So Christ says, "But woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation," etc. (Lk 6:24).
- Fifth, because they were simple men, they despised no one. To such God gives his grace. Authority of Christ: "I confess to you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these

things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to the little ones," (Mt 11:25).

A191. Sermon on the Feast of the Epiphany

Mt. 2:1-12 *Douay* When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. 2 Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to adore him. 3 And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. 5 But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet:

6 And thou Bethlehem the land of Juda
art not the least
among the princes of Juda:

for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; 8 And sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come to adore him. 9 Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. 10 And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.

"And falling down they adored him," (Mt 2:11)

Today's feast is commonly called Epiphany or Appearance, which is the same. Because the Virgin Birth which had been hidden and secret, today was manifest to the nations. So the churchmen say and call this feast Epiphany, from "epi" which is "above" and "phanos" which is "appearance," because the star appeared over the nations. In order that God should wish to give us sentiments of sweetness of this feast in our souls, let us salute the Virgin Mary, etc.

"And falling down they adored him." The assigned reading reveals to us in a few words the great and perfect reverence which the three kings of the east offered today to our Lord Jesus Christ, "falling down, etc." Not only did they uncover their heads, nor were they content to bend their knees, but they folded their hands and arms, and even their whole body. "And falling down they adored him," (Mt 2:11).

Now to give us a reason for this adoration – for reason begets understanding, and authority confirms belief – I find in sacred scripture that for true, devout and perfect adoration two things are required: a reverent attitude of the interior mind, and a humble gesture of the outward body. As for the first, when man thinks of the infinite and incomprehensible majesty of God and his transcendent power, there comes a reverent trembling interiorly in the soul, and from this there follows exteriorly a humility in the body, joining the hands, genuflecting, or prostrating oneself in prayer to God. Divine adoration consists in these two.

To understand this reason, it must be understood that God created man in his substantial being different than other creatures. Man is a composite, substantially with respect to the soul, and materially with respect to the body. Not so the angels, who are only spiritual substances, nor the animals which are material substances. Because of this man is similar to the angels and animals, because he has both.

So God wishes to be worshipped by both: from the soul thinking of the majesty of God, and from the body through humble gestures. Just like a landowner who leases his field and vineyard for a certain assessment of use. He requires an accounting from both, otherwise he takes back to himself the whole commission. So God is with us. He gives us the vine, the soul which makes the heart drunk with the love of God, and the field of the body that it might bear the fruit of repentance and mercy. So from both he would have a reckoning of devout adoration. Of the angels he asks only spiritual adoration, reverential movements of the mind. Of the animals he asks only a reverential posture of the body, like the ox and ass when they adored Christ in the manger, because they could only bend their knees, but interiorly they had no thoughts. But from us God wishes both, namely the reverent motion of the mind, and bodily actions.

Christ said, "But the hour comes, and is now, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeks such to adore him. God is a spirit; and they who adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth," (Jn 4:23-24). Note, "the hour comes," the time of the law of grace, "when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit" with respect to the soul, "and in truth" with respect to the body, because that is truth, when the body conforms and corresponds to the mind. And he gives a reason,

saying, "God is a Spirit," and so it is necessary to "adore him in spirit and in truth."

Think of the miracle found in John 9, of the man born blind, given sight by Christ, to whom he says: "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered, and said: 'Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?' And Jesus said to him: 'You have both seen him; and it is he who is talking with you.' And he said: 'I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored him,'" (Jn 9:35-38). See the reverential interior movement in the soul and the external bodily gesture, because "falling down he adored him."

The three kings acted thus when they saw the infant Jesus. Instantly there entered into their souls a movement of reverential fear from the presence of divine majesty. And so, "prostrating themselves they adored him."

Of these three kings I shall explain four points

First how they prepared themselves diligently [*se paraverunt diligenter*]

Second how they went forth courageously [*ambulaverunt fortiter*]

Third how they sought him persistently [*quaesierunt firmiter*]

Fourth how they adored him profoundly. [*adoraverunt firmiter*]

And from the fourth point the theme speaks, "Falling down they adored him."

Diligently Prepared Themselves

The first point is to tell how these three holy kings aptly prepared themselves. We need to know what God promised Abraham and the holy patriarchs, that he would send his son, born into this world of a virgin, true God and true man. About this he gave clear prophecies, not only to the Jews in Judea, but also to diverse parts of the world, as a sign that he would come not only to save the Jews, as they falsely believe, but also all those believing in him and obeying him.

He especially sent prophecies to the eastern regions – where there were great prophets and wise men – through the prophet Balaam saying: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel: and shall strike the chiefs

of Moab," (Num 24:17). Note: "I shall see him," Christ, whom he saw not in himself but through his successors; "I shall see him, but not now," because from the text of the bible there were 1,500 years from Balaam to Christ. But these three kings were from their own time [genere], and he gave them signs saying: "A star shall rise out of Jacob," from the promised land, "and a scepter shall spring up from Israel," the Messiah king savior, and he "shall strike the kings of Moab," which is so interpreted. It [Moab] signifies the devil who is the father of sinners, to whom Christ said: "You are of your father the devil," (Jn 8.44), "the kings of Moab," i.e. of the devil or of Lucifer.

And there are seven princes who are the captains of the seven capital sins:

- The first prince, and captain of pride is called Leviathan, in Job 40, (v. 20). He is the king over all the sons of pride.
- The second prince, and captain of avarice is called Mammon, about whom Christ spoke in Matthew 6:24: "You cannot serve God and mammon."
- The third prince, and captain of lust is called Asmodeus, about whom we read in Tobit 3:8: "And a devil named Asmodeus had killed them," namely the lusting [bridegrooms].
- The fourth prince, of envy is called Beelzebub. Luke, 11:15 " He casts out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils," The word was about the envy of the Jews of Christ.
- The fifth prince, of gluttony is called Beelphegor. Ps. 105:28: "They also were initiated to Beelphegor: and ate the sacrifices of the dead."
- The sixth prince, of anger is called Baalberith. Judges 9:4: ".out of the temple of Baalberith: wherewith he hired to himself men."
- The seventh prince, of sloth is called Astaroth. I Kings 7:3: "Put away the strange gods from among you, Baalim and Astaroth: and prepare your hearts unto the Lord."

Lord Jesus Christ struck down these seven princes with the staff of his preaching. David said: "The Lord will send forth the scepter of your power out of Sion," (Ps. 109:2).

About this prophecy of Balaam, Chrysostom says, that his disciples and those who were of his kind, after his death wished to observe that star. And

they ordained that certain ones of them would stand on the tall Mount Victory, to gaze at the heavens. There they would wash themselves, believing that by this their sins were forgiven, and they would pray saying, "O God of heaven, God of Israel, send the star," and fulfill the prophecy," (Cf. [James of Voragine, Golden Legend](#)). And so they divided up times [to watch] for themselves. And on the night of the nativity, by divine providence, these three Kings of the East, great philosophers and astrologers, on Mount Victory saw the predicted star. And at the moment when Christ was born of the Virgin's womb, the star appeared to them extremely bright, and low in the sky, nor did daylight dim its appearance.

Chrysostom repeats the opinion that there was the image of a child in that star, with a cross on his forehead. Some say that the Magi wanted to adore the star. But Augustine says that the angel of the Lord told them that they should not adore the star, but that they should make their way to adore the newly born Creator.

Then the kings took counsel how they should travel, how they should prepare, and what they should bring to offer to him, saying, "He is a great king and powerful. We should offer him gold. And he is God and creator, because the stars serve him, so we shall offer him incense. And in this sign of the cross it is revealed that he is to die on a cross, and so we shall offer him bitter myrrh." [*Ecclesiast.*] The Magi seeing the star, consulted each other. "This is the sign of a great king. Let us go and inquire of him and offer him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh."

I believe, therefore, although it is not written, that the holy kings symbolized in their gifts what they believed about Christ. I believe that also [it was expressed] in their clothing, because the king who brought the gold, was clothed in a gold shirt, and the one who brought the incense, in a purple tunic, and the one with the myrrh, in a red scarf. See how they made themselves fit both in gifts as well as clothing.

Morally.

I find in sacred scripture that God promised men two stars, one in the old law, namely that which appeared to the eastern kings, which prefigured the redemption of mankind. The second, and better, was promised in the new testament saying: "And he that shall overcome,

and keep my works unto the end, . I will give him the morning star," (Rev 2:26,28). This signifies heavenly salvation. Note, he who shall conquer the devil through humility, the flesh through chastity, and the world through poverty, "and keep my works unto the end.I will give him the morning star," i.e. the good angel guiding the soul to Christ. See how the angels in sacred scripture are called stars. The reason is because just as the heavenly firmament is decorated and bedecked with stars, so the empyreal heaven is decorated and bedecked with angels, and so they are referred to as stars. Authority: "And the stars have given light in their watches, and rejoiced: They were called, and they said: Here we are: and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to him that made them," (Bar 3:34-36). Note "the stars," i.e. angels, "stars have given light in their watches" i.e. to men who were keeping watch. David: "For he has given his angels charge over you; to keep you, commanded to his angels to keep you," (Ps. 90:11). They bring to the understanding what ought to be believed, to the memory what is to be feared and remembered, and to the will what is to be hoped for, and to deeds, what is to be done. And when a man receives the light of their instruction, he rejoices.

And in the end, when a man is in the arms of death, God sends the morning star, i.e. an angel who leads the soul to Christ, just as that star led the kings to Christ. And so it happens that if this [Epiphany] star is corruptible, because it is immediately was changed back into the underlying material, once it had been observed and desired, how much more should we await that incorruptible star, by washing ourselves from all uncleanness and sins? First by washing our heart from anger, rancor and ill will; our mouths from blasphemies, lies and detractions; our hands from theft and extortion and the like; and the whole body from the corruptions of lust and carnal sins.

Note from the aforesaid evidence that this star which appeared brighter in the birth of Christ was not one of the heavenly stars, for five reasons, which St. Thomas gives [III Pars, q.36, a.7](#). St. Thomas says, repeating the opinions of others, that the essence of this star most probably was of a new creation, not in the heaven, but in the atmosphere, which moved according to divine will. Augustine believed namely that it was not of the heavenly stars, because he says in his book [Contra Faustum Bk, 2](#), "Besides, this star was

not one of those which from the beginning of the world continue in the course ordained by the Creator. Along with the new birth from the Virgin appeared a new star." Chrysostom believes this too.

Proceeded with Courage

The second point is to declare how the three holy kings proceeded with courage, because from the head of the world, namely from the East, they came for thirteen days to Judea which is in the middle of the world. In fact, from what I have found in the text and in the Glosses of the doctors, having prepared themselves they immediately began their journey.

The star first rose ahead of them, showing them the way which they should take. So that when they had to climb a hill, first the star rose, and when they had to descend, it descended. When they had to cross a river, the star showed them the place to ford it. And when they were in a village in which they had to rest, the star would remain motionless over the hotel. Then when they were leaving the star would lead again and they would follow. Doesn't this seem to you to be a great miracle? In this way they came to their destination, the promised land.

And on the next day when they were to enter the land of Judah, the star disappeared from their sight. Imagine the sadness they had, saying, "O woe! What is this? Has the star disappeared because of some sin of one of us? What should we do?" St. Thomas Aquinas says that they took counsel on what they should do. One said that they should return, because to seek a new king in a foreign land would be very dangerous. Others said that they should at least go into the city of Jerusalem; "Such a king ought to be born in a noble city, or at least they would know where he had been born, because there were great rabbis and professors there, so let us do what we can." And they came to the city of Jerusalem.

And then was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, saying: "Arise be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you. And the Gentiles shall walk in your light, and kings in the brightness of your rising," (Is 60:1-2). The gentles speak to the Jews as if to a person

sleeping saying: "Arise" city of Jerusalem, "be enlightened," with the brightness of the light of faith, "for your light is come," the Christ. Note: "And the Gentiles shall walk in your light," not just the Jews.

Morally:

The kings, having lost their star, came to Jerusalem, so that they can be instructed there. So should we do when we lose the star of the grace of God. You know that the grace of God is called a star, signified by the star of the kings. Why? Because just as that star directed and led the kings to Christ in Judea, so the grace of God directs and leads and shows the way to paradise to those who have it. At a fork in the road it points out the way, to the right. O how many forks in the road there are in this world for those who chose not to go to Christ.

- First is of pride and vanity to the left; of sweetness and humility to the right. The star of the grace of God points to the right, the way of humility, which is the correct way, straight and good and without danger.
- Second is [the fork] of avarice and desire; and of mercy and liberality.
- Third is [the fork] of lust and carnal desires; and purity and innocence.
- Fourth is [the fork] of envy and malice on the left; and of benevolence and goodness on the right, which the star of grace makes clear.
- Fifth is of gluttony and voraciousness; and abstinence and moderation.
- Sixth is [the fork] of anger and brutality; and of peace and unity.
- Seventh is [the fork] of torpor and laziness; of diligence and industriousness.

In these the star of the grace of God directs us, also the star of the grace of God shows the way, ascending through the contemplative way and descending through the active way for works of mercy and piety. It also shows the crossing on the river of worldly delights,

where many are drowned, submerged by food and drink and clothing, and tastes, etc.

So Blessed John says: "Let the anointing, which you have received from him, abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you; but as his anointing teaches you of all things," (1John 2:27) Note: "the anointing," Gloss, i.e. divine grace. But what must you do when the state of divine grace is lost, which is not lost but through mortal sin? I say you ought to do what those holy kings did, namely go to Jerusalem, i.e. to the church, to confess our sins, and so rediscover the star of the grace of God. Thus Christ said to Paul, who lost the star, "Go into the city, and there it shall be told you what you must do," (Acts 9:7). Note, "the city" i.e. Damascus, which is translated "bloody" and signifies the church in which the blood of Christ is consecrated and consumed.

Sought Him Discreetly

The third point is how these three holy kings sought Christ discreetly, the place of the birth of Christ, after they had been in the city of Jerusalem. When the kings were near the city, think how there was a disturbance in the city, especially because Herod, who was a new king, and a foreigner to the people of Judah, feared for himself, and kept himself apart from them. Think how Herod immediately sent for the kings to find out who they were, and whom they sought, and why they had come. The kings replied that they had come to seek the newly born king of the Jews. You can imagine that someone warned them "Do not tell, otherwise Herod would follow you." They did not deny the truth. "We have seen his star in the east, and have come to adore him," (Mt 2:2). Chrysostom: "Consider the devotion of the kings. They have not yet seen Christ, and they are prepared to die for him." Herod had asked why they had come. Think what fear and pain entered into his ear, especially because he was already afraid of this. And he had heard of the wonders which would happen at the birth of the Christ, on account of which he considered himself ruined and destroyed. About this the Evangelist Matthew writes: "[Herod] hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him," (Mt 2:3). But he hid his malice, feigning joy at the birth of Christ. And because the kings of the east had come in simplicity,

and unarmed, he permitted them to enter the city and received them honorably.

Next, he said to them, "My lords, why have you come?" They replied, "We seek the whereabouts of the one who has been born king of the Jews." See what peril they placed themselves in. Herod, dissimulating, said, "I have heard something of this, but I don't know whether it is certain that he has been born." The kings replied: "It is certain, because we have seen his star in the east." Then Herod said: "And now, my lords, what do you wish?" They responded, "We have come with gifts to adore him." Then Herod, in a loud voice, eagerly asked of them the time when the star appeared to them. In private he asked them, "Tell me exactly the day and time of his birth. And I, with my masters, doctors and rabbis shall tell you of the place where he has been born, that we all might come to adore him." O deceiver! With his other hand he already was readying the sword, that he might cut him down if he could. And gathering all the chief priests and the scribes he consulted them as to where the Christ would be born. They all agreed and responded it was in the city of Bethlehem according to the prophet Michea: "And you, Bethlehem Ephrata, are a little one among the thousands of Judah: out of you shall he come forth to me he who is to be the ruler in Israel," (Mic 5:2). Note "who is to be the ruler," ruler in virtues, by the example of his behavior and preaching. Then Herod informed the kings of the place, and sending them to Bethlehem said: "Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I too may come to adore him," (Matt. 2:8). O betrayer! Enemy of the Church! Wicked Herod, why do you fear the Christ to come? He who rules [gives] the celestial kingdom does not seize a mortal kingdom. Thus the holy kings sought him discreetly and with great diligence.

Morally:

The holy kings, before they came to Herod, were guided by a star, but after they had gone to King Herod, they turned again to holy scriptures to guide themselves, etc. Herod signifies the Antichrist, because just as Herod wishing to kill the Christ, killed the innocents, so the Antichrist wishing to destroy the faith of Christ, shall kill Christians contradicting him. And that star signifies human science, logic, philosophy, laws, canons, by which we are now directed and ruled. But in the time of the Antichrist it shall be necessary to turn

again to sacred scriptures, because the Antichrist shall not believe in logic, nor philosophy nor poetry nor laws, etc. Only with sacred scripture shall we make a stand against him. Therefore how guilty are we now, because no one cares about the Bible. Laypeople give themselves to profitable sciences. And among religious, who ought to study sacred scripture, one devotes himself to Virgil, another to Ovid, another to Terence, and so for the others. This is one sign, among others, of the nearness of the Antichrist. Because the Antichrist, to prove his error that he is the Messiah and the son of God etc., shall bring forth only the text of the Bible and the prophets. How do you defend yourself, to refute him, if you are ignorant of the Bible? About this there is a prophecy of Solomon saying, "When prophecy shall fail, the people shall be scattered," (Prov 29:18). This prophecy speaks of the old testament. Christ speaks to all, saying, "Search the scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me," (Jn 5:39).

Adored him profoundly

The fourth point is how they adored him profoundly. After they had received the instruction or permission to depart from Herod, and when they had come to Jerusalem's gate, the star reappeared to them. O if one could express the joy which they had! And Matthew relates this. "And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," (Mt 2:10) We now know the reason why the star hid from them, so that by a double sign, the star and the scriptures, they might be certified of the truth and would have a double testimony. And the star went before them as before.

When they were near Bethlehem, the judges and officials of Bethlehem, who had heard of their arrival, came to meet them saying, "What do you wish? And why do you come here?" They replied, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East and we come to adore him." They said, "We know no other king but Herod." O liars! That star illumined those three kings, and the sun, that is, Christ, was not able to illuminate them. Their sinfulness was blinding them, placing an obstacle on the night of the nativity, when [light] was shining. And the star

was seen by all, as Maximus says in his sermon for today. "Rightly one star shone, the rays of which a faithless people were not able to hide, nor hide its truth; where the very heaven of the universe shone forth with a sidereal light to the eyes of everyone." Think when the Jews looked at the star, how it brought devotion to the good, and instilled terror on the wicked. How they wondered because it did not shine from very high up. The kings followed it and entered the city and finally came to the place where the child was.

The holy teachers tell us that the Virgin Mary was still in that cave with the child where she had given birth. And the Gloss says that Joseph, by divine providence, was not there at that time, lest he himself be thought to be the father of the child. When the Virgin Mary sensed that the army which she feared was coming, imagine how she hid the child in the manger and began sewing and knitting, praying, and her whole heart trembled.

The star stood above the place where the child was. And the kings were amazed when they did not see a palace there, or a noble house, and they looked at each other saying, "How is it that the star is not moving?" Maximus says that the star emitted new and brighter rays, which told the kings "Here is the king whom you seek." The kings dismounted from their horses and beasts, and one of them coming to the entrance of the cave lifted up the door-covering a little, and asked, "Who is here?" He saw the Virgin knitting and sewing. The other two kings approached, and when they saw the Virgin Mary, they immediately were seized with great devotion. She said to them, "My lords, what do you seek?" They asked: "Do you know where the one is who has been born King of the Jews, because we wish to adore him." The Virgin Mary did not say that she did not know, but she said, "Lords, the great ones, the rabbis and rectors of the city ought to know." She spoke the truth, and immediately the kings hearts were fully inflamed. And again going out they looked for the star. It was standing immediately overhead, and not moving. It was even more beautiful. They returned to the Virgin and they said to her, "Have you a son?" She responded, "Yes, my lords." "How long is it since you gave birth?" She replied, "Lords, today is the thirteenth day." The kings said "Dear young woman, please show him to us." Then the Virgin, knowing that they had come with good intentions, picked up the child from the manger, and held him out to them. They said: "What is his name?" The Virgin Mary replied,

"Jesus." In hearing the name they prostrated themselves and adored him saying, "O Savior, it is good that you have come. O Lord such is your humility that you have wished to come in a stable of this miserable world. You who are infinite in divinity, are now confined in humanity. You who are Creator, have become a creature. You who are immortally and invulnerably safe, have become vulnerable and mortal. O Lord this is such a grace!" And weeping they kissed his feet. Then adoring the mother, they said, "O Chamber of Paradise, Temple of God, Chalice of the Holy Spirit. O Blessed, you have brought to us a Savior."

The evangelist says that opening their treasures they gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold for a great king, frankincense for the true God, and bitter myrrh for one who would suffer. And so the prophecy of David was fulfilled of this day saying, "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts: And all kings of the earth shall adore him: all nations shall serve him," (Ps 71:10-11). Note, they "shall serve him," namely for the good reward and remuneration which he gives to his servants. Otherwise one serves the world, which brings death to his servants and delivers his soul to the devil, for eternal punishment. But Christ gives grace to his servants in this world, and glory in the next. Therefore he is to be served, and so Christ said, "The Lord your God shall you adore, and him only shall you serve," (Mt 4:10).

Then the holy kings prayed to God, that He might show them if they should return to Herod. But the Evangelist says, that "having received an answer in sleep," from an angel, "that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country," (Mt 2:11).

Think a moment here, when Joseph came and saw such gold, incense and myrrh, how he rejoiced. But on the other hand he was saddened, that he was not judged worthy to be present for such a special event. St. Bernard says that they gave all of their gold out of love of God.

Morally.

- From the example of the kings we ought to offer the gold of our conversion. Such a person can say with David, "I have loved your commandments above gold and topaz," which is a precious stone, "therefore was I directed to all your

commandments: I have hated all wicked ways," (Ps 118:127-128).

- Second, the frankincense of devout prayer, saying, "Let my prayer be directed as incense [in your sight]," (Ps 140:2).
- Third we should offer the myrrh of voluntary penance. And such a one can say, "You shall . make me to live. Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter: but you best delivered my soul that it should not perish," (Is 38:16-17).

A 248. Sermon on the Baptism of Jesus

Mt 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John stayed him, saying: I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened to him: and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him. 17 And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

"I ought to be baptized by you," (Mt 3:14), in today's gospel. Holy Mother Church today celebrates this feast of the Baptism of Christ, about which today's gospel speaks, how Christ was baptized by St. John. And our sermon shall be about this. We have a number of good speculative teachings to enlighten the intellect, and moral instructions for the correction of life. But first let the Virgin Mary be hailed, etc.

In the present sermon I have thought to follow the way of jurists, who in their schools, when they want to read or dispute, first set forth the case of the law [casum legis]. Then ask how the law applies [quid iuris]. So first I shall recite the case of divine law, the story of the holy gospel. Then I shall posit some speculative and moral questions.

The gospel story tells how Christ came from the town of Nazareth to John at the Jordan that he might be baptized by him. The Holy Spirit revealed to John that this man was the savior of the world, true God and true man. On account of which John, in wonder, spoke reverently the theme text: "I ought to be baptized by you, and you come to me?" (Mt 3:14). Christ said to him, "Suffer it to be so now. For so it becomes us to fulfill all justice," (v. 15). Christ did not speak pompously [pompatice] as from the Lord, but he spoke personally, as himself to John saying, "So, through humility it is fitting that we fulfill all justice." Christ, "Humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death," (Phil 2:8). Behold here the total fulfillment [impletio] of justice in human redemption. Gregory the Great, [[Easter Prayer](#)]: "It would benefit us nothing, unless we had been redeemed." Behold, John also was humbled to fulfill the command of Christ that he be baptized, and trembling all over, he baptized Christ. The Church, the Baptist, trembled, and dared not touch the

holy crown of the head of God. With a shudder he cried out, "Sanctify me, Savior!" John used this form in baptizing Christ.

Morally, we are here instructed by this, that John, so holy himself, about whom Christ said, "among them that are born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist," (Mt 11:11), dared not touch Christ. Note here how great ought to be the purity and good life of priests who have to touch Christ in the sacrament of the altar. And so holy scripture says, "The priests that come to the Lord, let them be sanctified, lest he strike them," (Ex 19:22). Also the laity are not to approach the altars, cf. Numbers 1 & 3. One who is not of the family of Aaron, i.e. not a priest, who comes forward, is to be killed. If what is said in the old law is true, holier and more worthy is the altar of the new law than the old. How much more dignified is Christ who is sacrificed on the altar of the new testament, than a lamb which is sacrificed on the altar of the old testament. So the altar of the new testament is of a greater dignity. I argue now from the lesser to the greater. If then there was a punishment of death for one who approached the altar by leaning on it . if it is said, "Never can a man kiss the altar," etc., I reply "always, reverently," but it would be better to kiss the ground next to the altar where the feet of the priest stand. "Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation," (1Pet 5:6). See how the hand of the divine person or power humbles and brings low the proud and exalts the humble.

Now, having stated the case of the gospel law, some questions have to be raised [quid iuris] – what law applies. And I raise five questions for discussion.

Why did Christ come to be baptized?

First about this, where the gospel says. "Jesus comes from Galilee to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him," (Mt 3:13), it is asked: Why did Christ wish to be baptized? The reason for this question is because baptism is given primarily against original sin, and also against actual sins if there are any. But Christ did not have any sin, neither original nor actual. "Who did no sin," (1Pet 2:22). Therefore it seems that he ought not to be baptized.

I reply that Christ wished to be baptized, not that **he** might receive something from baptism – we receive from baptism various spiritual gifts: the remission of sins, sanctification, virtues and graces, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the infused moral virtues. Christ received none of these from baptism. He wished rather to receive baptism so that he might give to baptism regenerative power, as Bede says in his homily for today. "The Son of God comes to be baptized by a man in the water of the Jordan, he who was pure of all uncleanness, that washing the filth of all our sins, he might sanctify the flowing of the waters."

Recall the appropriate legend about the unicorn which by the touch of his horn purifies water. Then the awaiting animals can drink. This properly signifies the baptism of Christ. And so in sacred scripture Christ is called a unicorn: "But my horn shall be exalted like that of the unicorn: and my old age in plentiful mercy," (Ps 91:11), and the prophet speaks in the person of the church saying, "shall be exalted." Christ is like a



unicorn, because divinity and humanity in Christ make up only one horn, i.e. one person. "And my old age." Note, just as the ages of a man are seven, so also are there seven ages of human nature: **infancy** was from Adam to Noah; **childhood** from Noah to Abraham; **adolescence** from Abraham to Moses; **youth** from Moses to David; **adulthood** [virilitas] from David to the Babylonian captivity; **old age** from the Babylonian captivity to Christ; **decrepitude** from Christ to the end of the world. See why he says, "My old age in plentiful mercy," i.e. abundant, because now the mercy of God abounds, for all sins with respect to guilt are remitted in baptism and also with respect to punishment. Another text authority, Luke 1:69 says: "And he has raised up a horn of salvation to us." "The horn of our salvation" is the body of Christ. Today, this most pure unicorn touches the waters, so that by his touch he might confer a regenerative force for all others. Tell how Christ terminated and finished the purification of the old law, which took place through circumcision, and begins the purification of the new law, which happens through baptism. Christ is called the "Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end," (Rev 21:), the beginning of the new law and the end of the old. For this reason we Christians receive only baptism and not circumcision,

because in Christ the sacraments of the [old] law have their end and term. God said to Abraham, "Walk before me, and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you," (Gn 17:1-2). Between these two terms or forces, Abraham and Christ, the covenant of circumcision should endure for two thousand years. The Apostle says: "Behold, I Paul tell you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," (Gal 5:2). Whoever, therefore, wishes to be circumcised, following the example of Christ, sins gravely.

Why ought John be baptized?

A second question is about this, that the theme text has John saying to Christ, "I ought to be baptized by you," (Mt 3:14). We might ask: Why did St. John say this since he was sanctified in the womb of his mother? Luke 1:15: The angel said to Zachary, John's father, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Why then did John say to Christ, "I ought to be baptized by you?"

I reply, according to the determinations of the holy doctors, that baptism places a character in the soul, a certain beautiful sign, like a royal crown, which sign no one in paradise can have unless he had been baptized. So neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor David nor anyone of the old testament have this sign, nor also those [fifty philosophers](#) [rhetores] of St. Catherine [of Alexandria] who were killed without the baptism of water, although they were saved by the baptism of blood. Of this sign the Apostle says, "Believing, you were signed with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance," (Eph 1:13-14). "The pledge" is the down payment of the inheritance, like that which they give to merchants. Therefore, although St. John had been sanctified in the womb of his mother, nevertheless he did not have the character. Because of this, so that he might have it, he said to Christ, "I ought to be baptized by you," to receive this sign. And because he said "I ought," we have for certain that Christ baptized St. John, and also the apostles and disciples. From apostolic authority: "Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea: and there he abode with them, and baptized," (Jn 3:22). But it is said John 4, as if to the contrary, "Though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples," (v. 2). Augustine and the Gloss agree on this point, when John says, "and he was baptizing." The Gloss says [he was

baptizing] the disciples and apostles, though Christ did not baptize others. The disciples baptized others. For the same reason it is believed that Christ baptized the Virgin Mary, that she might have that sign of the crown. You know the difference between a crown and a tiara [crinale]. The sign of the character is like a crown, and on its front it has a band [monile] with the name "Jesus." "Lo a lamb stood upon mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads," (Rev 14:1).

Morally. Because we Christians bear the name of Jesus written on our foreheads, beware lest we bring the name of the devil in our mouth, saying, "In the devil's name why did you do such and such." Take note of the thief crying out "Jesus!" and the devil crying out "Thieves! Thieves!" This is against those who don't know how to say anything without invoking the name of the devil. David, Psalm 39: "Blessed is the man whose trust is in the name of the Lord," (v. 5), and does not speak the name of the devil.

Why did the dove descend?

The third question is about this. The Holy Spirit "descended like a dove," (Mt 3:16) on him. Why? Because it is certain that Christ as man, from the instant of his conception, received the Holy Spirit, who never left him: Isa 61:1 and Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me," by grace at my conception.

Response: The Spirit descended like a dove on him, not as if he had not had it before or he was not in him, nor that he might confer at that moment a new grace, as he would coming on the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and in Luke 1:35, he came upon the Virgin Mary, but to show us that the Holy Spirit descends on one who is baptized, and there he makes his dwelling as if in his own temple. When someone before baptism, by habit at least, or by reality, or vow becomes the dwelling place of demons, in being baptized he is exorcized to expel the demons.

Morally, from the fact that once the Holy Spirit takes up his dwelling place in a creature, he never recedes from the creature unless he shows irreverence to him through mortal sin. He does not leave for venial sin. But when a man sins mortally, then he drives the Holy Spirit from himself and welcomes the devil. O what an injury! To expel the king and to welcome a lecherous pimp [ribaldum lenonem]. So scripture says, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For, that of the true proverb has happened to them: 'The dog is returned to his vomit;' and, 'The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire,'" (2Pet 2:21-22). So children should be taught and nourished lest they hand over a mess to the Holy Spirit who dwells in them. See what parents ought to teach their children.

Why did the voice speak?

The fourth question is about this, "A voice came from heaven: You are my beloved Son; in you I am well pleased," (Lk 2:22). It is asked why this voice has happened, because it is certain that Christ did not begin then to be the Son of God, because Christ eternally is the Son of God. Authority: "The Lord said to me: You are my son, today have I begotten you," (Ps 2:7). Note when he says here "today," many days result from the interposition of night. If the sun hovered over us always, there would be only one day. In heaven, there never is night, because God always, invariably, illuminates. "The city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God has enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof," (Rev. 21:23). When it is said, "Today have I begotten you," i.e. in eternity. Therefore why does that voice speak?

Response: Because that voice does not come for Christ, but for us, to show that in baptism we are made children of God. Just as a man with his wife begets legitimate sons and daughters, so Christ [begets children] with the Church his spouse. "The seed is the word of God.," (Lk 8:11). Therefore we Christians are all children of God, of the king Christ and the queen, the Church. It is otherwise before baptism. But after baptism parents ought to consider themselves as nurses of the child of Christ the King. "[A woman] shall be saved through childbearing;" that is, by

nourishing, "if she continue in faith, and love, and sanctification," (1 Tim 2:15). "Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God," (1Jn 3:1).

Morally, we are instructed that just as the sons of the king do not go to the brothel, nor to taverns, nor to the place where they play dice etc., so neither should Christians, otherwise they would become unworthy and not gain the inheritance of paradise etc.

Why did the heavens open?

The fifth question is about this, "And the heavens were opened," (Mt 3:16). It is asked why this, because the heavens were always opened to Christ. "All things are naked and open to his eyes," (Heb 4:13).

I reply that the heavens were opened not for his sake, but to show that the heavens are opened to those who are newly baptized. It was otherwise before the coming of Christ, because for more than five thousand years the heavens had been closed to mankind. The gates of paradise had been closed for all because of Eve, and through the Virgin Mary they had been opened again, etc. And so children who died after baptism before they had sinned mortally, immediately flew straightway to paradise, and they found heaven open. About whom Christ said to the gatekeepers of paradise, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such," (Mt 19:14). Some women err when they say that they bypass purgatory because of [enduring] a mother's pains. "When [he] was in the midst of the captives by the river Chobar, the heavens were opened," (Ez 1:1). "Chobar " means baptism.

Morally, we are instructed lest we grieve for such children when they die. You should rejoice as if the king had taken your son into his court. Rather you should weep for your lecherous adult children [adulti ribaldi]. The Apostle [Paul] writes, "And we will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep," innocently at rest, "that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope," of resurrection, (1Thes 4:13).

A260. The First Sunday after the Octave of Epiphany - Sermon 3

On the Six Stone Water Jugs at Cana (Jn 2:6)

Jn 2:1 (Douay trans.) And the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. 4 And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. 6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. 7 Jesus saith to them: Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

"Now there were set there six water pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews," (Jn 2:6). This theme gives me a motive and reason for declaring what those things are which God ordained to purify our souls so that they might enter into paradise. But first let us salute the Virgin Mary, etc.

"Now there were set there six water pots of stone etc.," i.e. for purification. According to the spiritual sense [of scriptures] which I wish to employ, it must be known that in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ there was constituted a marriage between the Son of God and our humanity, because just as a man and woman "are not two, but one flesh," (Mt 19:6), so Christ, God and man, is not two persons but one. There are not two supposites, but only one.

The wedding took place in the chapel of the Virgin's womb. So David, speaking of the divinity of Christ said, "He [is] like a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber," (Ps 18:6). But the nuptials took place not in this world, because it is not an appropriate or sufficient place for such nuptials, but it happened in the empyreal heaven. Authority. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son," (Mt 22:2). For just as at the wedding of the chief steward no one entered unless they first had washed, and for this purpose there were six stone water jugs there, as the Theologian [John the evangelist] literally says, so neither in the wedding of paradise can someone enter unless he first is cleaned and purified in this world, because, "There shall not enter into it anyone defiled, or who does

abominable things or tells lies," (Rev 21:27). For this reason, Christ the bridegroom placed in this world six stone water jugs, six penitential works, for cleaning and purifying our souls.

- The first is heartfelt contrition.
- The second is sacramental confession.
- The third is penitential affliction.
- The fourth is spiritual prayers.
- The fifth is merciful giving.
- The sixth is forgiveness of injuries.

Heartfelt Contrition

The first water jug is the first work of penance, which is **heartfelt contrition**, when someone thinks about his sins and vices and evil deeds which he has committed and is contrite, saying "O miserable me, what shall become of me, because I have committed so many sins." Against every state of life. First, the religious, because he did not keep the rules, or constitutions, nor ordinations of his order, but lived as he wished. When he recovers his senses, he is contrite saying, "O miserable me, what shall become of me," etc. In this water jug the soul is washed and purified, especially when the water there consists of tears. About this, read the lamentation of King Hezekiah, "Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter," (Is 38:17). It says how the sinner is always at war with God, but contrition of the sinners makes peace between God and the sinner, and so he says, "in peace is my bitterness most bitter." Peace is caused by bitterness, i.e. contrition. Or because from peace, namely, worldly bitterness is caused. This peace is bitter, more bitter, most bitter from the bitterness, i.e. contrition. Bitter because he lost the grace of God. More bitter, because he lost the inheritance of paradise. Most bitter because it is the judgment of infernal damnation.

Sacramental Confession

The second water jug is **sacramental confession**. Note that the confessor ought to sit like a judge, and the penitent ought, at his feet, to confess all his sins by accusing himself. etc. And at the end of confession, when the confessor absolves, the soul is purified of all mortal sins. About this image 4 Kgs 5 where we read that a certain nobleman who was a leper came to

Elisha to be purified by him from the disease of leprosy. To whom the prophet said, "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean," (4Kg 5:10). And so it happened. This was a prefiguring of confession, so that the river Jordan is the same as the river of judgment. Behold here is confession, in which the confessor is the judge, and so he should sit. The sinner is the accused who ought to be washed there seven times, i.e. to confess the seven mortal sins to which all other sins are reduced. First to confess of the sin of pride, not only in general because it is not sufficient, but in species, the same for the other sins, and so the soul is purified. O how great a grace is this, that the sinner is absolved by confession. It is just the opposite in human trials, in which the sinner, having confessed his crime, is sentenced and condemned. etc. So it is the greatest sin for those who do not wish to confess, but stay away for three or four years, etc. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins," by virtue of confession, "and to cleanse us from all iniquity," (1Jn 1:9). For this reason the Church requires that everyone go to confession at least once a year, during Lent, and receive communion at Easter, otherwise they should be refused a church burial.

Voluntary Penance

The third water jug is voluntary **penitential actions**. The reason is because our flesh is the occasion of all the sins we commit. The soul, in its proper condition wishes to contemplate always, like the angels, but the flesh draws it down, now to pride, next to avarice, next to lust and so for the others. "For the flesh lusts against the spirit," (Gal 5:17). So it is that the flesh is chastised and beaten back with penances and fasts etc., because it is better to correct a son or daughter than, that they be sent to the stocks. So the body is the son, and the flesh is the daughter, and it is better that they be corrected by you than by the wards of hell, i.e., by the demons. Authority: "But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," by God, (1Cor 11:31). The choice is ours, for we gladly diet for health's sake, but for the health of the soul we are unwilling to do anything. Knights in armor, for no good reason, bear great burdens, they hunger, they thirst, they wield iron weapons, etc., but for their soul, nothing. God renders justice and punishment in hell. Authority: "No, I say to you: but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the

tower fell in Siloe, and slew them," (Lk 13:3-4). Note, the eighteenth sin, namely, final impenitence, damns a man.

Spiritual Prayer

The fourth water jug is **spiritual prayer**. Some pray only physical prayers, because they say only words, but their heart is thinking about something else, cooking dinner, or the market, or the tavern. Prayer is spiritual when someone ponders in their heart what they say with their mouth. Augustine in the Rule says: "When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, entertain your heart with what your lips are reciting," ([Rule of St. Augustine 2:3](#)). To do this your two hands should be joined, which signifies the conjunction of voice and heart, and then it is spiritual prayer. For example, when you say the Our Father or the Hail Mary, your heart ought then to think with whom you speak. He who speaks with the Pope or with the King, speaks with great reverence, not fidgeting or adjusting their clothing. So a man in prayer speaks to the high priest and king Christ, and so with great reverence, otherwise etc. The Apostle Paul writes. "If I pray in a tongue," i.e. in such a way, "my spirit prays, but my understanding is without fruit. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the understanding; I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the understanding," (1Cor 14:14-15). Such a spiritual prayer purifies the soul according to what Christ declared in Luke 18:13, about that publican who went up to the temple to pray saying, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." He did not know any other prayer. About whom Christ himself said, "Amen I say to you, this man went down into his house justified," (Lk 18:14). And so it is necessary "to pray always," (Lk 18:1), morning and evening, and not to give up.

Merciful Giving

The fifth jug is **merciful almsgiving**, because God is generous and indeed most generous, so he himself says, "But yet that which remains, give alms; and behold, all things are clean unto you," (Lk 11:41). Note "yet that which remains," namely having made restitution, "give alms" from your own just goods, and "all things," namely, sins, "are clean unto you." If it is said what can I do, because I have stolen much and I now have nothing. The response is according to the law, "Whoever cannot pay should give back goods and is free." Because the Rule of Law, 14, q. 6, chap 1: "If something belonging to

another, on account of which is a sin, is able to be returned and is not returned, penance is not accomplished but feigned. If however it is truly done, the sin is not remitted until thing taken is restored if it is able to be restored. Often what is taken has been lost, he doesn't have it to return. To this we certainly cannot say: Return what you have taken." This Augustine: "So you would yield and serve God in good station and pray for those for whom you are bound, and so no one can be excused from restitution, either corporal or spiritual." "Give alms out of your substance," (Tob 4:7), and not from another's. However much you can, so be merciful. If much has come to you, give abundantly, if a little has come to you, even then try to give your little bit generously.

Forgiveness of Injuries

The sixth jug is **forgiveness of injuries**. If you want God to forgive the injuries, which you have committed against God, forgive your enemies their injuries which they have committed against you. To the extent that you forgive your enemies, to that extent God forgives you, because God cannot be bested by creatures in goodness, which would be the case if you would forgive and he would not forgive you. Tell how in the particular or universal judgment God would show to the soul its sins saying, "Let's see what I have done for you, and what you have done for me." Blessed are you if you then are able to say, truthfully, "And if I have not have done as much for you as you have done for me, nevertheless out of your love forgive such an injury, etc." God is satisfied, and so he himself says, "For if you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences," (Mt 6: 14-15).

So much for the theme of the six water jugs set out for purification. Thanks be to God.

C111. On the Conversion of St. Paul

Acts 9 (Douay transl.): 3 And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. 4 And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And he: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. 6 And he trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? 7 And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him, stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus. 9 And he was there three days, without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink. 15 And the Lord said to him: Go thy way; for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

"This man is to me a vessel of election," (Acts 9:15). These words are found in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 9. Today, in church, is the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. No saint other than St. Paul the Apostle has a feast of their conversion, not just for its own sake, because it was miraculous, but also for our sake, because he was a profitable [*proficua*] sinner, for in his conversion is shown how a sinner ought to be converted to Christ. But first we "Hail" the Virgin Mary.

By way of a short introduction to the material it must be known that the principal foundation and principle of the salvation of a man is the eternal election of God. Before God created the heavens and earth, or anything, already in the secret consistory of the Trinity the choice of those to be saved had been made, in such a way: There are so many lords, emperors, kings, dukes, and counts, etc. in the world. From these, the Father says, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, so many will be saved out of the love of justice, because they succeeded in the correction of their subjects. Also there were so many prelates, popes, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops and bishops, etc. in the world. From these so many shall be saved by virtue of their charity and diligence toward their flocks. Also there are so many religious, from which so many shall be saved by virtue of obedience, serving their order. Also so many clergy, by virtue of their devotion. Also so many rich people, by virtue of their mercy. So many poor people, by virtue of their patience.

Also so many women, by virtue of their integrity and continence. This election is the first and fundamental principle of the salvation of men and women. Authority: "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in his sight in charity. Who has predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ," our Lord (Eph. 1:4-5). And this choice is called predestination. And because St. Paul was chosen by God from all eternity, that he would be one of the greater saints in paradise, about him Christ spoke in the theme text, "Vessel of election;" he, Paul, is chosen – passively – for me.

But although divine election has been made in eternity, it has its execution in time, I say to you the practical execution of the election of St. Paul, as is contained in today's epistle. Luke tells the story in today's epistle, Acts 9, how he was persecuting Christians, as a wolf hunts sheep, to the extent that many Christians fled from Jerusalem, and so he himself said, "I shall then pursue them." It is told how infected with rage he was going to Damascus etc. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). Note, he does not say "Why do you persecute my servants?" because so great is the love of Christ for his servants, that their persecution is considered his. Just as the good which comes to his servants out of love of him, he receives in his own person, and also evil. And so he says in the universal judgment, "For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat," (Mt 25:35). Then they shall say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; thirsty, and gave you a drink?" (v.37). To whom he will say, "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me," (v.40). Here is made clear how a man ought to be careful lest he displease the servants of God, because he [Christ] receives it in his own person, just as a king takes it personally when a knight is offended, or one of his officials. And because of this there is great fear lest an official of the king be offended. Therefore Christ says, "Saul," for so he was called before his conversion, "Saul, why do you persecute me?" Behold, the love of Christ for us. And Paul, frightened and stunned said, "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9:5). Jesus replied, "I am Jesus whom you persecute. It is hard for you to kick against the goad," (v. 5). Note that Paul, before his conversion had four false beliefs or opinions and errors,

First, that he did not believe him to be God, but simply man.

Second, that he was not the Savior of the world, but an imposter.

Third, that he had not risen from the dead.

Fourth that he was not the judge of the good and wicked.

But Christ, in response, dispelled all these errors when he said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth," etc., (Acts 22:8).

And first, when he said, "I am," which is the name of the Divinity, because God has existence of himself. Our existence is given to us by God. Already it ought not to be called existence. Just as no one ought to be called rich because of monies which he received on loan. Our total existence has been loaned to us by God. Therefore, properly speaking, no one has being but God alone. Therefore we read in Exodus 3 that when God wished to send Moses to free the people of Israel from Egypt, Moses said to him, "If they should say to me: What is the name [of God]? what shall I say to them? [The LORD] said to Moses: I AM WHO AM. He said: Thus shall you say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS, has sent me to you," (vv. 13-14). See why he replied to Paul, "I am." And Augustine says in his Book on Seeing God, that Christ then showed Paul the divine essence.

Against the second error he says, "Jesus," which is the same as "Savior," showing him clearly that no one can enter paradise, nor be saved unless believing and obeying him.

Against the third error he says, "of Nazareth," that is, "blooming," because his body in his glorious resurrection blossomed with four flowers: 1) invulnerability, 2) lightness, 3) subtlety, 4) clarity. That is why he said, "of Nazareth."

Against the fourth error he said, "It is hard for you to kick against the goad," (Acts 9:5). The goad is a harsh sentence, which he shall give as the universal judge of the good and the wicked, when he will say to the wicked, "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire," (Mt 25:41). Then Paul, "trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what will you have me to do," that I might be saved? (Acts 9:6). Now I see clearly my errors. "And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told you what you must do. And Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing," (Acts 9:6,8). So great was the brightness which surrounded him, that he lost his sight, as if a man had looked at the sun for a long time, he would lose his sight. "But they, leading him by the hands,"

men who accompanied him, who stood amazed, "brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days, without sight, and he neither ate nor drank," (Acts 9:8-9). The scriptural doctors say that during these three days he learned and saw in the school of paradise whatever later he preached. In the mean time Christ appeared to a certain disciple of his living in Damascus, who was called Ananias, and said to him, "Ananias. And he said: Behold I am here, Lord. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas, one named Saul of Tarsus," (Acts 9:10-11). And Ananias was afraid saying, "Lord, I have heard from many," (v. 13) of this man, how he persecuted your name, etc. And so Lord do not send me to that wolf," etc. Then "the Lord said to him: Go thy way; for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," (v. 15). Because just as fruit is presented to lords in a gold or silver bowl, so this man shall bear my name, etc. The story of the epistle is completed by the concluding theme, "This man is to me a vessel of election." Behold, the eternal election.

As for the second I say that in the conversion of St. Paul is shown the manner of the conversion of a sinner to God. And so the Church makes a feast only of this conversion of Paul. And there are seven ways by which a sinner is converted to God, like Paul, which are as follows:

1. Divine illumination
2. Personal humiliation
3. Fraternal correction
4. Judicial exposure
5. Doctrinal instruction
6. Example of virtue
7. Penitential affliction.

Divine Illumination

The first mode is divine illumination, when the sinner is converted to God, like Paul, he is subtly enlightened by God, because the sinner while he remains in sins is blind. A blind man does not see the danger in which he is. Just as one who walks along the street, and first falls into the mud, then stumbles on rocks, then into vipers, he is judged blind, because he truly is blind. So for the sinner passing through the road of this world or of life, who first falls into the morass of putrid lust, then between the prickly thorns

of avarice, and then between the rocks of anger and malice. And so holy scripture judges such to be blind: "And they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord," (Zeph 1:17). And so the divine light is necessary, illuminating the mind of the sinner. The sinner is illuminated by light when he says: "O wretched me [miser]! How many years have I been in the mire of lust, or in the thorns of avarice?" And so for the others. "O wretched me! What will become of me or of my soul?" When the divine light illuminates his conscience, he recognizes sins, because the natural light of the intellect does not suffice, nor even the light of acquired science, but the divine light is necessary.

This is shown in the conversion of St. Paul where it says, "And as he went on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven shone round about him," (Acts 9:3). Note, "light from heaven;" not from the natural intellect or human genius. This manner of conversion is very sweet. When God suddenly enlightens a sinner in his home, his room, on his bed, or going on the street, that he might recognize his sins, saying: "O wretch, what will become of me." This light David sought saying in prayer, "Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death," (Ps 12:4).

Personal Humiliation

The second way is personal illumination or humbling. When pompous inflated persons who care only for worldly things are brought down or humiliated, and if this happens because, God says, "These need another remedy," and he makes them lose their temporal goods, and the love of lords in whom they trusted, and then they are converted to God, because others were not caring about them. And so David, "Fill their faces with shame; and they shall seek your name, O Lord," (Ps 82:17). Blessed is the adversity or trouble of poverty, of sickness or persecution of lords, which converts the sinner to God.

This way is shown in Paul who went about filled with fury, [dirumque] power flushed his whole heart, and falling on the earth, from being a persecutor he was made a "vessel of election," saying, "Lord, what will you have me do?" (Acts 9:6). Behold how out of adversity, he was converted.

Fraternal Correction

The third [way] is fraternal correction. Just as some are not converted by the first or second way, because God does not get them on the first day, but when someone, a friend, brother, companion, father or neighbor gently corrects his friend or son, saying, "This is for your own good. People are already talking about you. So for the love of God straighten up!". In this way many are converted to Christ. And so Christ says, "If your brother shall offend against you, go, and rebuke him between you and him alone. If he shall hear you, you shall gain your brother," (Mt 18:15).

This way is shown in Paul, when Christ correcting him said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4).

Judicial Exposure

The fourth is judicial exposure, as when God by himself invisibly or through the mouth of some holy and devout person points out to him the rigor of justice in such a way. "Let us see if you wish to persevere in this wicked life, what shall you say in the judgment? What shall you respond to Christ when he says, "What have you done for me?" Showing his wounds [Christ] says: "See what I have done for you. Do you recognize these wounds? Let us see what you have done for me." What will you say who now stand and live in sins, and you have done nothing good? How shall you avoid the punishments of hell? Such judicial exposures make many convert, confess and do penance, so that they have something to show at the judgment. And so David: "The Lord shall be known when he executes judgments: the sinner has been caught in the works of his own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell," namely through thinking [cogitationem], (Ps 9:17-18).

This way is seen in Paul to whom Christ exposes himself in judicial form, just as he ought to stand on the day of judgment, when he says to him, "It is hard for you to kick against the goad," (Acts 9:5). And Paul immediately replied, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" (v. 6).

Doctrinal Instruction

Fifth is doctrinal instruction, as in preaching, to which many sinners come, entangled in great sins, and they return converted to God, because in preaching, when the preacher preaches sound doctrine, sinners come to recognize their evil life, and they say, "O wretched me! According to this [preaching] I am in an evil state!" And in this way more are converted than by the other aforesaid ways. And so the Apostle says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes," (Rom 1:16). Note, "I am not ashamed of the gospel," like those who care more about the poets, than the gospels. The teaching of the poets saves no one. And so the preachers of the evangelical doctrine have a special crown in paradise.

This way of conversion was shown in Paul to whom Christ said, "Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told you what you must do," (Acts 9:7). If Paul had wanted to say, "Lord, you show me what I have to do. Why do you send me rather than another?" Christ would have said, "Go, because in you I instruct the Christian. How you have gone, so they can go. They have a lesson." Note the city to which Christ sent Paul, saying, "Arise, and go into the city." It is called Damascus which is interpreted to mean "bloody," and it signifies the Church, where the blood of Christ is consecrated [conficitur] and drunk. When therefore he says, "Go into the city," into the Church for hearing Mass and a sermon, there you are told what you ought to do. This is the principal manner for converting sinners.

Example Of Virtue

The sixth way [of conversion] is the example of virtue. When one sees that someone lives a good and holy life, even if it is not told by preaching, but just by the example of such a one many are converted. There is a story about the conversion of a certain prince of thieves on a road lying in wait to steal. A certain holy abbot wishing to convert him to Christ came to him and immediately was captured, and stripped naked. The abbot however questioned him about how it was living in such a wilderness. The abbot said, "O, you live in great labor and danger. If you wish, come with me to the monastery, and I shall provide for you abundantly [opulenter]. Fearing capture, he did not dare to go, but the abbot assured him, and he followed him. He gave him the best of cells,

and a most devoted monk as a servant, that he might serve him, giving him whatever he wished to eat: chickens, partridges, and capons, and ministering to him. And after he had dined, his brother the servant ate bread and water in his presence. And when he laid down on his bed, the brother prayed on his knees with tears etc. After a number of days, the robber captain said to the brother, "And what kind of life did you have in the world, because you do so much penance?" And the brother said: "Many [sins], lord." "Tell me, if you please." He said, "I laughed excessively, and I cheated," and so for other venial sins. And the captain said, "O wretched me! What shall be of me who have robbed and killed so many men, because you, for such little sins do such great penances? Henceforth I wish to live like you. Give me a bed no more, nor hens." And so, he had been converted by the example of a good life. Possibly, if someone had preached to him for a hundred years, he would never have converted him. Yet, he was converted by the example of a good life. We read that in the time of St. Peter the Apostle, when he was preaching in Rome, some good woman already converted to Christ had perverse husbands to convert. Showing them this way, he said, "Let wives be subject to their husbands: that if any believe not the word, they may be won without the word, by the conversation of the wives," (1Pet 3:1).

This mode was shown in Paul, when leading him by the hand they led him into the city. Hands signify works, because they are done by hands. And so he said "leading him by the hands," in which is implied that by the example of deeds sinners are drawn to God.

Voluntary Penance

The seventh manner is voluntary penance [*afflictio penitentialis*], by saying "Lord, although I am wicked and a sinner, I hope nevertheless that because of this penance you shall rescue me from sin and shall convert me to a good life. And so, although a man perceives himself to be in sin, he should not abandon penitence, because it disposes to conversion, and ultimately to salvation. "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Mt 4:17).

This way is shown in the conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, who for three days did not eat, or drink. What a penitential affliction! It was a sign that by penitence God leads the sinner to conversion and salvation.

This is why the Church celebrates a feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, because not only was it miraculous, but it was also profitable for sinners.

C117. Sermon on the Purification of Mary

Luke 2:22 (Douay trans.) And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord: 23 As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord: 24 And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons: 25 And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him.

"And after the days of her purification," (Lk 2:22). This present feast is one of the greater of the whole year. Reason. Because there are three grades of sanctity, which we celebrate in this feast.

- The first, about eminent persons, that is exalted,
- The second, even greater, namely about a holy and excellent person.
- The third, much greater, about a transcendent holy person.

I say first, that at the first grade was certain of the apostles, Peter and Paul etc., John the Baptist, the martyrs and confessors etc. Therefore their feasts are great. The second grade is the Virgin Mary, who not only is holy, but has an excellence above all the saints, and so her feasts are greater. In the third grade is Christ alone, who transcends all heights of creatures. And so his feasts, like Christmas, Epiphany, Presentation, Resurrection, etc., are the greatest. These three grades of saints I find in today's feast, because today the feast is:

About Simeon, the eminent saint,

About the Holy Virgin, more excellent than the others, and

About Christ the holiest, most transcendentally,

Who today was presented in the temple by the Virgin Mary, just as now women, after childbirth, come to the church with their offspring. And so this feast has three names. Inasmuch as it is of Simeon, it is called the day of Simeon's Meeting. Inasmuch as it is of Jesus Christ, it is called the day of his Presentation. Inasmuch as it is of the Virgin Mary, it is called the day of the Purification of Mary. And because today is especially the feast of the Virgin Mary, and so uniquely the theme speaks, "the day of her

purification," etc. And so first we speak of the Virgin. Second of Christ. Third of St. Simeon.

Purification of Mary

First, insofar as the present feast touches the Virgin, it is called the Day of the Purification of Mary. Now when you hear that the Virgin Mary needs purification, because she has never sinned in any way, neither in her heart by thinking wrongly, nor by her mouth, by speaking vainly, nor by doing ill with her body, moreover she was purer than the sun, to the extent that the Holy Spirit was in love [philocaptus] with her. About her purity the Cantic of Canticles says, "How beautiful you are, my love, how beautiful you are!" (Song 4:1), and again, "You are all beautiful, O my love, and there is not a spot in you," (v. 7). Note how it is like a lover speaking. And "beautiful" is said three times, she was beautiful in the soul, because she never had a wicked or vain thought, otherwise with us. Second, beautiful in voice, because she never spoke in vain or frivolously, or indiscreetly. We, on the other hand do not have a "beautiful voice." Third, "beautiful," in her whole body, because she is without any defect and negligence, temperate in food and drink, diligent in the service of God; it is otherwise with us.

Why, therefore, does the theme state, the day of the Purification of Mary? St. Luke raises this question in today's gospel, saying, "the day of the purification of Mary." He immediately says, "according to the law of Moses," and he does not say according to the her own person, because she did not need it.

Let us now see what the law of Moses is which he gives to women giving birth to males. The law says, "If a woman having received seed shall bear a man child, she shall be unclean seven days, neither shall she enter into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification be fulfilled," (Lv 12:2,4). So this precept does not touch the Virgin Mary, because she did not give birth "having received seed." So St. Thomas [III, q.37, a.4](#) "Whether it was fitting that the Mother of God should go to the temple to be purified?" And he replies yes:

As the fullness of grace flowed from Christ on to His Mother, so it was becoming that the mother should be like her Son in humility: for "God gives grace to the humble," as is written James 4:6. And

therefore, just as Christ, though not subject to the Law, wished, nevertheless, to submit to circumcision and the other burdens of the Law, in order to give an example of humility and obedience; and in order to show His approval of the Law; and, again, in order to take away from the Jews an excuse for calumniating Him: for the same reasons He wished His Mother also to fulfill the prescriptions of the Law, to which, nevertheless, she was not subject.

And so, expressly, the evangelist Luke says, "And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses," (Lk 2:22). She herself had no need of purification, for in Leviticus 12 it says, "If a woman having received seed shall bear a man child," (Lv 12:2). Moses seems to have spoken to exempt the mother of God from uncleanness, who had given birth having not received seed, and so it is clear that she was not obliged to the fulfillment of this precept, but fulfilled the observance of purification voluntarily.

But here is the question. Why did God ordain this law? It is never a sin to generate children in the state of matrimony. The response is that it is not. But many reasons are given by the holy doctors. I wish to declare only one. The reason for this law is because all the precepts of the law are reduced and are included in the ten commandments of the Decalogue, which is broken down fourfold, namely by deed, omission, word and thought. Four times ten makes forty. Women in conceiving, bearing, birthing and nursing sin against the precepts of God in these four ways, and so they experience the day of purification.

1. First they sin in the act of conceiving. For God has ordered the act of generation for the conservation of human nature. Many are not urged toward it unless like a horse or mule, a dog or pig, according to the sensuality of the flesh, when they ought to have the intention of the preacher, who preaches to convert the pagans to God, so that paradise be filled with the children of God, so the propagators ought to have the intention of begetting children for paradise. The Virgin Mary however did not sin by deed, because she conceived not by a man but by the Holy Spirit, who formed the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, like the kernel is formed within a hazel nut or almond. And so the Church sings: "Begotten of no human will, but of the Spirit, Thou art still, the Word of God in flesh

arrayed, the promised fruit to man displayed." ([Ambrose: Veni redemptor gentium](#)).

2. Second, women sin in childbearing by omission, because if at first they were doing penance, namely by fasting, prayers, pilgrimages, and such, when they are pregnant they give them all up. Although they might be somewhat fastidious, then they make themselves more fastidious, and more delicate. The Virgin Mary did not sin in this way, by omitting something, because St. Bernard says, that she was pregnant without difficulty, moreover the pregnancy bore her. Like a cloud which cannot be raised, but when the rays of the sun touch it, it is raised and is lighter, so the ray of the eternal sun existing in the womb of the Virgin. Thus she did not give up any of her devotions, rather she performed them even more. Like a priest, when carrying the Eucharist, is more devout, so the Virgin, who was the custodian of the body of Christ.

3. Third, women sin in speech when they give birth. When they feel the pains of childbirth they say many vain and indiscreet words. When however they should have recourse to Christ by saying "Jesus" and to the Virgin Mary, who gave birth without pain, and to the saints of God. Some of them curse Eve, some their husbands, other say, "O, if I can get past this, I'll never again approach my husband." But the Virgin did not sin in this way, because she gave birth without pain or misery, like the ray of the sun passes through the glass window without breaking it, it even renders her more beautiful. Isaiah, "It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise: the glory of Lebanon is given to it: the beauty of Carmel, and Sharon," (Is 35:2).

4. Fourth, women sin by thought in suckling. They think, "Now I have the heir! Now I am the Lady!" When rather in great fear they should be saying, "O Lord, you have given me a son. What will become of my son? Will he be so wicked a man, that he would kill me; or what evil deed might he do that he would be hung, and finally damned?" But the Virgin did not sin in this way. She knew the scriptures. Therefore when in childbirth she saw the miracles which would be done; she was thinking about her passion. And so St. Luke says, Mary "kept all these words," collecting them, "in her heart," (Lk 2:51). When she beheld the infant Jesus, newborn, and naked, in her heart she thought, saying, "O woe, so my son shall be naked on the cross."

Then she wrapped him in a blanket, thinking that so she would wrap his body in a shroud in his tomb. Then she put him in the manger in the middle of two animals, thinking, that so he would be suspended between two thieves. It is clear therefore, that the Virgin Mary in no way sinned, neither in the deed of conceiving, nor in the omissions of childbearing, nor in the outcries of childbirth, nor in the thoughts of nursing. Other women are sinners.

Rightly Bernard says that she was like her son, who wished to endure circumcision to which he was not bound, because it is given as a sign of sin, like cutting off the ears of a thief as a mark of his thievery. So the Virgin wished to keep this law, to which she was not obliged.

Practically and plausibly we should here explain how she was exempted from that law, because on the fortieth day from the birth of her son, as it is today, she came to the temple of the Lord, in which were standing the generous and rich women, and the poor and simple, and the virgins, each group separately. And the Jews observe this custom today. The Virgin Mary, however in her entry into the temple considered, thinking with whom should she associate, because although she was generous and most noble, of the tribe of David, nevertheless she was poor and simply clothed, because she had given her whole dowry out of love of God and all the gold which the kings of the orient had given to her, and she was willing to live by her own hands. Therefore if she joined with the rich women, they could have said to her, "Go to your own place. Dear God, the wife of a poor carpenter wants to associate herself with us! etc." If with the virgins, although she would have been a virgin, they would have said to her, "And you, who have a husband and son wish to come with us? How about this!" Therefore she put herself with the simple and poor women, and so was fulfilled a certain prophecy which the Holy Spirit predicted through the mouth of Solomon saying, "As the lily among thorns, so my love," supply "is," " among the daughters," (Song 2:2). We have here an example of humility. Whoever exalts himself, because whoever wishes to be at the head table in dinner parties etc. And so the Virgin Mary, queen of paradise, takes her place at the back. And so Mary says, "Because he has regarded the humility of his handmaid," – she doesn't say "the charity" or, "the virginity." – "For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," (Lk 1:48). And this was first humility which today she practiced in fulfilling the law.

Note too another great humility in the Virgin Mary, because the gospel today says, "to do for him according to the custom of the law," (Lk 2:27). The custom of the law was, as is clear from Leviticus 12, that when after childbirth on the fortieth day the woman comes to the temple, on bended knees before the priest, she would say, "Here is the offering. You are to offer a sacrifice for me, that God might forgive my sins which I have committed, conceiving, bearing, birthing and nursing." Then the priest, having accepted the offering and making the sacrifice, gives the woman a blessing, and the woman goes away. The Virgin Mary wished today to observe this custom, coming into the temple, and speaking to the priest – not to Simeon, because we do not read that he was a priest, but a holy man. Today is the fortieth day since she gave birth to her son, and on the eighth day he was circumcised, and was called "Jesus," and she gave a pair of turtledoves as an offering for him, or two young pigeons, asking that he pray for her. O what great humility! The most holy one speaks to a sinner, "Pray for me." And the priest did not recognize her, or rather he knew her in the Isaiah saying, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel," (Isa 7:14). Then was fulfilled the prophecy of Solomon saying in the person of the virgin, "I am black but beautiful, O you daughters of Jerusalem," etc. (Song 1:4), "Do not consider me that I am brown, because the sun has altered my color," (v. 5). The Virgin was black to ignorant eyes, eyes not recognizing her; but she was beautiful to the angels of God. "Do not consider me," supply "in disdain," "because the sun has altered my color," because the heat of divine love so humbles one, supply by inflaming. And so she can say to us that of Matthew 11, "learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light," (Mt 11:29-30).

Presentation of Jesus Christ

Second, this feast next touches our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also named the Day of the Presentation of Jesus Christ. We understand that Christ did not need a presentation, because he never was apart from God the Father, nor was he ever absent. Just as the sun sends forth its rays to us, and nevertheless the rays are always with the sun, so to with Christ. We are distanced from God by sin, and so we need a presentation. Christ however

was always present to the Father, even while in the womb of the Virgin, day and night. And so the Father said to him, "Son, you are always with me," (Lk 15:31). Although I will send you in the world for enlightening in evangelical faith, for warming in the love of God and bearing fruit in good works.

So today the presentation of Christ was not of necessity but of humility, just like the purification of the Virgin mother. Christ indeed wished to observe the law of presentation, as St. Thomas says [III, q.37, a.3](#), where he says, that Christ wished to be "made under the Law, that He might redeem them who were under the Law" (Gal 4:4-5), and that the "justification of the Law might be" spiritually 'fulfilled' in His members. And in the solution to the third objection [ad 3m], he says:

For this very reason He wished the legal victims to be offered for Him who was the true Victim, in order that the figure might be united to and confirmed by the reality, against those who denied that in the Gospel Christ preached the God of the Law. "For we must not think," says Origen (Hom. xiv in Luc.) "that the good God subjected His Son to the enemy's law, which He Himself had not given."

These remarks are in the same citation. We gather from the body of this article 3, and from the solutions to the objections, that Christ wished to be presented in the temple today for four reasons.

1. First for the fulfillment of the law. And this the Doctor [St. Thomas] touches in the body of the article where he says:

Now, the Law contained a twofold precept touching the children born. one was a general precept which affected all--namely, that "when the days of the mother's purification were expired," a sacrifice was to be offered either "for a son or for a daughter," as laid down Leviticus 12:6. And this sacrifice was for the expiation of the sin in which the child was conceived and born; and also for a certain consecration of the child, because it was then presented in the Temple for the first time. Wherefore one offering was made as a holocaust and another for sin.

The other was a special precept in the law concerning the first-born of "both man and beast": for the Lord claimed for Himself all the first-born in Israel, because, in order to deliver Israelites, He "slew every

first-born in the land of Egypt, both men and cattle" (Ex 12:12-29), the first-born of Israel being saved; which law is set down Exodus 13. Here also was Christ foreshadowed, who is "the First-born amongst many brethren" (Rom 8:29).

Therefore, since Christ was born of a woman and was her first-born, and since He wished to be "made under the Law," the Evangelist Luke shows that both these precepts were fulfilled in His regard. First, as to that which concerns the first-born, when he says (Lk 2:22-23): "They carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord: as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.'" Secondly, as to the general precept which concerned all, when he says (Lk 2:24): "And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons." (Summa theologiae, III, q.37, a.3, body).

2. Second, Christ wished to be offered in the temple for the sanctification of the temple. And this the same Doctor [St. Thomas] says such in the response to the first objection:

As Gregory Nazianzen says that that precept of the law: "Sanctify unto me every firstborn that opens the womb among the children of Israel," (Ex. 13:2), was fulfilled in God incarnate alone in a special manner exclusively proper to Him. For He alone, whose conception was ineffable, and whose birth was incomprehensible, opened the virginal womb which had been closed to sexual union, in such a way that after birth the seal of chastity remained inviolate." Consequently the words "opening the womb" imply that nothing hitherto had entered or gone forth therefrom. Again, for a special reason is it written "'a male, because He contracted nothing of the woman's sin:" and in a singular way "is He called 'holy,' because He felt no contagion of earthly corruption, whose birth was wondrously immaculate" (Ambrose, on Luke 2:23). (St. Thomas, *ibid.*, ad 3m)

And so he did not need to be sanctified in the temple, but rather the temple ought to be sanctified by him, because he was and is the saint of saints. Whence Haggai: "Yet one little while, and I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations: and the desired of all nations shall come,. Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first" (Hag 2:7-8,10). To

Malachi, "And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire," (Mal 3:1).

3. Third Christ wished to be offered in the temple for our instruction, as the Doctor [Thomas] touches upon in the same place in the response to the second objection, because:

As the Son of God "became man, and was circumcised in the flesh, not for His own sake, but that He might make us to be God's through grace, and that we might be circumcised in the spirit; so, again, for our sake He was presented to the Lord, that we may learn to offer ourselves to God" [Athanasius, on Luke 2:23]. And this was done after His circumcision, in order to show that "no one who is not circumcised from vice is worthy of Divine regard" [Bede, on Luke 2:23].

4. Fourth he wished to be offered in the temple for a mystical significance. The Doctor touches on this in the response to the fourth objection.

The law of Leviticus 12:6,[8] "commanded those who could, to offer, for a son or a daughter, a lamb and also a turtle dove or a pigeon: but those who were unable to offer a lamb were commanded to offer two turtle doves or two young pigeons" [Bede, Hom. xv in Purif.]. "And so the Lord, who, 'being rich, became poor for our [Vulgate: 'your'] sakes, that through His poverty we [you] might be rich," as is written 2 Corinthians 8:9, "wished the poor man's victim to be offered for Him" just as in His birth He was "wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger" [Bede on Luke 1]. Nevertheless, these birds have a figurative sense. For the turtle dove, being a loquacious bird, represents the preaching and confession of faith; and because it is a chaste animal, it signifies chastity; and being a solitary animal, it signifies contemplation. The pigeon is a gentle and simple animal, and therefore signifies gentleness and simplicity. It is also a gregarious animal; wherefore it signifies the active life. Consequently this sacrifice signified the perfection of Christ and His members. Again, "both these animals, by the plaintiveness of their song, represented the mourning of the saints in this life: but the turtle dove, being solitary, signifies the tears of prayer; whereas the pigeon, being gregarious, signifies the public prayers of the Church" [Bede, Hom. xv in Purif.]. Lastly, two of each of these animals are offered, to show

that holiness should be not only in the soul, but also in the body. ([St. Thomas, Summa, ibid., ad 4m](#)).

This St. Thomas says in the same article. And because of these four reasons Christ wished to be presented in the temple. Nevertheless from the aforesaid the literal reason is also clear why Christ preserved every firstborn.

But the moral reason is this. Just as indeed between husband and wife there is a marriage for generating offspring, so between the spirit and flesh there is a quasi marriage-union for generating offspring, namely virtuous acts and meritorious works, because the flesh without the spirit counts for nothing. For the spirit moves the flesh to accomplish works of virtue and merits, which are called offspring. So David says, "Your children as olive plants, round about your table," (Ps 127:3). Of these "children," virtuous actions, God wishes the firstborn to be offered to him.

But who is this firstborn? It is a rule of philosophy, that that which is ultimate in execution is first in intention, toward God. For example, if it is asked: Why do you go to Mass today? What was your first intention? If you say: "For the honor of God and of the Virgin, and because of the precept of the church," then you stand right in conscience, because your intention is good, because you are going because of God. If however you say: "I go to church just to see the ladies," etc., then you offer your firstborn to the devil, and not to God, because your intention is evil. The same for alms, if you give them out of an intention of vainglory, or such like, the firstborn is given to the devil. If however it is given so that God would give you alms, the grace which you seek from him, when your soul comes to the gate of paradise, knocking and asking for the alms, that God would give you alms, then the firstborn is given to God. And so in whatever virtuous work, you should inquire within yourself as to whom the firstborn is given and offered, lest merit is lost from an evil intention. A virtuous deed done from a bad intention counts for nothing, and many great virtuous works are lost because they are done with a bad intention, because the firstborn is not offered to God. See why God commands that the firstborn are to be offered to him. And so the Apostle says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God," (1Cor 10:31).

Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ as firstborn and only-begotten of the Virgin Mary, wished to be presented to God the Father in the temple and offered in the hands of the priest. And "by five sicles," like five royals of silver, he is

redeemed according to the law, which is found in Numbers 18 where it says, "Whatsoever is firstborn of all flesh, which they offer to the Lord, whether it be of men, or of beasts, shall belong to you: only for the firstborn of man shall you take a price." and he is redeemed, "by five sicles,.which is twenty ebolos." (Num 18:15-16). And so unless he is redeemed, he would belong to the priest, and would serve in the temple.

In fact this is how the presentation took place. The Virgin Mary offered her son, Christ into the hands of the priest, and he offered him to the Lord. O how foolish the priest! If he had known him, he would have adored him. Finally, the priest wished to keep him, seeing that the Virgin mother was poor. And the Virgin said to him, "You are not to keep him. See, I have five sicles. These she had gradually saved up, and received from her own labor, perhaps by eating less, so that she might redeem her son. And she opened her purse, not made of gold or iron, and counted out five sicles according to the custom of the law.

The question here is: Why did Christ wish to be redeemed by five sicles, since he was to be the redeemer of the world, and for this reason he was sent by God the Father? Note two answers to this. One is allegorical, the other moral.

The allegorical is this He wished to be redeemed by five sicles, just as he was about to redeem the world with the five major wounds, which make up our entire redemption: circumcision, flight into Egypt, scourging, crowning and crucifixion. And so David, "Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with him plentiful redemption," (Ps 129:7).

The second reason is moral, giving us an example, as when man is sold to the devil by sin, because to sin mortally is to sell oneself to the devil. For example: He who is pompous and vain, for the price of pride, immediately sells himself to the devil. The greedy, charging interest and a price, by which he is sold to the devil. Include thievery, robbery and the other species of greed. The lustful person, by that delight gives his soul over to the devil. The same for the other sins. And so it is necessary to be redeemed by five sicles, if we wish to be saved, namely by the works of penance. The first is contrition, with the purpose of not returning to sin. Second is oral confession. Third, the affliction of the body. Fourth, the restitution of what is owed. Fifth, the forgiveness of injuries. And this is verified by the words of scripture, "There is one who buys much for a small price, and restores the same sevenfold," (Sir 20:12).

Meeting with Simeon

As for the third, this feast inasmuch as it touches St. Simeon, is said to be the day of the meeting with Simeon. Practically. Then at the time when the Virgin gave birth to her son, all the Jews skilled and learned in the law held for certain that the Messiah was born, because they were seeing the time assigned by the prophets and fulfilled, but they did not know him. And because of this John the Baptist said, "There has stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not," (Jn 1:26). And so many were praying that he might show himself to them, especially Simeon, holy and just. "And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Christ of the Lord." And knowing the prophecy: "And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple," (Mal 3:1), because of this he came to the temple every day. And when he saw a woman carrying a child, he inquired, "Is it a boy or a girl? And the Holy Spirit said nothing to him until this day, when he said to him, "Today you shall meet the Messiah king in the temple; you shall see him." And so after a good sleep he rose in the morning, and went to the temple, purifying himself, and praying, because when the king ought to enter his home, his home should be decorated. And so the church sings: "Adorn thy bridal chamber, O Sion, and receive Christ the King, and with great devotion, expect to see him," (John Damascene: [Antiphon for the Feast of the Presentation](#)).

It was otherwise with the priest, who expected him so that he would receive a greater offering, and he would have doves and pigeons. "For all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's," (Phil 2:21). For there are three conditions of persons, who are not occupied from certain business matters. First, a child at play. Second, women dancing. Third, priests offering. But of those who are of Jesus Christ, immediately they are aware. When however the Virgin with Joseph entered the temple, the Holy Spirit said to Simeon, "Simeon, this woman is his mother, and her son is the king and Messiah promised in the law." Immediately the old man, weeping for joy, adored him, and receiving him into his arms began to sing a beautiful canticle of four verses: "Now you do dismiss your servant, O Lord, according to your

word in peace, etc.," (Lk 2:29). Behold the day of the Meeting of Simeon.

And so today the church sings: "And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now do you dismiss your servant, O Lord, according to your word in peace," (Lk 2:27-29).

It is asked why holy Simeon took him in his arms, because this was not promised to him by the Holy Spirit, but it was promised to him that he would not die until he first saw Christ the Lord. Whence therefore such presumption that he would take him? I reply that for our salvation it does not suffice to see Christ through faith, but it is necessary to receive him in the hands through good works. So Mark, last chapter, "He who believes and is baptized, shall be saved," (Mk 16:16). One might say, "I have those eyes of the soul, the right by believing the divinity of Christ, and the left, the humanity of Christ. So Christ is seen by us on the way. What else is it necessary for me to do? I say, like Simeon, that Christ is received in to our hands through good works. "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he has faith, but has not works? Shall faith be able to save him?" "Faith without works is dead," (James 2: 20, 26). As a sign of this we carry lighted candles in our hands, which signifies three things which are in Christ. The soft wax signifies the flesh of Christ, which has vulnerability, which has been liquefied in the passion. The white wick signifies the most pure soul of Christ. The flame, however, signifies the immense divinity of Christ. It is not sufficient just to see the light on the altar, nor Christ through faith, but to receive him in our hands through good works. And so the Apostle [Paul says], "Glorify and bear God in your body," (1Cor 6:20). Then indeed Christ is born by us when out of love of him we avoid sin. Thanks be to God.

C125. On St. Blaise - Feb. 3

John 12:24 (Douay transl.) Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, 25 Itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal.

"Unless the grain of wheat falling to the ground die," (Jn 12:24). This text is found in John 12. The whole solemnity today is about the most glorious St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, and so is my sermon. From the many virtues and examples of his good life, we can derive instruction for the virtuous regulation of our own life. But first the Virgin Mary must be "Hailed."

This theme is the answer to the question from some ignorant person asking, "Who was this St. Blaise, and what is his story? The theme replies: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die," etc. The words are figurative, secretly pointing out his virtues and excellences according to the five words of the theme:

- The first virtue is virtuous humility, because the text says "a grain," not chaff.
- The second is gracious sublimity, because it says "of wheat," and not barley.
- The third is rigorous adversity, because it says "falling," from dignity.
- The fourth is sorrowful bitterness, because it says "on the ground," through torture.
- The fifth is precious or glorious happiness, because it says "dead."

Virtuous Humility

As for the first, I say that one great and excellent virtue of St. Blaise was his virtuous humility. Although he was filled with virtues, nevertheless he kept them in the pouch of humility, otherwise they might be lost. Whoever collects virtue without humility, is like someone who carries dust in the wind. Note here two humilities. The first is virtuous. The second is vicious. The virtuous kind is when a man on one hand thinks of the immensity of

God and his infinite power; on the other hand he thinks of his own smallness and defects, and so his heart is humbled. Such humility, which regards God is virtuous, and pleases God very much, because in this way a creature regards himself as nothing, nor does he presume about himself. St. James praises this kind saying, "Be humbled in the sight of the Lord," – he does not say 'of men,'— "and he will exalt you," (James 4:10).

The second humility is vicious, when one is humbled in the sight of men, and yet within has an inflated heart, like the belly of a pregnant woman, and they behave before men like hypocrites. Of these scripture says, "There is one that humbles himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit," (Sir 19:23).

The humility of St. Blaise was virtuous, because he was humbled in the sight of the Lord. He would hide his works so that he would avoid vainglory. By praying and contemplating through the night, and secretly, he kept to his penitential bed, and he wore a hair shirt. Outside he went about decently dressed. He fasted, and as much as he could, he hid his sanctity out of humility. But God exalted him. Authority. "Be you humbled . under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation," (1Peter 5:6). Also, "Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you," (James 4:10), because God wishes to show him off for the glory of God and as a good example for men. Note, this text, "A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid," (Mt 5:14). The Gloss quotes Augustine, that is, a person over a long life. It is otherwise for hypocrites, who want to be seen and praised, and falsely do many deeds. Like smoke, such pass away totally and do not have a foundation in God, because scripture says, "The joy of the hypocrite [is] but for a moment," (Job 20:5).

The virtuous humility of St. Blaise is noted when he says, "a grain." For chaff stands for the proud. Reason, because there are more of them than the humble. Second, because chaff is puffed up and light, and always stands out; grain however is small and always hidden, like the humble person, etc. The scripture says about this, "You sow not the body that shall be;" namely a holy person sowing, in this world, "but bare grain," bare of vanities, (1Cor 15:37). Behold humility. "But God gives it [a body as he will]," etc., (v. 38).

The more St. Blaise hid his holiness, the more it was published in the miracles which he worked. It is told how he was from a city of Cappadocia etc. The miracle is told of the cure of the widow's son who choked or was choking on a fish bone stuck in his throat. Christ granted health for him and for all who call upon [St. Blaise] for illnesses of the throat. So today bread, wine and such are blessed in honor of St. Blaise, and so the scripture is verified in St. Blaise, Luke 18: "He who humbles himself, shall be exalted," (Lk 18:14). Note, "He who humbles himself," with true humility, "shall be exalted."

Gracious Sublimity

The second virtue is gracious sublimity, namely in dignity, because he was the bishop of the city of Sebaste, and so it is said, of corn that it is better than the other grains. And so prelates, who are the greater and more noble of the populace are symbolized by corn. Zach 9: "For what is the good thing of him," namely of the Christian people, "and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect," (Zach 9:17), that is, of the prelates. And because St. Blaise was a bishop, therefore it is said, "of the corn."

It is told how he was elected, not only by the canons, but also by all the laity of Sebaste, praying etc. And suddenly in their hearts God inspired them all to cry out in a loud voice for Blaise to be the bishop. However, he refused. Nevertheless he was elected, and in tears he assumed his position. Why was he weeping? Because in the [last] judgment bishops have to render an account not only for their own souls, but also for all committed to him. And so scripture says, ".a most severe judgment shall be for them who rule. For to him that is little, mercy is granted: but the mighty shall be mightily tormented, " (Wis 6:6-7). Note the "most severe judgment."

Three judgments happen to a prelate. The first is how he attained his dignity. Whether through the door, when, without his foreknowledge he is elected, or the pope provides without his or his friends request. If, however, he obtains it another way, he is a thief and a robber, nor can he be saved unless he resigns. So scripture says about this: "Amen, amen I say to you: He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up another way," namely by letters, or armed demands [preces armatas], or through

gifts etc., "the same is a thief and a robber," (Jn 10:1). O what a hard judgment will befall him.

The second is a harder judgment, which happens to him, based on how he has lived after he became a bishop, and how he spent his income. He ought to divide it into three parts: one for himself, a second for his household, and a third for the poor.

The third will be the hardest judgment, which happens to him when he renders a count of the souls damned because of his negligence. For to such a one Ezekiel 33 says: " I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel: therefore you shall hear the word from my mouth, and shall tell it them from me. When I say to the wicked: O wicked man, you shall surely die: if you do not speak to warn the wicked man from his way: that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at your hand. But if you tell the wicked man, that he may be converted from his ways, and he be not converted from his way: he shall die in his iniquity: but you have saved your soul," (Ez 33:7-9). Now you see how and what kind is the care of souls. See why he says, "a most severe judgment," etc., (Wis 6:6).

Considering these things, the saints of old accepted the episcopal burden with the greatest trepidation, and would refuse, until they knew the will of God, and then trusting in divine help they accepted. It is told how St. Blaise having been made a bishop didn't change his status, as do many wicked men. They immediately do vain things in their excessively vast household, in horses and poms, saying "Honors change morals, in wicked men. In the good it is not true." And because St. Blaise did not abandon his life style, neither did God remove from him the grace of miracles, rather he augmented it, because not only was he curing men, but even wild beasts, which obeyed him.

The story is told of the miracle of the poor woman, having one pig, which was seized by a wolf. She rushed to St. Blaise, to have him command the wolf to return the pig to her, which she had purchased, etc. This he did. Immediately the wolf brought it back alive.

Note here carefully two points. First the virtue of St. Blaise. Second our hardness. St. Blaise's virtue moved the heart of the most ferocious wolf to

return the pork which he loved so much. He obeyed St. Blaise, because he was a friend of God and obedient to God. So also it was in the first state [of mankind] when as long as Adam was obedient to God, the animals obeyed him.

Second, consider our hardness. The rapacious wolf at the command of St. Blaise restored what he had stolen. Yet you, thief, robber, not because of the command of Blaise but of God, do not wish to restore your loot or usury. We are worse than beasts. O how many usurers are there who lend ten florins and write in a contract that they were twelve; or buy at less than a fair price [pretio parato], or sell for more, for a hoped for price; or lend monies over possessions, and in the mean time profit from the fruits or from the community etc., or they keep for themselves the wages of their servants, or the goods of the church, or tithes or first fruits, or goods of the deceased. Such persons cannot be saved until they make restitution. Their sins are not even forgiven unless they return what they have taken. It is a rule of jurists, *14, q. 6. Si res*, and also of theologians, and it is originally of Augustine. Here you can speak against those usurers.

Rigorous Adversity

I say third that the third virtue is rigorous adversity, when the text says "falling" etc., namely from episcopal dignity. When St. Blaise had been a bishop for some time, a persecution arose against Christians. They were to deny the faith of Christ, or they would be killed. For this reason St. Blaise was deposed and exiled from his bishopric by the prefect. He took refuge in the desert where he lived in a cave on a mountain, in great penance. See how he can be said to have fallen. He could say with David, "Being pushed I was overturned that I might fall: but the Lord supported me," in the desert, (Ps 117:13). And because in such hardship St. Blaise did not wish to abandon God, neither did God abandon him. When he was in the desert he had nothing to eat. Trusting in God he said, "The eyes of all hope in thee, O Lord," (Ps 144:15), devoutly reciting his hours as if he were in the city, and at the dinner hour he came out of the cave. So the story goes, that birds were would come to him bringing him food from what they were eating. They delivered it to him at the dinner hour, at the hour of none [3 pm] they would come, fifty or a hundred doves with grains of wheat. Also a

woodpecker [tornellus] with an olive in its beak. Crows brought fresh figs. Falcons too came with partridges. And St. Blaise was reciting a verse and all the birds were around him in a circle. Note that no bishop or king had so many servants, and he ate that which pleased him, but not the meat. Afterwards, he divided the leftovers for them ordering them not to argue. It is said how it is confessed of God: "Whoever serves God well, need not fear that they will be lacking." A monk or friar [religiosus] therefore should not say, "O wretched me, how will I get another cappa [a friar's cape], when this one gets torn," etc. You should serve God diligently, because nothing will be lacking to you. Did not God, Jesus Christ, say, "Seek you therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you," (Mt 6:33). Same for the clergy and laypeople. But the life of many is such that it is a wonder that they find water in the well, because they are not worthy. But about them who serve God Christ says, "Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed. For your Father knows that you have need of all these things." (Mt 6:31-32).

And not only birds, but also animals like lions, bears, wolves, sometimes if they were ill, or that they had something stuck in their throat or a thorn, they came to him showing him the wounds, which he cured in the name of Jesus, with the sign of the cross made over the wound saying: "Be careful now, and hurt no one. It is because of your malice and because of sin this evil came to you," or something of the sort. Note here that the irrational animals turned to him to recover their health. To whom do you turn? To the devil! Because you go to soothsayers and fortune tellers. If you say "We do this, because we do not have doctors, pharmacists nor medicines." It is said of the power of this name of Jesus, according to the Psalm, "Men and beasts you will preserve, O Lord: O how have you multiplied your mercy, O God!" (Ps 35:7-8). And so David, "Blessed is the man whose trust is in the name of the Lord; and who has not had regard to vanities, and lying follies," (Ps 39:5).

Sorrowful Bitterness

The fourth virtue is sorrowful bitterness, of many tortures, which is indicated when it is said "into the ground." Led out of the desert he would return to his country where there he would attain the crown of glory through

martyrdom. "He will crown you with a crown of tribulation, he will toss you like a ball into a large and spacious country," (Isa 22:18), that is, from torture to torture. While he was in the desert, as I said, in a cave, Christ appeared to him saying that he should offer him a sacrifice, which he understood that he should say a mass, and so he got up. Meanwhile some men sent by the commissioner of the emperor came to him to arrest him. And then St. Blaise understood that Christ was speaking about the sacrifice of his body, in martyrdom, and on bended knees he gave thanks to Christ that he had been mindful of his servant.

When he was led away captive, many, seeing the miracles which he worked, were converted. When he came before the prefect, the prefect said to him, "Rejoice Blaise, friend of the gods," saluting him cordially. Blaise said: "Do not say 'gods,' but 'demons.'" Angered, the prefect then sentenced him to five tortures. The first, five blows with a club, and at each blow St. Blaise said "Jesus Christ." From the power of this name he survived, because otherwise it was a wonder how he could have lived.

The second was imprisonment in a stinking cell without food or water. But although his body was detained in the prison, his soul nevertheless was strolling through the palace of paradise, devoutly contemplating the orders of angels. He was comforted by a woman to whom a wolf had delivered a pig. She hearing of the arrest of St. Blaise brought the cooked head of the pig, and bread and wine with a lighted lamp to St. Blaise. Getting permission from the jailer, she entered his cell. To whom St. Blaise said. "Daughter I want to repay the charity which you have extended to me. You know that very shortly I am to be martyred, and I shall beg pardon for you. And because, daughter, you are a poor person, I shall give you a way of becoming wealthy. Every year you are to come to my church with a lighted candle. And so she did. And in a short time she grew wealthy. We read of no other saint who has promised to someone temporal riches.

The third torture was the rack, on which, naked and with iron hooks he was torn at, to the extent that streams of blood flowed down his body. He was saying, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come," (Rom 8:18). He did not pay attention to this torture, so he was again returned to the cell. Even greater tortures were prepared. Seven

women who were collecting the blood of the martyr out of devotion were beheaded.

The fourth torture was this. The prefect ordered that he be thrown into a lake, which, at a sign from him, suddenly solidified, as if it were solid and dry, and he was standing in the middle. The idol worshippers wishing to come to him, sank into the water. The water supported the light, but not heavy works, especially of sins.

Glorious Happiness

I say, fifth, that the fifth virtue is glorious happiness, when it [the text] says, "die." No torture makes a martyr glorious but death. And so David says: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," (Ps 115:6). So it has been ordained by Christ. No one has glorious happiness unless through death, because neither Christ himself, nor his Virgin mother Mary had it otherwise. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26). And so "die" is said in the theme. Note this martyrdom. When he was in the water, the angel of the Lord said to him, "O glorious one go forth, and receive the crown." He went forward, and a great light appeared before his face. And he said to the prefect, you should know that I consider it as glory for me to die for Christ. Behold I present myself now. And many were converted by his miracles.

The prefect sentenced him to be beheaded. When however St. Blaise was praying, the Lord said to him; "I will grant every petition of yours," promising to help all who call upon him. And this having been said, he was beheaded. Note here, with how much penitence the saints and friends of God gain paradise. Yet we still believe that it is gained without penitence. "Iniquity has lied to itself." (Ps 26:12). And so it is necessary that we do penance: in our heart through contrition; in our voice through confession; and in our body through voluntary penance. And so Christ says, "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Mt 4:16).

Lent and Easter

A364. On Ash Wednesday

Mt 6:16-18

16 And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest anoint thy head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee.

"But you, when you fast anoint your head, and wash your face."(Mt 6:17ff)

That which above all in this moral life is especially necessary for us for the remission of sins and the pursuit of the kingdom of heaven, is penitence. Nor do we have any other remedy for sins committed after baptism.

Note the similarity to a sailor undergoing shipwreck, after which the sailors have no other life saver except to place themselves on some planks and firmly hang on, otherwise. So it is with us. For the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great captain, has built a beautiful ship for sailing safely to paradise, namely baptismal innocence. And whoever rightly sails with this, like the Blessed Virgin, arrives at paradise and to its gates. Of this ship according to the spiritual sense of the [scriptural] authority, "And when he entered into the boat," that is, baptism," his disciples," that is Christians, "followed him," (Mt 8:23). This ship, baptismal innocence, has suffered shipwreck, and has been broken, wrecked upon the rocks of mortal sins, from the winds of diabolic temptations or the waves of carnal inclinations, or the dangers of worldly occupations, to the extent that there are so many dangers in the sea of this world that in ten thousand souls not one makes it with this ship of baptismal innocence, without sinning mortally, and so is wrecked. So, like sailors, if they are willing to cling firmly to the flotsam of penitence, they might yet survive. All the doctors say this, and the theologians, and canonists and lawyers are saying that penance is the second plank after shipwreck.

But why is it called the second plank? What is first? For an answer note that there are two shipwrecks in human nature, and the first is general, the second particular. The first shipwreck was [the loss] of original justice from the sin of Adam, for then the ship of original justice was wrecked and all in it were drowned. Authority: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned," (Rom. 5:12). For this reason, so that all can be saved, God ordained two planks, and the first was baptism, the second, penance. Thus penance is called the second plank. But if we wish to speak of the special or particular shipwreck, which happens when you or another sin mortally, then penance is called the first plank and not the second, because we do not have another remedy for salvation. Thus Christ said, "I say to you: but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish," (Lk 13:3). So penance is necessary for us. In the sermon theme Christ shows us how it is to be done, saying, "when you fast, anoint.etc."

Christ shows us three necessary things, which we should be busy about at this time, if we wish to be saved with the plank of penance. This is subtly understood in the theme.

First is penitential affliction (*afflictio penitentialis*), where, "When you fast,"

Second, spiritual prayer (*oratio spiritualis*), where "Anoint your head."

Third is sacramental confession (*confessio sacramentalis*), where, "Wash your face."

Penance

I say first, etc. when it is said, "When you fast, etc." It must be known, however, that Christ and holy mother the Church which orders this fast, that the fast is an affliction for those who are not accustomed to fast. I say, therefore, "when you fast," presuming that all Christians fast, beginning today, from this day up to Easter, except for the six Sundays. And so there are forty fast days, and so by fasting we are conformed to Christ like good disciples and good ministers to our Lord, who for us fasted for forty days. Thus the Apostle, "In all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, . in fastings," (2 Cor. 6:4-5). Note the word when he says "in much patience," because with much patience the affliction of such

fasting is accomplished, by conforming us to our Lord Jesus Christ. And first [patience] with ourselves, second with our neighbors, third in our own house.

First, because you are not accustomed to fast, in the beginning it is difficult for you, because the first thing in the morning your stomach growls "I'm hungry, I'm hungry, I'm hungry," and a headache follows. Then, because you have not eaten, you find it hard to sleep, and so patience is necessary for yourself, because in this consists merit. Nor because of this should you stop fasting, remembering that Christ endured much for you, and your sins have deserved much. So, to the extent that you diligently observe a diet for your physical health, you should the more so keep the diet ordained by Christ for the health of your soul, lest it happen to you like the fearful soldiers, who in the center of the battle when they hear the cannons, are terrified and then retreat, when they should be more aggressive and fight more fiercely.

Second, it is necessary to be patient with our neighbors. For some clergy because of their fasting become impatient. Even when someone speak to them politely, they react with anger. Thus patience is necessary, otherwise the fast would become diabolical, if one would fast always, but impatiently and with malice.

Third, it is necessary that you be patient in your own home. If for example, when you come home for dinner, and the dinner is not ready, you should not be indignant with your wife or family, but patiently wait and in the meantime say a prayer, and if dinner is over-cooked or less well prepared, hold your patience and don't throw the plate at your wife's head. Behold why "in much patience." Sacred scripture concurs: "For patience is necessary for you," supply, fasting, "that, doing the will of God," i.e. fasting, "you may receive the promise,"(Heb. 10:36). Note, "in much fastings," namely forty days as he said.

Now there arise three questions which you commonly ask. And the first is of those saying: I have already fasted three or four Lents, or even ten, and you always are saying that Lent happens after the example of Christ who fasted only one forty-day period, why therefore, do we fast for forty days every year? Since Christ did not fast but once in his life,

especially because he said, "The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord," (Mt 10:24f)? For the answer note that this question proceeds from the ignorance of not considering the fact of Jesus Christ. How do you believe that Christ fasted those forty days? Some simple folks would say that Christ fasted as we fast, eating once in the day etc. Others say that Christ took with him forty loaves of bread into the desert, and each day ate one. This is wrong. Some say that he was eating herbs, and this is false. Behold what the text of the gospel says. He fasted forty days in the desert, "And he ate nothing in those days," (Lk. 3:2). Now if you wish to fast one Lent in that way, and to endure a forty day period like that, I give you permission, lest you fast any other way. For Christ, his entire life was like the Lent which we observe, because he would eat only once in the day, and nowhere do we read that he ate meat, except the paschal lamb, to fulfill the law. Because, therefore, we cannot be compared to him in this kind of fasting; because we are not able to go for forty days without food, thus holy mother the Church in ordering our fast takes the number forty days from Christ, namely forty in general. And in a general way, from his ordinary way of living, according the Master of History, we now receive the manner of our annual fast, namely eating only once in the day, not meat, but Lenten food, because every action of Christ is an instruction, as Gregory says. Also, ". Jesus began to do and to teach," (Acts 1:1).

The second question is whether some are exempt from this fast? I respond that many persons are excused because neither God nor holy mother the Church intends to oblige someone to the impossible, or to put someone in danger. So you ask what kind of people are exempted? I submit that, according to the theologians, there are eight kinds of people who are dispensed from this fast.

- The first exempted are pregnant women The reason is that such women have to provide for two persons, themselves and their son or daughter, because if they were to fast, the creation growing in their womb could be severely weakened and would not live long. Thus they can eat without sin. But if the woman is healthy and hearty, she can fast a little.

- Second, women breastfeeding are excused for the same reason as above.
- Third the sick are excused, not sick of any illness whatsoever, but only of those which take away the appetite, lest they might be deprived of a good meal even once. Not [dispensed] are gout-sufferers, or the wounded and such illness, which do not disturb the appetite, and from indigestion, [de gutta] which results from excessive food and drink etc. They do not excuse.
- Fourth, the poor, who at supper time do not have enough food, like those who beg at the door or others who have nothing or barely some cabbage with oil. If such can fast, they would have great merit, but they are not obliged. About this see St. Thomas [Summa] II-II q.118. The rich, however who are able to have fish and other such foods are bound to fast.
- Fifth, those journeying on foot, because of necessity; those on horseback are not excused; the horse or the mule can eat, but you can't without sinning.
- Sixth, laborers or miners, construction workers, who in whole or in part can't, and who otherwise could not provide for their wives and children. Seamstresses however and tailors, clerks and the like who do their work sitting down are not excused.
- Seventh, children. But of what age? St. Thomas in IV Sent. and in [II-II, q.147](#), says that not all are bound to fast. Children may even be excused, who have not yet completed 21 years. The reason, because up to that time the body is building, and children are growing. Such children need at least two meals [a day]. One for sustaining life, and the other for bodily growth. So I give you this advice for children seven or eight years old, it is enough that they fast on Good Friday. Others who are older, if eleven or twelve years old, once in the week and so on for the others.
- Eighth, old folks of a certain age. When they have lost their appetite for eating or because they have lost their teeth, they should eat often or more often, like children. But old folks, eighty years old or even older, who once could eat well, are not excused in some of the above lest they sin mortally.

Therefore, we all should fast with diligence. Otherwise if they are not excused for one of the aforesaid reasons, they sin mortally because they transgress the ecclesiastical precept, about which De Conse. di. 3. *It is not permitted*, and chap. *It is not necessary* and chap. *It pleases*. Thus the response to the second question is clear. So it is said, "And all the people cried to the Lord with great earnestness, and they humbled their souls in fastings, and prayers, both they and their wives," (Judith 4:8).

The third question posed by some, and especially by rich people, asks if they can redeem their fasting through alms, or commute their obligation, saying since there are three penitential works, namely fasting, prayer and almsgiving, and fasting is the least of the works, so these say, they may commute a lesser good into a greater good, i.e. fasting into almsgiving, and on their own, by their own authority and without permission commute [their obligation to fast]. But they are not excused by this. Note, as a response, just because simply speaking, all things being equal, almsgiving is better than fasting, but on the other hand I say that obedience is better than fasting, prayer and almsgiving, "For obedience is better than sacrifices," (1 Kgs. 15). So, on this account, if you would give all that you possess in alms for the love of God, and by your own authority you break your fast, against obedience, all would be lost. Because the universal Church ordains this fast, obedience to her should be observed. So Christ says to the keepers of the Church, "He that hears you, hears me; and he that despises you, despises me," (Lk 10:16).

If therefore you have any need, you should go to the pastor, and if by chance the pastor is not certain of your need, you should consult the doctor, and if the doctor advises not to fast, with the advice and permission of the doctor and the pastor you can replace fasting with almsgiving, otherwise not.

Prayer

I say secondly, etc. that the task which we should now be occupied and doing is spiritual prayer, when he says, "Anoint your head." And it is understood that in sacred scripture we find that Christ is the head of the Church, both militant and triumphant. The reason is because like the head, he is above and generally influences the members. St. Thomas beautifully defines this in [III q. 8](#) and in III Sent. dist. 13. And the doctors in the same

dist. 3. [Scriptural] authority: "And he has subjected all things under his feet, and has made him head over all the church, which is his body," (Eph. 1:22f). Note: "all things," namely universals and particulars. Therefore, the Apostle says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ," (1 Cor. 11:3). By spiritual prayer this head, namely Christ, is anointed, which softens him and renders him gentle to sinners. You know that anointing softens and makes anointed skin smooth, although it was rough before. So Christ, to the extent that he might have seemed to be harsh and strict to sinners, by spiritual prayer is rendered soft and gentle. St. Bernard: "Prayer anoints [ungit] God, tears pierce [compungit] him." And so the Lord Jesus Christ, who in his fleshly time, is hard and strict because of our sins, and through the rigor of his justice, if now in this holy time is anointed with devout prayers, he becomes gentle and soft. And by this oil he wishes to be anointed, because it pleases him much. And note this parable which he told about himself: "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him, that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold," (Mt 18:23-25). That worthless servant began to anoint his head with the oil of prayer saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all,"(v. 26). up to "because you asked me"

And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow servants that owed him an hundred pence: and laying hold of him, throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. 29 And his fellow servant falling down, besought him, saying: **Have patience with me**, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt. 31 Now his fellow servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord called him; and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, **because you asked me**:

In this parable Christ is speaking about himself, who is the Lord and our King. We are the servants and must render to him an account, how we have dealt with thoughts, words, deeds and all are obligated to "ten thousand," which ten are the commandments in which are included all the

perfections of this life. We by sinning are obliged to satisfaction. If therefore you wish that your debt be dismissed to you, anoint his head, namely of Christ. If you wish to know the manner of anointing, look to Mary Magdalen, about whom it is said, "There came to him a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he was at table," (Mt 20:7).

Here is shown three ways for those who are serving in devout prayer:

- The first way is when he says "There came to him a woman," that is, a devout soul, thinking devoutly when one is saying when he says "Our Father who art etc."
- The second way is when it is said "having an alabaster box," that is a body of precious ointment, namely reverential fear.
- The third way is where it says "and poured it on his head," and this is when the mouth is opened, saying devoutly the words of a prayer. And just as Mary Magdalen twice anointed Christ, so you twice a day ought to anoint Christ, devoutly praying, in the morning and in the evening. Behold therefore why he says, "Anoint your head, etc." And this for the second part.

Confession

Third: I say that the third work which we should occupy ourselves in this holy time is sacramental confession, when he says, "and wash your face, etc." Conscience is the face of the soul. Reason: Because just as in the face we recognize the person, so God in the face recognizes who are his disciples. And of this face David speaks saying in Psalm 26:8, "My heart has spoken to you, my face has sought you," that is, the conscience. This face is washed now through sacramental confession. O who washes the face of his body only once a year? How much dirt and grime would it have! So it is of the face of conscience. This washing was prefigured in 4 Kgs. 4:5, where God prefigured the necessity of confession in the leper Naaman. And

note, briefly the story when Elisha the prophet said, "Go, and wash seven times in the Jordan, and thy flesh shall recover health, and you shall be clean." Note that leprosy stands for mortal sin. And note, that the leper has the effects of every mortal sin.

- First, because the leprosy makes a man swell. See here the effects of the sin of pride.
- Second, it induces a great thirst, through which is symbolized the sin of avarice.
- Third, it infects those living with him. Behold the effects of the sin of lust.
- Fourth, it dehydrates. Behold here, envy.
- Fifth, it makes the breath smell bad. Behold here the effects of gluttony.
- Sixth, it makes the voice hoarse. Behold here the effects of anger.
- Seventh, it weakens all the members in their functioning. Behold here the sin of sloth.

Therefore the remedy, the cure, is to go to the Jordan, and the name comes from *Jor*, i.e. river, and *dan*, i.e. judgment. Behold here confession, which is nothing but the river of judgment. For there judgment of sins happen. Here, indeed, a man ought to get undressed, showing all his shames, i.e. naked sins, clearly, to the confessor. So he says "go", namely to the confessor, "to wash seven times", i.e. to confess the seven mortal sins to which all the other sins are reduced. The first time man is washed of the sin of pride, in the second, of avarice, etc. In the seventh, however a man is clean and his face cleansed of all mortal stains, so that, having confessed, none remain to him.

There are some miserable people who choose not to confess their sins. If God had had commanded us to hurl ourselves into a fire for the remission of sins, we should do it. How much more ought we confess, since it is so easy. Thus the servants said to Naaman, "If the prophet had bid you do some great thing, surely you should have done it. How much rather what he now has said to you: Wash, and you shall be clean?" (4 Kgs. 5:13). If it

were possible, all of you ought to confess already today, that you might participate in the church's blessings. Thus John says, agreeing with the aforesaid image, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity," (1 John 1:9). Now you know what you should be doing in this holy time [of Lent].

A370. Thursday after Ash Wednesday: Cure of the Centurion's Servant

Mt 8:5-8 Douay trans.

5 And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. 8 And the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

"I will come and heal him," (Mt 8:7). It is a general teaching in holy theology that in every conversion of a sinner from an evil life to a good one, and from sin to grace, from vice to virtue, in that conversion, if it be true, God is always first present, through grace. The power of any creature is insufficient for that conversion, of man or of angel, because "Without me you can do nothing," (Jn 15:5). It is a conclusion of all the theologians. And this conclusion can be declared through a rule for the general conversion and redemption of the world, for which God himself principally comes. No one else was able or sufficient for this work. It is like in a large hospital in which many sick people are lying, suffering from an incurable illness, where it is necessary that a great doctor must come to cure them. We all are lying in the hospital of this world, with the great illnesses of sins. For this reason the great doctor comes from his office in paradise to practice, and cure the sick. And so Augustine on the text of Matthew 9:13: "For I am not come to call the just, but sinners," says "The great doctor comes to us from heaven, because the whole world lies sick." It is clear therefore that for universal redemption his coming was necessary.

So I say that in the conversion of the sinner, it is principally necessary for him to come, because no one else would be sufficient. And so David understanding this conclusions in the spirit of prophecy, and the teaching about his coming, thanking God, says to his soul in Ps 102: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and let all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all he has done for you. Who forgives all your iniquities: who heals all your diseases," (Ps 102:1-3). And so when that Centurion about whom today's gospel speaks, pleads with Christ, that he

would go to cure his servant, Christ responds, "I will come and heal him," (Mt 8:7).

But why does he say "I will come," because he did not go, nor intended to go. Did he not tell a lie? I reply, according to the teachers, that when God cured something in the body, he also cured in the soul, because the work of God is perfect. And so he said, he would make the whole man healthy, "I have healed the whole man," (Jn 7:23), the whole, i.e. in body and soul. And unless he comes through grace, no soul can be cured, and so because of this he says, "I will come," – not by bodily presence but through spiritual grace – "and heal him," (Mt 8:7).

Since, therefore Christ is the proper and immediate doctor of the soul of the sinner, let us see how he might cure the sick soul. This matter is very subtle, and so I shall explain it to you through a comparison to a physical doctor, who in curing the body does seven things. For a good doctor first wishes to examine the patient, who generally is lying in his closed room, hidden. Second, the doctor lights a lamp and looks at his face, in the light of which he recognizes his interior condition.

- - First his face is examined. [facies eius inspicitur]
 - Second his pulse is taken, [pulsus tangitur]
 - Third his urine is inspected, [urina attenditur]
 - Fourth a diet is prescribed, [dieta praecipitur]
 - Fifth, a medicine is given, [syrupus immittitur]
 - Sixth a purgation is performed, [purgatio tribuitur]
 - Seventh, dining is allowed. [refectio conceditur]

Christ the heavenly doctor, observes all these things, in order, in curing a sinner's soul.

Face Examined

First he wants to see his face, i.e. the disposition of the sinner, because he lies in the dark room of guilt, on the bed of sin, nor does he see the danger of the demons who are watching him. Because if the sinner could see clearly the good which he lost through sin, and the evil which he incurred, and the danger which he is in, he would immediately flee from sin. And so

David says, speaking of sinners in Ps 81: "They have not known nor understood: they walk on in darkness," (v. 5). Note, when he says "They have not known," good things, namely those which they have lost, "nor understood," the evil things which they have incurred, "they walk on in darkness," not seeing the danger in which they are, of falling into hell if they were then to die. But when Christ comes he lights the lamp of his mercy, which he sets before his face, i.e. the conscience of the sinner, lighting it up, so that he might recognize his sins. When the religious says, "O wretched me, for so many years I was." etc. Same for a clergyman and layman. He is then enlightened by the ray of divine mercy, when he recognizes his evil life, and the sins which he committed. So scripture says, "The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, which searches all the hidden things of the bowels," (Prov 20:27), that is, of the mind.

Christ observes this practice, and it served in the cure of St. Peter, who on the night of his passion, when he denied him, in the first denial did not recognize sin, because he was lying in a dark room, nor in the second, nor in the third, but the text says that the cock crowed. "And the Lord turning looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word, which Jesus said to him: "Before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times. And Peter going out, wept bitterly," (Lk 22:61-62). Note that Christ did not look at Peter in his first denial, nor in the second, but after the third, after the cock crowed. But why did he look at him more then than before?

St. Gregory says in his "Moralibus" that the cock crowing signifies the preacher for two reasons. First because the cock, before he crows, excites himself, when he strikes himself with his wings. So the preacher should first excite himself, exciting himself with two wings, and striking himself: first he ought to free himself from sin, second he should maintain a good life. Because if one wished to preach humility, he should see that he is not proud, and so for the rest. And so the Apostle says, "For I dare not to speak of any of those things which Christ works not by me," (Rom 15:18). And, "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway," (1Cor 9:27).

The second reason is, because the rooster crows stronger and more often at the end of the night as day approaches. So the preacher should preach stronger and more often now ,at the end of the night of this life, with the

day of judgment approaching. And note here how God poses many questions to Job, among which were these, saying, "Who has put wisdom in the heart of man? or who gave the cock understanding?" (Job 38:36). He isn't speaking of the rooster, the animal, but the "rooster" spiritual preacher who ought to have the wisdom of avoiding sins and clinging to a good life, and the understanding of preaching, especially now, at the end of night, so that the people might awaken from their sins. When, therefore the rooster crows – the preacher by preaching – then Christ gazes at us by enlightening us. Then you come to a recognition and remembrance of your sins. Behold the first procedure of the medicinal cure by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Taking the Pulse

The second work of a physical doctor is to take a pulse. So too Christ, in the contrition of the heart. For contrition is a certain medicinal touch of the hand of Christ on the artery of the heart. Like a doctor he takes the pulse with his whole hand, but one finger especially senses. So also Christ, takes the pulse with the hand of his mercy, which hand has five fingers, i.e. five motives for contrition. And the first is fear of eternal damnation, which is like the thumb, because commonly sinners begin contrition from this motive, from fear. Second is the pain of damnation, because from sins he lost all his merit, so much so that if he died then nothing of his good deeds would count for him. And so he weeps, like a merchant who lost everything. Third is the pain of loss, because he lost his inheritance of paradise. How he would be devastated. It would be like the pain of the prince, the king's firstborn, who because of his guilt would lose the inheritance of the kingdom. Fourth is most important, when you think that by sinning you have offended your creator, who has given you so many good things. Fifth by thinking how you by your sins have made yourself an enemy of the angels and all the citizens of heaven, as if all of this city would be your archenemies; that friendship has deteriorated. It is clear then that true contrition is nothing other than a certain medicinal touch of the divine hand. About this scripture has, ".and I went away in bitterness in the indignation of my spirit," and so, "the hand of the Lord was with me, strengthening me," (Ez 3:14), giving contrition and a purpose of not returning to sins. And so confessors, at the end of a confession ought to ask,

"Do those sins displease you, and do you have a purpose of not returning to them?" If he says, "No," he ought not to be absolved.

Examining the Urine

Third, the urine is examined. For in the water a doctor recognizes illness and the disposition of the body. Behold, here, oral confession, for through confession is revealed and shown the interior disposition of the sinner. Confession is like a urinal, in which the stinking urine of the sinner, existing within him, is revealed to the confessor, and there the illnesses of the soul are recognized. But it is required that the urine be clear, i. e. that his sins be confessed clearly. Note, against those who minimize and excuse themselves, confessing by accusing others. It is necessary indeed to show clearly the urine of a bad life to the confessor, by accusing oneself, bravely telling the truth. And so I give this counsel, lest you make your confession with those "confessionals" [possibly handbooks of sins for the penitent], well ordered and not heartfelt, because there is a double error. First, accusing yourself of sins which you have not committed is a mortal sin, of lying in confession. Second because through those generalities many sins are glossed over. Those confessions [or "confessionals"] are only for remembering sins, but not for confessing them.

Also it is required that the door of the urinal be closed, lest in confession you might reveal the sin of another. For example if someone has sinned with a sister or daughter, he should turn away, so he might seek out a confessor who does not know his sister or daughter, lest the sin be revealed. If however he does not find such a confessor he ought so to say, "Father I have sinned with one very close to me." This is the mind of St. Thomas in IV Sent. Dist. 16, namely to preserve the good name of another in confession.

A figurative example of confession is found in scripture: "Joshua said to Achan: My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me what you have done, hide it not. And Achan answered Joshua, and said to him: Indeed I have sinned against the Lord the God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done," (Jos 7:19-20). Note when it is said, "My son," here confessors have an example of how they should speak gently to the sinner. And so the Apostle speaks to confessors: "If a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness,"

(Gal 6:1). Second [Joshua] says, "give glory to the Lord God of Israel," because honor which is given to the confessor, is given to God, because the confessor takes the place of God. Note, this is against those who come to confession very casually, as if they were dancing, etc.

Diet is Prescribed

Fourth, a diet is prescribed, having recognized the illness, and this happens in the restriction of life and abstinence from the occasion of sins. For example, For a diet which Christ gives by means of the confessor, to the proud, the vain, the pompous, is that they be humbled. Same for a vain woman, and so for the other sins of lust and greed etc. Note, this is against some confessors who know only to give a diet of masses, to each sick person. They prescribe the same medicine. Note also against those who prefer not to keep to the diet given by the confessor for the health of their soul, but would well keep a diet given by a medical doctor for the health of their body. And so the Apostle Peter: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul," (1Pet 2:11).

Medicinal Syrup is Swallowed

Fifth, the medicine [syrupus] is swallowed. This happens in grace and devout prayer. Syrup is sweet; so prayer is sweet. Would it not seem to you sweet, if at any hour you could speak with the king or the Pope? In devout prayer a man is speaking with Christ the King, and Pope. And he replies in his own way by giving consolation, illuminations, good resolves, and things like that. But many are deaf, and do not hear. But David the prophet heard, and so he said in prayer in Ps. 118: "How sweet are your words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth," (v. 103).

Second the syrup-medicine is taken in the morning and in the evening, in a certain measure; so many Our Fathers and so many Hail Marys, etc.

Third the syrup-medicine is taken mixed with warm water. So also when in prayer God grants you some tears, etc. about which it is said, ".and give us for our drink tears in measure?" (Ps 79:6). About this Christ said, " we ought always to pray," morning and evening, "and not to faint," (Lk 18:1).

Purgation Is Performed

Sixth, purgation is performed. This happens in the restitution of things taken, and the forgiveness of injuries. Purgation expels bitter corrupt humors, superfluous, and it expels them. Purgation is used against cholera, and it signifies that we should forgive injuries for God's sake, close our eyes to them. Say whatever you wish. It is necessary to rehabilitate the unjust. You, robber, if you have something at home which you stole, or you loan-sharks, or you slave drivers, you judge, you lawyer, you merchant, you cleric, if you obtained your position by bribery, the purgation of restitution is necessary if you wish to be saved. So it is said, "The sin is not remitted, unless the stolen is returned." It is a rule of the theologians, and the jurists, *14, q. 6 Si res*. Certainly one says that this purgation is hard. Other medicines please me more. A remedy against this bitterness is to taste the sting in one bite of a bitter red apple. This happens by thinking of the bitterness of eternal damnation and death, through which, either by force or voluntarily it is necessary for you to give up everything which you have. Better to give it up now, by meritoriously restoring. Whence Jerome, to Paulinus, last chapter, "It is easy to despise everything, who always thinks that he is about to die. With the remedy of this thought purgation of restitution is easily accepted. So the Apostle Paul, "Render therefore to all men their due. Owe no man any thing," (Rom 13:17-16).

Dinner is Permitted

Seventh, dining is permitted, when for building up strength, meat is offered – not beef or veal, but chicken. And this happens in Holy Communion, because, restitution having been made, man can receive communion, and eat the Lamb, the Son of that blessed ewe, the Virgin Mary. The meat is most delicate, and wine is drunk, his blood, which is contained in the host. So he himself said, "For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me, and I in him," (Jn 6:56-57). Just as the body of a sick person is strengthened by eating, so the soul in worthy communion. But just as for the sick person it would be deadly to eat meat before purgation, so would it be for the sinner, to receive communion before making restitution. See therefore why he says,

"I will come and heal him," (Mt 8:7), which is the theme. Thanks be to God.

A375. Friday after Ash Wednesday, On Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving

Mt 6:1-6 Douay transl. Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. 4 That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee. And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.

"Take heed that you do not your justice before men," (Mt 6:1) The theme is the word of Christ, advising us, saying "Take heed." The Lord Jesus Christ in this theme calls penitence "justice." It is the custom in sacred scriptures, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, that true penitence is called "justice." The reason: because through good penitence man does true justice for himself, and for all the good things, by which we commonly sin which are three, namely

- The material body, [corpus materiale]
- The rational soul, [anima rationalis]
- And temporal goods [substantia temporalia]

For penitence, if it is true, ought to do justice, and punishment [punitio] to these three. And first it does justice to the body by afflicting it through fasting, vigils, disciplines, and pilgrimages etc., because from its inclination we commit many sins. And so lest God do justice to the body in hell through those evil ministers, man ought to do justice here through penance. This privilege God gives uniquely to human nature, that each renders judgment in his own case. Even though man renders justice to himself, he [God] is content. Behold the privilege: "But if we would judge ourselves, we should not," by the Lord, "be judged," (1Cor 11:31), in our body. And so when the repentant soul, which has done justice, comes before Christ at judgment, and is accused by the demons, then the soul responds with the

saying of David in Ps. 118: "I have done judgment and justice: give me not up to them who slander me," (v. 121).

The same penitence for the soul. Many sins are within the soul through wicked thoughts, through hatred, rancor, malice, through ill will, or through errors and false opinions. But penitence does justice through devout prayers, as if by binding up the soul in the chain of devout prayers, which pass verbally through the neck, whose head is bound at the foot of the throne of Christ, as if saying, "Lord, because I am judge in my own case, I suspend my soul etc. lest you suspend it in the fork of hell."

Third, penitence does justice regarding temporal goods, which have been for you an occasion of sin, in committing secret thefts, robbery, usury, overcharging, for extortion, withholding salaries of your workers, or the goods of the church, or of the dead, not paying tithes, first fruits etc. Penitence does justice by repaying.

It is clear therefore true penitence is nothing other than justice, and so it is said, "But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he has committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he has done: in his justice which he has wrought, he shall live," (Ez 18:21-22). Of this justice, true penitence, the theme speaks when it says, "Take heed that you do not your justice," that is, penitence, "before men," (Mt 6:1). The theme therefore is clear. Christ himself shows and declares in the holy gospel today how it is to be avoided, lest penitential justice happens before men.

There are three parts in which he shows how penitential justice should not be practiced before men.

- First about the physical body,
- Second about material affluence,
- Third about the rational soul.

Bodily Penitence

I say first etc., and this, when he says in the first part of the gospel, "Take heed that you do not your justice before men," (Mt 6:1), which is about the body through fasting, vigils and abstinences, you do before men, for their

recognition, not for God. Note here the difference between the recognition of men and of God. For the recognition of men extends itself only to the exterior works, and not to the interior. But the recognition of God extends itself to both works, because he sees all things clearly, "Nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man sees those things that appear, but the Lord beholds the heart," (1Sam 16:7). Note, according to St. Thomas [I, q.57, a.4](#), where he asks whether the angels know the thoughts of the heart. Response:

A secret thought can be known in two ways: first, in its effect. In this way it can be known not only by an angel, but also by man; and with so much the greater subtlety according as the effect is the more hidden. For thought is sometimes discovered not merely by an outward act, but also by change of countenance; and doctors can tell some passions of the soul by the mere pulse. Much more then can angels, or even demons, the more deeply they penetrate those occult bodily modifications.

In another way thoughts can be known as they are in the mind, and affections as they are in the will: and thus God alone can know the thoughts of hearts and affections of wills. The reason of this is, because the rational creature is subject to God only, and He alone can work in it Who is its principal object and last end. Consequently all that is in the will, and all things that depend only on the will, are known to God alone. Now it is evident that it depends entirely on the will for anyone actually to consider anything; because a man who has a habit of knowledge, or any intelligible species, uses them at will. Hence the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 2:11): "For what man knows the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him?" ([I, q.57, a.4](#)). Cf. Also II Sent., d. 8, ad 5m. Also in IV Sent d. 45, q. 3, ad 5m.

Now therefore returning to the point, let us see what it is to fast "before men," and what it is to fast before God. To fast before men is to abstain from meat and especially to eat only once a day. Also to abstain from those delights of the body. This is fasting, which falls into the recognition of men. But to fast before God is when not only the body but also the heart abstains from stews [cibis potionatis], whether of the poisons of wicked thoughts, or depraved desires, of rancors, of ill will and from the desire for revenge. And

because there are many who fast before men and not before God, he says, "Take heed that you do not your justice before men," (Mt 6:1), supply "only" before men, but also before God, which is to say just as you fast by abstaining from bodily foods, fast also from the deadly and indigestible foods of the heart. etc. This fast Christ commands in the gospel of Matthew 5, in the first part of the gospel, saying, "You have heard that it has been said, You shalt love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who makes his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and rains upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them who love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans do this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens do this? Therefore be perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect," (Mt 5:43 48).

Note when he says "be perfect," by fasting, not only before men but also before God, "as also your heavenly Father is perfect," who in this world has many enemies, all sinners and infidels, yet he loves them and gives them the blessings of the sun, the moon, the rain and provisions. And so like good children we are assimilated to our heavenly Father. Also because we are bound to do more for God than the infidels, because they alone love those loving them, this also dogs do. But when a creature loves with the love of God, they not only love those who love him, but also their enemies, this is meritorious. Also if you greet those who greet you, no thanks for that. But there are many who say they do not hate someone, but they do not speak to them, unless the other speaks to him first. I tell to you that he who speaks first and greets the other, he then gains merit, a crown. And so we not only fast before men but also before God, then we shall be perfect in our fasting.

Today's epistle agrees with the gospel. It tells how the Jews, in the time of Isaiah the prophet, as is found in Isaiah 58, had great tribulations in Jerusalem of drought, famine, locusts and such. The rulers of the city ordered that all would fast for some days, and the more they fasted, the worse the troubles grew, on which account they came to the temple and praying said, "Why have we fasted, and you have not regarded. We have humbled our souls, and you have not taken notice?" – by accepting it. And God responded to them through Isaiah the prophet, "Behold in the day of

your fast your own will is found," (Isa 58:3) – note, he did not speak of God who commanded to forgive and love enemies – "and you exact of all your debtors. Behold you fast for debates and strife, and strike wickedly with the fist. Do not fast as you have done until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high. Is this such a fast as I have chosen: for a man to afflict his soul for a day? . will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord?" (Isa 58:3-5). Note, enemies are called "debtors." This is clear when it is said, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," our enemies (Mt 6:12). The debts are recalled through the desire of revenge.

But the fast, which he wants and chooses is that which follows, "Loose the bands of wickedness," (Is 58:6), which happens in two ways, through parents, or through a valet or aide. And when it is said to them that they make peace, they say "I will not make it, unless with my friends, or my valet or aide makes it. It is good to require them that they make peace, otherwise you go with God." And if you swear an oath to them via your valet or aide, it need not be kept, because it is contrary to charity. Therefore it is said in the plural, "Loose the bands." Second, "undo the bundles that oppress," (Is 58:6), namely hatred which someone holds in his heart, and this is the fast, which he chooses. Thus, the first part is clear. See why he says, "Take heed."

Penitence of Material Affluence

Second, I say that Christ warns lest penitential justice happen before men, from our material affluence [*de abundantia temporalis*], which happens through restitution and almsgiving. And this Christ shows in the second part of the gospel, Matthew 6, when he says, "Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. That your alms may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you," (Mt 6:2-4). To explain this text note how, the Jewish rabbis and Pharisees of old did not care about heavenly glory but about temporal and terrestrial glory, and so everything whatsoever they did they did only before men. And when they were to give alms, first it was cried out through the city, and they followed the crier that they might hear the praises from the people saying, "O how pious is this

man!" and they delighted in these praises. Behold vainglory! And so Christ said about them, "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." So that great reward is lost which God promised to persons of mercy saying, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," (Mt 5:7). When the soul which gives alms or other goods out of vainglory, comes to judgment before Christ, immediately it will be remitted to hell, saying that it has already received its reward here. If it is asked, therefore, what manner should we hold to in giving alms, this Christ shows saying, "But when you give alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing," (Mt 6:3).

Note here three moral points. First, temporal riches are called "hands." Reason: because just as by hands we do all our deeds, – hence the Philosopher says that the hand is the organ of organs – so with riches man does all his business. The right hand is good and just money earned, from his own labors or acquired possessions. The left hand is bad money, unjustly acquired or collected, from theft, usury, robbery, simony and the like. So about this Solomon wrote: "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me," (Song 2:6). Restitution should be made from the left, and alms given from the right,. And so he says, "But when you give alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing." (Mt 6:3). And so I give you useful advice, that in your financial books, or accounts you should put yourself in the middle, and money from good work is put in one side and from the unjust deed on the other side, because when they are placed together restitution is forgotten; and through that middle stance it is remembered. And then you know from which hand you give alms, and from which you make restitution. And according to this understanding Tobias said to his son, "My son. Give alms out of your substance, and turn not away your face from any poor person: for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from you," (Tob 4:7).

The second point is on the part of the intention of giving alms. The hand is called "right," when the intention is righteous [recta]. When alms are given solely out of love and honor of God who has given us so much alms, by creating, providing and redeeming us with the treasure of his blood. This intention is called the right hand. Or by thinking, "I shall now give alms, so that when I ask for alms at the gate of paradise, God might give me a crumb of his glory. This therefore is a right intention. Beware therefore lest you

give alms from a "left" [sinistra] intention, of praise or vainglory. "Let not your left hand know," the intention of vain glory. Many great works are lost because of a "left" intention.

The third point, the manner of giving alms, which can be good or evil, it is said to be a "right hand" or "left." The good way of giving alms is, when alms, a work of piety, are given with piety, benignity, and out of pure charity; then they are given with the right hand. When however given in a bad way, it is given like bread to a dog, or because they pretend not to hear the poor, or with indignation at the insistence of a beggar, then it is given by the left hand. And so the text says, "Therefore when you give alms." And so the counsel of the Apostle must be kept saying, "Every one as he has determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver," (2Cor 9:7). A practical note. When someone goes to church, he should carry in his hand what he proposes to give out of love of God. See why he says, "But when you give alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing." So the advice of the theme is kept, "Take heed that you do not your justice before men," (Mt 6:1).

Penitence of The Soul

I say, third, that in the third part of the gospel, Christ our Lord shows how to do penitential justice from a rational soul, not before men, but secretly. "And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But you when you shall pray, enter into your chamber, and having shut the door, pray to your Father in secret: and your Father who sees in secret will repay you," (Mt 6:5-6). This is said about the manner of praying of the ancient hypocrites in the synagogues, villages and street corners, where people would gather so they might be seen. O about these blessed ones, about whom Christ in the gospel said, "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward," (Mt 6:5). O stupid ones, that such a precious jewel, as is prayer, they give away for such a paltry and contemptible price. And so Christ shows us how to pray saying, "But you when you shall pray, enter into your chamber, and having shut the door, pray to your Father in secret: and your Father who sees in secret will repay you," (Mt 6:6).

Note, "into your chamber." But someone can say about this, "Should one NOT pray in the temple of God, or in the church?" Response: this is understood in two ways. In the first way, the conscience is said to be the secret chamber, and this prayer happens in the churches, namely not crying out nor making grand gestures in order to be seen, lest others be disturbed, but "by shutting the door," i.e. praying secretly. And this ought to be understood about prayers which happen in public or in common. About other special prayers, and the rest a man should shut himself up in his room. So the text is understood.

But here someone can argue saying, It seems that our Lord in his teaching is contradicting himself, because he says in today's gospel, "Take heed that you do not your justice before men," And in another place he says, "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven," (Mt 5:16). This seems to be a contradiction. Response: It is not a contradiction. But hear the explanation. Christ since he is the Lord and universal master gives his teaching to men, both to perfect persons, and also to the imperfect. Because they had to instruct others and to inform them in the spiritual life and teaching, he was saying, "You are the light of the world," (Mt 5:14). And he was speaking to the apostles and other perfect persons, whom the winds of adulation did not harm. And so he said, "So let your light shine," namely your good works and catholic teaching, "before men, that they may see .," etc. as if he had said, "Bear the royal banner," that is, the evangelical teaching, "under the standard of a good life," that all might say, "Certainly this one practices what he preaches, because otherwise he is not believed."

But to the imperfect, and those just beginning a good life, whom the winds of praise might harm, he says, "Take heed that you do not your justice before men," This question was once asked by St. Antoninus, who explained it in this way, "Just as a great fire is not extinguished by the wind, rather it is even increased, but a tiny light is blown out by the wind, so also a great fire of ardent devotion and charity is in the body of the perfect, but a modest fire in the imperfect. And so it is immediately extinguished by the slightest breath of praise, but in the perfect it is fanned and grows the more. And note this in the great honor given to St. Peter, when he came to

Antioch, and to St. John returning from exile, and to St. Paul in Galatians, as is clear in Galatians 4.

A391.Sermon for the First Sunday of Lent: The Temptation in the Desert

Mt 4:1-11 Douay trans.

1 Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. 3 And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 Who answered and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, 6 And said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said to him: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, 9 And said to him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. 10 Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan: for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and ministered to him.

"And behold angels came and ministered to him," (Mt 4:11) Today's gospel tells us of the holy fast of Jesus. The four points are as follows:

First, a convenient location,

Second, a sufficient time during which he fasted,

Third, an appropriate manner how he fasted,

Fourth, the fruit which resulted from the fast.

And about this fourth the theme speaks, ".angels came." etc., the fruits of what follows from the fast, because the angels came, etc.

Location

I say that today's gospel tells us about the holy fast; and first, the convenient place where he fasted. Notice that when Christ wished to fast for forty days, he chose not to fast in the city of Bethlehem, where he was born, nor in the temple where he was presented, nor in Nazareth where he was nourished, nor among men, but in the desert which is the habitat of beasts. This he says at the beginning of the gospel, "Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert," (Mt 4:2) – supply, wishing to fast – and this location was very appropriate. The reason is because of the fittingness which the desert offers

for the purpose of the fast. A fast is ordered to a three-fold end; namely restraining, liberating and for merit.

First for restraining sins and vices, which for the most part happen from the inclinations of the flesh. Because of this fasts are ordered for refraining. For just as in the case of a stupid man who is armed, the arms with which he could do much harm are taken away, so likewise the body of man, stupid, armed with food and drink and other delights, which God gave us for the necessity of nature, when indiscreetly taken often kill the soul. So they should be prudently taken away and removed from him.

Second, a fast is ordered for freeing the soul, which, as long as it is united to the body, is much impeded by the body in spiritual goods. And so it is said, "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul," (Wis 9:15). So that the soul might be free for working spiritually, the flesh is restrained through fastings, and so the soul is raised freely to God. It's like a scale. When one side is weighed down, the other is raised, and vice versa.

Third, [a fast is ordered] for meriting and acquiring spiritual treasure, because just as through the whole year a man works for the needs of the body, so, by fasting, at least in this holy season, you labor for the soul. Thus the Apostle, ".every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor," (1 Cor 3:8). For all of these reasons, see the authority of St. Gregory [the Great], who says, "You who restrain your vices by a bodily fast," –note the first, to restrain – "you raise your mind," – see the second, namely, to free the soul – "you will receive virtue and rewards," – see the third, to merit. Thus the triple ends of fasting very much fit a desert place, where vices are restrained, because you do not have the occasion of sinning, nor by seeing with your eyes, etc. and so for the other senses. It is clear, therefore, that the desert is the convenient place for a fast.

Thus about that text, "Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert," St. Gregory say in his homily today, "some are accustomed to doubt by which spirit Jesus is led into the desert? Truly and without any question it is appropriately understood that he is believed to be led into the desert by the Holy Spirit." But some might say these reasons are not appropriate for Christ, who in his body never had any bad inclinations. Also neither is his soul impeded by the flesh, and that he had merited his complete blessings. Also, because already he merits, both as God and as man.

I respond that regarding the person of Christ there is a good reason. For he did this so that he might give us an example, that in the time of the fast we might go to the desert leaving our cities, villages and communities. Understand it this way, that in the holy time we set aside our daily business, problems and conflicts etc. The model here is given for all. First to the religious and clerics. In this holy time [of Lent] it is enough that they are occupied about the hours and the office. Workers however in this holy time ought to hear Mass and a sermon, if there is preaching in some place, the first thing in the morning, and afterwards go about their business, so that they might provide for their children and household. The wealthy ought to get up in the morning for worship. They should hear a high Mass and a sermon, and afterwards pray the psalms after Mass, praying up to lunchtime. Those rich people who don't know the psalms, after Mass, should visit churches, monasteries and hospitals for prayer, where often there are many indulgences. After lunch then they can take a nap. Finally, they should go to Compline, [night prayer], and afterwards say Vespers [evensong] or the seven penitential psalms or the Our Father, etc. This is how someone goes out to the desert.

The great king David believed this, saying of himself, "Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode in the wilderness. I waited for him who has saved me from pusillanimity of spirit, and a storm," (Ps 54:8f). We don't read that David, after he was crowned king, was in the desert, but he remained alone in his palace room, far from his business, and so he achieves his purpose, "I waited for him who has saved me." And the fruit of his merits, "from pusillanimity of spirit," –see the freedom of the soul – "and a storm," – supply, of the evil inclinations of the spirit. It is clear then, [the desert is] a convenient place for a fast.

Time

I say secondly, etc. that the duration of forty days was sufficient. For the text says that he fasted forty days and forty nights. And why does it say forty nights? I respond that this is said to differentiate the fast of the Jews who of old fasted through the day, and at night would eat their fill, just as

the Muslims do. Do not believe that the fast of Christ in that forty days and forty nights was like that, because he consumed nothing.

Nevertheless, the duration of forty days and forty nights was sufficient. Reason: Because already you know that all God's commandments are ten in number, in which all others are fundamentally included. Just as God gave ten fingers to the body for doing all things, so he gave ten commandments, like ten fingers, for working meritoriously. These commandments we break in four ways, namely by thought, word, deed and omission.

- By thought we break two precepts especially [9 & 10], that: You shall not desire your neighbor's wife, because it does not suffice to keep the body clean from this deed, but also the soul from the thought. Secondly that: You shall not desire your neighbor's house nor anything which is his. From desires arise divisions and war, and so it is said, "For the desire of money is the root of all evils," (1 Tim. 6:10).

- By speech we break two other commandments, namely [2 & 8], that: You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, because one should never swear unless out of necessity or usefulness. And the other: Thou shalt not bear false witness, for whatever reason, neither in court or outside.

- By deed we break four, namely [1, 5, 6 & 7]: Thou shall not worship other gods. Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not steal.

- By omission we break two, namely [3 & 4]: Not keeping the holy days, and not honoring our parents.

Therefore by these four ways we break the ten commandments, and four times ten equals forty. For this reason we undertake forty days of penance, because we sin 4×10 [ways] because of the flesh. And so Gregory: "Through mortal wills of the flesh we break the Lord's commandments, which were received in the Decalogue, because therefore through the desires of the flesh we show contempt for the commandments of the Decalogue, it is fitting that we afflict the same flesh forty times."

Behold, therefore, it is a sufficient time that Christ fasted, giving us an example.

Now there is here a three-part question about Christ, since Christ fasted in the desert for forty days:

- And the first question is, where did he sleep?
- Second, what did he do?
- Third, what company did he keep?

Now listen devoutly, for the evangelists have not said expressly where he was sleeping, but often through symbols the truth can be elicited, just as from a husk the grain can be extracted. Christ's sleeping in the desert was prefigured in the patriarch Jacob. When he was a pilgrim and traveler from Canaan to Mesopotamia, he passed through parts of this desert. At night when he wished to sleep he put a stone under his head and in the night he saw the heaven opened and a ladder etc. See the story found in Genesis 28. All the [church] teachers say that Jacob signifies Christ. The ladder, penance. You have forty rungs for fasting. Some [people] ascend continuing their fasting, some descend breaking their fast. And Jacob, excited, was afraid, and he trembled at this vision. To him it was divinely revealed that Christ, the Savior of the world, would fast there and sleep at that place. Then Jacob said, "Indeed the Lord is in this place," (Gen 28:16). The first question is clear.

But contemplate this a while. Christ began his fast on the day after the Epiphany [his Baptism], when it was the coldest, and he was sleeping on the ground then, giving us an example, that in this holy season we should set aside our linens, mattress and [such] luxuries. And so David said, "Blessed is he who understands concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day. The Lord help him on his bed of sorrow: thou hast turned all his couch in his sickness," (Ps. 40:2,4).

The second question: What was the man Christ doing? Both because he was not working with his hands, and since he stayed forty days, was he not idle? The text doesn't clearly tell what he was doing, but Luke elsewhere says what Christ was doing in the desert: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God," (Lk. 6:12). Therefore he would spend his nights in dreaming and in prayer. But during the day what was he doing? I

reply, that in three activities, namely in reading, in contemplating and in praying.

-- Of the first he was reading in the book which he always had with him, the greater part of the whole bible, namely the book of life, i.e. of the knowledge of God in which is written all the things that ever were, are, or can be. And every day Jesus Christ was reading this whole book, reading the first chapter, namely of the glory of Paradise. And second, of the arrangement of the angels. Third, of the penalties of the damned. Fourth, of the sufferings of those in purgatory, and so on. Also about the natures of the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals of the earth. And all these he was seeing not only in general but even in particular, in their individuality, not only as God but also as man.

-- Second, he spent time in contemplating all these things.

-- As for the third, after the previous reading and contemplation, he was praying saying the prayer which later he would teach us, the Our Father. For "Jesus began to do and to teach," (Acts 1:1). And in our person he himself would say "Our Father." And, "forgive us, etc.," because just as the mouth speaks for the feet and the other members, so Christ as the head, speaks in the person of his members. In these [activities] therefore we should be about in this lenten time after the example of Christ. So he was saying, "Labor not for the meat which perishes," namely, the business of this world, "but for that which endures unto life everlasting," (Jn 6:27), namely, meritorious works.

The third question: Whose company did he keep? I say, that of wild animals, and beasts and robbers. Of beasts, it is said in Mark 1, that in that jungle [frondoso] desert there were lions, bears, wolves and many other animals. The text says: "And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan; and he was with beasts, and the angels ministered to him," (Mk 1:13). Practically, you can imagine that the aforesaid animals hid during the day in caves, and at night they went out to eat. And when they saw Christ we are able to say that, just as the ox and the ass adored Christ, so also [these] etc. This was the company Christ kept at night. During the day he had the company of thieves and other evildoers.

For that desert is between Jerusalem and Jericho, of which Luke 10 says, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers," (Lk 10:30). Here the place is called "adumim" in Hebrew, and is translated "redland" or "red rise." This place, where the man fell among robbers, is cruel and bloody. Imagine how it was when the robbers spied him from afar, they would approach to see if by chance he might have some money. But Jesus Christ changed their hearts and wills, and they showed Christ a great reverence. So we, in a moral sense, dwell with the beasts, the wild beasts of sin, thinking how we have lived like beasts, by sinning etc. Among robbers, thinking how by sinning, by appropriating honor and grace for ourselves, we have robbed God of [his due] honor and reverence and fear. On this account David said: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to thy name give glory," (Ps 113:9).

Manner

Third, the way in which Christ fasted, who overcame the temptation of the devil, is seen to be fitting. The teachers and especially the Master of History says that when in the baptism of Christ the voice of the Father sounded saying, "This is my beloved Son," "You are my beloved Son; in you I am well pleased," (Lk 3:22), he says that the devil heard this voice. He already knew that the time for the Messiah was completed, and so when he saw the miracles of Christ he concluded that he was the Son of God. But when he saw him hungry, he suspected the opposite. For this reason he wished to tempt him.

Taking a human form and in the robe of a holy man, he saluted him. To whom Christ, responding, said, "You have come. You do not believe." Briefly he spoke to Christ, "If you be the Son of God," (Lk 4:3). But the evangelist leaves it to us that we might touch on the practical point. So note, when the devil came to Christ himself saluting him he said: "Some are thinking that you are the Son of God. For the Son of God of old changed the staff of Moses into a snake, the water of Egypt into blood, (Ex 7), the wife of Lot into a pillar of salt. (Gen 19). So 'If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,'" (Mt 4:3) And replying, Jesus said: "It is written, Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," (Mt 4:4; Deut 8:3). See how appropriate this is for us, because when we fast now, the devil tempts us saying, "command that

these stones be made bread," (v.3) etc. We impatiently complain using harsh and cruel words, if our dinner is not ready or something else etc.

Second temptation. The devil, defeated by Christ in the first temptation from scripture, "Not in bread alone, etc." taking the next move from the fact that scripture, the word of God, is taught in the temple, proceeds to the second temptation, saying, "Are you willing that we go to the city to the temple?" Christ, however, as a good soldier, wishing to present himself to his enemy in every situation, followed him to the temple where there was a great crowd of people gathered. Then the devil said to Christ, "Are you willing that we ascend to the pinnacle? because there we can pray more privately." And when they were on the very top, the devil said to Christ, "Look at the crowd of people here below! There are many who do not believe you to be the Son of God, so, "throw yourself down,"(v. 6) because it is written of you, "For he has given his angels charge over you; to keep you in all your ways," (Ps 90:11). Christ said to him, "It is written again: You shall not tempt the Lord your God," (v.7). Here Christ gives an example to spiritual and devout people. When the devil tempts them to vainglory, they should stand firm, lest they fall.

The devil, seeing that Christ excused himself, so he would not incur vainglory, wished to tempt him again, and said to Christ, "Let us go to the desert, to a mountain high enough where we will be alone and can pray." And when they were on the mountain the devil showed Christ every corner of the earth, saying that all was his and he was able to give it to whomever he wished – but he lied – and he said, "All this will I give you, if falling down you will adore me," (v. 9). Christ, who in the other temptations patiently excused himself, in this temptation became indignant and shouted out saying, "Be gone, Satan: for it is written, The Lord your God shall you adore, and him only shall you serve,"(v. 10; Deut 6:13). But why?

Chrysostom says that some temptations touched on humility, but this touched on adoring the divinity, and on the crown of God, etc. St. Jerome says that Christ here gives us an example that we should tolerate injuries to our person, but those which touch upon God we should rebuke indignantly. Chrysostom: "In all personal injuries it is praiseworthy to be patient; injuries to God, however it is not wrong to rebuke to the utmost." Note the story about St. Louis the king of France who used to brand the tongues of

those who blasphemed God. A text from the prophets: "They who rule over them treat them unjustly, says the Lord, and my name is continually blasphemed all the day long," (Isa 52:5).

Reward

Fourth. The fruit resulting from fasting, is shown in the theme, when it is said: "And behold angels came," (Mt 4:11). Here is an image you can understand. It is like this, when two great lords, or princes, fight a duel in a closed arena, where the king keeps the field secure, and the friends and the army of both await the outcome on one side and the other. And when the battle is over, the defeated one flees with his entourage and servants, and the friends of the victor joyfully rush out to him with all the assistance necessary.

So it was with Christ and Lucifer, the greater princes of the world, as the Master of History says, but with a difference, for Christ is the prince of holiness and Lucifer of iniquity. Today they fought a duel, and God the Father kept the arena secure. Christ, as Chrysostom tells us, commanded the angels to stand back so they wouldn't be seen by Lucifer. Lucifer did the same with his minions, and only the two entered the arena. The weapons of the devil were three: the lance, the sword and the dagger. With the lance of pride and vainglory, with the dagger of gluttony and with the sword of avarice he tempted Christ and approached him. Lucifer himself had slain many with these weapons, but they could not harm Christ in any way. So, vanquished, he fled. And so it is of Christ the theme speaks, "and behold angels came and ministered to him," (v.11).

But how did they minister to him? Note that Christ was most in need of food, so they ministered to him in this way. Some devout contemplatives have said that the holy angels hastened to the Virgin Mary, who did not know anything of her son nor where he was. They told her of his battle and victory. When she heard from them the story of his victory, she sent him some food which she had prepared for him: cabbage, bread, spinach and perhaps some sardines, asking the angels if she could go to him, or if he could come to her, for lunch. Thus did the angels approach and minister to him.

So will it be for us. Now, in Lent, we are in a battle with the devil in a closed stadium. If we are victors over gluttony, vainglory and avarice, when the battle is over, on Easter day the angels will come, that is, the priests, and they will minister the food which the Virgin Mary prepared for us, at least materially – the Holy Spirit effectively – in the oven of her virginal womb, namely the body of Christ, in the consecrated host. Thus Christ says, "To him who overcomes, I will give the hidden manna, . which no man knows, but he who receives it," (Rev 2:17).

Greg., Hom. in Ev., 16, 1: Some doubt what Spirit it was that led Jesus into the desert, for that it is said after, "The Devil took him into the holy city." But true and without question agreeable to the context is the received opinion, that it was the Holy Spirit; that His own Spirit should lead Him thither where the evil spirit should find Him and try Him.

Greg., Hom. in Ev., 16, 5: The Creator of all things took no food whatever during forty days. We also, at the season of Lent as much as in us lies afflict our flesh by abstinence. The number forty is preserved, because the virtue of the decalogue is fulfilled in the books of the holy Gospel; and ten taken four times amounts to forty. Or, because in this mortal body we consist of four elements by the delights of which we go against the Lord's precepts received by the decalogue. And as we transgress the decalogue through the lusts of this flesh, it is fitting that we afflict the flesh forty-fold.

A440. Sermon for the Second Sunday of Lent, The Transfiguration

Gospel: Mt 17:1-9 Douay Trans.

1 And after six days Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: 2 And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. 3 And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, **let us make here three tabernacles**, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. 6 And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them: and said to them, Arise, and fear not. 8 And they lifting up their eyes saw no one but only Jesus. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead.

"Let us make here three tents," (Mt 17:4). We continue our reading in today's gospel. By way of introducing these words and the matter to be preached about, it must be known that in sacred scripture the devout hearing and listening to the gospel teaching are called tabernacles [or tents]. For if we analyze well the usefulness of tents, rightly they are compared to gospel teaching. For when tents or tabernacles, are pitched by soldiers, they are done for three reasons:

1. The first reason is because of the heat of the sun, to keep cool,
2. The second, against the gusting of the wind, for protection,
3. Third, for shelter against the rain.

All these benefits gospel teaching gives to those who listen carefully, and this against a threefold defect.

1. First, gospel teaching cools and preserves a man against the stimulation and ardor of the flesh, which moves many and stimulates them into sins of lust. Some are tempted to avarice, others into other sins. These teachings, therefore, give cool shelter against the ardor of the flesh.
2. Second, in this world there are many winds and storms and temptations of demons, but not inside the tent, i.e. of prayer and

contemplation. For prayer and contemplation keep out the temptations of the devil.

3. Third, there are great rains and floods, and these are the world, which offers many occasions for sinning. But enter the tent of gospel teaching and you will find there a remedy. And so Isaiah says of gospel teaching, "Over all the glory shall be a protection. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a security and covert from the whirlwind, and from rain." (Isa 4:5-6). So, prayer or contemplation gives cooling in the day against the ardor of the flesh. See, the first usefulness. And it gives security against the force of the wind, and this is its second strength or utility. And it provides shelter from the rains, and so the third benefit.

And so, by both reason and authority, these teachings appear like a tent, and so I intend to preach on three teachings, which are the three tents. "Let us make here three tents," which was our theme. Our sermon, therefore, shall contemplate this glorious transfiguration in three ways, a triple contemplation.

First because this transfiguration was gloriously celebrated,
Second because this transfiguration was calmly received,
Third because this transfiguration was piously kept hidden.

The First Tent – Gloriously Celebrated

My good people, let us place ourselves in these three tents, or in one of them. I say first that it was gloriously celebrated, because in the gospel it is said, "Jesus takes with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and brings them up to a high mountain apart: And he was transfigured before them. And his face shone like the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him," (Mt 17:1-3). And here I wish to pitch the first tent for our Lord.

Jesus chose three to follow him, whom he led to the top of the mountain, to show them the secret. When he prayed, he was transfigured, not that his figure which he already had was changed, but that it shone like the sun –

not like the sun shines, but incomparably greater than the sun. But in the gospel it is said "like the sun," because in the world nothing is found that is brighter, and not only in his face and hands, but also his clothes were like snow, although incomparably more so.

And two holy men from the past appeared there, i.e. Moses and Elias. You should understand [it was] the soul of Moses, for he was dead and his soul was in the limbo of the holy patriarchs, but Elias was not dead, rather he was alive, still living in a terrestrial paradise. He it was who was to preach at the time of the antichrist and against that very antichrist who would kill him, in martyrdom. And these three apostles, although they never had seen them, instantly recognized them, because of their splendor, and they saw them speaking with Jesus. Neither Mark nor Matthew report what they talked about, but St. Luke says that they were speaking with each other about the "excess of the passion" of Christ to take place in Jerusalem in those days. ["And they spoke of his decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem." (Lk 9: 30f)]

Now, good people, let us examine this in a practical way. These two, standing with Jesus, Moses and Elias, adored Jesus, knowing Jesus to be God and man, and they wondered much why he would permit himself to be chained and bound by the Jews, even if for sinners, since he could have accomplished his task by a single word. Filled with admiration, since he it was who gave glory to the angels and to all the others, they were saying, "O God, how great is this charity." Each of them discussed every aspect of his passion and detailed its excesses. The passion is said to be "excessive" because of the extremes of sufferings and love which he has shown to us, for, God, indeed is rich in mercy and because of this exceeding charity and mercy he has loved us, according to what is said in Ephesians, 2, "But God, (who is rich in mercy,) for his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us," (Eph 2:4). See how gloriously this transfiguration is celebrated. Behold, the first tent. Here we rest against the attack and the temptation of the devil. And this is the literal sense.

And now we enter [its] secrets. First we ask why Christ wished to be transfigured. Second, about the people he wished to invite.

My answer to the first is so that he might reveal his intrinsic glory and secrets. Just as it is said by the teachers. When Christ assumed humanity, let us see why he assumed it. I say for two reasons. For his soul, as it was created in the womb of the virgin Mary, immediately had such glory as he has now in heaven, and this because of his divinity. It was a spiritual substance. Nevertheless it was hidden in the body. And so we say, ".and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father," (Jn 1:14). It assumes a body, not glorious, but vulnerable and mortal, like us, and even more vulnerable than ours, and this for our sake. But it was otherwise for the soul. So because of his weakness he could be assimilated to his brothers in all things, as we read in Hebrews, "Wherefore he had to be made like unto his brethren in all things, that he might become merciful," (Heb 2:17). In such a body was the glorious soul, but it was not seen by people. By which it is believed that, just like the body, so too the soul would be vulnerable. Christ wished to show that this was not so. For this reason he wished to show his glory which poured out of his body and overflowed.

And listen to this parable. There is a man dressed in rags, yet he is extremely rich. People would consider him to be poor. He might gather all his friends and his family and show them his wealth, and the people followed him saying, that, although he is badly dressed, he is rich, we will follow him. So the common saying is, "Money makes for good friends." So Christ wished to be transfigured. For already he had promised when he said, "There are some of them that stand here, that shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," (Mt 16:28). And he was speaking of those whom he now took with himself.

Morally, for your sake. Christ first had glory and yet his body was capable of suffering. So for the souls of the saints who pass from this life to the next. First their souls are in glory, and yet their bodies remain in corruption. Nevertheless our body shall be transfigured, on the day of the resurrection, and the glorified soul will take up its body and overflow into the body. And that glorified body is called bright, and on the day of judgment it shall be brighter than the sun. And so it is said: "Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father," (Mt 13:43).

To the second question, why did he take just three apostles and not more, and why not all the saints, but just these two from the Old Testament – he

called five, the holy teachers say that from the testimony of two or three every word stands, if you ask about the number. But if you ask about the people, I say that these Apostles were Christ's friends. For by divine promise St. Peter was already constituted pope, he was invited so that he might know even more. Secondly he called James the Greater, because he was the first to receive martyrdom, as we read in the Acts, 12: "And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword," (Acts 12:2). Third, he called John, because he was a virgin chosen by God, and more beloved than the others, therefore he deserved to be honored more by the Lord.

I say that he wished to call the dead and the living to the transfiguration, since he is seen to be judge of the living and the dead. No so for the lords of this age, because they do not judge the dead. Therefore it is said: "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul," (Matt. 10:28). And Acts 10: ".that it is he who was appointed by God, to be judge of the living and of the dead," (Acts 10:42).

But why more Elias than Enoch, since he too was still alive? The question is unresolved. And why the dead Moses rather than the other holy patriarchs? Because there are many dead, especially since Abraham was the principal one. And so it is said, "in the bosom of Abraham," (cf. Lk 16:23). I say that I prefer one side of the various opinions about this, that which holds that only two of the holy patriarchs ever fasted for forty days: Moses, in Exodus 34, "And [Moses] was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights: he neither ate bread nor drank water," (Ex 34:28). And Elias: "And [he arose, and] ate, and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb, "3Kgs 19:8). Therefore because they fasted forty days, so they merited to be present at the transfiguration, in which it is clear how much this sacred fast of Lent is pleasing to God.

So we should fast for the forty days of Lent so on Easter Day we shall be at the transfiguration, namely by receiving communion, and we shall say with the Apostle [Paul], "But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," (2Cor 3:18).

Note here how Christ, Moses and Elias fasted for forty days, and it says that Christ fasted praying. Luke 6: "That he went out into a mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God." (Lk 6:12). Moses fasted for forty days by listening, (cf. Ex 34,) where it is said that he stayed on the mountain with God. Elias fasted by journeying or walking, (cf. above. 3Kgs 19). So we, at the example of Christ, should devote ourselves to praying. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children," (Eph 5:1), by praying every prayer and observance. Secondly, following the example of Moses, we should try to attend masses, and sermons and so we will be like Moses. Third, at the example of Elias, we should try to walk, to journey, in pilgrimage, because when you fast by praying like Christ and listen like Moses, you ought to fast like Elias traveling, that is by visiting churches, because there are many indulgences in such. Later, go to vespers, so that finally, on Easter, you shall be worthy to have the glory of paradise.

You ought in these times to set aside your courtrooms, your lawsuits, and your objections and allegations, by rather saying prayers, by saying the Our Father, the Hail Mary, etc. and after hearing a sermon and praying, you should journey forth, as I told you, that you might acquire some riches for your soul. And remember what Christ said: "Murmur not among yourselves," (Jn 6:43). In olden days, during this time [of Lent] court was not open nor was it held, but it is no longer such. And this about the first tent.

Second Tent – Quietly Received

The second point is that this transfiguration was quietly received by the Apostles, Moses and Elias. That is clear because St. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if you wish, let us pitch three tents here," (Mt 17:4). It was therefore quietly received, because when Christ so stood, transfigured, and the onlookers were perceiving the glory of paradise, Peter said, "It is good for us to be here," (v. 4), because he tasted the tabernacle (tent) of paradise, because he said, "Let us pitch three tents here," as if believing that John would stay with Moses, James with Elias,

and that he would be with Christ. St. Luke says about him, "not knowing what he said," (Lk 9:33).

Then the shining cloud came and overshadowed them. About this see, for although a cloud is bright of itself, nevertheless because of an impediment it is seen like a shadow. And so to those standing there, a voice comes from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son," (v. 5). And everyone fell on their face.

And Jesus came to the apostles lying there and he raised them up. Once on their feet they saw that Moses and Elias had already departed; Moses to the place of the holy patriarchs, Elias to the earthly paradise.

You can imagine that when the soul of Moses came to its place, he was questioned saying, "Where did you go and what did you see?" He replied, "I have seen the redeemer of the world, who is already many years old. Soon he shall come to free us." O, what a great joy came over them. The same can be imagined about Elias, when his companion Enoch saw him, and he said to him, "O companion, where did you go? Where were you? Tell me some news. Have you seen the Savior?" "Certainly," he replied, "I have seen the Savior. For I was carried by St. Michael and I clearly saw the Lord transfigured." He told him everything. Consider the sorrow of the other saying, "O why did I not go? O why was it not I?" Then he could have replied, "Because you have not fasted." So, about Moses someone might think what questions there had been. So it was received quietly .

But I ask what was the reason why Christ did not reply to the proposal of Peter saying, "Let us make here three tabernacles." According to the Gloss, he did not reply verbally, because it was not a rational request. Well enough! But I say that Jesus replied secretly. For Peter was seeking his glory on that mountain and Christ showed that it could not happen for five reasons:

1. The first is because of the arrival of the cloud. See, in deed, he replied.
2. Second because of the voice of the Father.
3. Third because they had fallen down.

4. Fourth because Christ helped them to rise up.
5. Fifth because they saw no one but Christ.

And so Christ wanted first to show Peter the five [events], before he was to come and to have glory. And first the cloud came and this signifies penance, and so: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matt. 4:17). So first penance must be done.

Second the voice of the Father sounded, "This is my beloved Son, .hear ye him," (v. 5). It signifies obedience. So it is said, " But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live," (Ezek. 18:21).

Third, fear and humiliation are required, because they fell down. For every saint fears death. For according to the Philosopher (Aristotle), " Death is the most terrible of all things," (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics 3.6 [1115a27]). Fourth, Christ has to come and this on the day of judgment, when, by divine power they shall be raised from death, because Christ made them rise up at his transfiguration when he said to them, "Arise, and fear not." (v. 7), because sinners fear his appearance. But it is said to the just, "Do not fear, arise."

Fifth " they lifting up their eyes saw no one but only Jesus," (v. 8), as is understood that only The divine essence and no creature is the object of glory, or of eternal life, speaking of essential or principal glory, about which St. Thomas, [\[Summa theologiae\] I, q.12, a.8 in the response to the 4th objection](#). And to this vision no creature through its own natural powers can come, as the same St. Thomas beautifully proves in the same question, namely [q.12, a.4](#). And so it is said in Romans 6: "But the grace of God, life everlasting, in Christ Jesus," (Rom. 6:23).

So that shall be the tent. Therefore he has to do all these things after, and in this way Christ responded by action (facto). And so in the Psalm, "Judge me O God," it is said, "Send forth your light and your truth: they have conducted me, and brought me unto your holy hill," (Ps 42:3), namely to Mount Thabor. Thus, the second point, namely how the transfiguration was calmly received.

Third Tent - Devoutly Hidden

The third part follows, in which that transfiguration was devoutly hidden. For the text says: "And as they came down from the mountain, etc.," Jesus said to them, "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead," (v. 9).

But why did he wish that the aforesaid transfiguration be kept hidden? Response: according to the teachers, the reason of his hiding was the piety of Christ, lest the Apostles and disciples hearing of such glory of Christ, if the transfiguration was revealed to them, and later having seen the ignominy of the passion of Christ, would have been more scandalized and would have sinned more by losing faith. Thus these three Apostles, "held their peace, and told no man in those days any of these things which they had seen," (Lk 9:36).

I believe, however, that St. John, with the permission of Christ, told the Virgin Mary of the glory of the transfiguration of Christ, and so, it seems, that Christ wished more for our salvation, than for his glory, when he says, "But I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeks and judges," (Jn 8:50). And so it was devoutly hidden, therefore now you have three tents. Here you rest, especially in these times [of Lent].

A561. Sermon for the Third Sunday of Lent, The Samaritan Woman

"We know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world," (Jn 4:42) This holy gospel contains a beautiful story which contains three great disputations between Christ and others:

- The first was between Christ and the Samaritan woman,
- The second was the Samaritan woman with Christ,
- The third was with Christ and the disciples.

And each disputation has an excellent question. The conclusion of the first disputation was, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," (v.19). The conclusion of the second disputation is that Christ is the Messiah. The conclusion of the third disputation is the theme, that [he is] the Savior of the world (v. 42).

The First Argument – with the Woman at The Well

As for the first disputation which was with the Samaritan woman it must be known that it was friendly, because Christ began it. So as Christ was traveling from village to village personally preaching, he came to Samaria, a great city, larger even than Paris. Near that city there was a high fountain -- it was called a fountain, because it gushed fresh water -- and a deep well. Christ was weary and totally exhausted from the journey. He sat himself on the edge of the well so he might wash his blessed face over the fountain, and so its coolness might refresh him. In the mean time he Apostles and disciples went into the city to buy food and bread.

And when Christ was alone at the fountain --the hour was noon -- a woman from the city of Samaria came to draw water. She found Christ there, and she did not greet him, recognizing that he was a Jew by his clothing, for Jews were not talking to Samaritans, just as we Christians do not talk with unbelieving Saracens. Christ began the disputation, saying, "[Woman,] give me a drink,"(v. 7). She, looked at him with a

fierce eye, began to argue with Christ, saying, "How do you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink,? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans,(v. 9) I shall certainly not give you a drink."

Christ replied saying, "O woman, if you knew the gift of God, and who he is that says to you, 'Give me to drink;' perhaps you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water," (v. 10). Note the gift of God given to the human race. This gift is the Son of God given in the incarnation, about which Isaiah, 9, ".A son is given to us," (Isa. 9:6). Behold the gift given in our redemption.

The woman continued arguing, saying to Christ, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where then do you have living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and himself drank there, and his children, and his cattle?" (vv. 11-12).

Christ responds: "Woman, you do not understand of which water I speak, because this is not it. Whosoever drinks of this water, shall thirst again; but he who shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever: But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting," (vv. 13-14), and he shall have eternal life.

Such was the power of Christ's words that the woman bowed to him, and already contrite in heart with humility and reverence said, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor have to come here to draw," (v. 15). Then Christ responded, "You want some of this water?" The woman replied, "Yes, lord." "Go to the city, and call your husband, and come back here," (v. 16). She said, "I have no husband," and Christ said, "Well have you said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands: and he whom you now have, is not your husband. He is a bully and a lecher [ruffianus et ribaldus], and you are his mistress." And he told her the names of all her husbands, and their characters, and what work they did. This one was called such, and had such a job, and died in this way, and so on with the others. "But this one which you now have is not your husband but a lecher and you too are a lecher." Then she began to cry out, "O Lord, Lord clearly I see that you are a prophet (v.19) and you

know everything that I have done (cf. v.39). Spare me, because I called you a Jew." The conclusion of the first disputation. Note she first called him a Jew, and later she calls the Lord a prophet. So much for the literal sense of the first disputation.

Morally. Now we uncover the moral lessons hidden for us. In this disputation there are six hidden moral [lessons], which we begin to explore through questions.

First, who is this Samaritan woman and what does she signify? Response: this Samaritan woman signifies every Christian sinner in two ways, and the gospel tells us. First, because she comes often, every day, to the water, but she is not satisfied. Such is the condition of sinners, because they come daily to the water of temporal prosperity, and are not satisfied. Such is the way of cupidity. For example, if a priest has a simple benefice, he tries to get a larger one, and is never satisfied. Behold the condition of the water of temporal goods which do not satisfy, because they do not hit the spot where the thirst is. For the thirst is for having worldly goods, such as, lands, possessions, gold, silver etc. These temporal goods do not enter within the heart. Even if you had a wagon filled with liquid gold, it would not satisfy you. But just as a starving man is not satisfied by the sight of food on the table, because hunger is in the stomach, and so unless the food goes in, it will not take away the hunger or thirst. So it is with the consumption of temporal goods. Thus, however much a man has, he thirsts and desires for more, because such things do not enter into his heart. Authority: "A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money: and he that loves riches shall reap no fruit from them, etc.," (Eccl 5:9).

And so direct pleasures and worldly delights, are like a fever which burns a person with thirst. He is then given a drop of water on the tongue, with a feather. The same with the delights of lust, of avarice, etc. And so wherever flesh seeks refreshment in temporal things, it discovers only failure. For the heart of a man is greater than the heavens and can be satisfied only by God, whom the heaven cannot embrace, but nevertheless the heart of man always holds fast to grace, and then man is

satisfied, so Christ says, " Whosoever drinks of this water, shall thirst again; but he who shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever, But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting," (vv. 13-14), by the water of grace and his presence. Thus the conclusion is from theology, that sanctifying grace [*gratia gratum faciens*] brings and has with it the presence of God. And by this sign it can be known if a person is in grace, when someone does not desire things leading to sin. Note: "springing up into life everlasting." What a leap is that which the soul makes, when by mouth it leaps immediately into heaven. Think if a man would jump from the earth into heaven. O what kind of a leap would it be, even if it is beyond higher, how much higher yet is it to heaven.

The second secret: Jesus, fatigued by the journey, was sitting there at the fountain. It was almost noon. Why was Jesus more exhausted at that hour from the journey than any of the Apostles? Because he was sustaining the whole world and all creatures. Reason: you know, good people, that there never was there a man of such a delicate constitution like Christ as man. Why? Because we are conceived and begotten from most vile and corrupt stuff, and so we have a coarser constitution for enduring labors. The body of Christ formed by the Holy Spirit, was not of most vile matter but from the purest drops of the blood of the Virgin Mary, and so it was more delicate; or because he was fasting every day, and "passed the whole night in prayer," (Luke 6:12), and he labored preaching every day

And about this sensitivity [*delicatura*] it is said in Isa 53: " .To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground: there is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he has born our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon

him, and by his bruises we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, every one has turned aside into his own way: and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all," (Isa 53:1-6). The arm of the Lord through which God the Father has worked all things, is Christ as God. "All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made." (John 1:3). And speaking of his humanity he says, " And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground," (v. 2). A tender plant is a little shoot and delicate, which grows up at the base of other large trees, or which sprouts in dry ground where there is not any water. It is very delicate and fragile. So it is clear the reason why Christ was more exhausted than the Apostles.

If it is said "Could he not care for himself?" I reply: Always, but he would not have given us an example of laboring for good works, so that we might have patience when we are tired and exhausted, as Christ was, and when from preaching or fasting or other reasons we are worn out, we take comfort from the example of Christ and we acquire patience. Thus the Apostle, "But in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God," (2 Cor 6:4-7).

The third secret is: Why did the Apostles leave him alone? because no one remained with him. The text says: " For his disciples had gone into the city to buy meats," (v. 8), and they left him alone in the desert, because that well was a considerable way from the city of Samaria. Response: why they left him alone, because it was at the command of Christ that all should go, so that he might save that woman. For if some disciple had been there, the woman would have been deterred, nor would she have spoken with him, and so he ordered that they all should go to the city to buy what was needed.

In this we are morally instructed. And we have an example, that just as Christ in the incarnation has dismissed the company of thousands of thousands of angels, Job 25: " Is there any numbering of his soldiers?"

(Job 25:3). For our salvation he dismissed them. The same way, as he dismissed the company of apostles for the salvation of that Samaritan woman. So likewise we [should dismiss] the company of friends, children, wife, etc. Also he says, "And every one that has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting," (Mt 19:29). Note "for my name's sake" which is Jesus, translated as Savior. "For my name's sake," i.e. for the salvation of a soul, that the religious leaves his homeland for the purpose of preaching. The same for the priest or layman, who leaving the world "shall receive a hundredfold, etc." Or wife, or children.

The question is: Is a man able to dismiss his wife for Christ, and the salvation of a soul, either his or of others? Response: that a man cannot dismiss a wife which he already has, unless they both agree upon entering religious life, and if the other is to remain in the world, they are bound to live continently. Likewise a father should not leave his children unless they are well provided with necessities, and are well instructed, educated and adult enough. The same holds for children, who should not leave their parents, poor and old, unless they are taken care of. Second, one "leaves a wife," not a wife which he has, but one which he might have, and children which he might have. For the love of Christ, he leaves everything. So, this text [auctoritas] is to be understood.

The fourth secret, or the fourth question is shown in this, when the woman says, "How do you, being a Jew, etc." (Jn 4:9). How does the woman know that Christ is a Jew? Response: that she recognized him by his speech in the same way as Peter was recognized on the night of the passion. "Surely you are also one of them; for even your speech betrays you," (Mt 26:73).

Morally. Everyone is recognized for where his homeland is. There are two opposing homelands: paradise, and hell, and in each they speak differently. The language of paradise is like that in the Psalm, "Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord: they shall praise you for ever and ever," (Ps 83:5). Therefore, when a religious or priest or layman freely praises God, it is a sign that he is one of those

from paradise. ". for even your speech betrays you," (Mt 26:73). It is otherwise when, with weariness in a confused and irreverent and non-devout way one recites the Office or prayers. It is a great sign of predestination to praise God with delight. The language of hell is that of which John says in Apocalypse 16: "And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, who has power over these plagues, neither did they do penance to give him glory," (Rev 16:9). Therefore, when one swears, contradicts [renegat], blasphemes, etc., it is a sign that he is a townsman and citizen of hell, whence, "you also are one of them, etc." Thus to swear and contradict is a manifest sign of predicted damnation.

The fifth secret is that water of which Christ spoke, "Whosoever drinks..," (v. 13) This is the spiritual grace which extinguishes ardor of pride in the proud, avarice in the greedy, lust in the lusting, etc., just as natural water puts out the heat of the body. Such a one does not wish for things inordinately, nor ardently seeks dignities, positions etc, like those do who still burn with the fever of pride, avarice etc. For the pure water of the grace of God extinguishes that burning in them. They who have grace say, with the Apostle [Paul], in 1 Tim. 6: "But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content," (1 Tim 6:8). He does not say "delicacies" [delectamenta] and by which we are "decorated" [ornemur] etc. This the grace of God accomplishes, or the water of grace "springing up into life everlasting," (v. 14). O, what a spring. Behold why he says, "he who shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever," (v.13), namely, with that temporal [thirst] from the heat of sin. Of this grace, Romans 6: "But the grace of God, life everlasting," (Rom 6:23), that is through "the grace of God" one has "eternal life."

The sixth secret or sixth question: Since Christ said, "Go call your husband," Why did he say that, since Christ knew that she did not have a husband? Response: that Christ chose this way of speaking so that the woman herself would speak the truth with her own mouth, that she did not have a husband.

Morally. " For you have had five husbands; and he whom you now have, is not your husband," (v.18). So when one sins out of weakness, or from

ignorance, each person has five husbands, and finally takes on the bully [ruffianum], the devil. The five husbands are the five natural bodily senses. For just as a man rules his household, so these five senses rule the body in [those] sins which come from weakness, like Peter when he denied Christ out of fear. But when one sins out of habit and malice, one is ruled by the devil, like a bully or a pimp. The Apostle says about this, "And they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will," (2 Tim 2:26). The same St. Paul says: "Know also this, that, in the last days, shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents," (2 Tim 3:1-2).

Second Argument – The Samaritan Woman with Christ

The second argument, of the Samaritan woman with Christ begins with her boldness. And to understand this disputation you should know that between the Jews and the Samaritans there was an ancient question as to where they should pray, in Jerusalem or there, on Mount Gerazim. The Jews said "in Jerusalem," because thus God commanded. The Samaritans however said "on this mountain," because the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped there. The Samaritan woman seeing Christ to be a prophet, who revealed her secrets to her, thought, "O this one tells you the truth." To seek the solution to this subtle question, she begins the by saying: "Our fathers adored on this mountain, and you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore," (v. 20). "Since you are a prophet, what do you say about this question?"

In his reply Christ acknowledged two opinions. First, that the truer opinion was that of the Jews, because although the patriarchs had adored there, nevertheless the place of prayer had been moved. The second opinion, that one can worship in every place, because God is everywhere. Then Christ replied: "Woman, believe me, that the hour is coming, when you shall adore the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem. You adore that which you do not know; we adore that which we know, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour comes, and is now, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and

in truth. For the Father also seeks such to adore him. God is a spirit; and they who adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth," (vv.21-24). And so Jesus resolved the question against the Samaritan woman.

"The woman said to him: I know that the Messiah (who is called Christ) is coming. Therefore, when he comes, he will tell us all things,"(v. 25). Jesus replied, " I, who am speaking with you, am he," (v.26). Nowhere in the gospels is it found that Christ so clearly said that he was the Christ, the Savior of the world, as he does here. And instantly the woman, enlightened, left her water jug and ran into the city, crying out and declaring and calling the people, "O my good people, come, and see a man who has told me everything that I have done. Is not he the Christ? They went therefore out of the city, and came to him," (v.29-30).

In this question there are three secrets.

1. The first is, God is spirit. What does it mean to adore "in spirit and in truth?"

1) To understand this, realize that it is an principle of philosophy, that truth is the correspondence of thing to intellect. For example, when the spirit thinks about the infinite sanctity and purity of Christ, and on the other hand it thinks about the gravest sins which man himself commits, then when the external gesture of the body corresponds to the spirit saying: "Lord I am not worthy to behold you. Alas, how many sins have I committed against your will and holiness etc.," and physically one bows down, by revealing humility externally, then [the body] corresponds with the spirit in the heart. But when the heart is in the tavern, and the body bows, it is not truth. In this way the publican prayed to God in the spirit and truth saying:" O God, be merciful to me a sinner," (Lk 18:13). For this reason, we now say. "Bow your heads to the Lord," [Invitation to the prayer at the end of Lenten Masses] as if the church is saying, you are not worthy to look upon him. For this reason, the statues are veiled in Lent as if to say we are not worthy to look upon these images.

2) Second, God is adored in spirit and truth. First in spirit by thinking of his dominion, how he created body and soul and all things are his. Otherwise of other lords. Second, he is to be adored in truth, by the genuflecting of both knees to him, temporal lords only the left, and prelates the right. In this way we say, "Let us bend the knees," [Flectamus genua. Levate. A liturgical command during Good Friday intercessions.] and it does not say by a knee. "Raise up," namely, the spirit on high. So when you wish to say a prayer, first you should pray in the spirit, thinking with whom you should be speaking, then in truth, by reverence of the body on the outside. Behold why Christ says, "The Father also seeks such to adore him in spirit and in truth," (Jn 4:23). And scriptures agree saying, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me," (Rom 14:11).

3) Third, God is adored in spirit and in truth. First in spirit thinking of his eternity, and in contrast of our own vile beginnings, because [we are] made of earth, and thinking of our end, because we shall die. And in truth by prostrating oneself on the earth, which is to say "to earth we shall return," and shall die, and God is in his eternity. This is signified in his passion when it is said, "He gave up his spirit," (Mt 27:50). There every Christian prostrates. Thus, David says, "Come let us adore and fall down: and weep before the Lord that made us," (Ps 94:6).

4) Fourth, God is worshipped in spirit, by thinking of the generosity of God who gives all temporal and spiritual goods, and on the other hand our uncleanness and needs. And in truth. So we raise our hands: the right for spiritual goods, the left for temporal goods.

5) The fifth manner of adoring God in spirit, by thinking of God's mercy, because since we are condemned to the pitchfork of hell, the Son of God was so merciful that he said to his Father: Blessed Father, I alone wish to be suspended for the whole people. And on the other hand, by thinking about sins for which the sentence has been given. And in truth, when the cross is signed in the heart saying: "The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord," (Ps 32:5) from your passion. Thus Paul, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," (Gal 6:14).

6) The sixth way of adoring in the spirit by striking our breast, thinking of God's infinite immensity and thinking of the offense committed toward him by our sins. Thus, the heart is struck with five fingers, just as we have five ways of sinning, namely, thought, word, work, omission and by persistence, because in these ways God is offended.

2. The second secret is when it says, "She left her jug, etc." Literally, why does she leave it? So she can run more quickly to the city. But spiritually, the jug symbolized the evil companions of the woman, who blocked her path, and so she left it. Many are such, who by the association and familiarity and love of certain people are impeded from the path to paradise. So the woman left her jug, i.e. her bad companions. Thus, the Poet, " Things you have which are harmful, [though dear, let go,]" (Cato, Distich, Lib. I, v. 6).

3. The third secret is when it is said that she went to the city, crying out, "Come, I shall show you a man..." (v.29). Thus, she was not satisfied with her own conversion, but wished to convert her neighbors, because she converted the whole city. Here we are instructed that no one ought to be content with his own conversion, but ought to go out to convert his neighbor, like the good and devout wife, sweetly to convert her crude husband. Likewise, brother, the brother; neighbor, their neighbor; servant, their lord; master, their disciple; a lady, her handmaiden. Ecclesiasticus 17, "And he gave to every one of them a commandment concerning his neighbor," (Sir 17:12). Also, the Apocalypse, last chapter, " And the spirit and the bride say: Come. And he that hears, let him say: Come. And he who thirsts, let him come," and drink, "and he who wishes, let him take the water of life, freely," (Rev 22:17). Note how the Holy Spirit says to man, "Come to Paradise etc."

The Third Argument – Between Christ and His Apostles

The third disputation was between Christ and the Apostles, humbly, because they said, "Rabbi, eat," (v. 31). and they set a meal before

him. However, Christ refused to eat, but replied saying, " I have meat to eat, which you know not," (v. 32). The evangelist says that, "The disciples therefore said one to another," namely between themselves, "Has any man brought him [something] to eat?" Christ however declaring which food he was talking about said, " My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work," (v. 34).

This he was saying for the sake of the people who were coming from the city, and when he saw the people, he thought, "It is necessary for me to preach," because he did not say I do not prefer to eat food, but he said, I have other food to eat, namely the word of God. For not by bread alone does a man live, "But in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," (Mat 4:4). Note that, in the example of Christ, a sermon should come from a fasting stomach.

And he preached to those from the city, O how sweetly, "and he remained there two days," (v. 40). And they believed in him, to such an extent that they said to the woman, "We now believe, not for your saying so: for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world. (v. 42) In such a way he illuminated us." Behold therefore the conclusion of this dispute.

Morally. The food of Christ is to do the will of God the Father. Thus, we do the will and we give him to eat, because this food is greatly pleasing to him.

- He wants food from bishops, that they enter through the door, not through simony. Second after they are inside, that they be more concerned about souls than stipends. Finally, that they live from stipends and share with the poor and give good example and good teaching. From this food God is satisfied.

- As for secular lords he wants food, namely that they minister justice both to the little ones and to the great, both to the poor as well as to the rich, and they do not qualify justice because of bribes and favors. Shunning robbery, content with their own income, they serve the people in peace.

- In religious he wants four foods, and from these Christ wishes to be fed, namely apostolic poverty, evangelical chastity, complete

obedience, and ceremonial observance. - And of priests he wants three foods, namely devoutly to pray their breviaries, celebrate worthily, and behave properly. 1 Tim 3:7, "Moreover he must have a good testimony of them who are without: lest he fall into reproach."

- Of the laity he wants two foods, and they are enough, namely the articles of the faith and the observance of the precepts of God. And finally, he would say to you in judgment, from Mat 25:34, "Come, you blessed of my Father, etc." namely with the aforesaid foods and so you shall be with Christ at the table of glory, about which he said, "And I dispose to you, as my Father has disposed to me, a kingdom; That you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom," here through grace, and in the future, through glory (Lk 22:29).

Jn 4:5-42 Douay trans.

5 He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria, to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink. 8 For his disciples were gone into the city to buy meats. 9 Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered, and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith to him: Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered, and said to her: Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever: 14 But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting. 15 The woman saith to him: Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw. 16 Jesus saith to her: Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman

answered, and said: I have no husband. Jesus said to her: Thou hast said well, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband. This thou hast said truly. 19 The woman saith to him: Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers adored on this mountain, and you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore. 21 Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me, that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father. 22 You adore that which you know not: we adore that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore him. 24 God is a spirit; and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth. 25 The woman saith to him: I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ); therefore, when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jesus saith to her: I am he, who am speaking with thee. 27 And immediately his disciples came; and they wondered that he talked with the woman. Yet no man said: What seekest thou? or, why talkest thou with her? 28 The woman therefore left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there: 29 Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not he the Christ? 30 They went therefore out of the city, and came unto him. 31 In the mean time the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi, eat. 32 But he said to them: I have meat to eat, which you know not. 33 The disciples therefore said one to another: Hath any man brought him to eat? 34 Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting: that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. 37 For in this is the saying true: That it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth. 38 I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour: others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours. 39 Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: He told me all things whatsoever I have done. 40 So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired that he would tarry there. And he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed in him because of his own word. 42 And they said

to the woman: We now believe, not for thy saying: for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

A600 Sermon on the Fourth Sunday of Lent: The Cure of the Man Born Blind

"And falling down, he adored him," (Jn 9:38). Our sermon shall be from the holy gospel today which contains a great and beautiful miracle which Christ performed, the cure [Vincent prefers the word, enlightenment] of the man born blind. But first, let us salute the Virgin Mary, etc. [Here he has everyone recite the Hail Mary.]

The complete gospel consists of three points,

- The first is the miraculous work (*operatio miraculosa*),
- The second is malicious attack (*impugnatio malitiosa*),
- The third is gracious approval (*approbtio gratiosa*).

And of this third, when the blind man, illuminated by Christ, approves the miracle by adoring Christ, [John] the Theologian says, "And falling down, he adored him," (Jn 9:38). Thus the gracious approval.

Miraculous Deed

The first shown in the holy gospel is the miraculous deed, about which the Gospel, "And Jesus passing by," i.e. exiting the temple, "saw a man, who was blind from birth," (v.1), who was standing there begging, and he whom Christ saw was familiar to all. The Gloss on Chrysostom, i.e. he looked on him attentively. Because of this attentive look, the Apostles found a reason for interrogating Christ saying, "Rabbi, who has sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (v. 2). They didn't ask whether this punishment had come from sin, because they presumed this, but they were asking through which sin. It seems that the Apostles were of the same opinion as the friends of Job, who were saying that all evil and illness come upon man from sins. Job was holding to the contrary: "I have not sinned, and my eye abides in bitterness," (Job 17:2).

Christ wishing to disabuse the Apostles of this opinion replied, saying, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God

should be made manifest in him," (v. 3). Note that Christ doesn't deny simply that children suffer something from the sins of the parents, especially in body which they have from their parents. Blessed Jerome even says that the secret sins of parents, which they commit behind closed doors, are often manifested in punishments of the children. Exodus 20: "I am the Lord your God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation," (Ex 20:5). And Isaiah: "Prepare his children for slaughter, for the iniquity of their fathers," (Isa 14:21). Ezekiel: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," (Ezek 18:20), and this with respect to the soul. But the penalties, with respect to the body, because God never punishes the soul of a child directly just because of the sin of the father. Thus he says in the same place, "Behold all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, the same shall die," (Ezek 18:4). But not so for this man; not from the sins of the parents, nor from his own was he born blind, "but that the works of God should be manifested in him," (v. 3). Note, [he says] "works" in the plural. For when an innocent infant suffers, four works of God are manifested.

First is manifested a work of justice. The Doctors of theology say that the first parents had been formed in original justice, and although the body is naturally vulnerable, nevertheless God had given that grace to Adam, because as long as he was obedient to God and the body also was obedient to the soul and that the body did not suffer some accident. But because Adam was disobedient to God, for this the body lost grace and remains in its misery and vulnerability. Whenever therefore you should see an infant suffering some evil, divine justice is manifested there, because on account of the sin of Adam bodies suffer justly. So David says, "And his justice unto children's children," (Ps 102:17). So in this blind man there was a defect of some principle of nature so that the work of divine justice would be manifested in him.

Second, in a suffering infant the work of divine mercy is made manifest, because the infant avoids sin. To the extent that this blind man lacks vision, many sins are avoided which are committed by the eyes. He was humble and merited from his patience. Thus Habakkuk 3: "When you are angry, you will remember mercy," (Hab 3:2).

Third, is manifested the work of penance, because when the sinner sees that he who is innocent is suffering, he says to himself, "O wretched one, what shall become of me?"

Fourth, is manifested the work of the grace of God, when God decided to cure him miraculously. So Christ cured this blind man miraculously. He says, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day," (v. 4). Here Christ calls his presence the "sun," which makes the day bright, and his absence through bodily death he calls "night." The Gloss says, "I must work," namely, miraculously, his "works, of him who sent me," namely the Father, "while it is day," i.e. as long as I am of the Father. "The night comes," namely of death and of my passion, when no one can work, miraculously. After his death through the prayers of the holy Apostles, Christ would work miracles. So David, "Give glory to the Lord," of lords, "for his mercy endures for ever," (Ps 105:1).

Note how Christ when curing the blind man used seven ceremonies. First he looked at him attentively. Second was the questioning of the Apostles, Third Christ spat on the earth. Fourth he made mud from the spittle. Fifth he rubbed it over his eyes. Sixth he sent him to the pool of Siloe. Seventh was the washing in that pool. Why did he want to keep so many ceremonies and details, when he could have enlightened him by a simple command, as we read regarding another blind man, in Luke 18, when Christ said, "What do you wish that I do to you?" The blind man said, "Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive your sight, etc.," (Lk 18:41f), and immediately he could see. Why, therefore in this case did he use so many ceremonies?

I respond, that Christ wished to cure [literally, illuminate] this blind man in this way so that he might give an example to every blind sinner how he can be enlightened. Note how everyone in the state of mortal sin is blind, because he does not see the danger of suddenly plummeting into the pit of hell. Now he is just falling from sin into sin. So, the Prophet says about sinners, "And they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned

against the Lord," (Zeph 1:17). Thus to cure him, it was necessary for Christ to follow the above ceremonies in bringing light to this blind man.

First, Jesus sees, i.e. looked at him attentively. See here the recognition of sins which comes from the glance of Christ, as was made clear to Peter, who on the night of the passion denied Christ three times. He did not acknowledge his sin until Christ looked at him, Luke 22: "And the Lord turning looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times. And Peter going out, wept bitterly," (Lk 22:61). See how the look of Christ is necessary for the recognition of sins. So David said, "Look upon me, and have mercy on me; for I am unique and poor," (Ps 24:16). Note "unique," i.e. alone, from whom God withdraws. Before his sin God was with him.

The second circumstance was the questioning of the Apostles, "Rabbi, etc.," (v. 1), in which is shown contrition for sins, which is nothing other than the questioning of the heart or a debate, for which reason the sinner, out of contrition, says to himself, "O wretch, what have you done? You have committed so many sins, what will happen to my soul? I have lost so many good things," etc. Note here the similarity with that merchant who on market day buys a straw basket as a gold one, who buys fish eyes for pearls, for which he paid everything that he had. He shows his purchase to his friends, who asked how he could be so duped, and that it was worthless. He did not despair because he counted on his rich father, but he blamed himself saying, "O miserable one, why did I not seek some advice. How stupid it was to make my purchase." So there are also today many stupid buyers in the world, who believed that they had bought a golden urn, namely honors, dignities, which nevertheless is worthless. Likewise they believe carnal delights to be pearls. But when they are enlightened by God and see themselves deceived, then they put their hope in Christ, like a rich father. It is clear therefore how contrition is only an indicting questioning of oneself.

Thus Job, 14, in the person of a sinner says, "How many are my iniquities and sins? make me know my crimes and offences," (Job 13:23). Where he points out four differences between sins. First is "iniquities," i.e. not equals, which are the sins which happen against the neighbor, and nevertheless God

wishes that we be equal in love. Second is where, "and sins," which are about deeds which happen against our own body, like lust, gluttony, laziness. Thus sins are called beastly. Third where, "crimes," which happen directly against God, like blasphemy. Fourth where, "and offenses," which are about deeds which happen against the soul, like pride, avarice, anger and envy. Therefore, "offenses," as if abandoned, because by these defects the miserable soul is forsaken. See why he says, "How many are my iniquities and sins? make me know my crimes and offences," (Job 13:23).

The third circumstance why Christ spat on the ground. Behold here oral confession which is nothing but to vomit sins and to purge of sins the stomach of the soul. And in this it is shown the manner of confessing by which the sinner ought to go, on bended knees before the confessor, and there to spit out and vomit those uncleannesses of stinking sins by giving himself the power to expel sins. See how Christ "spat on the ground," (v. 6). Say against those who vomit on the altar, who confess on foot, where the confessor since he be the judge ought to sit. Some, however, confess, neither on the ground, nor on the altar, but looking the confessor face to face, which is bad for two reason. First because of the shame of the sinner. Second because of the danger to the confessors, looking on the face of a beautiful woman, etc. Therefore it is said to sinners, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity," (1 Jn 1:9).

The fourth, he makes "clay of the spittle," (v. 6). Behold here the imposition of a penance, because the prudent confessor ought to mix the saliva of the sinner with the earth, i.e. to recognize the gravity of the sins, so that, according to the condition and quality of the person, and the quantity of sins, he would know how to proportion the penance to what the sinner is able to do. Deuteronomy 25: "According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be," (Deut 25:2) The same is said of sinners, "As much as she has glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give to her," (Rev 18:7).

Fifth, he anoints his eyes. He does not say punished, but anointed, namely in two senses, in which is shown a gentle admonition, which the confessor

ought to give, namely anointing the eyes of the soul of the sinner, inducing him to penance, because it is better do penance here, than in the next world. Therefore the confessor ought to say to the sinner, "Whatsoever your hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in hell, where you are hurrying," (Eccl 9:10).

The sixth is, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloe," (v. 7). See here the actual continuation of the appointed penance, namely from day to day, from week to week, etc. unless it is changed for him by another confessor, otherwise unless the penance is accepted, the sinner is damned. Thus is said, "Go to the side of the holy age, with them that live and give praise to God. Tarry not in the error of the ungodly, give glory before death. Praise perishes from the dead as nothing. Give thanks while you are living, while you are alive and in health you shall give thanks, and shall praise God, and shall glory in his mercies," (Sir17:25-27). "The holy age," i.e. the penitential parts of the damned world are sins.

The seventh ceremony is, "He went and washed, and he came seeing," (v. 7). Siloe is interpreted "sent". See here eucharistic communion. After the sinner completed the six aforesaid works, he ought to go to the pool of Siloam, i.e. to the church of Christ who is "sent" by the Father, therefore, Mass is said by the sent Christ, in which the soul is washed, and bathed contemplating the depth of the sacrament. In this way the blind sinner is enlightened according to that in 1 Kings 14, "that my eyes are enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey," (1 Kings 14:29), namely of the sweetest body of Christ.

Malicious Attacks

The second point of the gospel is about a malicious attack. The Jews held four attacks or examinations about the cure of the blind man. The first was of the bystanders, the second, of the Pharisees, the third of the parents, and the fourth was by the high court [lit.: princes].

-- As to the first, it must be noted that after the bystanders saw him who had been blind coming without a guide, and without a staff, and that he was seeing clearly, they said to each other, "Is not this the one who sat and

begged? Some said: This is he. But others said: No, but he looks like him. But he himself said: I am he," (vv. 8-9).

-- As for the second, which was of the Pharisees, who having heard about it, asked him how it was that he could see. He told them everything, saying, "That man called Jesus made clay," out of spittle, "and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see," (v. 11). So they led him to the Pharisees. "It was the sabbath." To them he gave the same story. Then the Pharisees said of Christ, " This man is not of God, who keeps not the sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them," (v. 16).

-- The third examination was of the parents to whom the Pharisees said, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind?" How then does he now see? His parents answered them, and said: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But how he now sees, we know not; or who has opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself: he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews," (vv. 19-22), because the parents fearing the sentence of excommunication which the Jews imposed, had not dared to say who enlightened him, and so the sign was complete which Isaiah had promised, "God himself will come and .. then shall the eyes of the blind be opened," (Isa 35:4f).

-- The fourth dispute was with the high court [lit.: princes of the law], to which the healed blind man had been led. They said to him, "Give glory to God," that is, you should not say that this man cured you, because he is a sinner," (v. 24). He replied, " If he be a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," (v. 25). They then said, " What did he do to you?" tell us, etc. "Will you also become his disciples? They reviled him therefore, and said: You be his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses: but as for this man, we know not from whence he is," (vv. 27-29). He said to them, "Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence he is, and he has opened my eyes. Now we know that God does not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God, and does his will, him he hears." (v. 30f) They replied, "You

were wholly born in sins, and you dear to teach us? And they cast him out," (v. 34), excommunicating him. This cured blind man was a holy man called Saint Cedonius [Celidonius, Sedonius], who with Mary Magdalen, Martha and Lazarus came to the province of Marseilles, etc.

Morally. This blind man, cured by Christ signifies the sinner enlightened by Christ, by returning him through penance from the darkness of sins to the brightness and the light of grace. He is challenged and examined by four.

-- First by the neighbors. Say when a religious or priest, man or woman is converted to God, immediately the bystanders and others challenge him jokingly, deriding, so that the saying of David about his is fulfilled, "We are become a reproach to our neighbors," (Ps 78:3). There are many who at this time do not dare to begin a good life. Christ, comforting, says to such, "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you," (Lk. 6:22).

-- Second he is challenged by the Pharisees, i.e. by carnal inclinations which separate us from God. Galatians 5: "For the flesh lusts against the spirit," (Gal 5:17), or by the Pharisees, i.e. by the demons who are alienated from God, from paradise, and from us, who challenge us tempting, first our faith, next with avarice, and lust etc., to withdraw a person from a good life begun. The sinner ought to keep himself strong and happily endure such temptations. James 1: "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into diverse temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith works patience, and let patience be a perfect work; that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing," (Jas 1:2-4). Gregory: "He fails to tempt those whom he perceives possess themselves with a undisputed right. Augustine: "Don't judge yourself to live without temptation, for if you avoid one, expect another, if however you should say that you do not have a temptation, then you shall be tempted even stronger."

-- The third temptation, from the parents, i.e. from sickness, pain etc. which we have from our parents, namely Adam and Eve, because when a person is not overcome by derision and the temptations of demons, afterwards, come sicknesses, pains and the such by which they are compelled to go to God, so

David, "Their infirmities were multiplied: afterwards they made haste," (Ps 15:4), i. e. to go to God. So Gregory: "Evils which press us now, drive us to go to God." 2 Cor 12: " Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me," (2 Cor 12:9).

-- The fourth assault is from the princes of the law, i.e. from the temporal lords who want to have temporal goods of devout people. The first assault touches upon fame, by crying hypocrite, etc. the second touches the soul, the third the body, the fourth temporal goods, because when a person wishes to live well and serve God, immediately come litigious questions, quarrels against the goods until it is driven away by them. Thus patience is necessary. 2 Tim 3: " And all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution," (2 Tim 3:12). Or say that the fourth confrontation is from the princes, that is the demons who tempt, etc., as above. Thus the Apostle, Eph last: "Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers," (Eph 6:10).

Gracious Approval

The third point is the gracious approval of the miracle, from which comes the theme, "And falling down, he adored him." (v. 38). After the blind man now cured was thrown out by the Jews and excommunicated, no one dared to receive him in their homes, not even his parents, nor even to speak with him, nor to give him a light, or anything. He said to himself, "O miserable wretch, if we can only find that holy prophet Jesus who cured me, at least I would have his company." Christ however knowing his tribulation and his good desire came to him on the street saying, "Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered, and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him: You have both seen him; and it is he who is talking with you. And he said: I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored him, (vv. 35-38). Christ welcomed him into his company. He can say with David, "For my father and my mother have left me: but the Lord has taken me up," (Ps 26:10).

Morally. We have here a teaching, because just as this one did not hesitate to leave those unfaithful associates, to be in the company of Christ, so neither should you. Note this against merchants, who keep company with infidels, against whom holy Scripture says, "Bear not the yoke," i.e. the company, "with unbelievers," (2 Cor 6:14). The question which the *Muslims* make, because they hold and possess the Holy Land, therefore they should not be stamped out etc. Response. The truth is that God wishes that this land rather be in the possession of the Muslims than the Christians. Reason, for the greater confusion of the Muslims and the excusing of the Christians.

The Muslims, of old, were at one time Christians who were deceived by Sergius and Mohammed, who held that Christ was not God. When the Christians out of devotion went there, they showed the Christians the place in which Christ gave sight to the blind man and raised the dead etc., which miracles could not have happened, unless by God alone. Also, they say that they should not be baptized in the name of the Trinity; nevertheless they show there the place where Christ was baptized and the whole Trinity was revealed, which they deny. Also, they do not believe in the sacrament of the altar, all the while showing where Christ held the [Last] Supper and instituted that sacrament. Also they do not believe that Christ suffered, died or was buried, yet they show Christians the place of the passion, death, and the holy tomb, to their own confusion, because they show what they do not believe. Thus David says, in the person of the Christian people, "Show me a token for good: that they who hate me may see, and be confounded," etc., (Ps 85:17).

Second, the Muslims hold that land for the excusing of Christians, for no one is able to excuse himself of sins. Eccl 7: "For there is no just man upon earth, that does good, and sins not," (Eccl 7:21). Christ did not wish that Christians should commit sins and wicked deeds in that Holy Land. If it is asked, why should he permit that the Muslims would commit sins there? I reply, because it is not as displeasing to him, as Christians. Just like the king who permits his dogs to do their uncleanness in his room, which he would not tolerate with his children or soldiers. So that Holy Land is the chamber of God, where it is permitted that his dogs make their uncleanness of sin,

but it is not permitted to his children, namely the Christians. Hence, that whole homeland was once the Christians', but because they committed sins there, God said, "Outside, outside!" So Christ said, Lk 21: "..and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles," (Lk 21:24).

Third, the Muslims hold that land for the consolation of Christians, because through this it is realized that that land is not the final goal of Christians, as it was of the Jews. But the heavenly homeland is the final goal of Christians, gained for us by the merit of the passion of Christ. Thus the Apostle, in Hebrews, last chapter: " For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come," (Heb 13:14). To which Jesus leads us, etc.

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John 9: 1-38 Douay trans.

1 And Jesus passing by, saw a man, who was blind from his birth: 2 And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? 3 Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had said these things, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay on his eyes, 7 And said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted, Sent. He went therefore, and washed, and he came seeing. 8 The neighbors therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said: Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said: This is he. 9 But others said: No, but he is like him. But he said: I am he. 10 They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened? 11 He answered: That man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see. 12 And they said to him: Where is he? He saith: I know not. 13 They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was the sabbath, when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Again therefore the Pharisees asked him, how he had received his sight. But he said to them: He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see. 16 Some therefore of the Pharisees said: This man is not of God, who keepeth not the sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17 They say

therefore to the blind man again: What sayest thou of him that hath opened they eyes? And he said: He is a prophet. 18 The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight, 19 And asked them, saying: Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? 20 His parents answered them, and said: We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 But how he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself: he is of age, let him speak for himself. 22 These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore did his parents say: He is of age, ask himself. 24 They therefore called the man again that had been blind, and said to him: Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. 25 He said therefore to them: If he be a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. 26 They said then to him: What did he to thee? How did he open thy eyes? 27 He answered them: I have told you already, and you have heard: why would you hear it again? will you also become his disciples? 28 They reviled him therefore, and said: Be thou his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not from whence he is. 30 The man answered, and said to them: Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes. 31 Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. 32 From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. 33 Unless this man were of God, he could not do anything. 34 They answered, and said to him: Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God? 36 He answered, and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? 37 And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen him; and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said: I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored him.

Mary Magdalen and Cedonius

Tradition has it that fourteen years after Our Lord's death, St. Mary [Magdalen] was put in a boat by the Jews without sails or oars - along with Sts. Lazarus and Martha, St. Maximin (who baptized her), St. Sidonius ("the man born blind"), her maid Sera, and the body of St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. Expelled by persecutions from the Holy Land, they were put adrift out to sea in a frail boat with neither rudder nor mast. They traversed the Mediterranean and landed at the place called Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer near Arles. Mary Magdalene came the shores of Southern France, to Marseille. St. Mary spent the rest of her life as a contemplative in a cave known as Sainte-Baume.

Sergius and Mohammed

A legend of the Christians is, that the chief help Mohammed had in the contriving his Koran was from a Nestorian monk named Sergius. supposed to be the same person with the monk Boheira. with whom Mohammed. in his younger years, had some conference at Bosra, a city of Syria Damascena, where that monk resided.' To confirm which supposition, a passage has been produced from an Arab writer, who says that Boheira's name, in the books of the Christians, is Sergius ; but this is only a conjecture.

A612 – 618. Sermon on the Fifth Sunday of Lent: The Raising of Lazarus

He cried with a loud voice," (Jn 11:43) Today we read the gospel of the raising of Lazarus by Christ. This shall be our sermon. But first let us salute the Virgin Mary, etc.

"With a loud voice," etc. (v. 43). The holy gospel today briefly contains three miraculous incidents about the raising of Lazarus:

The first situation is humanly reluctant. [humanitus retractiva]

The second situation is leading to merit. [meritalis inductiva]

The third situation is principally effective. [principaliter effectiva]

And of this third the theme speaks, "He cried out with a loud voice," i.e. Jesus commanding, saying "Lazarus, come forth," (Jn 11:43).

Humanly Reluctant

The first situation is human reluctance. The apostles were afraid that Christ would try to raise Lazarus, for they all could be stoned in Jerusalem, and so they were discouraging Christ from going to Bethany which is near Jerusalem, where Lazarus had died. The promised land had been divided into three provinces: Judea, Galilee and Samaria. Christ had many enemies in the province of Judea and they frequently wanted to kill him. He had denounced the notorious sins, and vices of the Pharisees, the princes and the priests, and he was proving himself to be divine. But because the hour of his passion had not yet come, he withdrew from the province of Judea and came to the province of Galilee where he was beloved. In the meantime, Lazarus died in the province of Judea. So Jesus said to the apostles, "Let us go into Judea again," (Jn 11:7). The apostles, afraid of the situation, said to Christ, "Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone you: and you are going there again?" (v.8). See here the human reluctance, but indirectly, because it is human to fear carnal death. Then Christ told them that Lazarus, his friend, had died, so he wanted to go there.

To counter their fear he said to them, "Are there not twelve hours of the day?" If you ask, "And how is this to the point?" I say, very much so, and according to all four of the senses of sacred scripture.

First according to the literal sense. When Christ said these words, it was the time of the vernal equinox, which came after the 25th of March. That was the same day he had been conceived. Fifteen days before his passion, Christ said these words, "Are there not twelve.., etc." Literally, a day has twelve hours, as if Christ wished to say to the apostles, "You should know that the rancor or ill will of the Jews against me already has changed, for just as the day and time changes from hour to hour, so also the heart of man changes, because therefore they have already changed [their minds], not only twelve hours ago, but many days ago, therefore, etc. This Christ said by way of rebuking the bad opinion which they had of the Jews, because a man ought always to presume the best about his neighbor, according to that in Luke 6, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged," (v. 37).

"Are there not twelve, etc." is allegorical when the saying or deed is understood to be about that which a man should believe. According to this explanation Christ is called "day." Note, because just as morning and evening make one day, according to Genesis 1: "..and there was evening and morning one day," (v. 5). So God and man make one person of Christ. Morning is the [day's] beginning, so also the divinity is the beginning of all things. I am, "the beginning, who also speak unto you," (Jn 8:25). Christ, as man was the evening and end of all things. Because God made daylight first, second the firmament, third the plants, fourth the sun and stars, fifth the birds and fishes, sixth the beasts, and seventh he made man. When therefore the Son of God took on humanity, then "there was evening and morning one day," i.e. God and man have become one person. Hence the church sings, "Whose wisdom joined in meet array the morn and eve, and named them Day," (Hymn: Lucis creator optime). About this one David says to God the Father, "By your ordinance the day goes on," (Ps 118:91).

This day has twelve hours, namely the twelve apostles, Luke 6, "And when day was come, he called his disciples unto him; and he chose twelve of them (whom also he named apostles)," (v. 13) The first hour was Peter, and so on for the rest. In the same place it is clear in the text when he said, "Are

there not twelve hours, " i.e. twelve Apostles are for the day, that is of Christ, which is to say just as the hours do not dismiss the natural day, nor days the hours, rather the hours follow the day inseparably, so neither ought you dismiss me, nor I you, rather I defend you. He did just that on the night of the passion, when he said to the Jews, "If therefore you seek me, let these go their way," (Jn 18:8). Behold the day, that is how it defends the hours. So he said to the Father, "Of those whom you have given me, I have not lost any one, " (Jn 18:9).

The third explanation is tropological, that is moral. According to this exposition the bright day is penance. Reason: because guilt is called a dark night. Thus grace to which man comes through penitence, is called day. About this the authority: "The night is passed, and the day is at hand," (Rom 13:12). This day has twelve hours, namely twelve works of repentance.

- The first hour is the acknowledgement of sins. Just as in the first hour the brightness of the day begins, and people can recognize each other, so in the recognition of sins man knows himself.
- The second is the contrition of the heart.
- Third, the purpose of amendment.
- The fourth, the avoidance of occasions [of sin].
- Fifth, oral confession.
- Sixth, bodily penance.
- Seventh, spiritual prayer.
- Eighth, almsgiving.
- Ninth, repayment of debts.
- Tenth, forgiveness of injuries.
- Eleventh, the restoration of [another's] good name.
- Twelfth, eucharistic communion.

About this day and [these] hours Christ says to the Apostles in the gospel, "Are there not twelve hours in the day, " namely of penance which you keep, observe and do? Therefore you need not fear from death, and so he adds, " If a man walks in the day, he stumbles not, because he sees the light of this world: But if he walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light," namely, of grace, "is not in him," (v. 9-10).

The fourth explanation is anagogical, from "άνώ" which is above, and "άγω" I lead, as in "I lead above," when the saying or action is explained as pertaining to hope. And according to this explanation the bright day is celestial glory. Reason: because in that place there is no night or darkness, nor obscurity of ignorance. Rather, when the soul enters paradise, God immediately shows it a book in which all things are revealed and made clear. This book of life is Christ who has two pages, namely divinity and humanity.

About this day of glory the authority in Psalm 83: "For better is one day in thy courts above thousands." (Is 83:11). From which follows this conclusion, that saint stays in paradise for only one day. Our life now has many days because of the interposition of nights. But in paradise there is no night. It is always day, brightly illuminated by the sun of justice. This day has twelve hours, that is twelve beatitudes, namely four of the soul and four of the body, and four of the composite. The first beatitude of the soul is wisdom of divine things. The second, knowledge of creatures. Third, memory of the past. Fourth, the joys of the universe. The first beatitude of the body is invulnerability. The second, clarity. The third, subtlety. The fourth, agility. The first beatitude of the composite or of the blessed life is general harmony. Second, general abundance. Third, full satisfaction. Fourth certain perpetuity. There shall be one day which is noted by the Lord in Zechariah 14: "And there shall be one day, which is known to the Lord, " (v. 7).

Or if you wish according to a second allegorical interpretation, say that the Catholic faith is a bright day, when it is without error, doubt and false opinion, about which the Apostle [Paul] to the Romans, 13: "The night is passed," namely of error, of darkness and of false opinions, "and the day is at hand," namely of the Catholic faith. This day has twelve hours, namely twelve articles of the faith according to the number of the twelve Apostles, all of which are in the "We believe in God.."

-- The first hour is of the creation of the world: " I believe in God, the Father Almighty," etc. The philosophers did not know this hour. They posited that the world was eternal.

-- The second, of the eternal generation of the son of God: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord," who is generated from the Father like a ray from the sun, etc.

-- The third of the incarnation of the Son of God: "Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary," like the rays of the sun passing through a glass window pane which they do not break.

-- Fourth of the passion of Christ: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, died and was buried," lest some believing for themselves and obeying, would suffer in the pit of hell.

-- Fifth about the freeing of the holy patriarchs: "He descended into hell," namely to free the holy patriarchs.

-- Sixth on the resurrection of Christ: "On the third day he rose again from the dead."

-- Seventh, about his miraculous ascension: "He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty."

-- The eight about his coming judgment: "He will come again to judge the living and the dead," that is the good and the bad. Whence he will come, namely from the right hand of God the Father.

-- Ninth, about the spiration of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, like heat from the sun and its ray: "I believe in the Holy Spirit."

-- Tenth, the universal authority of the church which it is necessary to believe, because the universal church can not err in those things which are of the faith, Christ saying to Peter, " But I have prayed for thee," Peter, " that thy faith fail not, (Lk 22:32). Christ does not say this to Peter insofar as he was an individual person, but insofar as he was the Pope, a common person: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," that is, universal .

-- Eleven is about the sanctification by the sacraments. By the sacraments the soul is made holy: "The Communion of Saints," that is of the sacraments, "the forgiveness of sins."

-- Twelfth is the general resurrection of all: "The resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

When therefore Christ says to the Apostles, "Are there not twelve hours of the day?" which is to say, "Why do you fear temporal death since you are strong in the faith?" It is otherwise for those who are dying without faith and in error. Thus Christ says, " If a man walk in the day," that is, in the faith, "he stumbles not," by falling into hell forever. See how there was a remedy against a tucked-in tail [caudam retractivam, i.e. a fearful spirit]. So men are given this advice, to say every day, "I believe..," and "Try your own selves if you be in the faith; prove ye yourselves," (2 Cor 13:5).

Leading to Merit

The second situation was leading to merit. This was the charity or love which Christ had for Lazarus his disciple, and Mary and Martha his sisters, and vice versa. Thus they drew him like a smoking candle which draws to itself the flame of another nearby candle, and this naturally, because since their hearts were like burning lamps, they drew that light. About which John 1: "It was the true light, which enlightens every man who comes into this world," (v. 9). See, this is the motivating reason, and so the Gospel says, "Jesus therefore came," to Bethany, "and found that he had been four days already in the grave (v.17)"..up to .. "he troubled himself and groaned in the spirit," (v. 33) Men do act in such a way, and "he troubled himself," namely by showing sadness in his face, and he wept, not only out of compassion for Mary and Martha, but also for the resurrection of Lazarus himself. He was about to bring [Lazarus] back from the state of sinlessness in which he presently was, to the state of being capable of sinning, for at the passion of Christ he also sinned. He lost faith in Christ. Behold the motivating situation which is called meritorious, because the love of Lazarus and his sisters for Christ was meritorious.

Morally. It must be noted here that in these words when it is said, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus," (v. 5), it is insinuated that this signifies three kinds of people who are loved by Christ. First, persons purely continent; second, persons worthily repentant; and third, persons justly governing.

First Christ loves purely continent persons, which is shown where it says, Jesus loved Martha, who always was a virgin, pure and continent. There are however here noted three grades of continence.

- First conjugal continence, which is between husband and wife, keeping the manner and faithfulness to each other. So Paul says, "Marriage honorable in all," keeping the manner, "and the bed undefiled," that is, keeping faith. "For fornicators and adulterers God will judge," (Heb 13:4).

- The second kind is the continence of widows, and this is better when widows avoid that act, because God wishes it to be only between husband and wife. The Apostle [Paul writes], "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication," (1 Thess 4:3).

- The third grade is virginal purity, and it is better than the others, which is never to have sensed that experience, neither desiring in the heart, nor

speaking of it with the mouth, nor touching upon the deed, etc. And of this kind is Martha, and so she is loved much by Christ. About these three grades, Bede says, "Conjugal chastity is good, better is the continence of widows, but best is virginal purity."

Second the Lord loves repentant persons, which is shown where, "Jesus loved Mary Magdalen who was a penitent, whom the Lord Christ loved more after her repentance than before, according to the parable in Luke 15: "What man of you that hath an hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost, until he finds it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing: And coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance," etc. (Lk 15:4-7). Note, he "lay it on his shoulders," and this when he carries the cross on his shoulders, then is fulfilled, "and the government is upon his shoulder," (Isa 9:6).

Third, God loves persons who rule justly, which is shown where, Jesus [loved] Lazarus who was the prefect and lord of one third of the city of Jerusalem. Say how [secular] lords and [churchly] prelates are loved by the Lord when they "enter through the gate." Second, when they live decently after they are in, and they care more for the souls than for their salaries. Third, when they divide their income into three parts, namely, one for themselves, another for their family and a third for the needy. Such men are presiding justly. It is otherwise with those who do not enter through the gate [i.e. legitimately promoted], but leap over, through robbery and simony [i.e. by bribery]. The temporal lords can be saved only by rendering just decisions and giving alms, because in judgment Christ does not ask the lay leaders whether they had said their breviary [literally, hours], or if they had fasted, but he asks of them if they had done justice for criminals, if they kept the people at peace, and if they corrected notorious sins.

But for many lords it happens that stupidly, they cover themselves with a shield, not just from where the arrows are coming, but from other direction. Many lords cover themselves with the shield of devotion, but not in that part whence come the arrows of censure. They recite the hours, and hear many masses, but do not care about justice and peace, nor for the correction

of sins. For this they will be rejected by Christ. About God's love for good lords, scripture says, "My heart loves the princes [of Israel]," (Judg 5:9).

Principally Effective

The third situation, designated principally effective, is about the power and authority of Christ, his precept and command, at the resurrection of Lazarus. This is the theme: "He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth," (Jn 11:43). The story from the Gospel begins when Jesus "comes to the tomb. Now it was a cave; and a stone was laid over it," etc. and continues to the end. In this raising of Lazarus, Christ performed five ceremonies

The first was when he had the tomb opened, saying, "Take away the stone." (v. 39). Martha said to him, "Lord, by this time he stinks, for it is now four days," wholly covered with worms. Christ said to her, "Did not I say to you, that if you believe, you shalt see the glory of God?" (v. 40).

The second ceremony when Jesus, "lifted up his eyes said: Father, I give you thanks that you have heard me. And I knew that you always hear me; but because of the people who stand about I have said it, that they may believe that you have sent me," (v. 42). As a man he is less than the Father, and so he was praying, because as God it was not necessary.

The third ceremony: "He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth," (v. 43). And he was not speaking to a corrupt body, because it hears nothing, but he was speaking to the soul existing in the limbo of the holy fathers, as is believed, because he [Lazarus] was a holy man, and "immediately he came forth." v. 44.

The fourth ceremony was when he said, "Lazarus, come forth" because he was "bound feet and hands with winding bands" according to Jewish custom.

The fifth ceremony was when he said, "Loose him, and let him go." "Many therefore of the Jews..had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done." vv. 45-46

Morally. In these five ceremonies Christ showed how a sinner is resuscitated from the death of guilt to the life of grace through

penitence.

First the tomb ought to be opened, "Take away the stone," etc. In sacred scripture the body of the sinner is said to be a tomb. Reason: because outside it is a tomb and seems like a burial place, but from within it is filthy and stinking and full of corruption, where the dead soul lies. And so Christ says to the sinners, "Woe to you..because you are like to whitened sepulchers, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness," (Mt 23:27). This first speaks about religious who externally wear the habit of decency, but inwardly are full of all kinds of sorrow. Some of priests, who externally wear their white surplices, but within, corruptibility. Some of laity, both men and women.

The first task to be done, if dead, if the spirit should be raised, is to open the tomb. This happens in oral confession, namely, to roll back the huge and heavy stone of shame. O how many there are who prefer not to remove this stone, nor open the tomb to clearly confess sins, but wish to mitigate their sins, like women, and so many are damned for this. See why Christ said, "Take away the stone."

Martha said, "Lord, by this time he stinks, for it is now four days." He sins by thought, word, deed and omission, and gives forth such a stink that all cover their noses, except Christ who was standing as if he perceived nothing. By these confessors are instructed that when they hear grave and stinking sins, they should not show fastidiousness, nor spit, nor gasp, lest the sinner be shamed and not dare to tell their sins, saying, "What would he do if I were to tell him some even greater sins?" Rather, he should listen, patiently and cover his face, and encourage the penitent to tell his sins and not be ashamed. Thus scripture says to the confessor, Deut. 23: "Thou shall not abhor the Edomite," i.e. the bloodstained sinner "because he is your brother: nor the Egyptian," i.e. the gloomy sinner, because you also were a sinner. Thus, "Now we that are stronger, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," (Rom 15:1). And of those who confess their sins, clearly can be said that, "Their throat is an open grave," (Ps 5:11).

The second ceremony was when Christ prayed after the opening of the tomb, in which he showed that after the confession is done, the confessor ought to pray saying, "May almighty God have mercy on you," etc. and so the heart of the sinner is disposed to contrition and to the good resolve to refrain from sins. James 5: "Confess therefore your sins one to another," that is, the laity to the priests, "and pray one for another, that you may be saved." (Jas 5:16).

Third, Christ "cries out with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth," from the tomb with respect to the body, and out from hell, with respect to the soul. So the sinner as he hears the penance assigned to him ought to come forth, forgiving sins himself, because otherwise he is not absolved, and he should come out of hell to which he was bound through guilt, if he does his penance, otherwise not. Hence, Luke 13: "unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish, " (Lk 13:3).

The fourth ceremony. Christ said, "Loose him." This saying is by the confessor when he absolves the sinner by saying, "By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ commissioned to us and granted to you, I absolve you," etc. Thus, about this absolution it is said to confessors, "And whatsoever you shalt loose on earth," namely, you confessors, "it shall be loosed also in heaven, and whatsoever you shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven." (Mt 16:19). This binding is the imposition of the penance.

The fifth ceremony, ".. and let him go," so namely if the penitent is not able to bear a large penance, give him a small one, because it is better to make it to purgatory with a small penance than with a large penance to end up in hell, and this is said against those confessors who give exceedingly heavy penances. About which Matthew says, c. 23: " For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders," (v.4). It can also be understood another way, namely that many are absolved by a confessor from the bonds of sins who are prevented from completing their penance, because a husband prevents his wife, and e converso, a friend a friend, a father his son, and e converso. No one should interfere with another doing penance unless it might possibly be hurtful, to whom Christ says, " But woe to you..[who] shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter. " (Mt 23:13)

John 11:1-45 Douay translation.

1 Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha her sister. 2 (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3 His sisters therefore sent to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4 And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God: that the Son of God may be glorified by it. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days. 7 Then after that, he said to his disciples: Let us go into Judea again. 8 The disciples say to him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again? 9 Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: 10 But if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. 11 These things he said; and after that he said to them: Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. 12 His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 But Jesus spoke of his death; and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. 14 Then therefore Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him. 16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with him. 17 Jesus therefore came, and found that he had been four days already in the grave. 18 (Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) 19 And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus had come, went to meet him: but Mary sat at home. 21 Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23 Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. 24 Martha saith to him: I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day. 25 Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me,

although he be dead, shall live: 26 And every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? 27 She saith to him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. 28 And when she had said these things, she went, and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The master is come, and calleth for thee. 29 She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly, and cometh to him. 30 For Jesus was not yet come into the town: but he was still in that place where Martha had met him. 31 The Jews therefore, who were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying: She goeth to the grave to weep there. 32 When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing him, she fell down at his feet, and saith to him: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 33 Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself, 34 And said: Where have you laid him? They say to him: Lord, come and see. 35 And Jesus wept. 36 The Jews therefore said: Behold how he loved him. 37 But some of them said: Could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die? 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the sepulchre. Now it was a cave; and a stone was laid over it. 39 Jesus saith: Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. 40 Jesus saith to her: Did not I say to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? 41 They took therefore the stone away. And Jesus lifting up his eyes said: Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43 When he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. 44 And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him, and let him go. 45 Many therefore of the Jews, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done.

A686. Sermon for Palm Sunday

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” Mt 21:9.

This text is taken as the basis of our sermon. It is a short and very devout song composed by the Holy Spirit, and today devoutly sung to Christ, when he solemnly entered the city of Jerusalem. We sing it today many times, representing that solemnity and coming of Christ into the city of Jerusalem, saying, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

The whole solemnity of Palm Sunday today consists of three points:

- First is about the honor and solemnity coming to Christ shown today by the city of Jerusalem in which he was received honorably [receptus honorabiliter].
- Second is about the solemnity which we today give, representing him appropriately [repraesentando appropriate].
- Third is about the path which Christ walks today, as he comes into the city of Jerusalem virtuously [veniendo virtuose] .

And for each of these in particular and for all of them in general we should sing and say to God, Blessed is he who comes,” etc.

Received Honorably

The first point today is about the honor and solemnity shown by the Jews. They praised and blessed Christ as he came into the city of Jerusalem to the temple. He was received honorably with great joy and festivity, which was very remarkable. I find that often and for many reasons Christ came to Jerusalem, and never was there given any celebration or honor like today.

- First Christ came to Jerusalem for the presentation, fifty days after his birth, when the virgin Mary presented him in the temple. We do not read that there was a solemn reception then, except for Simeon and Anna, who adored him, as is clear in Luke 2. He was tiny, and the procession was tiny. But his body grew, and his compassion grew, and the time came when he was not carried in the arms of the

virgin, but on the back of an ordinary donkey, not to be bought back with [sacrificed] birds, but he would redeem us all by his blood.

- Second, Christ came to the city of Jerusalem for disputing, namely when he was twelve years old. There was no celebration for him at that time.
- Third, he came for prayer, because according to the law, he would come to Jerusalem on every feast day, and would enter the temple.
- Fourth, he came to extirpate, namely the sins and notorious vices, because the high priests from their avarice had made of the temple a house of business, Jn 2. Nor was there any celebration for him then.
- Fifth he came often to preach, because that metropolis was the capital of the province.
- Sixth, he came to manifest his divinity by working miracles, healing the sick, and raising the dead. Not even then was there a celebration.
- Seventh, he came for sacrificing himself. Today he wished to enter Jerusalem, where he would suffer for the redemption of the human race. Then there was a great festival for him and a solemnity celebrated.

For this reason, I reply that although Christ had performed many good works for us, nevertheless we are more bound and obliged to him for the work of his passion and death, that for all the others. So we are bound to praise and bless him for the work of the incarnation which he did out of love for us. Also for the teaching and preaching which he had given going from village to village. But above all we are bound [to bless] him for the work of the passion, because the Lord himself wished to die for his servants, the king for his subjects, a just man for the unjust, the innocent one for sinners, So Bernard: "Above all, good Jesus, the chalice of the passion which you drank, the work of our redemption, renders you beloved to me." See the reason why God put it into the hearts of the people that he be received so solemnly when he came to Jerusalem for sacrificing.

This solemnity consists in six circumstances or ceremonies which were done for him.

First, because he wished to enter riding. It is not read anywhere that Christ ever rode an animal. Only today, when he entered Jerusalem. And then he

rode on a colt, of an ass, according to the prophecy of Zechariah 9: " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold your king will come to you, the just and savior: he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," (Zech 9:9). Thus that prophecy was fulfilled.

Read practically how from Bethphage he sent two disciples, according to the Gloss [anonymous Commentary on Scripture], Peter and Philip, for the donkey and colt, etc. A tethered ass signifies the Jewish people, or the synagogue bound by the chain of the law of Moses. This chain has three links, the three kinds of precepts: the ceremonial precepts which order a person toward God. Second, the judicial precepts , which order one to the neighbor. Third, the moral precepts which order a person with respect to himself, how everyone should live. The colt which had not yet had been tied, nor had ever borne a burden on its back, signifies the Gentiles, who had no chain of law around its neck, nor burden of precepts on its back, It shows that Christ had come not only to redeem and save the Jews, but also the Gentiles and pagans. He observed this ceremony, because he first wished to ride on the ass, which he had to untie, because at the time of the Messiah king all prefiguring and ceremonies should cease. Second, he wished to ride on the unbroken colt, not out of necessity, but that scripture and the prefiguring should be fulfilled, for the gentiles should also be converted to Christ. Thus the Apostle, "and whosoever believes in him shall not be confounded," (Rom 9:33).

The second ceremony or circumstance is this. He wished today to enter Jerusalem in a procession, because a great crowd preceded him and followed him, and with the apostles he went in the middle. Just as we do today in processions in which many precede and many follow, and the bishop or priest who represent Christ, in the middle with the priests.

And the gospel says that both the ones preceding and the ones following were looking back saying "Hosanna to the son of David," (v. 9). In this is shown that all who preceded, from Abel down to Christ, namely the Patriarchs and Prophets, as well as also those who would follow, down to the end of the world, all look upon Christ through faith, saying, "Hosanna," etc. For no one can be saved, unless through Christ. Therefore Gen 49: "I will look for your salvation, O Lord," (Gen 49:18). And, in Acts 4: "Neither

is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved," (Acts 4:12).

The third circumstance is this. The entire route, from the mount of Olives up to Jerusalem was covered. Such was the devotion of the people, that not with caps [cappis] or other decorations [ornamentis], but they spread out on his path their coats and capes, both men and women. The Evangelists says, " And a very great multitude spread their garments on the way," (v. 8). And why this? I reply that this was a figure of future martyrs, as is clear in sacred scripture. The human body is called the clothing of the soul, which clothing the vast crowd of martyrs would lay down on the way, dying for their faith in Christ. So David says, in the person of the martyrs: " Because for your sake we are killed all the day long: we are counted as sheep for the slaughter," (Ps 43:22). Also in the Apocalypse 7 it says of martyrs: "These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb," i.e. of Christ, (Rev 7:14).

The fourth ceremony was of the tree branches. The Evangelist says that "others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way," (v. 8), flowers and leaves and branches from trees. It was a sign. For in sacred scripture men are called trees. Mark 8: " I see men as it were trees, walking," (Mk 8:24). These trees, flowers, leaves and branches of merit and good works are to be spread out before the way of Christ, namely that they be done for him, because otherwise they are worthless. Jn 15: "for without me you can do nothing," (Jn 15:5), worthy of merit.

The fifth was that he wished to be praised and blessed both by the great as well as by the small, and Hosannas cried out, according to that of David: "Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings you have perfected praise," (Ps 8:3), to show that by virtue of his passion not only adults and great ones are saved through penance, but also children through innocence. Wis 6: "for he made the little and the great, and he has equally care of all," (Wis 6:8).

Sixth, because all, both the great as well as the small, with one voice were saying, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord," (v. 9). In which it is shown that he was the universal redeemer of all. Authority: "For there

is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a redemption for all," (1 Tim 2:5f).

From this is the reason why and how this solemnity was today celebrated for Christ and not otherwise. About this Zechariah had prophesied and the father of John the Baptist, saying: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; because he has visited and wrought the redemption of his people," (Lk 1:68).

Represented Appropriately

The second point is about the solemnity which we make, representing that solemnity given appropriately today to Christ, because just as Christ today with solemnity and procession came to the place of his passion, so also we today with great solemnity and procession, come to the passion which is read in the mass today. Someone might remark: "Why is the passion of Christ read today with such solemnity?" Because the passion of Christ, so sad and painful, ought to generate the same in the hearts of the faithful, and not joy and gladness. Note at this how the passion and death of Christ can be taken in four ways, according to which it is read in church four times, using the four gospels.

First it can be taken and thought about according to personal dignity, considering the person who suffers, who is Christ: king, father, Lord, innocent and pure. And according to this consideration the passion of Christ gives to Christians sadness, pain, tears and sighs. And in this respect the passion of Christ is read on Good Friday, when the bells are not rung, and people fall down sad, bowing their heads. In this respect the prophet Jeremiah considered the passion of Christ saying, "And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim," (Jer 11:19).

In a second way the passion of Christ can be received and considered according to human necessity, because we are all weak and wounded by the plague of sins, nor can we be cured except by the blood of Christ, who willed to suffer for our sins. Isa 53: "But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins," (Isa 53:5). And according to this point of view the passion of Christ brings us to contrition and sorrow for our sins, for which it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die. And in this respect the

passion of Christ is read in the church on Wednesday [of Holy Week], according to Luke.

A third way can be considered according to judicial perversity, because the Jews who had been honored by God, the sons of the prophets and patriarchs, the people chosen by God, had so strongly rebelled against their God. In this respect the passion of Christ gives us an occasion for compassion for that reprobate people, destroyed and damned by the passion of Christ. And according to this consideration the passion of Christ is read in church on Tuesday. In this sense Zechariah the prophet was considering the passion of Christ, saying: "What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands? And he shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them who loved me," (Zach 13:6).

Fourth, the passion of Christ can be received and considered according to its ultimate usefulness. We have been freed by the passion of Christ from damnation to hell, from mortal sins, and so we have grace in this world and glory in the next. See the final utility of the passion of Christ. In this respect the passion of Christ generates in us joy, happiness and exultation, and consolation. And from this point of view the passion of Christ is read today with such solemnity, joy and happiness, singing, "Glory and praise." So this is why Isaiah says: "Rejoice, and give praise together, O ye deserts of Jerusalem: for the Lord has comforted his people: he has redeemed Jerusalem," (Isa 52:9). Note, the "deserts of Jerusalem," about which the Apostle says in Galatians 4: "But that Jerusalem, which is above, is free," (Gal 4:26), and from this [city] all men of the world have fled by sins. But now we must rejoice, " for the Lord has comforted his people," by paying for them the price. This is the reason why the passion today is read with joy.

Here note the six differences of today's joy as opposed to the six sorrows of Good Friday. The first sadness, because on Good Friday the holy bells are not rung, moreover they are silenced. Reason is because in the passion and death of Christ, the bells, i.e. the apostles whose sound of preaching goes out to the whole world, according to the prophecy of David, lose their sound, because none dared to announce Christ. Moreover the greater bell, Peter, was broken by denying Christ, nor did John, who stood next to the cross, dare to say anything in favor of Christ. But today, considering the

final utility of the passion of Christ we make a great solemnity by ringing bells.

The second sadness, because [on Good Friday] the tables are struck, which is the sound of sadness and pain. This signifies the sound of derision and blasphemy which they heaped on Christ in the passion. But today the priests sing with a high and clear voice. And the reason for this is, because of the passion of Christ the blessed souls shall sing with the angels in glory.

The third sadness, because on Good Friday the holy images, crosses and icons are hidden and covered, just as in the passion of Christ, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalen and John and others covered their heads out of grief and sadness. They could not look upon the cruel passion of Christ. But today the cross is held high, solemnly, in a sign of the utility of the passion of Christ.

The fourth sadness, because on Good Friday, the holy passion is commemorated with tears and sorrows, to show the tears and sighs of the Virgin Mary and the others. But today it is remembered with joy and gladness according to the ultimate utility.

The fifth sadness, because on Friday, people, with sadness, prostrate themselves with shoes off, and many fast on bread and water. But today people process with great joy, well dressed carrying branches in their hands which signifies the victory which we have over our enemies by the passion of Christ.

The sixth sadness, because then the passion is sung without procession and order, for the apostles were dispersed, separated and divided. Today a solemn procession takes place, and we all go, gathered and ordered, because from the passion of Christ we all are united and gathered, according to that of John 6, Christ was to die "to gather together in one the children of God, that were dispersed," (Jn 11:52). So we sing with joy: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," (v. 9).

The Way to Jerusalem

The third point is about the route which Christ took coming into Jerusalem, which way is made up of six stages.

The first, Christ, today, in the morning departed from Bethany and came to Bethphage. Second, from Bethphage to the Mount of Olives. Third from the Mount of Olives he descended into the Valley of Josephat. Fourth from the Valley of Josephat he came to Jerusalem. Fifth, from Jerusalem he went into the Temple of God. Sixth, from the Temple he returned to Bethany with the twelve apostles, as in Mark 11 In which it seems that he had six stations.

And this represents our path which we walk by sinning and returning to grace through the way of penance.

First, through sin we depart from Bethany which is interpreted "house of obedience," from which we withdraw whenever we break the precepts of God for the sake of having some prize. In this withdrawal there should be weeping. So when Christ left Bethany, leaving Mary Magdalen, Martha and Lazarus, thanking them, because often they had received him into their home, then Mary Magdalen began to weep saying to Christ, "Lord where do you wish to go? because it is already decided in Jerusalem that they should kill you. So keep the paschal feast here, and your mother will come here." The apostles said the same, and Martha and Lazarus. They were afraid. Christ replied to them, "It is necessary to fulfill the will of him who sent me." Magdalen and all the others wept, saying, "Perhaps we shall never see you again." See, tears in the departure from Bethany, in which it is shown that man, when he departs from the house of obedience ought to weep, through contrition, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, 2: "Know you, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for you, to have left the Lord your God, and that my fear is not with you," (Jer 2:19). So, the first station.

Second he comes to Bethphage, which literally means the "house of the cheek" or "house of the mouth." See here oral confession. After you have left Bethany, i.e. the house of obedience, with tears of contrition, it is necessary that you come to Bethphage, i.e. to the house of confessing your sins by mouth. Bethphage is a village of priests. So confession has to be done to priests, because no one else, no matter how holy, can forgive sins, for only to priests did Christ say, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," (Jn 20:23). Note they are forgiven them, he does not say they will be forgiven, because at the very moment they are forgiven by a confessor, they are forgiven by God. "and whose sins you shall retain,"

namely by withholding absolution, because they were unwilling to abstain from sinning, or because they were unwilling to make restitution, or because they were unwilling to forgive injuries, "they are retained," (Jn 20:23) by God. Thus the second station.

Third, from Bethphage he went up the Mount of Olives. So, the works of satisfaction. The Mount of Olives has three conditions in which are signified the three works of satisfaction. First because the Mount of Olives is difficult [to ascend]. This stands for the difficulty of fastings, of vigils etc. Second because it is high it is like the height of prayer, which according to Damascene is the "elevation of the mind to God." Third because olives grow there, which are medicinal, and so this means the outpouring of alms. "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance," (Mt 3:8).

Fourth, from the Mount of Olives he descended into the valley of Josaphat, which means "the judgment of the Lord." Thus the payment of debts, because the Lord shall judge irrevocably whether everyone repays his debts. Although you are on the Mount of Olives through satisfactory works, it is also required that you descend into the valley of Josaphat, by restoring things taken in two ways, either spiritually or temporally. Spiritually, a clergyman descends into the valley of Josaphat who obtained his prelacy or dignity or benefice by simony, for he has committed theft. John 10: "He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up another way, is a thief and a robber," (Jn 10:1). The door stands for a legitimate election without your assistance, or dealing, or a spiritual appointment is pure, because the Pope put you there without your knowledge or dealing. Otherwise, if you wish to be saved it is necessary to descend into the valley of Josaphat by making reparations, saying, "Lord I have stolen this, so I restore it to the hands of your vicar." In a secular matter, he who stole a castle, a villa, a home, a field or possessions or money, or something else descends into the valley of Josaphat, when he restores it. It is necessary to descend from the evil state. Do not be deceived.

Also if you defame someone, it is necessary to descend to restoring to him his good name if it not true what you said, or if it is hidden or a secret. If it is said that it shall be embarrassing to recant or dangerous for you, I respond, it doesn't matter, because the sin is not remitted until what was taken is restored. (14. q. 6 si. res.)[reference to theological text].

Fifth, from the valley of Josaphat he comes to Jerusalem which is interpreted as "peaceful". Behold here the forgiveness of injuries, when a man makes peace for himself with his enemy. So David: "Pray for the things that are for the peace of Jerusalem: and abundance for them that love you. Let peace be in your strength: and abundance in your towers," (Ps 121:6-7). Note: "abundance," because unless a greater person is at peace with lesser and vice versa, and the greater among themselves do not "abound," then there will be the poor and the earth will be sterile. So the Apostle says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness: without which no man shall see God.," (Heb 12:14). Note peace and holiness go together, because some have peace but no holiness, but malice and sin like robbers among themselves, like procurers with their prostitutes. Thus the buyer, seller and manager have peace, but not holiness, when they defraud each other.

Sixth, from Jerusalem he enters the temple of the Lord. See here Holy Communion. After you have done the previous stations, you go to the temple of the Lord for communion, nor do you expect that the Lord would come to you in your weakness, etc. Gen "Come in, you blessed of the Lord: why do you stand without?...And bread was set before him," (Gen 24:31,34), which is allegorically said to every Christian. Behold the way to paradise which Christ, coming into Jerusalem, showed to us. And so: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," (Mt 12:9).

Matthew 12: 1-9 Douay translation

1 And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 Saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them to me. 3 And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go. 4 Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 5 Tell ye the daughter of Zion: Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke. 6 And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. 7 And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. 8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way: 9 And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

A717. Sermon on Holy Thursday

"Do this in commemoration of me," (1 Cor 11:24)

In our present sermon, three great solemnities come together. First is that of the supper which Christ wished to eat with his disciples accepting farewells from them. Second, is the washing of the feet of the apostles, for Christ who was Lord and king and master wanted humbly to wash the feet of the apostles so he might give us an example of humility. These two solemnities are told in the gospel, and after dinner there is a sermon. Third is of the blessed sacrament of the altar, about which today's epistle speaks. We treat the wonderful usefulness of this sacrament in the sermon for Corpus Christi. Today, however the matter at hand is the institution of this sacrament, namely why and how this sacrament was instituted and ordained by Christ. But first the Virgin Mary is saluted.

"Do this," etc. I am seeking in sacred scripture the manner and reason why Christ, true God and man wished to institute and ordain this blessed sacrament. And I have found five principal reasons.

- First, for showing a memorial,
- Second, for perpetual prayer,
- Third, for spiritual nourishment,
- Fourth, for medicinal healing, and
- Fifth for heavenly promotion.

Memorial

About the first Christ speaks in our theme to priests and generally to all Christians saying: "Do this," namely, sacrifice, "in remembrance of me," namely, by celebrating, offering, sacrificing in memory of me, not for the acquisition of money, nor for vainglory, or for showing hypocrisy. And you laity do this, namely, hearing mass, serving, contemplating and communicating in my memory.

The first reason for the institution of this sacrament is to keep a memorial, namely, for pointing out what should be adored by man. This reason is

based on a philosophical principle which says, "Nothing is in the intellect unless it is first in the senses." For example, just as by a church which has five doors, about which it is true to say that no one is in the church unless he entered through one of these doors. So nothing is in the intellect unless it entered through one of those, namely, physical senses, either according to the property or according to the diversity of the thing, either according to the fittingness or difference of the thing, or according to quantity, or quality, or action or passion.

God, however in his essence is a substance imperceptible to any bodily sense, because he cannot be seen by physical eyes, nor heard by ears, nor touched by hands, etc. Because of this God, from the beginning of the world until now always wished to be adored by some visible form or figure. It is certain that God appeared to Adam, Abraham and other holy patriarchs who did not see God in his essence, but they beheld a form or figure, which was not God. And they did not adore that form or figure, but God in that form or figure. And so God, through that form or figure, entered into the understanding of the one to whom he appeared.

Then came the time of the prophets, among whom Moses was the first. The Lord appeared to him in the form of fire when he was keeping sheep for his father-in-law Jethro. And Moses did not adore the fire, nor the bush, but God in that image, through which he entered into the intellect of Moses. Thus when God in Exodus 20 gave the law on Mount Sinai, he appeared there in the form of fire, and Moses and the people adored not the fire but God in that form in which he wished to be adored, for showing his activity in punishing, that he might frighten them, and so Moses said to the people, "Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that the dread of him might be in you, and you should not sin," (Ex 20:20).

Then he commanded Moses that he would build an ark, covered with purest gold inside and out, and on top there were two Cherubim who held the propitiatory, that is the table of gold, and within the ark were the two tablets of the law, the staff of Aaron and a jar of manna. The entire Jewish people adored, not the wood of the ark, nor the gold, but God, because in that form or figure he wished to be adored. The reason is, just as the ark held that which was contained in it, so God would keep and conserve that people, as long as they believed in him and obeyed him. And when they were carrying

it the people adored, and today the Jews ridicule us when we adore God in the host.

Then at the time of the kings, after king Solomon at God's command built the temple and put the ark in the holy of holies of the temple, nor could it be seen, God wished to be adored in another form, namely, in the figure of a cloud, 3 Kgs 8: "The Lord said that he would dwell in a cloud," (v. 12). And Solomon and all the people were not adoring the cloud, but God in that form. Reason: because then he wished to be adored in the form of a cloud, for just as a cloud cools against the heat of the sun, so at the time of Solomon the Jews had a great refreshing period of peace and quiet with all its enemies.

Finally, God came and took human form in the virginal womb, and as long as Christ lived, God was adored in human form. But when Christ wished to withdraw from this world through bodily death, and after he had instituted the other sacraments, Christ instituted another form, or figure, under which God wished to be adored, not fearsome fire, nor the ark, nor clouds, but bread which is better than the aforesaid figures, and gives life; because the life of man is fundamentally sustained by bread, other foods are for well being. In this it is shown that God gives the life of grace and glory to those believing in him and obeying him. See the reason why he wanted to be adored now under such a form or figure, because we do not adore bread, nor whiteness which represents divine purity, nor roundness which represents divine eternity, which lacks beginning and end, but God contained within. Priests are to take care lest the hosts be broken or stained. See why Christ says, "Do this in remembrance of me," namely, of my passion. Hosea 14: "They shall be converted that sit under his shadow: they shall live upon wheat, and they shall blossom as a vine: his memorial shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hos 14:8-9). The law of Moses was the shadow of Christ. Also, from the New Testament, the text, "Because through the Mystery of the Word made flesh, [the new light of Thy glory hath shone upon the eyes of our mind]," (Preface for the Christmas Mass at Dawn).

Offering

The second reason for the institution of this sacrament as a perpetual offering. To explain this it must be noted that God from the beginning of the world wished that all men should offer sacrifice. Reason: because he is the source which gives us everything, and so he wishes that we make some offering to him. But the offerings changed just as also the figures or forms of worship changed.

Cain offered the fruits of the earth, worse. Abel however from the flocks, better. Melchisedech however standing before Abraham offered to the Lord not grain nor lambs but bread and wine, (Cf Gen 14:18f). Even the pagans who were living in the land of Canaan before the children of Israel lived there, offered their sons and daughters to idols. Tell now of how they molded idols from brass, and with great excitement dragged their children through fire, and offered them to that idol – a father did not even feel to weep for his son, etc. About which David said: "And they sacrificed their sons, and their daughters to devils," (Ps 105:37). But it was a wicked sacrifice and forbidden, and so God commanded the children of Israel to offer, not their sons nor their daughters, but animals: oxen, sheep, heifers, lambs and doves, etc. And this lasted until the time of Christ, who would change the sacrifice and get rid of all the other sacrifices and ways of sacrificing, namely those of Cain, Abel, Aaron, etc. He chose the sacrifice of Melchisedech who offered bread and wine, who was the priest of the Most High God. According to the prophet. "The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: [Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.] " (Ps 109:4). He doesn't say "according to the order of Aaron," who offered animals.

See here the perpetual offering, and it is of such a power that in the whole world there is not any other sacrifice remaining, only that one, because with its coming, all other sacrifices ought to cease. So neither Muslims [Agareni], nor Jews nor other pagans have any sacrifice, for God does not allow that there be any other sacrifice in the world. And so the prophecy of Malachi is fulfilled, "I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: " (Mal 1:10-11). It speaks to the priests of the old law. This text [auctoritas] ought to be written in gold letters. Note, "in every place." The Jews dared not

offer sacrifice but only in Jerusalem, under pain of death. And it is called a "clean oblation," on the other hand the oblation of the Jews, unclean. The priests of the Jews are butchers, etc., but the Christian oblation is clean. Priests should take care that the altar cloth and the corporals are clean, and the hosts are clean and the wine, chalice etc. In this holy sacrifice God comes down every day, and although he does not depart from heaven, just as the rays of the sun descend, and comes in through every open window, and nevertheless do not separate from the sun or from the heavens. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," (Mt 28:20).

Refreshment

The third reason for this institution was spiritual refreshment. You certainly understand that no living creature, neither corporeal nor spiritual can live, nor survive in being without food, which, for bodily creatures is evident to the eyes. About spiritual creatures however, namely angels, it is evident because even they need food, spiritual food not corporal. Authority: Raphael said to Tobias, "For when I was with you, I was there by the will of God: may you bless him, and sing praises to him. I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you: but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men," (Tob 12:18-19).

So God, as a good provider [paterfamilias] provides bodily food for bodies, when he said to Adam living in paradise, "Of every tree of paradise you shall eat," (Gn 2:16). See, the first food. He did not give permission to eat meat and fish nor drink wine until up to the time of Noah, after 1,500 years had gone by. If you might say, he gave fruit as a snack [modicam confortationem]. I respond, no, he gave fruit with water then as a substantial meal [maiolem confortationem], now we eat capons, hens and drink wine. Hence God says, "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth, and all trees that have in themselves seed of their own kind, to be your meat, and to all the beasts of the earth," (Gn 1:29f). Then, after the flood in the time of Noah, when he washed the world of its uncleanness, he changed the menu, because the waters of the flood had so destroyed the earth that its fruit then would not have been so good, nor as nutritious as before. So now it is not good to eat only fruit and to drink water. Therefore after the flood God gave permission to eat meat, fish and drink wine,

saying, "All the fowls of the air, and all that move upon the earth: all the fishes of the sea are delivered into your hand. And every thing that moves and lives shall be meat for you," (Gn 9:2-3).

Then, in the desert where the children of Israel ran out of food of the aforesaid kinds, God provided manna for them, which every day descended in the morning like coriander seeds, which lasted until they arrived to the promised land. So David, "The eyes of all hope in thee, O Lord: and you give them meat " (Ps 144:15). But he had not yet provided spiritual food for the souls, which are spiritual, and the soul is the most important part of man. Therefore David, weeping, said, "They were hungry and thirsty: their soul fainted in them," (Ps 106:5).

But Christ came, who instituted food, and spiritual food for souls, namely this holy sacrifice, which is not only an offering, but also for spiritual refreshment. In this food souls are restored and strengthened in devotion and virtues. Nor should you believe that this food would go down just into the stomach of the body to be digested there, but rather into the stomach of the soul, namely, the memory. About this food David prophesied saying: "And [God] had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the bread of heaven. Man ate the bread of angels: he sent them provisions in abundance," (Ps 77:24-25). First he speaks of the manna of the Jews, where it says, "And had rained down manna," namely from the clouds and not from the empyrean heaven, but from the aerial heaven. Then he speaks of this sacrament, "and had given them the bread of heaven." He is not speaking of manna like the Jews speak, because angels do not eat the manna. Note "bread;" this cannot be understood of manna, because it was just one food, but of this sacrament in which is the body of Christ, soul, divinity, powers and influences of all good things. Therefore he says "bread", and thus the church sings: "The Bread of Angels becomes the bread of men; The Bread of heaven ends all prefigurations: What wonder! a poor and humble servant consumes him, the Lord." [Thomas Aquinas: Panis angelicus].

Practically speaking, see how Christ on this day at the supper took a loaf of unleavened bread, for this reason we consecrate unleavened bread, and raising his eyes to heaven blessed and said those same words which we say in the consecration. And at the moment the words are said, the substance of

bread does not remain there, because it has been converted into the body of Christ, and because it was a living body, therefore there was blood and soul and divinity there, but the apostles were not seeing flesh there.

And he received communion first, just as the priest first communicates himself, then the others, nor by breaking the host is the body of Christ broken, just as the image is broken in breaking a mirror. Then he communicated the apostles saying, "Take and eat, this is my body." "Lord," Peter said, "this bread is your body?" "Peter," Christ said, "it is not bread, but it is my body. Therefore, eat." After he had received communion Peter said, "O Lord this food comforted me completely and enlightened my soul." Then Christ said to him, "I give you the power of doing the same."

He then gave communion to Judas, who without devotion and badly prepared took it and sinned just as bad by badly receiving communion, as by betraying Christ. If it is asked why Christ gave communion to him whom he knew to be in sin and ill prepared, I reply: because he did not wish to make it public, because his sin was hidden. So neither should a parish priest deny communion to someone whom he knows to be a secret sinner, if he lines up with others to receive communion, because he would defame him.

Every Christian ought to communicate on Easter etc. Children from the age of twelve or fourteen years. So Christ says, "This is the bread that came down from heaven," (Jn 6:59), not from the aerial heaven but from the empyreal. In apostolic times Christians received communion each day. "And they were persevering...in the communication of the breaking of bread," (Acts 2:42). "Bread," Gloss, of the Eucharist. Then it was required to communicate every Sunday. Then in the four principal festivals of the year. Later it was mandated that once a year, namely on Easter everyone should communicate. But good counsel says it is good to communicate on the four special feast days. John 6: "Amen, amen I say unto you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." (Jn 6:54).

Healing

The fourth reason for the institution of the sacrament was for a medicinal healing, namely for curing bodily and spiritual wounds. All evils, tribulations and miseries, and ultimately death itself had their origin and came from Adam's eating of that food contrary to the commandment of God. From that food the doors to all evils were opened, because otherwise people would have lived in the earthly paradise without any miseries and punishments whatsoever. And after they had lived there according to the divine plan, God would have said to Michael, "Descend into the earthly paradise and bring back here all those there who are of such an age." Without pain and death we would have ascended to glory, but because of the sin of Adam, etc. Therefore, the Grammarian says, [Mala mali malo mala contulit omnia malo]. "The jaw of the evil man by an apple brings all evil to evil." Construction: "mala", that is the jaw, "mali" of an evildoer, namely Adam, "malo," by an apple, "omnia mala contulit," brings all evil, "malo," to an evil, supply world. Even though Eve had eaten of this food, if Adam had not eaten, we would not have been obliged to this evil, nor would we have been conceived in original sin. Only Eve would have been punished.

The Lord God, seeing that the devil had so ordained that from fruit would come all evil, on the other hand ordained that from the fruit, namely, of the tree of Mary, to whom we pray, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb," would come all good to the whole world. Just as the devil, by his scheme knew how to do to much, that from the fruit he would wound and plague all peoples, on the other hand I shall make a universal medicine against all sicknesses, both of the body and of the soul. Therefore the church sings, "This work of our salvation order has arranged, etc.

The question here is, because many sick and wounded in body receive communion, who nevertheless are not cured in their soul from sins, moreover their sins are increased, how is it then a curative medicine?

I respond that a physicians giving medicine to a sick person consider two things, namely the disposition of the sick one and the usefulness of the medicine. First, they consider the disposition of the sick one. Therefore before they give strong laxatives to a sick person, they mix him a syrup to prepare and dispose him. And, they look to and consider the final usefulness, because although they might cure the sick one, nevertheless

they choose not to, because the medicine might kill him, as is evident with a certain king. There is required in the patient both a certain disposition and ultimate usefulness. And if either of these is lacking, it is not the fault of the medicine.

It is the same for the proposed question, if someone is indisposed and ill prepared receives this medicine, or purgation, without previously disposing syrup. The four spoons of syrup for disposing [a sinner] are: contrition of the heart, confession of the lips, deeds of satisfaction, and bodily affliction with the hot water of tears. So a soul is cured from sins. It is the same for the body. Since God knows that the sickness of the body overflows to the soul, sometimes God gives illness to the body for the health of the soul, because [physical] health and the curing of the illness would be harmful to the soul. And so he does not give health, which he would otherwise infallibly give if it were [spiritually] useful.

Without doubt therefore you hold that if a person is well disposed and well prepared and receives this medicine, both the body and the soul gain health, and so the priest says [when placing a particle of the consecrated host into the chalice], "May this sacrosanct mixture of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ become for me and all who receive health of mind and body."

See the reason why it was instituted as a universal medicine. Authority. "The most High has created medicines out of the earth, and a wise man will not abhor them, " (Sir 38:4). Note, "has created." It seems that this text contains a contradiction, because to create is to make something out of nothing, according to the Philosopher, but when something is made out of something, it is not said to be created but made. Since, however, it is said, "The most High hath created medicines out of the earth," he does not seem to create but to make. I respond, that in this sacrament there is not properly speaking generation, nor alteration, nor transmutation, because in alteration and substantial change the subject remains the same. Even of that which happens through generation something remains, as is clear in ashes. But it is not so in creation. Because in a thing newly created there is nothing which existed previously, as is clear with the soul newly created by God. So in this sacrament, beneath the whiteness is a substance, or matter of bread, and when transubstantiation takes place, all is changed, because nothing

remains of the matter or substance of bread. Therefore it comes closer to creation on this account, because it takes place entirely from divine power. Therefore he says, "The most High...out of the earth," that is out of earthly substance creates medicine. He does not say generated, made or formed, because in these there always remains something of the term from which it came [de termino a quo] in the term which it becomes [terminum ad quem], which is not the case in transubstantiation. "And a wise man will not abhor them," because ordinarily fastidious people abhor medicines, like laxatives or pills, because they would rather not take them. But a prudent doctor hides the medicine with honey or some other good [flavor], so it is not seen, or tasted. Thus Christ the best physician hides his flesh which cannot be seen or sensed, in the host. Therefore he says, "a wise man," etc.

Christ could have made it that he be seen in the consecrated host, like an image is seen in a mirror. But such a host ought not be consumed by a priest as the Doctors of theology say, because it might seem abhorrent visibly to eat the flesh of a man. Therefore Christ is not seen. Rather he remains hidden under that veil of whiteness, like a king under a cauldron. Isaiah, to whom this sacrament was revealed, says, "Truly you are a hidden God, the God of Israel the savior, " (Isa 45:15).

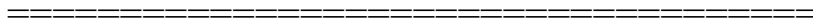
Heaven

The fifth reason for the institution was for heavenly promotion, so that we might ascend to heaven, because by nature no one can ascend to heaven, only God. "The heaven of heaven is the Lord's: but the earth he has given to the children of men, " (Ps 113:24). Note, "heaven," that is, the glory of heaven, "the Lord's", supply belongs to him by nature. "But the earth he has given to the children of men."

Therefore if we wish to ascend to heaven, we need a promoter and helper by whom we ascend, because Christ says, "No man has ascended into heaven, but he who descends from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven," (Jn 3:13). Unless this text is properly understood it could be an occasion for despair. "No man has ascended into heaven," therefore neither the innocent, nor the penitent, nor martyrs, nor confessors etc., because none of them descended from heaven. But it must be understood in this

way, "No man has ascended into heaven," supply, by his own power, but well does he ascend into heaven by virtue of the body of Christ contained in this sacrament. For just as a fog, which in the morning lies on the ground which of itself cannot ascend because of its weight, but when the sun come which warms it, then the sun makes it ascend, so for us who are terrestrial and heavy, by our own power we cannot ascend into heaven, but the sun of justice shines, which is in this sacrament, and by his power we are able to rise. Therefore it is called viaticum, that is the food of travelers.

Tell of the miracle of Hugo of Saint Victor, who when he received communion said, "Ascend Son to Father and Spirit to God, who sent him." And he died and his soul ascended with Christ into heaven. This was prefigured in the prophet Elijah, sleeping. "And the angel of the Lord... touched him, and said to him: Arise, eat: for you have yet a great way to go," (3 Kgs 19:7). When a man is in mortal sin he is sleeping like the prophet in the desert, in danger from the lions and leopards of hell. And it is said to him by the angel, that is the priest, "Arise," you who are sleeping and rise up from the dead, etc., and "eat" that is by receiving communion. "And [he] walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God," (v.8). In sacred scripture a day signifies prosperity, and night signifies adversity. The divine commandments are ten, which are to be kept in four ways, namely in the heart, by thinking, on the lips by speaking, in deed by doing, and by persevering in their fulfillment. Four times ten is forty, and so we shall go up to the mountain of God, into the kingdom of heaven. Amen



1 Cor 11

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

24 And giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me.

25 In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me.

26 For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come.

27 Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.

A724. Sermon on Good Friday

" We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die," (Jn 19:7).

This passage is found in John 19, and is recited today in the passion of the Lord. Daily through the whole week the passion of Jesus Christ has been represented and remembered, but much differently today than on the other days. It was represented before as something already past. And so at Mass we said, "At that time...", etc. But today it is recited like it is happening now, and we are eyewitnesses. And so today "At that time" is not said, but today we simply begin, "He goes forth," (Jn 18:1) in the present tense. And there is a reason for the difference, because a present thing moves the heart of men more than something past, like a fly stinging us now more than a sting from the past. And so that we might sense its sweetness and our souls might be compassionate with the death of Christ, it is represented today like something present. So the [divine] Office and sermons take place as if Christ is seen now to be on the cross, that we might perceive, according to what God says, "Remember my poverty, and transgression, the wormwood, and the gall," (Lamentations 3:19). Note: "poverty" because he was crucified naked. And the prophet responds in the person of the Christian people, "I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me," (Lam. 3:20). "I will be mindful," namely of the past, "and remember," as if it were in the present. Therefore, just as I said, we speak as if we are looking at Jesus Christ crucified now.

What about the sorrow of the Virgin Mary. You know that you do not greet [cheerfully] a grieving person, nor does one dare to say words of joy to a person drowning in sadness. So we shall not salute her in our usual way [with the Hail Mary], because it would cause her sorrows to increase. She would say, "Why do you say 'Hail,' because I am full of all grief and pain, bitterness and misery," etc. If we were to say, "The Lord is with thee," she would say, "The Lord is not with me, because they have taken him from me and crucified him." If we would say, "Blessed," she would say, "Why do you call me 'blessed,' because everyone speaks ill of me." And so we shall not salute her. But less we preach without devotion, let us turn to God

hanging on the cross crucified saying, "We adore you O Christ and we bless you, because by your cross you have redeemed the world," etc.

"We have a law," etc. as above. For the declaration of the proposed text and the introduction of the matter for preaching, it must be known that in sacred theology there is this question: Whether some other work of Christ besides his death would have been sufficient to redeem mankind, or whether it was necessary that he should die? And this question is decided by the holy doctors of theology through two conclusions.

The first conclusion is, if we speak according to the dignity of the divine person and according to the holiness of his divinity and humanity, we say that any work whatsoever and any effort [taedium], even without death, would have been sufficient to redeem mankind. And the reason is because Jesus Christ, insofar as he is God, had in his actions infinite power. Same also because of the holiness of his humanity, to the extent that just one prayer or tear, or one drop of blood, without death, would have sufficed to redeem humanity. And David understands this conclusion in Ps 138 which begins, "Lord, you have proved me, etc." in the verse where he says, "I will praise you, for you are fearfully magnified: wonderful are your works, and my soul knows right well," (Ps 138:14). David is speaking in the spirit of prophecy of the messiah king. And he says, "fearfully", and this because of the infinite power of divinity, and "magnified," because of his humanity.

The second conclusion is, if we speak of Jesus Christ according to the plan of God embedded [inserta] in the law of Moses and the prophets, then it was necessary that he should die, so that death might be redeemed by death, because, after man has been handed over to death because of the sins of a man, namely Adam, and after Christ wished to free mankind, it was necessary that he should die. Whence Christ by his death has freed us from a double death, namely from the spiritual death of the soul through baptism, and from the death of the body at the end of the world after resurrection. This God revealed to Moses in the book of Numbers 35, when he commanded that if one has killed someone by accident he should flee to a city of refuge -- which were six, three this side of the Jordan and three beyond -- and that there he could await the death of the high priest, and at his death he could then return a free man. In this it is seen that there was given a reason for desiring the death of the high priest. The text

nevertheless says, "and he shall abide there until the death of the high priest, who is anointed with the holy oil," (Num 35:25).

One might ask who is this killer, and where are these cities of refuge, and who is this high priest? It must be said that the killer is every sinner. In the old testament, Ezek 18 says, "The soul that sins, the same shall die," (Ez 18:4). The sinner is a killer by accident, and not voluntarily, not deliberately, because he who sins with pride or commits other sins, does not intend to kill his soul, because no one deliberately acts for evil. But the sinner takes pleasure in sin, as for example in pride or another sin, from which sin the death of the soul follows by accident. This sinner is a killer, because he kills the principal part of a man, namely the soul. Therefore he cannot enter that city Jerusalem, our mother above, i.e. heaven, but he must flee to a city of refuge. And so all the dead after completing their penance went to limbo, and were not able to go to the city of Jerusalem, however good they might have been, until the high priest who is our Lord Jesus Christ would die. David says about him, "You art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech," (Ps 108:4). Heaven had been closed, for in Genesis 3 it is said that after the sin of the first man, God, "placed Cherubim before the paradise of pleasure, and a flaming sword, turning every way, to guard the way to the tree of life," (Gen 3:24).

Hence, St. Thomas, [Summa theologiae,] III Pars, q.49, a.5, where he pursues this image says at first that the ancient fathers through their good works merited to enter the kingdom of heaven through faith in the passion of Jesus Christ, according to Heb 11 "by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice," (Heb 11:33), through which they also would be cleansed of their personal sins, to the extent that it pertained to the healing of their own person. Not however did the faith or justice of someone suffice to removing the obstacle which was the condition of the whole human race. This was removed through the outpouring of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus before the passion of Christ, no one was able to enter or access the celestial kingdom by obtaining eternal beatitude which consists in the full enjoyment of God. Christ merited for us the entrance to the kingdom of heaven.

It is clear therefore that it was not absolutely necessary for Christ to die as

says the first conclusion, which also St. Thomas says in III, q.45, a.1. He posits that because he could have freed men in another way. But according to his preordained plan, expressed through the prophets, and foreshadowed through figures in the old law, it was necessary that Christ die so that the scriptures would be fulfilled. And this is what Luke says in 22: "And the Son of Man indeed goes, according to that which is determined," (Lk 22:22). And Luke 24: "These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me," (Lk 24:44). And because it has been written, for that reason it was necessary that Christ suffer and rise from the dead. This St. Thomas has in the same place.

And therefore this sermon's theme is proposed not in the person of the Jews unjustly seeking the death of Christ, but it is proposed in the person of all the prophets who say, "We have a law," because in their written law a bronze serpent and paschal lamb were figures of the death of Christ, therefore that scriptures might be fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven opened, Christ according to that law ought to die. The theme, therefore, is clear.

Now it is necessary to declare how the passion of Christ took place for our redemption and reconciliation. To understand this we should note that just as in the sin of Adam there were six circumstances or conditions, so in the passion of Christ there were six circumstances or conditions, corresponding to the sin.

- First, there was a physical meal,
- Second, a binding of the person,
- Third, human condemnation,
- Fourth, social compassion,
- Fifth, dying for a time,
- Sixth, an earthly burial.

Dinner

First, in the passion of Christ there was a physical dinner. Before his passion Christ wished to eat with his apostles. Reason: for just as the sin

[praevaricatio] of Adam began with eating, when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, so Christ to show that he had come to reform the evil of Adam, wished to eat with his apostles. Practically speaking, note how the apostles, Peter and John, as Luke makes clear, ch. 22, said to him, "[Rabbi] Where do you wish that we prepare for you to eat the Passover?" (Mt 26:17). In that year the Passover of the Jews was on Good Friday, and the solemnity began on the evening before, when they ate the paschal lamb with bitter herbs. Thus they said to him, "Rabbi. Where do you wish that we prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He replied to them saying that they were to go to the city, Jerusalem, to the house of a certain good man, his secret disciple. "And he sent Peter and John," (Luke 22:8). Peter and John told the lord of the house that their master, Christ, had sent them to him. And he replied, "O blessed are you who are the disciples of the savior, and what do you wish?" They said, "You already know how our master, although he is the Lord of all things, nevertheless wishes to be poor. He sent us to say that he wished to celebrate the Passover in your house." The man was most grateful to God for such an honor, that the savior wished to celebrate the Passover in his house. He showed them the large dining room which he had prepared for them saying, that he wished to pay for all the necessities and make the preparations. "And you should return to him and warn him lest he come by daylight, because the chief [priests] had issued a death sentence against him, and they wished to seize him."

So Christ arrived at a late hour and secretly entered the city. Think how that good man, the lord of the house, reverently greeted Christ when he arrived, thanking him, because it pleased him to come to his house. He wished to wait on Christ and offer water to wash his hands, but Christ refused. Then Christ gave the blessing of the table, "The eyes of all [hope in you, O Lord: and you give them meat in due season]," (Ps 144:15). [The traditional monastic prayer before meals.] And he sat down at the table with the apostles.

The evangelists did not report that the Virgin was in the room, but indeed they do say that she was present at the passion, so she was in Jerusalem on the day of the Passover, and also at the passion of Christ. The evangelists say this. Therefore, some devout contemplatives believe it to be likely that she also wished to be at the dinner with her son. He had withdrawn with the

apostles to the city of Ephraim near the desert. The Virgin thinking that her son would be at the paschal feast in Jerusalem as he was accustomed to do, on the previous night had come joyfully to Jerusalem hoping to hear a sermon from her son on Passover day. She went directly to the house of Mary Magdalen to find out what was happening with her son. Magdalen said that he was in a citizen's house with his disciples. The Virgin Mary said, I would like to ask that we go to him. Magdalene however who knew the whole business, wished to keep her back until the next day, but the Virgin insisted on going. So Mary Magdalen, Martha, and Lazarus accompanied her to that house. Magdalen knocked at the door. Think how frightened that citizen was that the Jews were coming to arrest Christ. He said to Christ, "Your mother wishes to come in," He agreed. The Virgin entering said to her son, "O son, I wanted to see you very much." And she scolded John, her "grandson" [nepote] because he had not shared with her news of her son. He made an excuse, saying that they were in a different town.

Christ however invited his mother to eat with them. Christ knowing that his passion was approaching, at the end of the meal said farewell to his mother lest she be present. But she wanted by all means to remain with her son. Christ did not permit it. Then the Virgin invited him with the apostles to lunch the next day because she was throwing a big feast for Passover, and because on that day, namely Friday she had conceived him. Christ, knowing the "dinner" that was being prepared for him, did not explicitly tell his mother all that would happen on the next day, but responding gently said, "Mother you and I shall eat together tomorrow at the same table," namely of the passion of Christ, "and of the same food," namely of sorrow. But his mother did not understand this. Thoroughly comforted and content she departed. Think how Magdalen, who knew everything, was saying, "Lord tomorrow an evil meal awaits you and us." And if this is not told by the evangelists, it nevertheless is not contrary to the gospel, and the devout doctors and saints have written in this fashion of these things, so it ought piously to be believed. It is much like the things that were going to happen.

After his mother's departure Christ did four things. First, he told his apostles about his passion, as Luke says, "And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And

having taken the chalice, he gave thanks, and said: Take, and divide it among you: For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God comes...The hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. And the Son of man indeed goes, according to that which is determined: but yet, woe to that man by whom he shall be betrayed," (Lk 22:15-18, 22).

Think how the apostles hearing these words were sad and desolate and each was saying, "Is it I?" that is to say, "I should kill myself now, for I would have a lesser punishment." Christ however did not wish to reveal the sin of Judas publicly, which had been hidden, but secretly he revealed it to John who asked, "Who is he who shall betray you?" (Jn 21:20). Jesus said that he to whom he would give a portion of bread...saying, "The Son of man indeed goes, as it is written of him," (Mt 26:24) I say also to you more, that, "All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: -- by Zechariah (13:7) the prophet -- I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." (Mt 26:31). Then Peter, more passionate than the others said, "Although all shall be scandalized in you, I will never be scandalized," (Mt 26:33). He believed he was speaking the truth, because at that time he had a good heart, but out of weakness later he sinned. To him Christ said, "Amen I say to you, that...before the cock crows, you will deny me three times," (Mt 26:34). Then Christ said to Peter comforting him, "I have prayed for you, that your faith does not fail," that is, in the end. Then Peter was consoled.

Second Christ rose from the table, as John (ch. 13) said, and put on an apron and poured warm water into a basin for washing the feet of the apostles. He came to Peter first. "Lord," Peter said, "do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered, and said to him: "What I do you do not know now; but you shall know hereafter," (Jn 13:6-7). Peter said to him "You shall never wash my feet. Christ answered him: If I do not wash you, you shall have no part with me," (v. 8). In which he shows that we ought to wash away the uncleanness of temporal affections. Then Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head," (v.9). Christ said to him, "He who is washed," i.e. through baptism, "needs only to wash his feet," i.e. of earthly affections, "but is wholly clean. And you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: You are not all clean." (vv.10-11). And he washed the feet of all the apostles who were weeping,

even of Judas, who he started with [after Peter], as some say, so that he might be inclined to repentance. Then he said to them, "You call me Master, and Lord; and you say well, for so I am," (Jn 13:13). "For I have given you an example," i.e. of humility, "that as I have done to you, so you do also," (v. 15).

Third he instituted the sacrament of the altar, wishing to put an end to the sacrifice of the old law and to institute the sacrifice of the new law. After the washing of feet, he returned to the table and took up a plate of unleavened bread and consecrated and first communicated himself, then the apostles. as the priest does, because first he communicates himself then others. The text of Mat 26: "And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread," and giving thanks, "blessed, and broke: and gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, and eat. This is my body." (v. 26), "which shall be delivered for you," (Cf I Cor 11:24). Peter asked him, "Lord this bread is your body?" Christ replied, "Peter, there is nothing left of bread. It is my body. Eat." After he ate he said, "O Lord it completely comforts me. Never has my soul found such sweetness in any food." All the other apostles received communion, and even Judas. Then the devil entered into him to possess him more fully, because he who unworthily receives communion, welcomes the devil. Jesus said to Judas, "What you do, do quickly," (Jn 13:27). The apostles did not understand, believing that he was speaking to him about some task he had to do. Then Christ ordained the apostles and made them priests, saying, "As often as you do this, do it in memory of me," (Cf I Cor 11:24f). Likewise "taking the chalice," after they had eaten, "he gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink you all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for [you and for] many..," (Mt 26:27).

Fourth he proceeds to give the apostles some good lessons which John calls his testament, saying, "A little while, and now you shall not see me," (Jn 16:16), therefore bear with tribulations and persecutions patiently, because, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you," (Jn 15:20). I send you the spirit of truth. (v. 26) And having finished speaking, he prayed for them saying, "I pray for them," (Jn 17:9). The apostles couldn't stop weeping.

See here the physical dinner for our reformation, just as there had been one in the sinning. And so the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled about this meal saying, " And they shall eat the roasted flesh that night," (Ex 12:8). "They shall eat," namely Christ and the apostles, "the flesh," etc.

Bound

Second, in the passion, Christ was personally tied up, when he was arrested and bound in person in the garden. Reason: because just as in the sin, after Adam ate there was a binding through sin in the terrestrial garden of paradise, where before they had been free with original justice, so too Christ, to show that he came for the reforming of the sin of Adam, wished to be arrested and bound. Practically, now having sung a hymn of thanksgiving, specifically, "I will praise thee, O Lord, " (Ps. 110:4) [the traditional monastic prayer after meals], he expressed his gratitude to the master of the house, because Christ is not ungrateful, saying that he should persevere in good works, and that he would receive him in the house of his glory, and then "he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron," (Jn 18:1). so named from the cedar trees there. Note that the valley of Josaphat is between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. And down the middle of the valley of Josaphat passes the brook of Cedron. He entered the garden where he had gone often. The moon was full -- according to the law, Ex 12, the Passover was always at the time of the full moon. Mark says that "he began to fear and to be heavy." (Mk 14:33). This was to show his true humanity which naturally flees from death. Seeing this the apostles said to themselves, "O Lord, what is happening?" Christ said, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," (v.34), and this because of the flight of the apostles, because of the sorrows of his mother and for the destruction of the Jews, and so he said this, "My soul is sorrowful..." The remedy is to pray. So, "Watch, and pray that you enter not into temptation," (v. 38), because I am going to do the same.

And so distancing himself a stone's throw away (Lk 22:41) he prayed three times for the three intentions. "Father, all things are possible to you: remove this chalice from me," (Mk 14:36). In this prayer Christ shows himself to have true humanity which naturally flees from death, but Christ was ready for death giving us an example that in tribulations we should conform ourselves to the divine will. Second he asked for his resurrection saying,

Father, "Let this chalice pass from me," i.e. of the measured passion from God the Father, may it pass, i.e. last only three days, and his glorious resurrection might come. And so he says "Father, let it pass from me." About this Hilary says, "He does not seek that it not come, but that it pass from him to the martyrs, so that the courage and patience of his martyrdom would pass to the martyrs and they would become courageous and patient in enduring martyrdom for him. Because of this prayer, the holy martyrs, Lawrence, Vincent, Catherine, Agnes and others were brave in patiently enduring martyrdom."

Luke then says, "And being in an agony," (Lk 22:41) not of sensuality against reason, because such struggle was never in Christ—it is only in us—but the agony was of sensuality against the object of the passion. Christ saw clearly [principaliter] all the sufferings of his passion which his sense nature was shunning. So his veins were so pressured from the memory of the passion they began to exude blood.

Then angels came to comfort him, not that he needed it, because he was stronger than the angels, but the angel paid him the honor that he ought to show to his Lord, like a shield-bearer comforting his much stronger lord before he entered battle. He said to Christ according to the mind of devout holy doctors, "Lord this passion is not contrary to your will. You yourself have planned it with the Father and the Holy Spirit for the salvation of believers and obedient followers. Therefore the holy fathers joyfully await you in limbo. From this passion a great glory is prepared for you. Because of this you shall be the universal judge over all creatures."

After the angel left Christ came to his disciples and "found them sleeping for sorrow," (Lk 22:45), and he said to them, "Arise, let us go," (Mt. 26:46). "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak," (Mt 26:41).

And the Jews came with swords and clubs. Then Peter asked Christ, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" (Lk 42:29). Christ replied that we should not defend ourselves with weapons, but with patience. Then the traitor Judas, who had given them a cue, lest they arrest James, who looked like Christ, in place of Christ, said to Christ, "Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed him," (Mt 26:49), for Christ was accustomed to kiss his disciples when they first returned to him. But Christ turned his face and said to Judas, "Judas, do you

betray the Son of man with a kiss?" (Lk 22:48), which is to say, "Wretched man [miser], think of the damnation prepared for you today."

He approached the Jews and asked "Whom do you seek?" (Jn 18:4). They answered: "Jesus of Nazareth," (v. 5). Wishing to humble them he said, "I am he," [Ego sum] which is the proper name of God. And upon hearing that name all the Jews fell down on the ground. This is how Christ showed that they could not arrest him unless he wished to be arrested. Think how the apostles were rejoicing when the Jews fell down, saying to themselves that Christ would not be arrested. Chrysostom says, "Consider Christian how much power is in Christ about to be judged, that the one to be judged, has so much power by a single word." Therefore he says, "No one takes my soul from me," namely unwilling (Cf Jn 10:18). With Christ's permission they got to their feet. Christ again asked them: "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way." (Jn 18:8).

Then "they laid hands on Jesus, and held him," (Mt 26:49). Christ said to them, " You have come out as it were for a robber, with swords and clubs, to apprehend me. I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not lay hands on me." (Mt. 26:55), "but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Lk 22:53).

Then Peter, as if desperate, wishing to die for Christ, drew his sword and wanted to kill one of this servants. He ducked his head, and Peter cut off his right ear. Christ said to him, "Put up thy sword its scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn 18:11). "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled?" (Mt 26:54). He restored his ear to him.

Then the apostles seeing Christ arrested and bound, fled, fearing that they too would be arrested. Think how each was saying to himself: "O wretched one, now is fulfilled the scandal which he had predicted. O wretched one, I so deny my master and without a blow I desert him." "O wretched one," John says, "what shall I say to your mother?" And he returned to Christ. Peter, seeing that John was returning, also returned and followed at a distance to witness the end. Some say that when Christ, arrested, entered through the gate of the city of Jerusalem, the stone images of the roman emperors which were sculpted there bowed down to Christ, saying, "Lord,

rational men bound you, and we insensible ones adore you."

See here, the binding of Christ. And the prophecy was fulfilled (Lamentations 4) in the person of the prophet of old, "The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins: to whom we said: Under your shadow we shall live among the Gentiles," (Lam 4:20)

Condemnation

Third, in the passion of Christ there is human condemnation. Before four judges Christ was condemned, namely before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate. Reason: because the sin of Adam mankind was condemned to corruption under the four elements, for if Adam had not sinned, fire would not have harmed us, nor would air convey bad impressions, nor would there be storms against us, nor would water drown us, nor would earth harm us as we worked or traveled on it.

So Christ to make satisfaction for us, so that after the day of judgment we would be free from these corruptions of the elements, wished to be condemned before four of the aforesaid judges. Practically speaking, Christ, arrested and bound, was lead, first before Annas the priest who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, a most intense enemy of Christ. Fortunately John was known to them, because he used to bring him orders of fish. John's father would send him. Because the wicked judge freely received that service, so the door maid allowed John to enter. He also got permission for Peter to come in with him. The door maid said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" (Jn 18:17). He denied him out of fear of arrest. Then he approached the fire with the rest.

Then Annas questioned Christ about two matters, namely about his teaching and his disciples. saying, "Is not the teaching of Moses sufficient? It seems that you are wiser than God," etc., and, "You wish yourself to be the captain of the people, why so?" Christ replied to the first question about his teaching saying, "I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, where all the Jews gather; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why do you ask me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them," (Jn 18:20-21). And he replied to the second question, but just then the servant of the priest "struck Jesus a blow, saying:

Do you answer the high priest so?" And he knocked him to the ground. After he had gotten up Jesus said to him, "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me?" (Jn 18:23), which is to say you do not know whom you strike, but you will know on judgment day.

Peter seeing how Christ was struck, wept. They said to him, "Are not you too one of his disciples?" (v. 25). He denied it, and said: "I am not," (v. 26). One of the servants of the high priest (a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off) says to him: Did I not see you in the garden with him?" (Jn 18:25-26) Then Peter not only denied Christ but also swore and cursed saying that he did not know him. O Peter, where are the words of the promise which you made? I am prepared to be jailed with you and to go to my death. And if it is necessary that I die with you I shall not deny you, etc. "Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized," (Mt 26:33). O how badly you have kept your promise. And the cock crowed. And Christ turning, gazed on Peter, which is to say, "Peter, you have denied me." Then Peter "Going forth, wept bitterly," (v. 33). The Master of History (Peter Comestor) says that Peter hid himself in a certain tomb, and whenever a cock crowed Peter would always weep. So he always carried a towel. He denied Christ only because of fear. What about you who deny him and rebel out of malice?

Then Annas having seen that the cock crowed, considering that it was late night, passed sentence that Christ should be led before Caiaphas, and so it happened. Think how Christ was received there, where his enemies were gathered, saying, "Wise guy [Ribalde], how often did you confound us in your sermons!" They brought forward many false witnesses against him. The judge said to him, "Listen, they present so much adverse testimony against you." Jesus however did not respond. Reason: because when suffering from lying testimony it is better to remain silent than to say anything. Again the judge said, "Why do you not speak? I demand that you, under oath, tell us if you are the Christ." Then Christ, out of respect for the name of God said, "You have said it—supply, the truth—because I am the son of God and the messiah, the savior of the world." "Nevertheless hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven," (Mt 26:65) "Then they all said: Are you then the Son of God? He said: You say that I am," (Lk 22:70). Hearing

this Caiaphas, signaled blasphemy by rending his garments, saying, "He has blasphemed!" (Mt 26:65), "Have you heard the blasphemy? What does it seem to you?" And he condemned him saying he deserved to die. "Then they spat in his face and struck him blows," (v. 67), and so held him through the whole night.

And today, in the first hour of the morning, they led him to Pilate, handing him over to the secular jurisdiction for the death sentence, accusing him and saying, "We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding [people] to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the king." (Lk 23:2). "Pilate asked him, saying: Art you the king of the Jews? But Christ answering, said: You say it." (v. 3) –supply, "the truth." "And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the scribes: "I find no cause in this man". But they were more earnest, saying: "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." Then Pilate asked if the man were from Galilee? And when he understood that he fell under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem, in those days," (Lk 23:2-7).

Herod was pleased. For a long time he had desired to meet Jesus and to witness his miracles. He hoped to see some sign from him, not out of devotion, but as amusement. And he had a number of questions for Christ to answer. First he said to him, "I have heard that you know how to change water into wine; so do it in front of me." He had a large jug of water brought in saying, "Change it." But Christ said nothing to him. Rather he looked down on him like a fool. Then Herod said, "I have heard that you know how to multiply loaves of bread. Do it for me." He did nothing. Again, "I have heard that you can walk on water. Do it for me." But Christ said nothing to him. Herod said to him, "Don't you know that I have the power to free you?" Christ said nothing to him. "And Herod with his guard treated him with contempt, and mocked him, put a white garment on him, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with one another, that very day; for they were enemies before. (Lk 23:11-12).

"And Pilate, calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have presented this man to me as one who perverted the people. Having examined him before you, I find no cause in this man, in those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod either. For

I sent him to him. Look, nothing worthy of death is found in him," (Lk 23:13-15).

The devil, seeing Christ's great patience, and the joy of the holy fathers in limbo, and wishing to thwart the passion of Christ appeared in a dream to Pilate's wife, still in her bed sleeping, so that through the woman's intervention our redemption might be impeded. She was threatened.

She had to persuade her husband so in no way would he kill that good and just man. Then Pilate, as much out of love for his wife, as also because he knew that they had handed him over out of envy, worked to free Christ, all the while striving to keep the good will of the Jews.

He wished to free him for four reasons. First because of his innocence, which he had determined by his private meeting with Christ. When he asked if he had forbidden tribute to Caesar, Christ replied "No." Moreover he had said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," (Mt. 22:21). Again, when asked if he were the king of the Jews, Christ replied, "My kingdom is not of this world." (Jn 18:36). "The Jews wanted to make me king after the meal which I had provided for them, but I fled." Then Pilate said to the Jews, "I find no reason for a death sentence for this man. But they cried out saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Second, Pilate wished to free Christ using the exemption which the Jews had from a privilege granted by the Emperor, that on the Passover they were able to set free one prisoner, whomever they asked for. Reason: because on that day the people of Israel were freed from slavery in Egypt, and so in memory of that liberation they had obtained this privilege. Pilate was arranging for Christ to be freed using this privilege, saying, "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover; do you wish, therefore, that I release the king of the Jews to you? Then they all cried out again, saying: Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber," (Jn 18:39-40), and a murderer.

Third, he wished to free Christ out of compassion. Pilate knew that he was arrested out of envy and malice of heart, out of the misery of those beset with envy. Thus Pilate said to Christ, "I see that the whole people have turned against you out of envy, so I shall have you scourged, so that their malice for you may be transformed, lest you die." Christ replied, "Do

whatever you wish." Then Pilate took Jesus and bound him naked to a column, according to the Master of History, so tightly that one hand does not touch the other hand, for the space of two palms, but wrapped and tied by cords. He was whipped so fiercely, that from the soles of his feet to the top of his head no part of his blessed body was unmarked, except only his tongue, which would pray and bear witness for sinners and the thief on the cross. And so scriptures were fulfilled which had predicted that the Son of Man would be handed over to the people and whipped and spit on.

According to some, there were four soldiers whipping him,. The first two, according to Jerome in the Gloss, had prepared switches with thorns and sharpest brambles by which to puncture his skin. When these two were tired, the other two would take up whips, at the tips of which there were nodules with sharp points attached for ripping his holy skin. The other two had chains with hooks at their ends, to tear out flesh. Hence Eusebius and Chrysosom on this text, "The discipline [i.e. whipping] of our peace was upon him. They say that Christ was wounded by this discipline in a triple way, namely hard, because of rods and thorns, and harder because of the nodules on the whips, and hardest because of the iron chains. Since, according to doctors, there are 276 bones in the human body, Christ was so whipped that each bone received a triple blow, one from the rods, another from the whips, the third from the chains.

When he was untied, Christ wished to put on his own garments, but they wouldn't permit it. The soldiers taking Jesus, led him from the whipping post into the atrium where they gathered the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a rough, old purple garment, as a sign of royal majesty, for kings wear purple. Shaping a crown of marine [marinis] thorns, which have sharper and longer spines than other thorns, they pressed it on his head, cruelly wounding it in 72 places. It was shaped like a cap [ad modum pilei] so that wherever it contacted the head, the spines penetrated to the skull. These contacts, according to Isidore, were concave on the inside drawing up the blood of Christ. They put a reed in his right hand like a royal scepter, and they mocked him and began to genuflect before him and to salute him in derision saying, "Hail king of the Jews," which is to say, "You call yourself king of the Jews, Now you are crowned." And spitting on him they

struck him at will. For this reason, the church, when praying for them, does not have us genuflect, as with the prayers for the pagans and for others.

And then Pilate went out again and said, "Look, that you may know that I find no cause in him, I bring him forth to you (Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment.) And [Pilate] said to them: Behold the Man, " (Jn 19:4-5). Which is to say, "Here is the man who says he is your king, as you allege. It is enough for you that such abominable contempt be laid on this man for this accusation," etc. When the priests and ministers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify, crucify him!" which says, "That punishment was not sufficient. We ask that he be crucified," and "We want no other death but crucifixion," since, according to Chrysostom, crucifixion was so ignominious that one crucified would be remembered only as cursed. And that David bewails saying, "I am poured out like water," (Ps 21:15), because the smell of every liquid remains in the empty jar, except for water. They wanted his name to be forgotten, as St. Thomas says on this text, therefore they sought that he be crucified.

Pilate however said, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more," (Jn 19:6-8), not the law, because he was a Gentile, but lest by chance, according to Jerome, it was true that he had a divine origin, and so he would have committed an enormous crime by whipping him.

Pilate wanted even more certainty. Again he entered the pretorium with Jesus and said to Jesus, "Where are you from? of divine or human generation?" Jesus did not reply because of the difficulty of the question, for Pilate was not sufficiently ready to accept the answer. "Pilate therefore said to him: Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and I have power to release you?" With these words Pilate condemned himself. "Jesus answered: You should not have any power against me, unless it were given you from above. Therefore, he who has delivered me to you, has the greater sin," (Jn 19:11) Augustine says that whoever sins from avarice, sins more than he who sins from human fear. "From henceforth," i.e. from this case, "Pilate sought to release him," (v. 12), as a clever man seeing that he had cleared him of sin, and lest he

should kill an innocent man, he was seeking an opportunity to dismiss him, as he had done before.

"But the Jews," seeing him, "cried out, saying: If you release this man, you art not Caesar's friend. For whosoever makes himself a king," etc. "Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forward, and sat down in the judgment seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the preparation day [parasceve]...", that is, the first solemn day on which they prepared food for the Sabbath. On the Sabbath itself it is not permitted to prepare food because of the solemnity, but only on the preceding day, Friday, therefore every Friday was called the evening of the Passover [parasceve], "at about the sixth hour," (Jn 19:13f). Because on the sixth day man was created. And Pilate said: "Behold your king. But they, "as if hysterically, "cried out: Away with him; away with him; crucify him! Pilate said to them: Shall I crucify your king? " which is to say, "Indeed, from this shall be generated great shame, when it is told that you crucified your king." The priests replied: "We have no king but Caesar," (v. 15). Then Pilate realizing that he was incurring the indignation of the people, and of Caesar, granted them their petition.

"And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent [a message] to him, saying: Have you nothing to do with that just man," (Mt 27:19). I have endured much this night because of this holy and just man. Then the devil recognized the fruit of the passion of Jesus Christ from the joy of the souls awaiting in limbo which from many prophets were hoping that they be redeemed. Pilate seeing however that he was making no progress, but a great riot was breaking out, taking water washed his hands before the people saying: " I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and our children " (Mt 27:19). O what a terrible legacy did these stupid people leave. The heritage remains to this very day. For, as a sign of this claim, when Jewish boys are born, of the race which cried out such, they have their right hand full of blood positioned on their heads.

So Pilate, shaken with fear released Barabbas the murderer to them. Jesus, however, scourged, he handed over to their will, to be crucified, contrary to the law of justice. Pilate's sentence of Jesus read: "Jesus, seduced the people, blasphemed God, calling himself Christ, to be the king of the Jews,

judged and condemned to be nailed to the cross." And because today is offered the [alpha] and [omega], the beginning and the end, therefore on these days the church omits the usual beginnings and endings of the hours [of the Divine Office].

Compassion

Fourth in the passion of Christ is social compassion, because not only Christ endured the passion and the sorrows of the heart, but also the Virgin Mary his mother, and many others. Reason: because Adam did not suffer the evils of his sin alone, but also Eve.

The sentence of death was issued. Next they mocked him. They clothed him in purple and dressed him in a way that would make it more recognizable that he was going to his death, so he would be jeered at all the more. And then, without doubt, Christ experienced afresh extreme pain, because that purple garment had become encrusted, and deeply embedded in the wounds of the scourging. It could not be ripped off without excruciating pain. You can imagine, especially when his tunic was torn away, that all his wounds were reopened, and this was a harsher penalty than scourging, or even the crown. Fresh bleeding began, and his whole body was coated in red. And laying the cross on him, they led him out of the city.

Because the glorious passion of Christ extends itself not only to the Jews but also to all, as a sign of this, he wished to suffer outside of the city. O how many good things the blessed Jesus always did for this city. For all these things, to disgrace him more, they laid the cross on his own shoulders to carry. St. Bernard: "O silent [inauditu] spectacle, never heard, seen or done, that some thief or malefactor would be forced to do this, that he carries his own yoke, only the savior, so the passage of Isaiah was fulfilled: 'and the government is upon his shoulder,'" (Isa 9:6).

This was prefigured in Isaac, who when he went to be sacrificed by his father, carried the wood on his own back (See Gn 22:6). There we find that the Lord said to Abraham: "Abraham, Abraham. And he answered: Here I am. He said to him: Take your only begotten son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of vision: and there you shall offer him for a holocaust

upon one of the mountains which I will show you. So Abraham rising up in the night, saddled his ass: and took with him two young men, and Isaac his son: and when he had cut wood for the holocaust he went his way to the place which God had commanded him," (Gn 22:1-3) This was a figure of the passion of Christ, because Abraham signified the Father in divinity, who offers his only begotten Son on the altar of the holy cross in redemption for all us miserable sinners. And just as Isaac, the son of Abraham, obedient to the will of his father, carried on his own shoulders the wood of the holocaust, so the Son of God, our savior Jesus, patiently like an innocent lamb, carried the yoke of the holy cross laid upon his shoulders.

And because the Jews had so weakened him with blows, strokes, and mockeries, not to mention the scourgings and crowning, he was not able to carry the cross very long or very far, because he was totally spent and exhausted. So he fell under the cross. No wonder, from the blood shed from all his veins, which flowed from the wounds of the scourging and thorns, and the immensity of the cross which was fifteen feet high and ten feet across. Going out to the place they call Calvary, as he was being led there, he found he could not continue. They picked out a man, Simon of Cyrene by name, coming from the village, father of Alexander and Rufus. They seized him and forced him to carry his cross. They, not moved by mercy, but that they might more quickly get on with the execution, had him carry the cross after Christ. Nor should anyone judge this to be contrary to the perfection of Christ, as true God and true man. The divinity of Christ yielded to his humanity suffering from all the human weaknesses, not wishing to favor itself in anything which would alleviate his punishment. The condition of human weakness demanded that the man Christ would fail under such a burden, so exhausted by the whole night, and weakened by the outpouring of blood. No surprise, because when even under lesser stress, think of the journey elsewhere [through Samaria], when he sat down to recover his strength [at the well] on the mountain, Jn 4.

Learned doctors believe that this news, that Christ her son had been condemned to death, was first told to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was then at the home of Mary Magdalen. With how much heartfelt pain and anxiety of the soul did she receive this news. The faithful mother pondered it all in her heart. Nevertheless, she never did anything indecent to her

modesty or deflecting from her virginity. Nor is that fable true, by which the wicked would seem to injure the glorious Virgin, which says that the Virgin ran here and there from house to house like a hysterical woman, to where Christ was being taken, and as a sign of her anxiety she tore her hair out, peering through windows, wringing her hands, and wailing pitifully. There are many other such tales, all of which are false and frivolous. Reason: otherwise, many women would have been more perfect than the Virgin Mary, namely Sophia, the mother of the seven sons, and many other such. But since there are three manners of weeping. Some express excessive sorrow in exterior works, like Eli, (1 Kgs 4) who hearing that the ark [of the covenant] was captured and his two sons killed, fell over backwards, and died of a broken neck. Some suffer nothing harmful, yet because of a certain honesty they let out a cry of pain like the cry of some animal, like young women at the death of her misshapen babies, and old women [ut iuvenulae de morte virorum deformium et vetulorum]. But both afflict themselves in vain. The first, without inordinate emotion, is thought well of by all. The second, the more insanelly they act, the less faith they show. So the Virgin mother discovered the third human way, which with bitter taste of sorrow in her heart, did nothing wrong or indecent, neither forgetting her catholic faith, and virginal modesty. In her alone remained faith in the resurrection of her son. So she moderated the incomparable pain, and she did nothing that was undisciplined. Origen in a certain sermon on the passion says: All the pain conceived in the Blessed Virgin by the passion of Christ, she so kept within the cloister of her soul, that neither excessive impatience or exterior sign of something inordinate came from her, unless insofar as a flow of tears from her maternal eyes which revealed her crushing anxiety. Hence she had the maximum compassion with Christ.

Bernard described the lamentable procession saying, "When, he says Christ was so led forth, there was a crowd of people following him, just as when thieves and malefactors are led to death. Some went laughing, others mocking, others throwing dirt on him. Looking up, he sees the yoke laid on his shoulders, pressing heavily on him. Looking behind, he sees his mother with the great crowd of people and of women who follow, who wept and lamented him out of their great compassion. "But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me," (Lk 23:28). "Because I freely choose to die, and because of the divine plan, which ordains that I die

in such a way, and because of the utility of my death, that by dying I destroy death." He commands [them] to weep for past and future sins, the cause of the passion, which makes Christ suffer in the order of justice. It is necessary that he suffer these sorrows for our salvation. This Bernard. "But weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the breasts that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us." (Lk 23:28-30). He was speaking of the assault of the Romans by Titus and Vespasian, princes of Jerusalem in the year 42 after the ascension of the Lord [70 AD], destroying it to the ground, when so great a slaughter occurred, that the blood of those killed flowed like a river through all parts of the city. And the city was taken on the day of Passover, and all the Jewish officials killed. And thirty were sold for one denarius. And in the siege of the city 1,100,000 died from famine and the sword, and 80,000 sold to slavery or dispersed. And so was verified that curse which they had said to Pilate: "His blood be upon us and our children," (Mt 27:25). Christ wept for that disaster on Palm Sunday. The famine was such at the time of the siege, that mothers were eating their children, as Josephus says, who was actually there, although he had hidden in the clefts of the rocks until the persecution ceased.

Jesus was also speaking of the final judgment, when, out of fear "they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us over." For he adds the clause. "For if in the green wood they do these things," that is, in me. Christ is said to be green wood, because, [he is] green in the root of his divinity, in the stem of his humanity, in the branches of his virtues, in the leaves of his words, in the fruit of good works. "In the dry," that is the sin which lacks the moisture of grace, the fruit of justice, the healthy growth of constancy, "what shall be done?" (Lk 23;31), that is, "How much punishment do you think they deserve?" The compassion of his mother and the women are clear from this.

Death

Fifth in the passion of Christ is temporal death, because he wished to die on the cross. Although the other sufferings of Christ would have been sufficient to redeem mankind, nevertheless he yet wished to die. Reason:

because from the sin of Adam we not only have troubles, sorrows and sufferings, but also death, Gen. 2: " For on the very day you shall eat of it, you shall die the death." (Gn 2:17). And this manner is more convenient. Hence the holy doctors and especially St. Thomas III, q 46, a.2 says there indeed were for God other possible ways of redemption, absolutely speaking, because Luke 1 says, "Because no word shall be impossible with God," (Lk 1:37) and Isaiah 59 saying, "Behold the hand of the Lord is not too short that it cannot save," (Isa 59:1). And so there were many other ways possible to God, as Thomas says at the third argument. If God had freed man without any satisfaction from sin, it would not have been against justice, because the sin was committed against him, and so he acted with mercy. But it would not have been a more convenient manner, as Thomas says in the same place, same question, article 3, because Augustine says in XIII De Trinitate: "There was no other more suitable way of healing our misery" than by the Passion of Christ. "Hence absolutely it was not necessary that Christ should die, but out of necessity of the end," as he says in the same question, in article 1. And this can be understood in two ways. First from our part who through his passion have been liberated according to that in John 3: "So must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believes in him, may not perish; but may have life everlasting," (Jn 3:14-15). Second on the part of Christ himself who through the humility of the passion merits the glory of his exaltation, and through this it is clear what Luke says, last chapter: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26).

[Here Vincent quotes the entire body of article 3 from St. Thomas' Summa,]

"But in this that man was delivered by Christ's Passion, many other things besides deliverance from sin concurred for man's salvation.

In the first place, man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation; hence the Apostle says: "God commends His charity

towards us; for when as yet we were sinners... Christ died for us," (Rom 5:8).

Secondly, because thereby He set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the Passion, which are requisite for man's salvation. Hence Peter says: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps." (1 Peter 2:21)

Thirdly, because Christ by His Passion not only delivered man from sin, but also merited justifying grace for him and the glory of bliss. We have confidence in the entering into the holies" i.e. of the faithful, " by the blood of Christ," (Heb 10:19).

Fourthly, because by this man is all the more bound to refrain from sin, when he thinks himself redeemed by the blood of Christ from sin, according to that in I Cor 6: "For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body," (I Cor 6:20).

Fifthly, because it redounded to man's greater dignity, that as man was overcome and deceived by the devil, so also it should be a man that should overthrow the devil; and as man deserved death, so a man by dying should vanquish death. as it says in I Cor 15: " Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," (v. 57) It was accordingly more fitting that we should be delivered by Christ's Passion than simply by God's good-will. This St. Thomas q.46, a.3.

Practically speaking this is how they led Christ with the cross which he was carrying on his shoulder. Two other criminals were led with him to be executed on the hill of Calvary. And when they arrived there they said to him, "Get undressed," and he did it. The soldiers "took his garments, (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part,) and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They then said to one another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, [to see] whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have divided my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots," (Jn 19:23-24). Then, "They crucified him, and with him two others," (v 18).

Think when they crucified him as the Virgin was witnessing the hammering of the nails, how they pierced her heart. And when the cross was raised, the people backed away. Then the Virgin with John and Magdalen approached the foot of the cross, and drops of blood from her son were falling on the head of the Virgin. Think of the pain of Christ and the compassion of his mother. Then Christ prayed for his crucifiers, saying, "Father, ignore [ignosce] them, because they do not know what they do." The Virgin Mary hearing her son, raised her eyes and beheld him bloodied from head to feet. The thief who was hanging on a cross to Christ's right, seeing that Christ was praying for his executioners, and considering the patience of Christ, found faith in Christ and contrition in his heart for his sins, and said tearfully to Christ, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom," (Lk 23:42). "I do not say that you spare me now, because I am not worthy, but afterwards I shall be in purgatory, then remember me." To whom Christ replied, "Amen I say to you, this day you shall be with me in paradise." (v. 43).

Question: Why one of the two thieves crucified with Christ was converted and not the other? Reason: some allege that it was the shadow of his arm which fell upon him and converted him. Authority: From the lesser reference to the shadow of Peter, as is clear from Acts 5. No wonder then that the shadow of Christ saved the soul of the thief.

The Virgin seeing her son speaking to the thief said, "O son, you have spoken to the thief and you say nothing to me who am dying here with you?" Then Christ wishing to comfort his mother, nodded to John with his head and said, "Woman, behold your son." And to John, "Behold your mother," honor her and serve her as your mother. (Cf Jn 19:26f). The Virgin might have replied, "O son, what kind of comfort, what kind of exchange is this, to give the son of the Creator for the son of a fisherman, the son of God for a son of Zebedee. O my son, now it is fulfilled the prophecy of Simeon saying, 'your own soul a sword shall pierce,'" (Lk 2:35). Then Christ began to say, "Eli, Eli, that is My God, my God," look on me, "why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46), that my friends have deserted me, the apostles and disciples. And if someone had asked of him, "O Lord where are the blind whom you gave sight to, where the sick whom you cured? where the possessed, where the lepers whom you cleansed? where the dead

whom you raised? where the apostles whom you honored?" He would have answered, "All have abandoned me."

And when all things were fulfilled, it was the ninth hour, and he cried out: "I thirst," (Jn 19:28). The Virgin replied, "O son, I have only the water of my tears." Then someone with a sponge stuck on a reed gave him vinegar mixed with gall. And when he tasted it he said: "It is consummated," (v. 30) namely the work and the mystery of human redemption. The Virgin replied, "O son, my sorrows are complete." Then Christ with a loud voice cried out, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," (Lk 23:46). And bowing his head, as if bidding farewell to his mother, gave up the spirit.

It is a wonder that the Virgin Mary did not drop dead, but immediately there followed consolations and comforting remedies, because darkness fell over the whole land, because the sun removed the bright clothing of its clarity and put on darkness, and there was an earthquake and rocks were split open, and many bodies of the saints who were sleeping arose. And the centurion was converted saying "Truly this was the son of God," (Mt 27:54). And the people were striking their breasts saying, "O misery, what have we done." These fruits of the passion which the Virgin was seeing consoled her.

See here his temporal death, because he wished to die that he might free us from eternal death, and would give us glorious life according to the prophet Isaiah 53: "He has delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked: and he has borne the sins of many," (Isa 53:12).

Burial

Sixth in the passion of Christ is an earthly burial. Reason: because from the sin of Adam mankind was not only condemned to death but also to the tomb and dissolution and corruption. Gen. 3: "for you are dust, and into dust you shall return " (Gn 3:19). So Christ wished to be buried but not corrupted, according to that of David: "Nor will then give your holy one to see corruption," (Ps. 16:10).

Because it was Passover, the Jews, did not wish his body to remain on the cross on the sabbath. It was a feast, and they have the commandment of

God in Lev. 23:6ff. Therefore lest their feast day be dishonored, and the solemnities begin on the evening of that day—that sabbath was a great feast day—Pilate commanded that their legs be broken so that they might die more quickly. Because this festival of unleavened bread is entirely joyful, and for these seven days men and women lead processions around the circuit of Jerusalem singing the Canticle of Moses, "Let us sing to the Lord: for he is gloriously triumphant," (Ex. 15:1-19), in remembrance of the time when he freed them from slavery to the Egyptians and to Pharaoh, drowning his army in the Red Sea. Therefore lest such a solemnity be spoiled by the spectacle of the corpses near the city, they asked that they be taken down.

"The soldiers therefore came; and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they came to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers..,"who according to Isidore was called Longinus, according to the Master of History, and was not able to see whether Jesus was dead, because he had cataracts on his eyes, took his lance and plunged it into the heart of Christ," and immediately," miraculously, "there came out blood and water," (Jn 19:33-34), and running down the shaft of his spear touched his hand. Immediately upon contact he received perfect sight, and having converted to the faith lived for 28 years as a monk. When a persecution of Christians arose, having become a bishop, he was crowned with glorious martyrdom, and so ascended to heaven. This soldier did this with good intentions and out of compassion. And so God interiorly and exteriorly illuminated him, since he was blind.

This wound, according to Alexander of Hales, was not thrust into Christ in that part in which there might be a bone, namely a rib, but it was below, into the soft flesh and between the ribs and the arms, and so thrusting up it struck the heart. Reason: because Christ was hanging on high and the soldier was standing on the ground. So if the lance had struck around the ribs, it would have broken a rib because of the size of the lance. But according to John, who saw it and bore witness to it, and his testimony is true: "For these things were done, that the scripture might be fulfilled: You shall not break a bone of him. Exod 12," (Jn 19:36), "And again another scripture says: They shall look on him whom they pierced," (v.37).

Why is it portrayed in that way? It must be said that pictures are the scriptures of the laity. Therefore so that more expressly for the laity, the lance pierces the heart of Christ, as a sign, that out of the heart our sins are forgiven to us through his death. These two miracles happened after death, namely the flow of blood and the cure of the blind soldier. Blood in a dead man coagulates, but not in Christ, so that it might be shown that he had power in his body even without his soul.

And there are three opinions about soul, that it would be in the blood, in the head and in the heart. The first opinion holds that when the blood flows out of the body, the soul is accustomed to flee the body. But the second, because the soul seems to show a greater force of its powers in the head. Others however because they have seen the heart of a man first living and ultimately dying. And so they look effectively in these three places, although Christ did not sense this wound, because he was already dead. All these things happened at the ninth hour. Thus the church sings Nones [Divine Office for the afternoon] to give thanks.

After this had happened, it was already late, i.e. the evening hour. There was a nobleman by the name of Joseph of Arimathea, a city in Judea, who was a captain, and wealthy, a good and just man, from the fact that he was a disciple of the Lord, secretly however because of fear of the Jews. He had not agreed with the decision and the deeds of others, because he awaited the kingdom of God. He boldly went in and approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, that he might take it. The evangelists report all these things to express the goodness and reverence of this Joseph. Heaven had arranged that he be rich, so that he would be able to pay for the Lord's tomb. That he be a nobleman and a captain, i.e. in charge of ten soldiers, so he could approach the procurator. Just and good, so he would be worthy to receive the body of Christ. A disciple, but not one of the twelve, since all believers in the early church were called disciples. Boldly, because he did not fear the Jews. And they believed that he did this not just because he was a disciple, but out of devotion.

He asked for the body of Jesus, because it was not permitted to bury the bodies of condemned criminals without the permission of the prefect. Pilate however wondered if he had already died. His wonder, according John, proceeded from levity and vanity of heart. No one else wondered with

Pilate why Jesus had died quickly, while the thieves were still alive, because he had endured many cruelties through the whole night and morning, while the thieves were left undisturbed. And summoning, i.e. calling, the centurion, he questioned him if he was already dead. When he had understood from the centurion that he was, he gave the body of Jesus to Joseph.

He came and took the body of Jesus. He came, and also did Nicodemus who first had come to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. They received the body of Jesus and wrapped it in clean linens with spices, and they wrapped it in a clean shroud which had been newly purchased, in the manner of Jewish burials. This ointment, by its bitterness, protected the cadaver from worms and corruption, and decay. From which it is clear, according to Chrysostom, that these two did not yet have full and perfect faith, not understanding that Psalm, "Nor will then give thy holy one to see corruption," (Ps 15:10). Hence if the body of Christ had lain in the tomb to the last day, it would not have been burned, or decayed, because it was embalmed with divinity.

This burial according to Bede and Origen was done in the presence of his mother Mary, who with her arms, sweetly embraced the body of her son, as piously believed, and kissed his wounds with an outcry of inexplicable maternal affection. Jesus however for the consolation of his mother was so glorified that no wounds or bruise appeared in his body except the five wounds of his hands, feet and side which he kept, not because of his inability to heal them, but so that he might show to the apostles and especially to Thomas, Judas, and to confound wicked Christians in the final judgment in the sight of the Father and for rejoicing the blessed by the vision of his redemption. These wounds did not dishonor the glorified body, for they shone forth brighter than the sun in the firmament of heaven. And because the body had been wrapped in linens, so in the church, the custom grew that the altar be covered [consecratur] not with lace or textured gold, but with a clean white linen cloth [sindone].

Thus although this anointing of Christ was done with honor, and reverence by friends and those who loved him, nevertheless, taken by itself it was exceedingly miserable task, because namely the Lord of such nobility, was handled like a corpse, although Christ because of the divine person's

presence [suppositum] was not a corpse. The crown of glory lies prostrate. As a sign of this to give thanks the church instituted the saying of Vespers [Evening Prayer].

"Now there was in the place where he was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, wherein no man yet had been laid," (Jn 19:41), and it was carved out of stone. This monument was Joseph's. In a garden the Lord was arrested, in a garden he now is buried, to show that in virtue of his passion we are freed from the sin which Adam had committed in the garden of delights. According to the divine plan he was placed in "a new tomb, wherein no man yet had been laid" lest his resurrection would be ascribed to another who was placed there first. Just as in the Virgin's womb no one was conceived before him, or after him, so according to Augustine, no one before him or after was buried there. "Therefore, because of the preparation day [parasceve] of the Jews, because the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus [Christ]," (Jn 19:42). Friday had come to an end and Saturday was beginning. According to Jerome, the Jews begin to count the following day from the preceding evening. So, because it was late, they could not bury the body farther away, fearing the arrival of the Sabbath. Not disrespectfully but honorably the Jews bury their dead, because according to the prophecy of Isaiah 11: "And his tomb shall be glorious," (Isa 11:10).

[Another lengthy borrowing from St. Thomas' Summa theologiae]

So, St. Thomas III, q.51, a.1 Whether it was fitting for Christ to be buried.

First, to prove the truth of his death. No one is placed in a tomb unless already the truth of his death is certain. Therefore Pilate before he gave permission that Christ be buried, with a diligent inquiry learned that he was already dead, as is clear from Mark 15.

Second, because the hope of resurrection is given through him to those who are in the tomb.[Cf Jn5:25ff]

Third, as an example of those who through the death of Christ spiritually die to sins, namely who are hidden from the "turmoil of men." [Cf Ps 30:21] Whence it is said in Colossians 3: "For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God," (Col 3:3). Hence the baptized who through the death of Christ die to sins, are as if they are buried with Christ through immersion,

according to that in Romans 6: "For we are buried together with him by baptism into death;" (Rom 6:4). This Thomas.

"And Joseph rolled a large stone to the door of the tomb," and withdrew (Cf. Mk 15:46). And the women, who had come with him from Galilee, followed after, seeing the monument and seeing how and where the body of Jesus was placed. They were sitting opposite the tomb. In the group were Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, who diligently, and with great affection planned how they could reverently to enter the tomb, once the sabbath was over, to thoroughly anoint the body of Jesus a second time with prepared ointments. It is manifestly clear that they too were doubting in faith, because they believed that he would not rise. The Blessed Virgin Mary in whom was true and certain faith, did not come with them for the anointing. For this reason the church devotes Saturdays throughout the whole year to a special devotion to her.

On the day after the preparation day, the high priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate saying: "Lord, we have remembered," (Mt 27:63), It is noteworthy that the Jews acknowledged Pilate as their lord, reduced to the service of foreigners, even by flattering him so that they might more easily seek his favor, said, "Lord, ...the seducer said," – amazing, that their envy had not yet ceased. "Seducer," rightly they were calling him by that name, according to Jerome, but they did not intend in the correct way. There is an evil seduction, from virtue into error. They tried to label Christ so, but they lied falsely. There is another meaning, from falsity into truth, from vices into virtues, in this way Christ was the seducer of the faithful. "After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the tomb to be guarded until the third day: lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the tomb sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards," (Mt 27:64-66). The guard by gentile soldiers was not sufficient for them, even though they had affixed the stone over the tomb entrance with their seals and chains. In memory of this tomb the church instituted Compline [night prayer of the divine Office].

Since on the cross Christ handed over his spirit to the Father, he soon went to hell, that is to the limbo of the fathers, for their comfort, and for the

confusion of the demons. And on the third day he rose from the tomb. The Jews gave the soldiers a considerable sum of money so they would testify that he was stolen by his disciples. (Cf. Mt 28:12-13) But after they had taken the money, they still told what had happened. Soldiers are not able to remain silent. For they confessed that they had seen a choir of angels, and that they had accepted money from the Jews. Vincent [of Beauvais] in his *Speculum* tells that Joseph of Arimathea that very evening when he buried the Lord, was jailed by the Jews, but the Lord freed him.

From these words it is clear the reason, the manner and the order of the whole series of events of the Lord's passion according to the intention of the evangelists, in order and according to the letter, which I have followed entirely, and I have described them according to the sequence of true facts. May Jesus grant us that through our grieving at his passion we might arrive at the glory and joy of the blessed resurrection. Amen.

A746. Sermon for Holy Saturday

Colossians 3

"For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."(Col 3:3-4)

At Colossians 3:3 and in today's epistle. Yesterday, the end of the sermon was the burial of the body of Christ, but about his soul where did it go, or what it did do, nothing was said. So now I wish to preach on this matter. But first we salute the Virgin Mary, etc. Already we can wish her joy and happiness, because soon the glorious resurrection of her son will happen, so we can greet her humbly and devoutly saying to her, Hail Mary. etc.

"Your life," etc. For introducing the declaration of this word and preaching this matter it must be understood that sacred doctrine is general and certain to the Christian faith, that after the bodily death of Christ, his soul descended into hell, and it is an article of the faith saying, "died and was buried," with respect to the body, "he descended into hell," with respect to the soul, although he could have immediately ascended into heaven if he had wished, but he chose not to, rather he wished to be so humbled, because he wished to descend principally to comfort the holy fathers, for liberating them. Just as a king, having a battlefield victory wishes to enter the city in person, so Christ. And as long as his body was in the tomb, that long was his soul in limbo, and the next day the soul of Christ, together with the holy fathers would come out of limbo and assuming his glorious body resurrected. This is the true teaching of Christian faith, confirmed by the authority of Christ saying, " "For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights," (Mt 12:40). Tell briefly the story of Jonah the prophet, as is found Jonah 1 and 2. And how he was a figure of the passion of Christ. The ship in which Christ sailed is human nature. Reason, because like the way a ship is made, namely narrow in the beginning, wide in the middle etc., likewise in the time of Christ, Gal 4: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son," (Gal 4:4). Now it is trimmed off like a stern. In the middle of the deck is placed the cross of Christ [*Malus huius vanis in medio positus fuit crux Christi*]. The sail is the

body of Christ. "She is like the merchant's ship," (Prov 31:14). This ship is battered by great waves and dangers of sinking into hell, nor was there another remedy of escaping but only that Jonah, i.e. Christ, be thrown into the sea, namely into the bitterness of suffering and death. And the whale, i.e. hell, opened its mouth and received him and held him three days and three nights, but on the next day he spit him up, and although the body of Christ and the soul on that day were divided and separated, nevertheless divinity never was separated nor divided, neither from the body nor from the soul, but all was with the body in the tomb, and all was with the soul in limbo, as St. Thomas says in the [Third Part, q.50, a.2 & 3](#).

If it is asked how is this possible. I shall give you two comparisons for your eyes to strengthen your understanding. First the apple, one part white and the other part red. which if it is cut by a knife into two parts, its odor remains with both divided parts. The same with the humanity of Christ. Think that the humanity of Christ is like an apple, whose white part is the soul of Christ, purest without any defect, the red part his flesh, bloodied from the passion. As but which Solomon, Canticle 5 in the person of the virgin Mary saying, "My beloved is white and ruddy, ," (Song 5:10). The eternal divinity is united to the body and soul of Christ before the passion and death, like smell is joined and united to an apple. But the humanity of Christ, by the sword of death was divided and separated into two principal parts, but nevertheless, the odor, i.e. the eternal divinity always remained with both part inseparably.

A second image is more beautiful and clearer than a piece of crystal to the ray of sun which completely is filled with light and the brightness of the sun. For which reason if it is divided into two parts, the whole clarity of the sun remains with each divided part. So too with the humility of Christ, purer than crystal, illumined by the light and brightness of divinity, which broken in death, the whole divinity remains inseparably with each divided part, hidden, namely with the body in the grave, and with the soul in limbo or in hell. "His brightness shall be as the light; horns are in his hands: There is his strength hid: Death shall go before his face.," (Hab 3:4f). In which is found three times of Christ, namely the time of his preaching, where " His brightness shall be as the light,". Second is the time of his bitter passion, " horns are in his hands," namely of the nails in his hands. And [third] the time of his death, where," There is his strength hid," namely his divinity,

which was hidden with his body in the tomb and with his soul in limbo. Note, " Death shall go before his face " Before the passion of Christ death itself followed from the persecution of the Jews, not that death would have something in Christ, and Christ was followed until it caught him. But after his resurrection death went before him. So he says "Death shall go before his face," Of this hiding Isaiah also speaks: "Verily thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel the savior," (Isa 45:15). Of this hiding speaks the theme, " your life," that is divinity is hidden with Christ.

Note for continuing of the sermon that although divinity is eternal, then it was hidden to those who were in the world, nevertheless then it was shown and manifested to those from hell, not that all from hell would see it, but all who were in hell and who knew Christ to be true God and true man. And divinity was shown to them and manifested in four ways, according that there were four places in hell

- First, the lowest place is the prison of the damned.
- Second, is the limbo of the fathers.
- Third is the limbo of those being purified,
- Fourth is the bosom of the holy fathers.

In each of these four the divinity of Christ was manifested in some way, because he descended to all, as the article of faith says, "died and was buried, and descended into hell [inferos]. Note the plural, "hells" [inferos]. But they did not see the divinity but only those who were in the bosom of the holy fathers, although he descended to all. So the Apostle, Ephesians 4: "he also descended first," that is before he rose, "into the lower parts of the earth ," (Eph 4:9). So it is good to know what he did there.

Hell

The first place, and the lowest, is the place of hell, the prison of the damned, filled with inextinguishable fire, which by divine power, tortures demons and damned souls. The soul of Christ descended to this place and there showed his divinity by rigorous reproaches, not according to its essence but according to effect, as St. Thomas says, [[Summa theologica](#) III, q.55, a.2.]

For two reasons the soul of Christ descended to these. First to bind Lucifer, who from the beginning of the world up to this time captured souls for one of the aforesaid four places. But yesterday, while Christ was on the cross with such a painful passion, abandoned by the apostles, disciples and friends, Lucifer, who first doubted whether he was the son of God, saying to himself, to the extent that this man is a holy prophet, nevertheless I shall lead him with me to hell, also came to Christ, and sat himself on the arms of the cross awaiting the soul of Christ. This is the image which St. Bede tells of this purpose, and it is also touched upon in the Gloss. It is said, briefly, the story of the son of Tobias going with Raphael, who wished to wash his feet in the river, and suddenly an immense fish, the biggest, lurched out to eat him. However, he grabbed it by the gills and dragged it on shore etc., Tob. 6. Bede explains, that the river, quick and turbulent signified the sudden and turbulent death of Christ, because it came without due legal process. Christ wished to wash his feet, which are ourselves, we who touch the earth and are dirtied by sin. But suddenly a great fish, namely Lucifer or Satan came to devour Christ, and he seized it by the gills, etc. He was not seen by anyone, only by Christ, who said, "O Traitor, in this evil hour you have come here." But when the soul of Christ separated from his body, Lucifer knew that he was God, and he wished to flee, but he could not, because Christ seized him. He who wished to capture Christ, was captured by Christ, like the fish by Tobias. That the devil came to Christ, Authority: "For the prince of this world comes," namely, Lucifer who like a tyrant was ruling the world, "and in me he has not anything," (Jn 14:30). And that he was captured by Christ, Scripture: "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.," (Jn 12:31). Furthermore, it was Christ himself who seized and bound him in the prison of the damned, until the time of the antichrist, then he will be let loose for a time. And so Christ showed himself to be the Lord of hell, whose brass gates and barred windows he shattered.

The second reason why the soul of Christ descended was for rigorous rebuking, After he bound Lucifer, he scolded and reprovved the damned. About this Peter seems to write in his epistle saying "Christ also died once for our sins," (1 Pet 3:18f). And it follows "In which," at the time of death, "also coming he preached to those spirits that were in prison:," (v. 19). St. Thomas says in [III, q.52, a.2 ad 3](#) that this preaching was not instructive,

but rebuking [incredativa], because as John Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iii): "As He evangelized them who are upon the earth, so did He those who were in hell"; not in order to convert unbelievers unto belief, but to put them to shame for their unbelief, since preaching cannot be understood otherwise than as the open manifesting of His Godhead to the hell-dwellers and in the descent of Christ to hell. This Thomas has in the same place.

Practically what was he saying to the evil emperors, kings and lords damned from their wicked lives and tyrannical rule, like Nero who was first who wished to have dominion, and Alexander and others wicked [strubis], that is accursed. "If you had used the good things I had given to you, gifts, for your lord, now you would have been saved." And he scolded the great philosophers, Plato, Aristotle and others about which Jerome says that they were damned, Christ says, "O Stupid ones, you were teaching and legislating and disputing about the one first principle and prime mover and first cause, in your schools, and in the temple you adored idols. You had great knowledge and bad conscience." Also he scolded the proud, saying, "O wretched ones ,if you had been humble, now you would have had glory." And the greedy, etc, priests, false prophets, the simoniacal. And the lustful, saying "O you who lived like pigs, see now you will not have the delights of glory,"etc. So too the gluttons, the wrathful, the envious, like Cain. So the blasphemers, saying to the condemned thief, "O wretched one, did you not today blaspheme me on the cross?" So he reproached Judas, "O traitor, behold what you have bought, for such a cheap price." Think how many tears, cries wailings of those damned, despairing of salvation. See how Christ manifested his divinity there, rigorously confounding them.

Limbo

The second place is called the place of children, as we say one place [porta, door] where all the children are who died with only original sin. Original sin is not committed by them, but received, like a painting falling into the mud, etc. Therefore, that sin is not called actual, but original, because that stain is received in bodily generation. And so because it is not an actual sin, they do not have physical pain there, but they are said to have fire from the fact that they shall never see the face of God. And the wrath of God, in which they are born, is seen to be fire. According to Deuteronomy 32: "A

fire is kindled in my wrath, and shall burn even to the lowest hell:" etc. (Deut 32:22). Holy scripture says, because they do not sleep bodily, so, like those who sleep are unaware of pain, so neither do these children sense pain [poenam]. Moreover, Job says in the person of someone damned: "Why did I not die in the womb, why did I not perish when I came out of the belly? Why received upon the knees? why suckled at the breasts? For now, I should have been asleep and still, and should have rest in my sleep, " (Job 3:11-13). St. Thomas says II Sent., dist. 34, a.1 and see there the good doctor, that when they see the glory of the blessed, that they do not grieve nor are saddened, because that it is not relevant for them, just as you are not saddened because you do not have a kingdom, which doesn't pertain to you. But the son of a king a prince, to whom the kingdom pertains, grieves about this. Neither are you saddened when you see an eagle flying, because you do not have wings. So, neither do these children grieve.

To these the soul of Christ descends for glorious consolation. Practically, imagine how as the soul of Christ appeared at the gate of limbo, those children immediately knew Christ to be the savior. Seeing his soul and adoring him, saying: "Glory be to you, Lord, who have died for mankind," etc. To whom he said, 'How are you?' They replied, "Lord it is good with us. We have great natural understanding and many graces and virtues," -- although they do not have sanctifying grace, "We debate with each other and we love each other." Christ said, "Therefore give thanks to God who freed you from the fire of hell," -- he showed them the place of the damned- - "and praise the Lord, and you will rest in peace."

Purgatory

The third place is called the place of purgation. About which it must be known that some people die without original sin, therefore they do not go with those children dying without the sacrament of baptism in limbo [literally, at the border of hell, ad inferni limbum], and they are without mortal sin, so they do not go with the damned. But because they had not made appropriate penance for sins committed after they had been washed from original sin, according to the quality and quantity of sins, such people, because of the fact that they have contrition, do not go with the damned, but into another world. Divine mercy ordained a place which is called purgatory, where souls are purified, where there is fire but there are no

demons there, because no one there enters unless he was in the grace of God. This fire of purgatory lasts until judgment day. It burns souls by divine power, which our physical fire cannot do. If your soul would be thrown into the pit of a furnace, that fire would not harm it. But after the day of judgment the fire of purgatory will be extinguished. You might ask what if someone who on the day of judgment has not completed his penance, was not purged, what happens to him? Response: God shall increase the intensity of his punishment, etc. Of this place holy scripture says: "For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.," (Sir 2:5).

To these Christ descends and visits with abundant liberation. The Doctors ask the question, and St. Thomas in [III, q.52, a.8](#): Whether Christ liberated all the souls which were then in purgatory? To that question it must be answered with a distinction. We can speak about this matter in two ways, either with the rigor of justice, or with the sweetness of mercy. If we speak in the first way, he liberated only those who had completed their time of penance, and this path St. Thomas follows in III Pars. If however we speak from the sweetness of mercy, we can say that he liberated all. And for this I will offer you two comparisons.

The first image is that of a newly crowned king, entering his city, who frees all the prisoners, unless they were captured for being between sides [*pro interesse partis*]. Thus, the king of glory, Christ, newly crowned with the crown of thorns, enters purgatory. All the souls in purgatory cried out to him, "Lord, free us." And Christ questioned, although he already knew, how long had they been there. They replied, "Lord we have been here already for a month, for a year," etc. Therefore, it is piously believed that Christ freed all. Authority: Isaiah reciting the word of God the father to his son, saying: "I have given you to be a covenant," that is peace, "of the people, that you might raise up the earth, and possess the inheritances that were destroyed: That you might say to them who are bound: Come forth: and to them who are in darkness: Show yourselves," (Isa 49:8f) There are four phrases [*clausulae*], of which two are about the life of Christ, the others about his death. First where, "I have given you to be a covenant of the people, that you might raise up," namely those who were sleeping in sins, whom Christ awakens by preaching. Second where, "and possess the inheritances that were destroyed," namely the rational souls which are the inheritance of

God, destroyed through sin. Third where, "That you mightest say to them who are bound: Come forth." He does not speak there of those who are in the hell of the damned, because no one escapes from there, but about those in purgatory. Fourth where, "and to them who are in darkness: Shew yourselves,"

A second comparison is with a newly created Pope, who then grants great indulgences and numerous graces. How much greater Pope Jesus who is the Lord of graces and indulgences, because the Pope, his vicar, is not the lord of the church, but dispenser and manager [dispensator et procurator]. Since therefore the Pope can be so liberal, how much more so Christ, who is Lord. Authority, Isaiah 61: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me: he has sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to who are shut up," (Isa 61:1). Note: the Spirit of the Lord, namely the Holy Spirit, is over me, Christ speaks insofar as he is man, because, insofar as he is God the Holy Spirit is not over him but equal, and one God. "He has sent me to preach to the meek," namely in this world for preaching and after death he says, "and to preach a release to the captives." Say how before the passion of Christ, after a soul had completed its purgatory, it would go forth from there and go to the place of the holy fathers, which is called the bosom of Abraham. Authority, Lk 16: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.," (Lk 16:22), because those fittingly repentant used to go there, but now they ascend to heaven and even after they leave purgatory. Say how the time assessed by God for staying in purgatory, can be reduced by suffrages of the living. So inheritors are bound to fulfill the last will and testament of the deceased, otherwise Christ says, Lk 18: "And will not God revenge his elect who cry to him day and night," (Lk 18:7).

Bosom of Abraham

The fourth place is called the bosom of Abraham. Here the souls of the holy fathers were staying, who had been there from the beginning of the world until the resurrection of Christ. The first of those who entered it was Abel, and when Christ arose all came out of there with Christ. None there suffered punishment, but they did not yet have glory. Into this home the soul of Christ entered. Augustine says that just as the soul of Christ entered through

this home, all those holy patriarchs beheld the divinity of Christ and experienced glory and paradise. About which Christ had said to the thief, "This you shall be with me in paradise.," (Lk 23:43). Augustine says that all the other souls of the holy fathers adored Christ, saying: "You have come, redeemer, you have come, whom we had expected every day. Now our joy is complete." Christ greeted them saying, "Peace be to you." Adam with all his sons and daughters humbly adored Christ, with all the patriarchs. Then Moses with the Prophets. Next Aaron with all the Priests, David with all the Kings. John the Baptist with all the Holy Innocents. Then, Eve with all the Holy Women. And Christ stayed with them until the resurrection. Authority, Mt 12: "For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights," (Mt 12:40). Also, the authority of Wisdom in the person of Christ: "I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord. ," (Sir 24:45). Note: " I will behold all that sleep," that is all the dead, "and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord," supply, with the light of divine glory.

Now there remains tomorrow the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. To which may he lead us, etc.

B001. First Sermon on Easter

"He has risen, he is not here, " (Mt 28:6)

In the present sermon on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, God wishes to pour into our hearts a spiritual feeling of sweetness and of blessings of the feast for the consolation of our souls. We return to the virgin saying to her, Hail Mary, etc.

Note, the assigned text implies the good news of the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ which the good angel announced to these three Mary's, who with great devotion running together arrived at the tomb of Christ, saying to them, "He is risen," as if he said, "His body has already left the tomb, his soul is no longer in limbo, because he is already gone. And his humanity is not here, nor his body, because he has already risen," as if he said, you should not seek him here.

To explain these word it must be known that the resurrection of Christ above all other resurrections of dead persons which had ever happened previously, had two great excellences.

First because it was powerful [virtuosa].

Second because it was glorious.

Powerful

Many had risen from the dead to life, both in the Old Testament and in the New, but they did not rise through their own power, but by another's. Christ, however, rose from the dead to life by his own power and not another's, as true God. Because his body in the tomb had infinite power for raising itself from its conjunction with divinity, and also his soul in limbo, as St. Thomas says, [III, q.53, a.4](#). It was not such for any other dead person, because a dead body otherwise has no power, nor even the soul to raise itself up, as David says, "A spirit that goes," supply, to death, "and returns not.," (Ps 77:39), supply, by its own power to life.

Of Elijah and Elisha, we read that they raised the dead in the Old Testament. Likewise, we read that the apostles and other saints raised various dead people, but how? By praying and petitioning not of their own power nor of the dead, but the power of God and only ministerially. St. Thomas says, [I, q.110, a.4](#), where he concludes that only God can make miracles, in the response to the first objection, that "Some angels are said to work miracles; either because God works miracles at their request, in the same way as holy men are said to work miracles; or because they exercise a kind of ministry in the miracles which take place; as in collecting the dust in the general resurrection, or by doing something of that kind." (ad 4). These words, he [Thomas] in the above location. *Also the same St. Thomas, II-II, q. 7, ch. 78, a.1 to the first objection, and III, q.88, a.3, ad 4m [These references in the Latin edition are erroneous]*. And in [De potentia, q.6, c.4](#), that the saints can work miracles in two ways, namely by petitioning and by power, that is without a manifest prayer preceding. However, in both cases God works principally, the saints only instrumentally. From these words it is clear that the saints do not work miracles by their own virtue or power, but by God's. because they work miracles only by praying and ministering instrumentally. But the resurrection of Christ today happens only through his own power, and so Christ was saying, "I put down," that is, lay down, "my life and take it up again." "No man takes it away from me." that is, violently, "but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down," namely, through death, "and I have power to take it up again," (Jn 10:18), namely, through resurrection.

Glorious

The second excellence was because this resurrection was glorious. Christ rose to a glorified, immortal and invulnerable life. Others who have been raised in the Old and New Testaments, and who have been raised by the general law and course are raised to mortal life to the hurtful miseries [miseriam passibilem] of this world, and afterwards would have to die again. But Christ, by a singular privilege [arose] from death to glorious life. Authority. "Christ rising again from the dead, dies now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him." (Rom 6:9).

St. Thomas lists three reasons for this glorious resurrection [III, q.54, a.2](#). Because his resurrection was the model and cause of our resurrection, as is

clear in 1 Cor 15. And second, because of the humiliation of his passion, from which he earned the glory of the resurrection. And third, because with the accomplishment of the mystery of redemption, from the glory of the soul glory overflowed into his body, although before by special dispensation, that overflowing had been impeded, so that he might complete the mystery of our redemption by his passion.

These two excellences of the resurrection of Christ are subtly touched on in the theme. First, namely that it was powerful, it touched in that word, as if active, "He has risen." It doesn't say "He has been raised," by another, as was Lazarus, but "He has risen," namely through his own power. Christ has risen from the dead through the glory of the father, Rom 6: "Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father," which is his glory with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The second excellence, namely that it was glorious, is shown where it says: "He is not here," namely the body in the tomb, nor the soul in limbo, nor the humanity in this mortal life, but sacramentally in the sacrament of the altar. Thus the angel said to the women seeking Christ in the tomb, "I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, tell ye his disciples that he is risen: and behold he will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him. Lo, I have foretold it to you." (Mt 28:5-7). The theme is clear.

About the blessed resurrection of Jesus I have noticed three points, in which is contained the whole practicality [practica] of this blessed resurrection.

- The Resurrection of Christ was: celebrated lovingly [celebrata affectuose];
- Revealed graciously [demonstrata gratiose]; and
- Publicized virtuously [publicata virtuose].

In these three points or conclusions stands the whole meaning of my sermon [practica sermonis].

Celebrated Lovingly

First, I say that the resurrection of Christ was celebrated lovingly. So many holy fathers, almost innumerable, who were in limbo, were ardently desiring to see that glorious body, which sustained the blow and the whole burden of the passion. The holy patriarchs seeing that Good Friday and Saturday had already passed, were desiring to witness the resurrection and his wounds tonight, just as a man desires to see the horse on which a king has triumphed. The holy fathers, together, entreated Christ that he rose, because although God from eternity certainly had predestined the resurrection of his Son, he also predestined it that it would happen through the prayers and supplications of the holy fathers. Thus, the faithful soul here can sweetly contemplate the intense desire of the holy fathers in limbo, how, with one heart, they begged Christ to rise in the order and fashion here noted.

First, Adam, the first patriarch, with Noah, Methuselah, Melchisedech, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others who had the first place for offering, and on bended knees before the soul of Christ proposed their supplications, which David registered in his record book, namely in his Psalter, and they said to Christ, "Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark, which you have sanctified," (Ps 131:8). Note, you most holy soul "Arise... in your resting place," namely flesh, which never opposed the spirit; and "you," soul, and "ark" of your holiness, namely flesh, full of all the fruits of virtues.

The second supplication was of the holy prophets, namely, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, others saying Psalm 67:2 "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered," namely, demons and the soldiers who watch over his tomb, "and let them that hate him flee from before his face," like the Jews, who flee the face of Christ even today.

Third was of the holy priests, Aaron, Eliezar, Ithamar, Phinees, and others saying Ps 7:7-8: "And arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which you have commanded: and a congregation of people shall surround you." Note "in the precept which you have commanded," namely, "...he who humbles himself, shall be exalted." (Lk 18:14). "So Lord, because you humiliated yourself so much, arise etc," and "the synagogue," i.e. the congregation of your disciples, "who lost faith "shall surround you," believing your resurrection.

The fourth supplication was that of the holy kings: David, Hezekiah, Joshua, Josaphat, and of the holy judges and leaders, Gideon, Jephthe, Samson, Judas Maccabeus and others saying: "Arise, O Lord, help us and redeem us for your name's sake." (Ps 43:26). Note, "help us," because it was permitted that they have essential glory just as today, nevertheless, they did not have a place of glory. So they said "and redeem us, with regard to our place," because with respect to place they were not redeemed, because they were yet in the prison of limbo and thus were not able to exit without God's help.

The fifth was [the petition] of the holy women: Eve, who after her sin did great penance, and Sara, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Judith, Esther, Hannah, Elizabeth and others repeating what Eve proposed saying, "Arise, and be attentive to my judgment: to my cause, my God, and my Lord," (Ps 34:23). While Eve was living in this life, the living were able to say to her when they were suffering some evil: "because of you we have this evil." Even in limbo they spoke thus to her, not with injury or indignation; "because of you we all are here." So Eve was saying and praying that he would rise, that they could be led out of there, so that from now on they wouldn't say such things to her.

The sixth was of the saints of the New Testament: John Baptist, the Holy Innocents, Joseph, and the good thief saying, "Arise, O God, judge your own cause: remember your reproaches with which the foolish man has

reproached you all the day." Ps. 73:22. Note Eve spoke "judge my cause," and John and others say "your cause": Each speak the truth in different ways, because as I say, John and the saints of the New Testament say: "Arise O God," and "judge," etc. For the Jews when they heard it said that Christ shall rise on the third day, laughed, and ridiculing said: "He cannot come down from the cross and escape the tomb," and they placed guards, lest the disciples steal his body; and they were hurling many insults at Christ, on this account they say, "Arise O God, judge your cause" and the Jews were silent who believed he did not have the power of rising. And why Eve said "my case," is already explained in the fifth petition.

The seventh petition is that of the holy Angels, who associated with the soul of Christ, who seeing that the holy fathers had prayed to Christ that he rise, also offer their good desire humbly pleading saying, "Arise, why do you sleep, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end," (Ps 43:23). The angels spoke as a friend speaks to a friend, rousing him from sleep. The angels knew that the general resurrection would happen at the end of the world so they were saying "Arise, why are you sleeping," i.e. you sleep too much, because today is the third day, and "cast us not off to the end," i.e. you delay your resurrection "to the end," namely in the general resurrection when we all will rise and be 30 years of age or thereabouts. St. Thomas says in IV [Sentences], Dist. 44 q. 1, art 3 that all will arise in a youthful age, not just with respect to the numerical age but with respect to condition.

When these seven supplications were proposed to Christ, at dawn, with great desire, Christ, responded to all those about him, saying, "On account of the suffering of the helpless and sighs of the poor, now I rise, says the Lord" (Ps 11:6), "Save me." (v. 2) Note: because of "the suffering," of the local saints, and "the sighs of the poor," i.e. his disciples now weeping, "now I rise." Behold how he wished that his glorious resurrection be brought about through the supplications of the saints, although from eternity it had been predestined. And the soul of Christ with all the holy fathers came out of limbo. And that place remained empty, because no one was left there.

And the soul of Christ assumed his glorious body and he arose. At his resurrection the earth trembled and the guards became like dead, and Christ came out of the tomb without its opening, just as he was born of the virgin

without destroying her virginity, and standing on [supra] the tomb he showed his glorious body, wounds and bruises to all the holy patriarchs, who with bent knees adoring said, "Glory to thee, O Lord, who have risen from the dead, with the Father and Holy Spirit,". See the first point of this blessed resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Graciously Revealed

The second point is how the resurrection was graciously revealed to Mary. It is the conclusion of many theologians saying that Christ in his resurrection, first appeared to the Virgin Mary his mother. This Ambrose expressly says in the book *On Virgins*, saying that Mary witnessed the resurrection of Christ and was the first to see him. But the gospel writers did not choose to include this, but they cared only to list undeniable witnesses, because the witness of a mother for her favorite son could be lying.

There are three reasons to believe that he first appeared to his virgin mother. First by divine precept because she suffered above all others in the passion of her son. Christ, by special privilege was born of his mother, so that she gave birth without pain, and contrary to the ordinary course of nature. So lest she perceive the sorrows in his death which exceeded all the sorrows of this life, as the lord Albert says on "He has been sent," [dominus Albe.super, missus est.) Death is the end of all terrible things because the whole soul is uprooted like a tree, but all the pains of birth and death came over her in the passion of her son. Since, scripture says, "Honor your father, and forget not the groaning of your mother," (Sir 7:29), Christ most perfectly kept the law of honoring parents. It follows that he appeared to his mother first, who was stressed [tribulata] more than all the others.

Second because of the merit of her faith. For certainly it happened and is shown clearly enough from the text that at the time of the passion of Christ all the apostles and disciples lost their Christian faith entirely; some doubting whether he was truly God and Messiah, although all considered him a very holy prophet. Only the Virgin Mary on that Holy Saturday invariably believed. Because of this on every Saturday the office of the day in the Church of God is celebrated in her honor. When therefore scripture says, "The Lord shows himself to them who have faith in him," (Wis 1:2), it

seems that as a reward of merit for her faith, that he would appear to her first.

Third because of the intensity of her love. There never was a mother who loved her son more than Mary loved Christ. Since therefore he said, "And he that loves me, shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him," (Jn 14:21) therefore it shall be etc. From these three reasons it is clear that he appeared to the Virgin Mother first, although the holy Evangelists are expressly silent about it.

Practically speaking, how it now happened could be as follows. The devout soul can piously contemplate, as God grants them to perceive the sweetness of this vision in their hearts.

The Virgin Mary was most certain that her son would rise on the third day, as he had predicted, but perhaps she did not know the hour of his resurrection, because it is not written that Christ had revealed the hour of his resurrection, whether at prime or terce [first or third hour of daylight] etc. So the Virgin Mary on this very night, which was so long for her, awaited the resurrection of her son and she began to think at which hour he would rise, but she did not know. And knowing that among other prophets, David spoke most about the passion and resurrection of Christ, she set about by reading the Psalter, to discover if David had said anything about the hour, and she read the first psalm, the second, the third...and found nothing about the time.

Then reading Psalm 56:9 where it says and David speaks in the person of a father to son saying, "Arise, O my glory, arise psaltery and harp," Response of the son to the father: "I will arise at dawn." Note that the father calls his son three times. Namely, his glory, psaltery and harp on account of three [things] which Christ had in his life. First God the Father calls Christ his "glory" and this because Christ in this life, in all that he said and did procured the honor of the Father. Second he calls him "psaltery." A psaltery or lyre has ten strings and it is an instrument for a small room and doesn't make much sound and stands for the law of Moses, which like a small instrument was given only to the Jewish people, which consisted in the ten commandments, like ten strings. To this Christ was extremely obedient. So he said, "I am not come to destroy [the law], but to fulfill it," (Mt 5:17).

From such obedience he is called by the father a "psaltery." Third he is called a "harp." The harp signifies the law of the Gospel. Why? Because it has a louder sound and is easier to hear. Such was the gospel law, which was heard through the whole world. "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth," etc., (Ps 18:5, Cf Rm 10:18). The son responds to the father, "I will arise at dawn." Imagine, when the virgin Mary knew the time of resurrection, how she arose from prayer, to see if it was dawn, and saw that it was not.

Again Mary returned to her reading to see if she could find another witness to the time of the resurrection, and in continuing her reading she came to Psalm 107:2-3 namely: "My heart is ready, O God." Where she found the same verse again: "Arise my glory," and again she looked out her window to see if it was dawn yet.

Then she wanted to see if any of the other prophets had said something of the hour of the resurrection and she found in Hosea speaking in the person of the apostles: "He will revive us after two days: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. We shall know, and we shall follow on, that we may know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning light," (Hos 6:3). Note, "He will revive us," because the apostles were mortified because of unbelief.

Then Mary got up saying, its enough for me to have three witness of the hour of the resurrection. And she prepared the room, and found a chair for her son saying "Here my son shall sit and here I will speak with him." And she looked out of the window, and she saw the dawn breaking, and she rejoiced saying "Now my son is rising." And on her knees she prayed, saying: "Rise up Lord to meet me, and behold: even you, O Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel," (Ps 58:6).

And Christ immediately sent the messenger Gabriel to the virgin saying: "Just as you announced to my mother the incarnation, now announce to her my resurrection." With unbridled great joy he came to the Virgin saying: "Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia. Because he whom you did merit to bear, Alleluia. Has risen as he said, Alleluia," as was revealed to Blessed Gregory, who added, "Pray for us to God, Alleluia." [The *Regina Cæli*, an Eastertide replacement for the *Angelus*].

Immediately following that her blessed Son came to her with all the holy fathers. etc. If it is asked, how can they [all] be received in that little room? I say that such is their magnificence, that if they wish, a thousand thousands can be received in it, even a smaller place, through divine power helping them at his nod, as St. Thomas touches in the IV [Sentences] Dist. 44.

Christ greeted his mother saying: "Peace be with you." The Virgin fell to her knees and weeping abundantly for joy adored him kissing his hands and feet saying: "O blessed wounds, which have given me such pain on Good Friday." Christ kissing his mother said: "My mother, rejoice, because from now on, you will have nothing but joy and celebration." Drying her tears, he sat down on the chair and they spoke with each other very sweetly. Oh, if only someone could have been present to this exchange! The Virgin said to her son, "Son, I am used to celebrating a feast on the Sabbath [Saturday], signifying [God's] rest from the creation of the world, but from now on I celebrate a feast on Sunday, in memory of your resurrection, and rest and glory." It pleased Christ.

Christ told his mother the things which he did in hell, how he had bound the devil, and he introduced her to the holy fathers, whom he had delivered from there. They then showed their great reverence to the virgin Mary. Imagine how Adam and Eve spoke to the Virgin Mary. "Blessed are you our daughter and the lady, about whom the Lord said to the serpent devil, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman,'" (Gen 3:15). Eve said, "I by sin closed the gates of paradise, but you by grace have opened them."

Also, each of the prophets spoke to the Virgin Mary, "I have prophesied of you in this place saying..." and humbly saluting her they all together said to the Virgin Mary: "You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the joy of Israel, you are the honor of our people," (Judith 15:10). Saluting them, the Virgin Mary said. "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light," (1 Pet. 2:9).

Then the holy angels said to her, as before, "Queen of heaven rejoice..." etc., because this was one of the seven principal joys of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin humbly acknowledging their praises said, "Are they not all

ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" (Heb 1:14)

Announced Publicly

Third. The resurrection was announced publicly. After Christ had comforted the Virgin Mary, the virgin Mother of consolation asked her Son to please go to console the most beloved Mary Magdalen, who so greatly suffered his passion, so saying: "Although the Apostles had a great sorrows at your passion, Mary Magdalen however had the greatest, so would you please console her and my sisters, who today, at early morning went to the tomb to anoint you." "And early in the morning the day after the Sabbath they came to the tomb, the sun having just risen...And going into the tomb they beheld a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a white garment, and they were amazed, he said to them 'Be not afraid; you seek Jesus of Nazareth,'" etc., (Mk 16:2, 5-6). – Note "early in the morning," that is in the first light of the sunrise, because the brightness of the dawn is the arrival of the sun – "So, Son, comfort them. Magdalen, your very beloved, is dying of your love. [*Illa enim Magdalena philocapta vestra, moritur amore vestri.*] Also the Apostles weep, especially Peter who hiding in some tomb can do nothing but weep. "

Immediately Christ sent an angel to the tomb, to announce to the three Mary's his resurrection. He found them with their jars of ointment, worrying, "Who will roll back the stone for us?" etc. And "because the guards are not permitting us to enter." And when they were at the tomb, a second time they saw the stone removed. It was very big. "And going into the tomb they saw the young man," etc. as is said above. And when they left the tomb, Christ appeared to them. Adoring, they embraced his feet, perhaps saying to him, "Lord, we shall go to your mother, who endured so many sorrows at your passion." He replied to them, "It is not necessary for you to go, because I have already seen her, and have comforted her." But he sent them to the disciples, that they might announce to them his resurrection, and later he himself appeared to the disciples, who rejoiced at the sight of the Lord. They had not believed the women. See how [the glorious resurrection] was publicly announced.

Morally. It is clear that the resurrection of Christ was made public and manifest to three kinds of persons. First to the Virgin Mary. Second to the three Marys. Third to the disciples.

It is shown mystically, that he shall appear in glory in paradise to the innocent, because they are signified by the Virgin, always innocent of all sin. And so Christ was saying "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such," (Mt 19:14).

Second, he shall appear to the repentant, who are designated by the women. Penitents carry the containers of ointment, i.e. the body, in which are the medicinal ointments of repentance, curative of the wounds and the weakness of sins. So Christ said "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Mt 4:17).

Third, he shall appear in glory to the obedient, who are signified by the disciples. Note, there are two grades of obedience. First is to obey the precepts or commandments of God, which generally oblige all, and to obey all the precepts of the Church, especially of fulfilling the precept of receiving communion today [Easter], unless at the good advice of your confessor it was anticipated or delayed, *Extrav. de peni. & re. omnis*. For today Christ has triumphed and set up camp. Today he wishes to enter the castle which he gained by so much effort, and so he was saying, "If you wish to enter life, keep the commandments," (Mt 19:17). Thus he shall appear to the Apostles at a table, to signify that today he appears to those who by grace are worthy of receiving communion.

The second grade of obedience is to obey the counsels. To this grade are bound those who oblige themselves through a vow to observe poverty, chastity, and obedience, etc., like religious. Of this grade Christ was saying, "If you would be perfect, go sell what you have," (Mat 19:21).

B009. Second Sermon on Easter

Why should we today sing Alleluia, Praise the Lord? Because this day we are fed, freed, assured of the truth, and given promises of being endowed, in our resurrection, with the gifts of clarity, agility, brightness and impassibility, which Christ showed in his resurrection.

"Alleluia," (Tobit 13 and Rev 19:1.)

This day is very desirable; many were excited [anhelaverunt, breathed heavy] over it, because of the sanctity of the day, and not rather because of the weariness of penance in fasts, or what is worse, because of the desire of returning to former sins, just as a dog returns to its vomit, (Cf Prov 26:11), about which the Apostle says to the Hebrews 6: "...Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making him a mockery," (Heb 6:6). So it is not is desirable for these reasons, but for the sanctification of this day, and its greatness.

You know that all the feast days of the year are given in memory of the blessings of God, which he gave to his holy church, so that it might praise God for them and give thanks. Isaiah 63 says: "I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord has bestowed upon us, and for the multitude of his good things to the house of Israel, which he hath given them according to his kindness, and according to the multitude of his mercies," (Isa 63:7). The greater the blessings given, the greater is the feast. About this see St. Thomas [\[Commentary\] on John, 10](#). The day of the Annunciation of the Lord is great, because then we receive the blessing of the beginning of our salvation, God assuming human nature in the womb of the virgin. A greater day is that of his Nativity, because on that day our salvation is openly made manifest, divinity seen in flesh, in humanity. Titus 2: "For the grace of God our Savior has appeared to all men," (Titus 2:11), and "the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared," (Titus 3:4). And Ps. 97: "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God," (Ps 97:3). Greater still is the day of the Lord's Passion, because then through the death of Christ, the price has been paid, by which we have been redeemed from eternal death, 1 Cor 6: " For you are bought with a great price," (v.20), and

1 Peter: "not ...with corruptible things as gold or silver," etc.(1 Pet 1:18). It would not have profited us that he be born if redemption had not followed. But the greatest of all is Easter Day, the day of the Lord's Resurrection, because today assurance was given to us to obtain eternal and immortal life in soul and body. Christ gave it to us through his resurrection, which is the cause and the assurance of our resurrection.

Therefore, today we should rejoice the most, and praise him by saying "Alleluia," for alleluia is said from "allelu" which is to praise, and "ia" which is the name of God, according as he is invisible. Whence "alleluia," that is, praise to God according to Huguccio [[Hugh of Pisa](#)]. [Papias](#) [says. Alleluia, in Latin, praise the Lord. We ought therefore today to praise the Lord. Psalm: "O praise the Lord, all you nations, etc." (Ps 116:1). Today indeed all creatures praise the Lord and rejoice, namely the superior creatures, the intermediate [mediocres], and the lower [infimae], as is clear from the preceding sermon, namely, "He is risen, he is not here."

Fed

There is, however, a multiple reason why today we ought spiritually to rejoice and praise God. First because God feeds us with his body and blood in the sacrament of the altar, for families celebrate much by eating together. So the body which today he gives us sacramentally is the same body which he assumed from the Virgin, in which he lived for 33 years, and in which he wished to suffer, be buried and rise. With his body, he gives his soul and divinity, because of natural concomitance. According to St. Thomas [III, q. 76, a.1](#), something is in this sacrament in two ways. From the power of the sacrament, that is signified through the form, and from natural concomitance, that is, really conjoined to Christ. So the soul of Christ and his divinity is in this sacrament. Secondly, to the extent [tantum] under both species there are similarly the quantity and the soul of Christ. His flesh and bones and such are under the species of wine in the second manner only, and under the species of bread in the first manner. Blood however conversely is under the species of wine from the power of the sacrament and under the species of bread from natural concomitance, as also St. Thomas says in III Sent, dist. 10. Whence through this gift is signified the

state of blessedness in which he gives himself inseparably, unfailingly [inamissibiliter], immediately and visibly, not under the species of bread. And this is the difference between this giving and the eternal giving, because here he gives himself bodily, there totally; here temporally, there eternally; here under the species of bread hidden, there openly without any intermediate. O what a gift, where God gives himself. Never can anyone receiving such a gift be a poor man, because in him is whatever is desirable. He can never be able to be disturbed or become saddened, because he is joy without end. Never can he become sick or grow old, because God is life. O truly is he a poor man who today is not fed with this food.

But before he can receive, it is necessary that the one receiving be well disposed, for just as medicine the more powerful it is, so much more ought the one receiving it fear that he be will prepared. Just as strong medicine heals the one well prepared, so it kills the one indisposed. The body of Christ is just such medicine, which cures the one receiving it well-disposed from all sin, because someone should receive communion with such devotion, that he should be without any sin, just like a newly baptized child. As St. Thomas says [III, q.79](#), through the whole question, and in IV Sent., dist. 12, the Eucharist is a great fruit. For the remission of sins it causes threefold, namely of the unknown future , insofar as it confers on us strength against future sins, by avoiding and causing contrition, and this happens in two ways. One way, not perceived in act, but in intention [non actu, sed voto] just as when one is previously justified from sin. Another way also perceived by him who is in mortal sin, of whom he has no conscience and sentiment [affectum]. Perhaps in the first he was not sufficiently contrite, but devoutly and reverently coming forward he pursues through this sacrament the grace and charity, which perfects contrition and the inquiry of sin both mortal and venial. He deletes the punishment due to sins, not all, but according to the measure of sins and devotion. The Eucharist frees us from purgatory according to the same St. Thomas, [III, q.52, a.8, ad 2](#), insofar as it is a satisfactory sacrifice for sins. Moreover, it has other effects. For since it is effective of spiritual life, it acts like bodily food, because it sustains, grows, restores and delights, and in the blessed it increases accidental glory, but not essential. The proper effect of the Eucharist according to St. Thomas in IV Sent., dist. 12, is the transformation of man into God, to which follows growth of virtues and the

restoration of what was lost. The consequent effects and less principal is the diminution of temptation [fomitis]. The same St. Thomas notes that Isaiah 10, The Eucharist gives five, namely pardon of sins, life of grace, confirmation in the fight, strengthening in life and a foretaste of glory. It strengthens from sin and preserves in two ways, as St. Thomas in III, and IV Sent where above., namely interiorly strengthening through grace and repelling externally every attack of the demons through the passion of Christ of which it is a sign. One can however approach with such lack of devotion that he would earn damnation. Whence, 1 Cor. 11, " For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself," (1 Cor 11:29). One taking the Eucharist conscious of mortal sin, sins mortally as St. Thomas says, IV Sent, dist. 9, and [III, q.79, a.2 ad 3m and 8m](#), and [a.] 4. Therefore with great fear and reverence we ought to prepare ourselves, and so, in the same place, " But let a man prove himself:" namely by premeditating [praemeditando], " and so let him eat of that bread," etc. (1 Cor 11:28). The manner of eating is given under the sign, in Exodus 12, of the paschal lamb. etc.

Freed

Second, we should rejoice and praise him, because he has liberated us from the captivity of hell. For a captive rejoices much at his liberation and we should rejoice over our liberation from hell. For the jail of hell is fire, and eternal fire, and the punishment is inflicted there without measure by the devil, and his minions living there. This hell God destroyed when he descended into hell. Ps 106, "Because he has broken the gates of brass, and burst the iron bars," (Ps 106:16). The gates of brass of hell are the desires [cupiditates] and vicious habits of men, which do not allow those imprisoned to escape. Christ shatters the iron bars with his power. We have a figure of this from Judges 16, about Samson, who "...went also into Gaza, and saw there a woman a harlot, and went in unto her. And when the Philistines had heard this," they placed guards there, "and watching there all the night in silence, that in the morning they might kill him as he went out. But Samson slept till midnight, and then rising he took both the doors of the gate, with the posts thereof, and the bolt, and laying them on his shoulders, carried them up to the top of the hill, " (Judg 16:2-3). Where Gregory in the Gloss asks "What is signified in this deed. Samson signifies the redeemer;

what is Gaza but hell? what the Philistines but the faithless Jews? who when they say Christ dead and his body laid in the tomb, posted a guard there, and they rejoiced that they had captured the author of life. But Christ straightaway [recte] destroyed the enclosure of hell, just as Samson the gates in Gaza. And Samson in the middle of the night broke out alone, but he also carried away its gates, because our redeemer rising before daylight, not only exited from hell a free man, but also destroyed the enclosure of hell. He took the gates and raised them to the top of a mountain, because by rising he broke the enclosure of hell and by ascending penetrated to the kingdom of heaven. Not only did Christ destroy hell, but also he diminished the power of the devil. For from the beginning of the world before the passion of Christ the devil freely went about the earth, that he might seduce all peoples, and so Christ therefore bound him. Apoc. 20: "And [the angel] laid hold of the dragon the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should no more seduce the nations, till the thousand years be finished," (Rev 20:2-3). The Interlinear Gloss has "Angel," Christ, apprehended the "dragon" for the violence of his harming, the "serpent" for deceptions, "old," because from the beginning of the world he has done harm, who is the "devil" coming down, and "Satan," that is, the adversary, and "bound him," that is deprived [him] of his prior power, and "cast into the abyss, and shut him up and marked with a sign," that is he put on him the sign of the holy cross, so that "he would not seduce more people," until the thousand years be accomplished," that is until antichrist comes.

Note according to St. Thomas in [III, q.49, a.2](#) that through the passion of Christ we have been freed in three ways from the power of the devil. "There are three things to be considered regarding the power which the devil exercised over men previous to Christ's Passion. The first is on man's own part, who by his sin deserved to be delivered over to the devil's power, and was overcome by his tempting. Another point is on God's part, whom man had offended by sinning, and who with justice left man under the devil's power. The third is on the devil's part, who out of his most wicked will hindered man from securing his salvation. As to the first point, by Christ's Passion, man was delivered from the devil's power, in so far as the Passion is the cause of the forgiveness of sins, as stated above (1). As to the second,

it must be said that Christ's Passion freed us from the devil's power, inasmuch as it reconciled us with God, as shall be shown later (4). But as to the third, Christ's Passion delivered us from the devil, inasmuch as in Christ's Passion he exceeded the limit of power assigned him by God, by conspiring to bring about Christ's death, Who, being sinless, did not deserve to die. (Summa theol. III, q. 49, a. 2, body.). Augustine says in De trinitate, Bk 14: "By the justice of Christ the devil is conquered, because although in him is found nothing worthy of death, he killed him. So indeed, he is just, that the debtors whom he held, they are set down [dimitterentur] they who believing in him whom without any debt he killed.

Assured: Appearances

Third we should rejoice and give him praise, because through his resurrection he gave us the certitude of knowledge. For he rejoiced much who saw the one desired for a long time. First he cannot appear or be seen clearly. Reason is because in a book with tiny letters [subtilis litterae]. the careful eye cannot read well, and so there is laid over itself with a crass body and obscure, but when a clear and lucid body is placed over it, it is read better, because indeed it appears larger, just as when a crystal or magnifying glass is held over it. The Son of God is a book containing in himself what is necessary for the salvation of mankind. He also is the book of life, and the testament of the Most High, and the acknowledgement of truth. But this subtle book is his divinity; so that no created intellect can read there in the present life. Ex 33: "for man shall not see me and live," (Ex 33:20). After the incarnation this book was bound with coarse and rough hide, namely a mortal body. Therefore, the divinity cannot be read nor be seen hiding under such a body. Thus, the Jews were wishing to stone him saying: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy," (Jn 10:33).

But today in the blessed resurrection since the glorious body, bright, and lucid was placed over divinity, then freely was it known and appeared, (Jn 12). His disciples did not recognize him at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered, that these scriptures were about him. Therefore, through the resurrection he gives us recognition.

As a sign of which it is read that he appeared often on the day of the resurrection. The first apparition he did was to the Blessed Virgin Mary, although the gospel does not tell us about this. And this can be shown by the authority of Sedulius, saying, "Always remaining a virgin, standing at his side. His own light first the Lord showed to her." Secondly, from the custom of the church. The Pope, on Easter, goes to St. Mary Major [a Roman basilica] first to celebrate the station, through this suggesting that [Christ's] first appearance was made to the Blessed Virgin. Third through the observance of the commandment. God indeed commands: "Honor your father and your mother," etc. If indeed someone was overseas, and his mother had understood that he had died, and he nevertheless healthy returned and would visit [first] other friends, and only last come to his mother, this would not be a good son, nor would he seem to have honored his mother. But if Christ first had rejoiced with others, and only later had appeared to his desolate mother, he would not seem to have kept the commandment of honoring parents. For more reasons about this, see the preceding sermon. The second apparition was made to Mary Magdalen about which today's gospel speaks saying, "Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices," (Mk 16:1).

You ask why especially did these women seek out Christ? Reason, because they were especially obligated to Christ from the fact that they had received many favors [plura officia] from him. Mary Magdalen was greatly bound to Christ, because he had cast out seven demons from her, (Cf Mk 16:9). Martha her sister had been cured of a flow of blood, and her brother Lazarus was raised after four days. He always spoke favorably of her, especially with the Pharisees who were calling her dirty, and with her sister who called her lazy, and with Judas who was calling her a spendthrift. Second, Mary of James, mother of James the Less, owed much to him. He was her nephew, and because her three sons, namely James, Simon and Jude the son of Alpheus, he made cardinals, that is apostles. Third, Mary Salome was obligated to him, because he was her nephew, and because made her two sons, James and John, apostles.

Second, why did the three of them go together? Reason, first for the greater truth of their testimony, because from the mouth of two or three witnesses every word stands. Second out of a sense of decency and modesty, it is more fitting that these women [matrones] go together. Third, because of the

mystical significance. They who had faith, charity and works came to Christ. Fourth, to commend community. It is better to serve God in society than singularly. Eccl 4: "It is better therefore that two should be together, than one: for they have the advantage of their society," (Eccl 4:9). Such persons, by their associations, sometimes rightly are kept free from the evil of committing sin. If some [tempter] shall prevail against one, two will resist him, and sometimes they encourage each other in the love of God, therefore it is added, "And if two lie together, they shall warm one another," (Eccl 4:11), one warmed by the other. Sometimes they are protected from the temptations of the devil, whence is said, "A threefold cord is not easily broken," (v.12). The devil cannot break the servants of God who are gathered together [insimiliter]. Ps. 132: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity," (Ps 132:1) Nor can he invade those united 1 Kg 17: "Choose out a man of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand," (1 Kgs 17:8).

These three women show a great devotion in three ways. First, they wished to anoint Christ, where it is said that they "bought sweet spices," (Mk 16:1), that is aromatic oils, so that coming [to the tomb] they might anoint Jesus. Out of great devotion they wished to anoint the body of Christ. It was the custom of the Jews to anoint the bodies of the dead, that they might be preserved from decay and from putrefaction, and from worms. But these women were deceived, because the body of Christ had been embalmed [balsamatum] by his divinity, and so if it had laid in the ground for a million years, it would never have putrefied, or decayed, nor would it have generated maggots. Psalm: "nor will then give your holy one to see corruption," (Ps 15:10). So in this they show very well their love for the dead Christ, a love which they had for the living Christ.

There are few friends in life who truly love, because almost everyone loves for themselves, and not for the friend. [propter sua, non propter se]. Sir 6: "And there is a friend a companion at the table, and he will not abide in the day of distress," (Sir 6:10). Fewer still are those who love in death, usually parents look to their children and children to their parents in death, when they wish to make some arrangements [prayers, Masses] for their salvation. Fewest of all are those who love someone after their death, because after a short time a father is forgotten by his son, a son by his father, and a friend by his friend. Psalm: "I am forgotten as one [*dead from the heart. I am*

become as a vessel that is destroyed]," (Ps 30:13). And elsewhere, "Their memory hath perished with a noise," (Ps 9:7). These holy women loved Christ in life, and they followed him preaching. Luke 8: "Mary Magdalen and the other women followed, " who ministered to him of their substance," (Lk 8:3). They loved him in death, because they were there with him on the cross. Jn 19: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen, " (Jn 19:25). And they loved him after his death, because they wished to anoint him lying in the tomb.

Second, the devotion of these women is shown in this that they wished to come at the most appropriate time, and so it is said: "And very early in the morning," (Mk 16:2). But if it was "very early in the morning" how then was the sun risen? And if the sun had already risen, how was it very early in the morning? Reason: because these women lived in the city, and the tomb of Christ was outside the city. They arose very early in the morning, but because it was a long way, and decent ladies [*honestas matronas*] ought not to run, but proceed maturely, therefore the sun had already risen when they arrived at the tomb. And this is the meaning, they came "very early in the morning," that is, they began to come, but the sun had risen when they arrived. Or they came at sunrise, with respect to its becoming light, which is called dawn, not with regard to its orb. So Augustine says, "The sun having risen, that is, when the heavens in the east had brightened." Or by the name of sun is understood Christ, who "had risen" from the womb of his mother through physical birth, and from the tomb through a certain glorious birth. This is the meaning, they came "very early in the morning," namely, when the true sun, Christ who had risen in this world from the womb of his mother by a bodily birth, now is risen by resurrecting from the tomb in a heavenly birth.

Where it says, "the first day of the week, [*una sabbatorum*]," it is to be understood the first day of the Sabbath, which is now called Sunday. The Jews name days one way, the Romans another and the church still another. The Jews name them from the Sabbath, saying first of the Sabbath, second of the Sabbath etc, and this out of reverence for the Sabbath, in which God rested from his work, and which he then sanctified. The Romans name the days from the planets and especially from that which rules the first hour, because the sun dominates the first hour of Sunday, it is called the Day of

the Sun, and so of the others. The church names days from "ferias" saying Feria Prima, Feria Secunda, Feria Tertia, etc., and so for the rest. Feria is the same as rest [cessatio]. Hence the ancients called a solemn day a ferial, because they rested from servile work. Or it is called feria for offering sacrifices, because in the festive days they offered sacrifices. But on the other hand, the Church now calls every day a ferial, because for all time there is a cessation from sacrificial victims. The ceremonial precepts of the old law were in force up to the passion of Christ, but from then on, they are dead, and after the spread of the Gospel, they are deadly, as St. Thomas says [I-II, q.103, a.3](#), and [II-II, q.87, a.1](#) and [q.93, a.1](#) and in IV Sent., dist 1 & 2.

Third the devotion of these women are shown in this that they were desiring to see the tomb open, and so they were asking themselves, "Who shall roll back the stone for us?" (Mk 16:3). The tomb had been closed in three ways: by rolling a large stone over its entrance; by the affixing of seals; and by the posting of an armed guard. So the women could not imagine how they would enter, because they were not able to move such a great stone, since they were fragile, and the soldiers would chase them away, and they did not dare break the official seals. However Christ, who had come out of the closed womb of the virgin, and who would come to the apostles through closed doors, came out of the tomb with the stone still closed, the seals unbroken, and the guards overwhelmed with terror. After he had risen, an angel rolled back the stone, so he might give the women access for entering. The soldiers were like dead men, half crazy, from this sudden opening of the tomb, and the ground shuddered mightily. There was a great earthquake which terrified the soldiers. It was as if the earth showed its happiness at the resurrection of Christ. Just as in the passion of Christ there was an earthquake as a sign of sadness, so now in the resurrection it was moved as a sign of gladness. Or the earthquake happened that to signify that the hearts of earthly persons through faith in the passion and resurrection might be promoted in faith.

The women approaching and taking it all in, saw the stone rolled away. But why did these three women wish to approach the tomb, when they had no assurance of the stone being rolled back? Reason: because, believing that the body of Christ would be in the tomb, they were saying to themselves: "Even if we are not able to anoint him, at least we would be able to touch

the tomb, and there weep for him and be near him." See how wonderful was the love and devotion of the women for their dead [friend]. Today, for many, the memory [of the dead] fades like an echo. Today many are like pigs, who come running to the cry of one pig, [slaughtered,] bleeding to death, and when they see the pig thrown into a bucket, they flee and forget about him. Many [today] when mourning the dead, when he has been buried, forget about him.

The women, however "entering into the tomb, saw a young man," (Mk 16:5), that is, an angel, whom they saw as a young man, to signify, that we all will rise as young people, not with respect to our numerical age, but with respect to our physical stature, as St. Thomas says, IV Sent., dist 44, a. 2, and [III, q.46, a.9, ad 2](#). He was "sitting on the right side." Gregory: "What is designated by the left, but the present life? what by the right but eternal life?" (Cf Glossa ordinaria), Therefore since our redeemer has passed over the corruption of the present life, rightly the angel who came to announce his eternal life, would be sitting on the right, etc. "Clothed with a white robe." Truly this robe is not from mortal cloth, but shining with celestial vitality, not in an earthly color. The prophet says, "Clothed with light as with a garment," (Ps 103:2), And of the just Matthew 13 says: "Then shall the just shine like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father," (Mt 13:43). Gregory: He appears clothed with a white robe because he announced the joy of the festivity. Whiteness of the clothing bespeaks the splendor of our festival. Matthew also says, "His countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow," (Mt 28:3). Lightning is from heaven, snow from earth, through which it is given to understand that in Christ' resurrection earthly things are joined to heavenly. According to Gregory in lightning the terror of the fearful is signified, in snow the allurements of the sincere [blandimentum candoris]. through which it is understood that Christ in the [Last] Judgment shall appear terrifying to sinners and comforting to the just.

This angel spoke to the women first to comfort them saying, "Do not be afraid," (Mt 16:6), In this you can tell a good angel from a bad angel, because a good angel in the beginning terrifies with lightning, in the middle he comforts with his speaking, and in the end brings gladness from immense consolation and his pleasing appearance. A bad angel, on the other hand, in the beginning would terrify [you] from his horrible appearance, in

the middle from his conversation would terrify you even more, and at the end would inflict sorrow from his deceptions which follow, as St. Thomas says, [III, q.30, a.3 ad 3](#), and On Job, ch. 4, and II Cor. 11, and there saying that every angel appearing exhorts to good, but the good angel persists, the bad however, reveals himself as evil.

Second, by convincing them and making certain of the resurrection [the angel] said, "Jesus of Nazareth, whom you seek, who was crucified...is not here," (Mk 16:6) Gregory: "He is not here through the presence of the flesh, but nevertheless he is everywhere through the presence of his majesty." That this is true, "Behold the place where they laid him," (v. 6). For this reason he rolled back the stone, so that he could show them the place, as if he had said, "If you don't believe my words, believe the empty tomb."

Third the angel sent them to the apostles, saying, "But go, tell," etc (v. 7). It should be noted that the first woman was the intermediary between the serpent and man, leading to perdition. The second, namely the virgin Mary was the intermediary between God and men fashioning our reconciliation. These women, [in the tomb,] were the intermediaries between the angel and the apostles, announcing to them our welfare and salvation. Already man was not able to be conquered from a woman, because if the first damned, the second saved, the third announced. If the first was the cause of our death, the second was the cause of our life, the third the herald [annunciatrix] of our salvation, and so the angel made these women messengers of our resurrection.

But why did he say and [tell] "Peter?" Response: three reasons. First, because Peter through denial had ceased to be a disciple and still was not certain, whether he had been restored to grace. So if he had not been named, he would have been confused, and perhaps he might have despaired. And so that he might know that through [his] tears his sin had been forgiven, and that he had been restored to the office of disciple, it was appropriate that he be mentioned by name. Secondly, that the angel might defer to him as the supreme pontiff. If someone sends letters to the pope and to the college of cardinals, the Pope is addressed by name, and the cardinals in general. Therefore, the angel expresses Peter by name, as the pope [summum pontificium], the disciples however in general, as if a college. Third because Peter is interpreted as unbelieving or

broken up, through which it is understood that those come to Christ, who have broken themselves up by carnal love, and who acknowledge their sins with contrition, and judge themselves humbly to be nothing. Fourth, the angel announces to these women Christ's appearance in Galilee, saying to them, "He goes before you into Galilee; there you shall see him," etc. (Mk 16:7). The apparition took place in Galilee. There is a mystery in this name. Galilee, is interpreted as "transmigration." Christ while he was in this mortal life endured a threefold weakness, namely, mortality, with respect to his body, vulnerability with respect to his soul, punishment and multiple miseries with respect to both. But in the resurrection a transmigration has taken place, because the body migrates from mortality to immortality, the soul from vulnerability to impassibility, the body and soul from miseries and punishment to glory and happiness. Whence Pope Leo: "After the passion, the chains of death, shattered, weakness passes into strength, mortality into eternity, contempt into glory."

Those women going out announced to the apostles that he has risen. But the apostles thought that they were hallucinating, and did not believe them. Then Peter and John ran to the tomb, and saw the linens and the napkin etc. "The disciples therefore departed again ...But Mary stayed outside the tomb, weeping," (Jn 20:10-11). There Christ, appeared to her in the guise of a gardener. And this was the first appearance, about which the Gospel speaks, although he had first appeared to his mother, as was said. But why does Christ appear first to Mary Magdalen? There are four reasons: First, because she had loved him more ardently, and so she remained there weeping. Second, that he might show that he died for sinners, (Cf Matt. 9 and Luke 5). "I came not to call the just, but sinners, " (Lk 5:32, Cf Mt 9:13). Third that just as a woman was the messenger of death, so she would be the messenger of life, according to the Gloss. Fourth, that where sin abounded, grace would abound the more, (Cf Rom 5:20).

The second apparition was made to the women returning from the tomb, when he said to them, "Hail," (Mt 28:9). The third to Peter, but where or when the evangelists do not say. Fourth to the disciples going to Emmaus. Fifth to the disciples gathered as one.

We should therefore rejoice at his resurrection, just like the apostles and women rejoiced, because they beheld the one, they thought to be dead.

Hence if we wish to see Christ, we must serve diligently with the fervor of enkindled charity, like Mary Magdalen. For we see that excessive moisture [humor] especially impedes our seeing of the brightness of the sun, but dry eyes see well. So man having eyes of his heart filled with the juices [humores] of carnal pleasure, cannot see Christ. So Mary Magdalen when she was living voluptuously, did not see Christ interiorly, because her interior eye was filled with moistures impeding it. But afterwards, the fervor of divine delight excited her, then Christ appeared to her. Therefore, those wishing for Christ to appear to them should remove every depraved moisture and excite in themselves the fervor of divine delight. Romans 12: " In fervent spirit. Serving the Lord," (Rom 12:11).

Endowed

Fourth we should be glad and rejoice, because through his resurrection he has opened the gates of heaven for us. For many rejoice who are invited to be in the company of princes, so etc. Whence, just as Christ in his resurrection has four endowments [dotes] although not according to the proper sense of endowments, just as neither the angels, as the Doctor [St. Thomas] says, in IV Sent., dist.49, q. 4, a. 3 and 4, so the blessed in the future resurrection will be endowed with four endowments [dotes] in their body, as also the Doctor touches in IV Sent., dist. 44, and [III,q. 45, a.1](#) and [3](#). The body of Christ was subtle, agile, bright and impassible. With these four our body will be endowed. They are called endowments [dotes] because the Lord gives them as a dowry to the saints, who are joined to him her through true faith and life and in the future through eternal enjoyment, just as a bride is given a dowry by her groom.

Subtlety

The first endowment or nobility is subtlety, which the body receives from the soul which makes the body wholly subject to the soul and elevates it into a certain likeness to the soul just as it had been elevated into a likeness of God, so that us the body seems as if one spirit with the soul. And this the Apostle says I Cor 15: "It is sown a natural body," (1 Cor 15:44), that is having animal movements of inordinate concupiscence, like in other animals, but, "it shall rise a spiritual body," that is totally subjected to the spirit and conformed, so that in offers no impediment to the soul in

anything, by which God would be the less contemplated, loved, and adhered to, which the soul does not have in this present state of life. Now indeed "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul," (Wis 9:15), and "For the flesh lusts against the spirit," (Gal 5:17), and impedes the soul, so it cannot continuously meditate on God, nor can it attain to his perfect awareness or love, and the grossness and weight of the body depressing the soul does this. Sleep gives us a sign of this, when the soul is not occupied with the use of the exterior senses, as when awake, then revelations can take place. The mind has two views [respectus], namely to the things above by which it is enlightened, and to the body in respect of which it is bound in sleep, not [bound] however with respect to the first, but [in sleep] it becomes freer than when awake, as St. Thomas says in [De veritate, q.12, a.3. ad 2m](#), and [q.28, a.2, ad 6m](#).

Moreover, we see that the heaviness of the body impedes, that it cannot pass freely, because other bodies resist it, like a walls or panels. But a glorified body shall be so subtle that it shall penetrate anybody without resistance. Something similar is found in nature. For oil penetrates the vessel containing it without breaking the vessel. By oil is understood grace. Just as indeed a sailor dives in the sea, bearing oil in his mouth, [or, on his face. portans oleum in ore], by means of which he is enlightened seeing the dangers of the sea, so the grace of God illuminates and directs those navigating between the dangers of the world lest they perish, in 2 Cor 12: "My grace is sufficient for thee," (2 Cor 12:9). Therefore, the glorified body is not only full of grace but of glory which is consummated grace. Every body also penetrates heaven without division. "Glory shall uphold the humble of spirit," (Prov 29:23).

Agility

The second endowment [dos] will be agility, which also flows from the glory of the soul into the body, so where the spirit wills, immediately there the body will be without any impediment. For it is because of the weight of the body in this life that the soul cannot be where it wishes. Whence when a soul wishes to raise up the weight of the body with it, and lead it to good works, frequently it [the body] casts it down, just as a monkey when it tries [credit] to raise up a ball tied to its back, the weight of the ball hurls the monkey into the mud, so the body hurls the soul into the mud of sin. But in

the resurrection, the body entirely obeys the soul. Augustine, "Wherever the spirit wishes, immediately it shall be and the body." Therefore, the Apostle says in 1 Cor 5, "It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power," (1 Cor 15:43). We see a similarity in nature. For some stone lying on the earth cannot be moved by ten, which is moved nevertheless by a child outside of the earth or its proper existing place. So the body which cannot be moved by the soul when it lies on the earth, in the resurrection shall be raised to heaven, and is moved by the soul at will. This power God gives to the very glorious body. Eccl 17: "God created man of the earth, and made him after his own image. And he turned him into it again, and clothed him with strength according to himself," (Sir 17:1-2), for just as a ray suddenly passes from east to west and the eye from earth instantly sees a star, so suddenly, at will, the body shall be where the soul wishes.

Clarity

The third endowment, will be clarity, which also flows from the glory of the soul. And according as every saint shall have greater merit, so shall there be greater clarity in the body, 1 Cor 15, "For star differs from star in glory," (1 Cor 15:41). So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead, for one [saint] shall be and shall appear more splendid than another, nevertheless each shall have a bodily brightness more than seven times brighter than the sun, because then the light of the sun will be like the light of seven days, and then "shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father," (Mt 13:43). And although now the light of the sun is disproportionate to our eyes, nevertheless it shall not be such there, because the light shall be moderated [demulces], and our eyes will be stronger and more noble. This clarity, according to Gregory, shall be everywhere [pervia], so that without impediment of the body one saint shall see what is in the body of another, and as much as he shall abound in the light of glory, to that extent shall he more clearly see, as in a clear spring. Therefore, the Apostle says in the above citation, "It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory." (1 Cor 15:43), not however in that glory about which 1 Macc 2, "for his glory is dung, and worms," (1 Macc 2:62), just as a snake puts his whole power in its beautiful colored skin, but under its skin has nothing but putridity and poison. So, some care so much about bodily beauty, that interiorly there remains only the putridity of sin. Such beauty shall not be there. But because the beauty

of the glorious body comes from the soul, Ps.44: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within," (Ps 44:14), it therefore lasts forever. Not so with modern beauty, about which James 1 writes: "For the sun rose with a burning heat, and parched the grass, and the flower thereof fell off, and the beauty of the shape thereof perished," (James 1:11), Then all bodily defects shall cease and the body shall have whatever is beautiful.

Impassibility

The fourth endowment shall be impassibility [impassibilitas], and immortality, so that neither hunger or nor thirst, neither cold nor heat, nor any wound which the body suffers now shall have any place there. And this also shall be in respect to the glory of the soul, because just as then it shall be entirely elevated into divine likeness, so the body through the soul, attains impassibility and immortality. Augustine: "God has made the soul with such powerful strength, that it redounds into the body with the vigor of incorruptibility."

The reason is, change alters nature, just as it is clear, the tree situated in bad earth does not bear fruit, but transplanted to good earth immediately bears fruit, because the tree draws nourishment from the earth, so fruit follows from the condition of the earth in which it is situated. For this reason Augustine says, that the first parents if they had stayed in innocence, their bodies would have been immortal and incorruptible, because whoever ate of the tree of life would be incorruptible. So, I say that we now eat corruptible and rotten food, as is clear of bread and wine, and so now the body nourished by such food has to corrupt. In fact, the more it eats and delights, the quicker it putrefies and dies.

But after the resurrection in paradise, we eat the food of life in which there is no corruption or decay. Apocalypse 2: " To him, who overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God," (Apoc 2:7). Again, we shall drink from the spring of life, Apoc. 7: "and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life," (Rev 7:17). To drink the delights of this world is to drink of the spring of death. Therefore, just as it is necessary now that our body decay because of the corruption of the food which we eat, so in paradise we shall be immortal because of the food which we use. John 6: Whoever "eats of this bread, shall live forever," (Jn

6:52). Therefore, because of the condition of food in paradise, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality," (1 Cor 15:53). This is what the Apostle says in the same place as above: "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption," (v. 42).

These are the four endowments or nobilities which our bodies receive from God, through the mediation of the soul in glory. And in order that he might convince us, he wishes in the present to show them in his body for a time, while he was still in the world. For he had subtlety, when he emerged from the closed womb of the virgin. Agility, when he walked over the waves of the sea. Mt 14 and Jn 6. Clarity, when on Mount Thabor he was transfigured, and showed the glory of clarity to his disciples. Mt 17. Impassibility, when he escaped from the hands of the Jews who wished to cast him down or to stone him. Lk 4 and Jn 8. If therefore in the resurrection we desire to be renewed by these ennoblements of the body, which the Lord showed in his body before the resurrection, and after the resurrection had permanently, it is necessary that we should so walk in newness of life.

Previews: Spiritual Subtlety

In this life we have a hint of them spiritually in the soul, so that we have subtlety and agility etc. We have subtlety when our heart has been purged from the inordinate love of earthly things, from which it contracts impurity and grossness. Inordinate love makes for impurity in the soul through this, that it causes it to flow out of itself into that thing which one loves, and to be united with it. Ps 21: "My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels," (Ps 21:15). Just as silver when melted and mixed with copper is made impure, so the soul through inordinate love, mixed with earthly things, is made impure. And so, the more the soul is elevated above earthly things, by despising them, so much subtler it is. Just as air is called subtle when it is not filled with heavy clouds, and wine subtle when it is elevated above sediments and impurities, likewise a man is said to be subtle in spirit, whose mind is not weighed down by sensual and gross things, who is able to grasp and sustain spiritual things. We see this too in everything that is well designed, that that which is subtler is more eminent, as a flower on a tree, and fire among the elements. So the soul when it rises above these earthly things is made subtle, from this, that it is united to God, who is the

ultimate [in termino] of all subtlety. Whatever thing, how much more it approaches its perfective [source], and that from which it receives its perfection, by so much more is it ennobled, just as air filled with light is more noble than murky, and likewise a body joined to the soul, than separated from it. When therefore the soul adhering to God alone, seeks "the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." (Col 3:2), as the Apostle says, "our conversation is in heaven," (Phil 3:20), then it is subtle and supple, and also merits subtlety in the body. On the other hand when it turns to earthly things, and pursues the desires of the body, it becomes weighed down, as it clear in an avaricious sinner who has an earthly soul, because he centers his whole pleasure in acquiring earthly things. Likewise, a lustful person has a filthy soul, because it lies in the filth through lust. A proud man has a soul puffed up, and so for the rest. Therefore if the soul wishes to have subtlety, it is necessary to remove such things and to extract itself from the inordinate love of earthly things, and to raise itself through this subtlety to contemplating heavenly things.

Spiritual Agility

There follows another nobility, namely agility. When in our mind we are withdrawn from the love and grossness of earthly desires, and the mind is totally elevated in the love of God and the desire of heavenly things, then we become agile and quick to running through the increasing number of good works there where our love and desire tends. Augustine: "My Love, my weight, in the same way, I am carried wherever I am carried." To grow in this agility the Apostle urges us, saying: "So run that you may obtain," (1 Cor 9:24), and he gives an example saying: "But I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend," (Phil 3:13). And through this running and following he intends nothing else but to be perfect in good and virtues through the exercise of good works. To this we are obliged as long as we are in this life. Because according to Jerome, Gregory, Augustine and Bernard, no one can be satisfied to stand still, neither in the body nor the soul, because on the path to God, not to progress is to regress.

Spiritual Clarity

Third it is necessary that we have a preview of clarity, if we wish to rise with Christ. And I call a preview of clarity [praeiviam claritatem], when

man is bright interiorly and exteriorly. Interiorly through the testimony of a good conscience, externally through a good reputation. Of the first the Apostle says, 2 Cor 1, "For our glory." that is joy, "is this, the testimony of our conscience," (2 Cor 1:12), and rightly so because what is naturally bright and lucid rejoices, as is clear in birds, for when dawn breaks, they rejoice and sing. Even men living in dark places are afraid and seeing light are comforted. If such extrinsic things bring joy, how much more the intrinsic clarity which shines in the conscience? Prov. 15: "A secure mind is like a continual feast." (Prov 15:15). And just as a pure conscience rejoices, so on the other hand a conscience shadowed with sin, upsets and saddens. Wis. 17: "For a troubled conscience always forecasts grievous things," (Wis 17:10).

Spiritual Impassibility

Fourth it is necessary for us to have impassibility, that is, not to be elevated by good fortune and depressed by adversity, but to patiently suffer all troubles, all adversities, for Christ. Nevertheless, we ought not have the patience of an ass. For naturalists tell us that an ass when it sees the wolf coming, hides its head in the bushes and permits itself to be bitten by the wolf, until it gets near the heart, and then it tries to resist. So, it is with many, the wolf is the devil, the ass, a man seeking delight in sins. Such patience we should not have, but we ought bravely to resist the devil in his bad suggestions, and when temptation begins, [to resist] contempt and disgrace [contumelias et opprobria], willingly and cheerfully for Christ, and following his example to bear up, and to pray for those doing us evil, so that by such an impassibility of soul as clothed Christ's soul and body in the resurrection, we might merit to be clothed in the general resurrection.

B057. First Sermon for Whitsunday, the Octave of Easter,

Douay translation Jn. 20:26-29

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. 27 Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. 28 Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God. 29 Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus came..." Jn 20:26.

The proposed word according to the historical or literal sense [of scripture] speaks of the coming of Christ and of his appearance which happened, so he might convert the unbelieving apostle, Thomas. Lest Thomas be damned, Christ again after eight days appeared to him, and this is what the theme says: "And after eight days again..." But according to the mystical and spiritual sense the theme speaks of the coming of Christ to the soul to justify it of sin, and for giving grace and blessing to it. And now in the present sermon I wish to explain these two senses.

According to the first sense, history of the gospel is literally called literal. Note he breathes saying, "Receive the holy Spirit," (Jn 20:22). Breath has two qualities; it is warm and moist. The Holy Spirit gives these two. First, he gives the warmth of love and devotion. Second, he gives the moisture of contrition and tears. These two are the effect of the Holy Spirit – Christ breathes, implying that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from him. He gives to the apostles and priests the power of forgiving sins, saying, "Whose sins you forgive," etc. By this commission of Christ priests can forgive sins instrumentally, for it is Christ who principally forgives sins.

At this apparition of Christ, Thomas was not with the other disciples. They said to Thomas, "We have seen the Lord," (v.25) He replied, saying, "Unless I shall see in his hands," etc. As if he were saying, "He has now risen? I certainly do not believe. Because when he hung on the cross still

alive and the Jews were saying to him, 'If he is the king of Israel,' etc., they were offering him their conversion, he was not able to descend from the cross. How therefore now dead could he come out of the sealed and guarded tomb? I say to you that unless I shall see," etc. See how filled with doubt and unbelief Thomas was, so that if he had died in such unbelief, he would have been eternally damned.

Think about it, and I tell you, perhaps all through the whole week the apostles worked to convince him. Even the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalen. Thomas would have been embarrassed perhaps to deny it in the presence of the Virgin Mary, but behind her back he was possibly asking, "Would not a mother tell a lie on behalf of her son?" Christ saw that neither the apostles, nor his mother were able to convince him. So Christ himself, moved by mercy, after eight days from his first appearance, came and the doors closed entered saying, "Peace be to you."

Note this secret, that Jesus saluted the apostles in today's gospel three times, to teach that if every good of the community ought to be conserved in good, it ought to have three peace's. First between the greater and lesser, by supporting the lesser and honoring the greater. Second, between the principals themselves there ought to be concord and charity, so that in good charity they pursue the common good. Third, peace between the ordinary people, that they be in harmony among themselves. So he said three times "Peace be to you, peace be to you, peace be to you."

Note how Christ was able to speak to Thomas. "Were not you the one who refused to believe my resurrection?" Thomas replies, "Yes, Lord but I believe you are my God and my Lord." O what shame he had over his unbelief. Thomas, when he saw Christ and Christ called him saying, "Put your finger," etc., Thomas believed. The Gloss cites Augustine, that Thomas preferred not to touch because he was already believing immediately when he saw Christ. But Blessed Gregory says that Christ insisted that he touch the place of the nails, so no one could have any doubt. And Thomas said, "I believe, Lord." To whom Christ said, "Because you have seen me Thomas, you believed," etc. He did not say "because you touched." I say to you that "blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed." So the theme is clear according to the historical and literal sense.

Now it is necessary to explain it according to the mystical and spiritual sense. For which it must be known that two works are at the top through which Christ comes into a creature through grace. He comes first through baptism. Second through penance. If indeed Christ is lost after he had come to a creature through baptism, after eight days he comes again through penance. I say first that Christ through grace comes into creature through baptism, because before baptism Christ is not in a creature through grace. Moreover, I say to you that before baptism the creature is the dwelling place of demons.

I say that Adam and Eve because of the sin they committed are made slaves to the devil. Just as when two soldiers fight a duel in a closed stadium, and one says, "Woe to me. I hand myself over to you." He is made slave of the other. So, it was between those two soldiers, namely Adam and the devil, in the closed stadium of the terrestrial paradise, there was a duel, where Adam was defeated and handed himself over to the devil by consent. Moreover, he was captured with his wife. And the law is such that if the slaves beget children, even the children are slaves. So of Adam. Authority, Isaiah 5, "Therefore is my people," that is the human race, "led away captive, because they had not knowledge," (Isa 5:13). Note, "because they had not knowledge," because the sin of Adam came from the desire of knowledge, because the serpent said, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," (Gen 3:5). It is clear therefore that all were enslaved to the devil.

How is the devil expelled? I reply, through baptism. Therefore, when the creature ought to be baptized, the priest does not permit him to enter the church until he is conjured or exorcized saying, "I exorcize you, etc. Go out accursed devil." From this the conclusion is inferred, that all Jews and infidels belong to the devil [sunt daemoniaci], because they are not exorcized. Therefore in baptism he is expelled, so when driven out and the room cleaned, Christ comes through grace. Behold the first coming of Christ in the creature. Authority. "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood." (1 Jn 5:6). Note: "by water and blood," If it is said, "I was often at baptisms and I saw no blood there," I reply: that by virtue of the blood of Christ baptism has its power and efficacy. Augustine. "Such is the power of that water, that it touches the body, and the soul is washed," which is to say by the blood of Christ.

But see, after baptism when we sin, we drive out Christ by the uncleanness of our sins. He is not a pig, that he would prefer to stay in the mud of lust. An then the infernal devil pigs would return and Christ would withdraw, as he said, "And when an unclean spirit is gone out of a man," etc. (Mt 12:53, & Lk 11:24). Note: "and the last state of that man in made worse than the first," (v. 45), because the actual sins are intensively worse than original sin, as St. Thomas says [III, q.1, a.4](#), because it has more of the reason of being voluntary, although original sin is extensively worse.

I repeat, the way the devil is expelled is through the conversion of penance. See how divine providence provides that through humble penance and a devout conscience one is purified and cleaned, and the devil is driven out. So, James "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you," (James 4:7).

So the theme says, "After eight days again," etc. Here eight days are the works of penance, which, when completed, Christ comes again.

- The first day is recognition of sin,
- Second, contrition of the heart,
- Third, confession by word,
- Fourth, correction of life,
- Fifth, forgiveness of injuries,
- Sixth, restitution of debts,
- Seventh, reparation of someone's good name,
- Eighth, Eucharistic communion.

About these the theme says, "After eight days again Jesus came."

I say first, that the first day is the recognition of sin, when a man because of the clarity of divine grace comes to know his sins saying, "O, I am a wretched religious, and I have not observed obedience, poverty, nor chastity, nor the regulations of our order regarding food, and the habit and bowing in the chapel," etc. Behold the first day. The same for clergy as well as lay people. And after realizing [their sinfulness] they can say with the Apostle Paul to the Romans, "The night is passed, and the day is at hand," (Rom 13:12)

The second day is the contrition of the heart. What good would it do to recognize the gravest sins, unless they would be displeasing? This is against those who celebrate when they commit evil etc. It is necessary therefore after the recognition of [your] sins, to be sorry and weep out of contrition, just as, for example, the boy falling into a mud puddle, who cries, because he got his coat dirty, etc. So also you who have soiled your new suit of innocence, which your father Christ had made for you in baptism, because you have fallen into the filth of lust or avarice, or gluttony. So you ought to weep and accuse yourself, according to that saying of Proverbs 6, "Because the jealousy and rage of the husband will not spare in the day of revenge, Nor will he yield to any man's prayers, nor will he accept for satisfaction ever so many gifts," (Prov 6:34-35). Note. "jealousy," like one who has a beautiful wife or daughter is jealous, and this for an excessive love, all the more one should be jealous of his soul, lest it be touched by demons or sin. "Rage" is that reprehension which a man has about himself out of contrition, saying: "O miserable one, how much have I offended God," etc.

The third day is the outward confession of sin, by which a person knows sins and is sorry for them, and so they are thrown away, as a maidservant carries away or throws the garbage out of the room of her mistress through the window. This broom with which we sweep the room of our conscience, is the remembrance of sins. David, "And I meditated in the night with my own heart: and I was exercised and I swept my spirit," (Ps. 76:7). So they are thrown out through the window of our mouth in the sewer of confession. This is what is sung today, "This is the day," namely of confession, "which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." Confession is called the "day" because of the brightness of the grace of God. And it is called the day of "the Lord," because Christ instituted confession. But James when he says: "Confess your sins one to another..." (James 5:16) But this is in error, because neither James or blessed Peter were able to institute some sacrament; Christ instituted seven sacraments. But James said this, as St. Thomas Aquinas says in [III, q.64, a.2, ad 3](#), "The apostles and their successors are God's vicars in governing the Church which is built on faith and the sacraments of faith. Wherefore, just as they may not institute another Church, so neither may they hand on another faith, nor institute other sacraments. On the contrary, the Church is said to be built up with the sacraments "which flowed from the side of Christ while

hanging on the Cross." And in the body of the article he says, that God alone can institute a sacrament, and he reminds us that Christ instituted it. So, we say, "This is the day the Lord has made," because he instituted confession, "let us rejoice and be glad in it," and after confession man finds himself very happy, because he feels himself unburdened of the weight of sin.

The fourth day is the correction of life. Having confessed, it is necessary to correct and emend ones life through devout prayers. And it is useful to everyone morning and evening to think, that you have seen Christ in the throne of his majesty angry at you, the same for the Virgin Mary. So punish your flesh -- which occasions all sins -- through fasting, or a hair shirt, or the discipline. Also give alms, especially on Sunday when you come to mass, thinking, now I come to ask alms from God. So that I might receive the best of alms, I give alms also by correcting my life, because if before you were proud and vain, you will be humbled and so for the other sins. About this day the Apostle Paul says, " Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness," (Rom. 13:13).

The fifth day is the redressing of injuries, namely, that you are willing to forgive your enemies' injuries and refuse to take revenge, but by the love of Jesus, spare them, saying to God, "Lord that person inflicted an injury on me, but, Lord, I have committed greater injuries on you. So lest you take revenge on me, I choose not to take revenge, but I forgive all because of your love." About this day Christ says, "If a man walk in the day, he stumbles not, because he sees the light of this world: But if he walk in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him," (Jn 11:9-10). "He stumbles," that is falling into hell, because the light of God, namely peace and love, is not in him. Because when he who does not wish to forgive dies, his soul, which would wish to ascend to heaven from a natural desire, then stumbles and falls into hell.

The sixth day is the repayment of debts, namely that whoever has a beautiful house, or garden (tasseam) should look around to see if there is something there that is stolen, seized illegally, by fraud, or kept illegally, which needs to be returned. Blessed is that day of restitution, About which Scripture says, "For we are come in a good day [to you]," (I Kgs 25:8).

The seventh day is restoring a person's good name. Many there are who have not had their goods stolen, nor their money, but have had more stolen, namely their good name, which is worth more. Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is better than great riches." A good reputation is necessary both for us and for others. For us, because it is a special good among exterior goods. Because it makes one fit for human offices and preserves from sin. And for others lest they be scandalized and they take to sinning from bad example, as Thomas Aquinas says in De veritate, q.3, a.2 and [II-II, q.73, a.2](#). Just as a thief is bound to restitution, so one who steals the good name of one's neighbor out of malice, even if what he says is true and it is a secret, is bound to restitution of that good name, otherwise he is not able to enter into paradise. But you ask how does one restore it? I reply, that in front of all of those before whom you have spoken ill, you are bound to make a retraction saying that they should not believe what you have maliciously reported, and if he who is defamed knows this, it is necessary also to ask forgiveness from him, otherwise it is not necessary. About this see at length Thomas Aquinas [II-II, q.73](#), virtually all. Many are damned because of these defamations, because a word travels, then they do not care nor confess it, nor does it enter their conscience. About this day David says symbolically [tropologice], " By your ordinance the day goes on," (Ps 118:91).

Note it "goes on" to the extent that if he does not restore the good name in this life, or because he does not have the opportunity, and dies with contrition, and the intention to ask pardon, the soul as it sometimes happens, returns from the other world to ask pardon. So, note that there were two who had defamed someone, and the one defamed and one of the defamers was still living, but one defamer died and lingered for some time in purgatory. And when he came out, he believed that he would go straight to heaven. And God said, "You shall not enter, because you first have to make restitution of the good name of that person." And I know that to be true that the soul returned, because I myself was the one defamed by that person and he sought pardon from me.

The eighth day is receiving the Eucharist. After a person knows his sins, and is repentant, confesses, corrects his life, forgives injuries, repays his debts and restores a good name, and finally devoutly receives Holy Communion, then is verified the theme: "After eight days," i.e. through eight aforesaid penitential works, "Jesus comes again." About this day

David said, Ps. 83:11, "For better is one day in thy courts," i.e. in the churches where Communion is received, "above thousands." Therefore, "After eight days Jesus came again," etc.

B093. First Sermon After the Easter Octave On the Good Shepherd

John 10:12-16 Douay translation

12 But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep: 13 And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. 15 As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

Jn 10:14 "I am the good shepherd." Our sermon shall be from the holy gospel of this Sunday. And we shall have many good teachings for the illumination of the mind and reformation of life. But first let the Blessed Virgin be saluted.

The proposed word for a theme and the basis of our sermon is the world of our Lord Jesus Christ speaking of himself saying: "I am the good shepherd," (Jn 10:14). The goodness of this Blessed shepherd toward his sheep, namely of the Christian faithful, is shown in today's holy Gospel in four ways:

- First reason, because he buys the sheep dearly [pretiose],
- Second, because he keeps them carefully,
- Third, because he feeds them abundantly, and
- Fourth, because he guards them safely.

Buys Dearly

I say first that Christ as the good shepherd buys his sheep at a great price [pretiose], namely by the price of his blood. He does not get them by stealth or stealing, or by deception, but he buys them for a just price and then some. About this he speaks in the beginning of the gospel, "I am the good shepherd," (Jn 10:14). Reason, because "The good shepherd gives his life," that is his bodily life, "for his sheep," (v. 11). Reason: why he gives such a precious price, is the incomparable value of a soul, because no bodily creature is comparable in value to the soul. Hence, on the scale of divine justice, which is just and fair, if on one side is placed all bodily creatures, namely gold and silver, pearls and elements, sun, moon and all the stars,

and on the other side one rational soul, the rational soul would weigh more in value than all the creatures. Authority: "For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Mt 16:26), as if he says, not enough. He profits little who loses his soul. If therefore for the redemption of one soul the whole world does not suffice, how much more for all souls? Therefore, there was no price sufficient but the blood of Christ, of infinite value, because of its union with divinity. Hence if on the scale of divine justice one side would be all souls, and on the other the least drop of the blood of Christ, the blood of Christ would weigh more in value than all the souls, because of its union with the divinity, nor would any other price able to be paid be sufficient. About this Scripture says, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled," (1 Pet 1:18-19). Note, "tradition of your fathers," that is of selling. Tell of how our father Adam sold himself and all of mankind for the price of one apple, although he was not bound of which he was to the species, and he himself had been made captive to the devil, his wife and consequently all his children, Authority: "For by whom a man is overcome," for example as in a duel, "of the same also he is the slave," (2 Pet 2:19). Thus, Adam and Eve consenting to sin handed themselves over to the devil. If therefore the slaves beget children, the children are also slaves.

But Christ comes, the best merchant from heaven to earth, knowing the value of souls, and he gives not an apple, nor gold, etc., but only his precious blood of inestimable value, which redeems us. Therefore, he says, "You have been redeemed," (Cf 1 Pet 1:18). Note "redeemed" [redempti], that is re-purchased [iterum empti]. Thus, it is a conclusion of theology that the least drop of the blood of Christ was a price sufficient and more so [superabundans] for redeeming a thousand worlds by virtue of its divinity and infinite charity.

Now think how many drops of blood Christ shed for us. First, while yet a baby in his circumcision. In the first drop he redeemed us. Again, in the second, etc. Second, on the night of his passion how many drops of blood did he shed. In Luke 22:44, "And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." Each drop would have been a sufficient

price. Third, when he was led off to the house of Pilate, etc. Fourth, when he was crowned with thorns, his whole head flowed blood. Fifth, when he was crucified in hands and feet, how many drops of blood were falling on the head of the Virgin Mary. Also, how many tears, how many drops of sweat, how many labors when he would go preaching. Thus, he does not say you have been bought, but you have been redeemed, that is bought many times over. Therefore, the Apostle [Paul]: "In whom we have redemption" he does not say purchase [emptionem], "through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which hath superabounded in us," (Eph 1:7-8). See the first reason why Christ is the Good Shepherd, because he buys his sheep at great price [pretiose].

Morally. [Moral sense]. Here one can ponder if the soul is of such great value, and Christ has paid such a price, how everyone ought to value his own soul. How is that man worthy of great reprehension who for some mundane usefulness, or for gaining some earthly good gives his soul to the devil by sinning mortally, because then the soul is sold to the devil for a cheap price of pride or avarice, and so for the other sins. Then the soul already purchased by Christ, you give away for such a vile price.

A story is told about the exceedingly rich merchant who in a transaction puts up all his money, and buys one precious pearl, and gives it to his wife, who places it in her purse, and a certain woman comes by carrying lettuce, and she gives it for some lettuce. Wouldn't you judge her to be stupid, or to have become so? Likewise, you would be in this or in such a stupidity. This merchant is Christ who came down from heaven to the marketplace and the everyday of this world, and bought a most precious pearl, namely the soul, for which he gave all his blood, and gave it to me and to you. The old woman passing by with the lettuce is temptation, saying: "O what a delight, etc." And when you consent to her, then you hand over the pearl to her, that is your soul. When temptation tempts you to vainglory, pride and so of the other sins, then you sell your soul. Or when for a little bribe you swear falsely. Others give [it away] for a little pleasure, like the lustful. Others for a meal or a jug of wine, like gluttons breaking the fast. Others for a little sleep, like the lazy [pigri] when they skip Mass, etc. So scripture says Deut 4: "Keep yourself therefore, and your soul carefully," (v. 9), namely, lest you return to the servitude to the devil. When the merchant returns, i.e. Christ in death, today or tomorrow, what would he say to you? See,

therefore, how sins must be avoided. The holy doctor Pope Leo says in his sermon on the Passion of the Lord, "Recognize, O Christian, your dignity, etc.

Keeps Carefully

Second, I say, Christ, the Good Shepherd, keeps his sheep carefully. You already see how every lord who has sheep on earth where there are wolves, keeps them well. So Christ does for the Christians lest they be devoured by the wolves of hell. About this he himself speaks in the second part of the gospel. "But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd," etc. until, "and mine know me," (Jn 10:12-14), where he states the difference between a true shepherd and the hireling.

12 But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep: 13 And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me.

Note how a lord who has sheep in the desert, has two custodians for the sheep, namely the shepherd and a dog against the raiding wolf. So Christ for the custody of his sheep provides two custodians, namely of pastoral ministers. The shepherds are the holy angels. Whence it is a teaching of sacred theology that everyone from the beginning of his birth has an angel commissioned for his protection. About this see Thomas [Aquinas] I, q. 113. Practically speaking. When a woman is about to give birth, Christ in heaven calls an Angel by name, because he has all names, saying, "I commit to you my son or daughter, keep them," etc. The infant as it is born is first received by the angel into the hands of the angel, that is in its keeping and care, and next to the midwife, however much she is present. From which it follows that a woman never gives birth without a midwife. Jerome says, about these words, "Their," i.e. of men, "angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven," (Mt 18:10). Here the Gloss of Jerome says: "How great is the dignity of souls, that each from the moment of their birth would have a good angel assigned to its care." Note, "each." No owner provides a shepherd for each of his sheep, but he commits 100 or 200 to one shepherd. But Christ loves souls so much that he gives to each their shepherd or keeper. See how he cares for his sheep. Think here, etc. If a king would have sheep like David had them in old

times, and the other kings, and would say to his soldiers and barons I commit to you these sheep of the desert, that you keep them, how indignant would he be, nor would he have any patience, and the holy angels of whom the least is greater than this Pope, King, or Emperor, would regard it as an honor for them, that God wished to commit creatures to them whom he made to his image and likeness, and redeemed by his blood and they would thank God. Nor would any angel desert the creature committed to him up until death, whom then, if he be perfect, he would lead to paradise, or to purgatory, or turn him over to the hands of the devils, if he be wicked and impenitent. Of this David, "For he hath given his angels charge over you; to keep you in all your ways," (Ps 90:11). Note, universally "in all," and through the sea and through land, etc.

Morally. You have hear the teaching, when you have some temptation, or occasion of sin, you should think repentance of the angel. No thief would steal when another person is watching, nor a lustful person commit a sin of lust. Think how the angel sees you always, etc. Again, Bernard, "In every corner, and every direction [diversorio] give reverence to the angel, and do not do in his presence what you would not do if I were present.

Second, Christ for keeping his sheep, provides dogs who hunt down the wolves of hell. The dogs are all who have the office of preaching. Demons are more afraid of and are more terrified by the clamor and barking of preaching, than wolves are of the barking of dogs. It is a greater dignity to be such a minister and watchdog – because it is the apostolic office on behalf of the flock of Christ – than to be a patriarch or prophet. Authority: Job in the person of Christ crucified, said, "But now the younger in time scorn me, whose fathers I would not have set with the dogs of my flock," (Job 30:1). Note, "But now," namely in the midst of the passion, "the younger in time scorn me," namely the Jews who were then were, "whose fathers," the patriarchs and prophets, "I would not have set with the dogs of my flock," namely with the apostles, because the apostles were of greater dignity, and the apostolic men, than the patriarchs and the prophets. Note therefore how great is the office of preaching, and with how much vigilance is it to be exercised by manly barking [viriliter latrando]. So David, in Ps 67:23-24, "The Lord said: I will turn them from Basan, I will turn them into the depth of the sea: That your foot may be dipped in the blood of your enemies; the tongue of your dogs be red with the same." Note, "The Lord

said: I will turn them," namely, sinners, "from Basan," i.e. from confusion. "I will turn them into the depth of the sea," i.e. by bitter contrition. And how does this happen? David replies, "That your foot," the body, "may be dipped in the blood," of the passion, "and the tongue of your dogs," of the preachers preaching of the passion of Christ, "of your enemies," supply the sheep are freed by him, namely by Christ, and not by virtue of the preaching.

Morally. Nowadays the dogs provided by Christ to keep the sheep, make peace with the wolves of hell. Therefore, the sheep are kept badly. Note here the parable of Aesop on the dogs and the wolves wishing to wage war. One old wolf who had seen and heard much said, I ask that before the battle you permit me to speak with the dogs. He said to the dogs, It will be a great evil for you to fight with us, because either you shall be conquered and [not] so good for you, or you will be victorious and if we die you shall lose your livelihood. With us dead they will no longer need you. Hearing this, the dogs changed their minds and made peace. The significance of this parable is good. The wolves are the demons; the dogs, the preachers, who ought to fight but make peace. For now, the preachers are not barking against the demons for the sake of keeping the flock, but as clergy are seen thus: they either have mistresses [familiarites], wealth, etc., and they preach the teachings of the poets and not of Christ. Thus, it is already true what Isaiah said: "All you beasts of the field come to devour, all you beasts of the forest. His watchmen are all blind, they are all ignorant: dumb dogs not able to bark, seeing vain things, sleeping and loving dreams. And meet impudent dogs, they never had enough: the shepherds themselves knew no understanding: all have turned aside into their own way, every one after his own gain, from the first even to the last," (Isa 56:9-11). Thus, the wolves, that is the demons, devour so many sheep.

If it is said, "It is a wonder that some sheep would perish, because they have a guardian angel," etc., I reply that God through the angels guards the sheep, but does not force free will. Christ commands, the angels however give counsel, and persuade but do not force; Christ as Lord and principal shepherd commands humility, and the angel induces you to the same, but you are so wicked and stubborn in your wickedness etc, that you do not wish to believe Christ commanding, nor the angel counseling, but you wish to act in a proud way and with pomp etc. The same of other virtues and their

opposite vices. Behold why the sheep of Christ are lost, because they prefer not to remain under the care or rule of the shepherd. So, David: "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost," (Ps 118:176).

Fed Abundantly

I say third, that the goodness of Christ the shepherd is shown in this that he feeds his sheep generously, namely in the sacrament of the altar. It is great when a lord permits his sheep to graze in his garden; greater still when at his table and of his own bread. Christ does more for his sheep, whom he permits to eat in his house, namely the church, and at his table, the altar, where he provides not bread, but his body as food, and his blood as drink, not one piece but his whole body. About this the gospel says, "As the Father knows me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep," (Jn 10:15). Here Gregory comments that he says this about the sacrament of the altar. Christ did what he admonishes, he shows what he commands. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, that he changes his body and blood into our sacrament, and he feeds the sheep which he has redeemed with the food of his flesh. About this pasture the prophecy of Ezekiel 34, Thus says the Lord, "I will feed [my sheep] in the mountains of Israel ... I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures, and their pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel," (Ez 34:13,14), namely in the three highest substances which are in the consecrated host. Hence the higher mountain or creature of the corporal world, and better is the body of Jesus Christ which is in the host. Christ said to the apostles at the last supper "Take and eat. This is my body," (Mat 26:24). The second highest mountain better and more excellent than all spiritual creatures is the soul of Christ, which is also there in the consecrated host through natural concomitance. The third highest mountain, because better and more excellent of all liquid substances is the blood of Christ, which is there through natural concomitance. Therefore, it is not given to you in the chalice. Also over all bodily and spiritual and liquid creatures is the divinity, which is entirely in the consecrated host. Behold what a haul [qualis bolus]. See why he said? "I will feed my sheep," etc., (Ez 34:15).

Morally. If therefore you wish to be with the angels in the pastures of paradise, receive communion each year at Easter, prepared well for you, otherwise you will not be received in paradise. A great reason is that he

who does not wish to receive Christ in his house will not be received by Christ in paradise. "Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you," (Jn 6:54). But he who receives communion, is received by Christ saying, "It is right, because you have received me, that I receive you into my house." "Well done, good and faithful servant," (Mt 25:21). Note that just as Christ should be received sacramentally each year, so he ought to be received spiritually on each Sunday at Mass. The priest receives him sacramentally, and the whole people ought to receive him spiritually. Thus the priest says in receiving communion, "Refreshed by the heavenly food and drink," etc.

Observing four conditions you should receive Christ at mass spiritually. On Sunday, you first should not drink, 1 Cor 11: "When you come together to eat, wait for one another," namely you should not drink when, etc. Second that you should have been to confession, because when man has invited, always he should have hands washed. David, "We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Go into his gates, "with praise [in confession]," (Ps 99:3-4). He doesn't say it in the epistle or in the gospel. Third, you should not talk in church. "For thus says the Lord God the Holy One of Israel: If you return and be quiet, you shall be saved: in silence and in hope shall your strength be." (Isa 30:15). Note "if you return," namely from your labors and temporal businesses. Fourth, you shouldn't leave until the blessing is given, according to that of Deut. 32, "Give magnificence to our God. The works of God are perfect."

Keeps Safe

Fourth, I say that Christ like a good shepherd keeps his sheep safe. Just as a shepherd gathers his sheep into a secure place, etc, so does Christ. About this the fourth part of the gospel: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold," (Jn 10:16), to the end. Thus, good people I see that you who have sheep in pastures on the mountain, when night comes, you put them in some sheepfold, lest the wolves eat them. So, Jesus does with us. When evening comes – the day of our death, Jesus gathers souls into paradise, if they have lived well, lest the wolf, that is the devil devour them. And Christ speaks to the angels saying, "Other sheep I have," men and women, and it is necessary to lead them to me, namely through innocence, or through obedience, or through penitence. The sheepfold, or place of these sheep

where in the night of death they might rest most securely is the empyreal heaven, namely the society of the angels, and they make up "one fold and one shepherd," (v. 16).

B189. Sermon on the Ascension

Acts 1:9-11 Douay translation

9 And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. 11 Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven.

"While they looked on, he was raised up..." (Acts 1:9)

This text is found in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1 and it is offered in today's Epistle. Today is the solemnity of the wonderful Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, when, having completed the work of our redemption, he ascended from this world into heaven openly before the Virgin Mary and the apostles and disciples. Our sermon will be about this blessed Ascension. But first let us hail the Virgin Mary

For the fundamental declaration of this text and the introduction of the material it must be known that our Lord Jesus Christ in the life which he had in this world, observed such an order and manner of living in his works that some works he chose to do secretly and hidden, others publicly and openly, and this for two reasons.

First, for our instruction, that we might do our good works in secret so as to flee vainglory, like a man hides his treasure, so good works ought to be hidden. Authority: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise, you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven," (Mt 6:1).

The second reason is that God the Father be praised and blessed by those [deeds] which he did publicly and openly. We are instructed that the good which we do publicly, like preaching or celebrating and others which cannot happen secretly, be for the praise and honor and glory of God. Therefore, he himself said, "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven," (Mt

5:16). See why Christ in his life did some works secretly and hidden, and some publicly and openly.

For example, the first work which Christ did in this world for our redemption was his blessed incarnation in the womb of the Virgin, like the seed which is formed within the apple [avellanam] which is hidden, because no human person but the Virgin Mary knew, according to the prophecy of David, "He shall come down like rain upon the fleece; and as showers falling gently upon the earth," so says the Psalmist in Ps 71:6: "Give to the king thy judgment, O God," (v. 2).

The second work was his birth, and this was public and manifest, because Christ wished to be born in a village [vico], that all might see him. The angels sang in the air and the animals adored him in the manger, the star led the kings immediately, and night seemed as day, according to the prophecy, "The people who walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen," (Isa 9:2).

The third work was the work of his everyday life, some of his works were hidden and some manifest. He lived about thirty years at home with Joseph and the Virgin Mary his mother. He was not working miracles, nor was his divinity known, although all people knew him to be a chaste man, holy and good, but not all considered him to be the Lord, because his divinity was hidden, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "Truly you are a hidden God, the God of Israel the savior," (Isa 45:15).

But in his baptism he wished to be public and manifest, for the heaven was seen to be open and the Holy Spirit in the image of a dove descended on him, and a voice of the Father sounded saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17). Then John started to say "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world," (Jn 1:29).

Then he immediately went into the desert and experienced a Lent, neither eating nor drinking anything in those forty days. And this work was a secret work giving to us the example of doing secretly penance, fasting, prayers, almsgivings and such.

Finally, he left the desert and began publicly to preach to the whole people. So he said before Annas, "I have spoken openly to the world: I have always

taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing," (Jn 18:20).

Another work was hidden, namely his transfiguration in which he revealed his divinity. This he wished to be secret, because none of the disciples were there but Peter, James and John whom he commanded, "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead," (Mt 17:9).

Another work he wished to be public, namely the working of miracles, curing the sick, raising the dead. Therefore, he himself said, "The works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me," (Jn 5:36).

Another hidden work was the Sacrament of the Altar. About which he said, "For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed," (Jn 6:56). But his sorrowful passion was a public work, according to the prophecy, speaking in the person of Christ, "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow," (Lam 1:12).

Another hidden work was his glorious Resurrection, because neither the Virgin Mary, nor others saw him rising.

But immediately there followed a public and manifest work, namely his glorious Ascension, because the Virgin Mary and seventy disciples, the apostles and holy women, in all there were about 120, and all saw him ascend. Therefore, he said, "I go to him that sent me, and none of you asks me: Where are you going? " (Jn 16:5) About which the Gloss of Bede says: "As if openly he said "I return by ascending to him who constituted me to be incarnated, and it shall be so clear the brightness of his Ascension, that none of you will find it necessary to ask where are you going, because to all witnessing, I shall go to heaven.

And this is our theme, "While they looked on," namely the Virgin Mary, the apostles and disciples, to the eyes of the public and openly, "he was raised up.," (Acts 1:9). See how the first work of our redemption was secret and hidden and the last, public and manifest. Of the middle works, some were hidden and some manifest.

About this glorious Ascension I wish now to preach to you three points, in which the entire matter of this feast is found:

- First is the theological reason why this Ascension was expedient.
- Second the historical details, how it was fitting.
- Third is the ultimate utility, which resulted from this Ascension.

Theological Reason

The first theological reason why the Ascension of Christ was expedient is founded in this rule of philosophy saying. "Everything ardently loved draws to itself the heart and thoughts of the one loving." Just as the vapors of the earth are drawn up by the heat of the sun, and similarly the flame in a lamp gradually draws to itself all the oil, so a person ardently loved draws the one loving to themselves for thinking about them in his heart, for speaking [with] the mouth, for seeing [with] the eye, because such is the nature of love.

Although this be true, nevertheless I shall give you the authority of Christ saying, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," (Lk 12:34). Because the apostles and the other disciples most ardently loved the bodily presence of Christ – and no wonder, because he was overwhelmingly lovely because of the sweetness of his words and of gracious conversation and in other ways – therefore, as long as Christ was on earth, many were impeded from the delight in and reception of heavenly goods. They didn't bother to elevate their heart or desire to heaven. Christ said, "I shall make you raise your heart, and understanding, and your thoughts, on high, because I shall ascend to heaven." Therefore after the Ascension, their whole heart and desire and thoughts were raised on high.

See now the reason why it was expedient, not only for the apostles and disciples, but also for us, that he ascended, because no one would have cared about heaven, but rather where [on earth] Christ would have been. He himself gives this reason saying to the apostles, who were weeping over his departure, "But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you," (Jn 16:7). About which the Gloss of Bede says: "It is expedient for you that the form of the servant be withdrawn from your sight, to the extent that the love of divinity might

more acutely be imprinted on your hearts." It is clear the reason for this blessed Ascension.

Morally [Moral sense of scripture] We have here a case of arguing from the minor premise, [*per locum a minori*]. If the Apostles are impeded from the reception of spiritual graces because of their love of Christ, what shall it be for us miserable ones, who do not so ardently love Christ like the apostles, but rather the transitory goods of this world, namely, riches, honors, offices, dignities, delights of the flesh, which do not permit us to elevate our understanding on high, but lower in earthly business? See how we are impeded from the reception of spiritual blessings and graces. For this reason the goods of this world ought to be loved with the salt of temperance [*cum sale temperantiae*], that is to say, the riches of this world should be loved in such a way so that because of them we don't lose the incorruptible riches of paradise, which never fail. The same for honors, so from love of them we don't lose the honors of paradise. O what an honor it is to be in the company of the holy angels and archangels, and more, and to be with the patriarchs, etc. The same for offices and dignities. The same for the delights of this world, so from the delights of beasts we don't lose the delights and honors and delectations of angels and saints. If you have a good wife, or if a woman, have a good husband, you ought to love them moderately, lest from love of them the love of God in your heart might be diminished. Same for the love of children and so of all the rest. Authority: "Love not the world," supply 'too much,' "nor the things which are in the world... For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh," see here the sin of lust, "and the concupiscence of the eyes," see here the sin of avarice, "and the pride of life," see here the sin of pride from honors, offices, etc., (1 Jn 2:15-16).

Historical Details

As to the second point, namely the historical details, how was the Ascension fitting? We know the reason why he ascended; we shall now see how he ascended. After the resurrection he did not wish to ascend to heaven immediately, but he wished to remain in the world for forty days, that he might prove his resurrection through many arguments, and that he might instruct and teach the Apostles. And on the fortieth day after his resurrection, he wished to ascend to heaven.

For this reason, today he appeared twice to the Apostles. Of the first apparition the gospel speaks. Of the second, today's epistle. Jesus, "appeared to the eleven [disciples] as they were at table," (Mk 16:14), greeting them in his usual way saying "Peace be to you." And he told them that today he wished to ascend to heaven, by which he completed the whole work of our redemption. Hearing this, the apostles began to weep. Christ said, "If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father," (Jn 14:28). "Lord, we rejoice at your honor, but we are saddened, because you leave us orphans. Because of our sadness we are unable to eat. So out of love of them Christ ate, so that they might eat. "And eating together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father," (Acts 1:4).

They all got up from the table and in procession went out to the Mount of Olives according to what Jesus said. This is the reason why this procession is held in many places. When they had arrived on the Mount, Christ visibly appeared to them and saluted his mother and all the others saying that he wished to ascend to heaven to the Father.

The Virgin Mary who sensed the presence of the saints who were to ascend with Christ said to her son with tears that if he pleased, she would ascend with him. Christ drying her tears said, "Blessed Mother, you shall remain in my place. You shall comfort my apostles. And because of the wisdom which I shall give you, you will destroy heresies which arise. Because of this it is said of the Virgin Mary, "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, you alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world," (Antiphon, Little Office of the B.V.M.).

And the apostles asked that they might ascend with him, lest he leave them orphans. He said, "Going therefore, teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," (Mt 28:19-20). "I will not leave you orphans," (Jn 14:18), "Behold I am with you," namely in the Sacrament of the Altar, "all days, even to the consummation of the world," (Mt 28:20).

Finally Mary Magdalen said to him, "O Lord, I was a great baroness, and now I am a pauper. Therefore, please, may I ascend with you." And Christ

said, "You shall be the companion of my mother."

When Jesus was raised off the ground, and began to ascend, the apostles "asked him, saying: Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). "Lord, will you come quickly to give the reign to Israel?" Christ responded, "It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father has put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem," (Acts 1:7-8). Note, "It is not for you to know" the definite day of judgment, but we can say definitely soon, very soon.

When he was already ascending, they looked up at him and said, "Lord, give us a blessing." "And lifting up his hands, he blessed them," (Lk 24:50), just as the priest after mass gives a blessing to the people.

Then "a cloud received him out of their sight," (Acts 1:9), not that he needed that to ascend, but to show that every creature is subject to him. David said of God the Father, "You have subjected all things under his feet," (Ps 8:8). When however, Christ was in heaven – he ascended quickly – because the apostles no longer could see him, he sent two angels to the apostles still gazing up to heaven, who said to them, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven," (Acts 1:11).

Behold the historical details, how this blessed Ascension was fitting, and how he ascended and sits at the right hand of God, and that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and elevated, and his train filled the temple," (Isa 6:1). Then the apostles and disciples, "adoring went back into Jerusalem with great joy. And they were always in the temple, praising and blessing God," (Lk 24:52-53).

Morally. Here, when it is said "adoring, etc.," we have an example and a moral instruction about going to church and keeping the feast days with joy, closing our temporal businesses, as Christ rested on the day of resurrection. And they [the feasts] are kept perfectly, as it is hinted when it is said "they were always in the temple," that is perfectly. Indeed, your goods grow more from observing a feast well, than from your labors. Third, they are kept

with a devout mind, when it is said "praising and blessing God," namely with silence hearing mass, [A canonical reference follows from Boniface VIII's Liber Sextus, Book 3, title 23, chapter 2] *Extravagantes, de immuni, eccles. libr. 6, decret.*: "Let there be at church humble and devout entries, let quiet conversation [*quieta conversatio*] happen in them, pleasing to God, tranquil for onlookers, etc." This is said against those talking in church, etc.

Ultimate Utility

As to the third point, namely the ultimate utility resulting from this, from the Ascension, this utility or fruit he himself declared saying, "In my Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you: because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself," (Jn 14:2-3). See here the ultimate utility resulting.

Note the many mansions are the nine orders of angels, which John calls "streets [plateas]." "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass," (Rev 21:21).

The first order or first street immediately upon entry [to the heavenly Jerusalem] is that of the holy angels, the second of the archangels, third of the principalities, fourth of the powers, fifth of the virtues, sixth of the dominations, seventh of the thrones, eighth of the Cherubim, and ninth of the Seraphim.

Christ has prepared these mansions. Therefore, he said, "I go to prepare a place for you," (Jn 14:2). Note the great humility of Christ. Kings most often send out nuncios and shield bearers to prepare the place, but Christ the king of glory wished to go himself to prepare a place for us. There can here be an argument to the contrary. Since Christ said, "Come, you blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," (Mt 25:34), how can he then say, "I go to prepare a place for you"?

I respond that this can be understood in two ways, namely either through individual distinction or through real possession. As to the first, it has already been prepared from the creation of the world, according to the

authority of Mt 25, "Come, ye blessed..." In the second way, namely through real possession he prepares today according to the real distribution of saints, who with Christ ascended into the orders of angels according to the merits of each, because no one entered heaven till today, i.e. before the Ascension of Christ.

- Practically speaking when he was in heaven with the holy fathers, so many thousands gathered in the first street [stage], that of the angels. There he gathered those who in this world served him in penance, each in his own chair. The name of each was already written there, and to each was given their crown on their head.
- In the order of archangels he gathered those who served him in spiritual works.
- In the third order, of the principalities, he gathered those who served him in works of mercy.
- In the fourth order, of powers, those who served him in great patience in adversities.
- In the fifth order, of virtues, those who served him in patience, not having ill will toward anyone. etc.
- In the sixth order, of dominations, he gathered the worldly leaders, rulers and judges, who with great justice ruled communities, etc.
- In the seventh order, of the thrones, those who for love of him embraced a life of poverty [vitam pauperem].
- In the eighth order, the Cherubim, the contemplatives, who had divine wisdom.
- In the ninth order, of the Seraphim, those burning with charity for love of God.

See how we understand, "I go to prepare a place for you, " with respect to real possession. Christ sits by himself over all orders of angels on the right, and is seen clearly by all. So the third point, and consequently the whole sermon is clear. Thanks be to God, etc.

B247. First Sermon on Pentecost

Acts 2:1-4 Douay translation.

1 And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:4) Today's entire solemnity is about the coming of the Holy Spirit, who visibly, in the form of fire, descended from heaven on the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ. Our sermon today shall be about this. And, God willing, we will have many teachings for the illumination of your understanding and for the instruction of life. Let us "Hail" the Virgin Mary etc.

The common doctrine is clear from the text of the Gospels, because the apostles and disciples before the passion of Christ and the resurrection, did not have the fullness of the Holy Spirit although they had him for the plentitude of grace and for the perfection of the spirit, and yet in many ways they were defective. And although Christ could have given them the Holy Spirit perfectly for the fullness of grace, nevertheless he preferred not to give it to them before his passion and resurrection. The reason is that there would be preserved a conformity between the proper and natural body of Christ, and his appropriated and figurative body. The proper and natural body of Christ is that which he received in the womb of the Virgin, united to his divinity, about which scripture speaks. "Who his own self bore our sins in his body on the tree," namely his proper and natural body, (1 Pet. 2:24). The appropriated and figurative body of Christ is the Church. because it was entirely in the apostles and disciples of Christ of whose body Christ himself is the head. Authority. "And he has made him head over all the Church, which is his body," (Eph. 1:22).

Now it is certain that before the resurrection of Christ in his own natural body there were many defects – not moral but natural defects – therefore to preserve the proportion in the figurative and mystical body of Christ, before his resurrection, there were many moral defects. But after the resurrection

of Christ, when his natural body was free of all defects of natural passions, it is fitting that his mystical body and figurative body would also have the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And this reason John touches upon when he says, "For as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified," (Jn 7:39). But today, they receive the Holy Spirit for the plenitude of grace and spiritual perfections. About this our theme speaks: "Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." It does not say they accepted the Holy Spirit, because already they had accepted him through sanctifying [*gratificantem*] grace. But "they were filled" which is to say that they were filled again, just as John 3, "reborn" and also "filled" that is filled again.

I find that after the resurrection of Christ, the apostles and disciples received the Holy Spirit in three "fullnesses":

- First with the fullness of intellectual knowledge.
- Second with the fullness of spiritual power.
- And third with the fullness of universal eloquence.

But today's reception was greater, therefore the theme says: "All were filled."

First of all, they were plain, simple and ignorant people. But after the resurrection, understanding filled them with intellectual knowledge so clearly that they would understand the scriptures, saying to them it is necessary, "that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures," (Lk 24:44f). Of this fullness we're able to say they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, intellectually.

Secondly, they received it with the fullness of spiritual power. Because a presider or legate of the pope needs great power. So, the apostles who were sent by the "pope" Jesus." For Christ, therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us," (2 Cor 5:20). It is necessary therefore for them to have spiritual power. See how he gave them this power after the resurrection, saying to them, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," (Jn 20:21-23).

And why did he breathe on them? I say to show the authority of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit proceeds from him. Just as breath proceeds from the breather, so the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son. And of this fullness we can say speaks to the theme, namely, "They were filled with the Holy Spirit," (Acts 2:4), and spiritual power, because then the promise was fulfilled which Christ made before his passion saying, "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven," (Mt 18:18).

Third they received the Holy Spirit with the fullness of universal eloquence. And this grace they received today. About which the theme says "They all were filled with the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak with diverse tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak," (Acts 2:4). The theme is clear and we are now in the aforesaid material.

Now I go to practical things which I shall declare through four necessary dispositions for receiving the Holy Spirit with a fullness of grace.

- First, is bodily abstinence,
- Second, is affective prayer,
- Third is fraternal concord, and
- Fourth is doctrinal listening.

All these dispositions, each and every one, the apostles and disciples of Christ had, on account of which the theme says: "They were filled etc."

Abstinence

The first proper and necessary disposition for receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit is corporal abstinence from excessive food, drink, sleeping, speaking, laughing, delights in looking at women or men, and conversations with people. Such abstinence is the proper and necessary disposition for receiving the Holy Spirit. This I explain through this story. If branches are green or soaking wet, and are thrown into the fire they will not burn, at least until the wood becomes dried out. Drying of wood necessarily precedes burning. And so of you. Persons dissolute in food and drink etc., are like green wood. How dissolute and green you are! If therefore you wish that the fire of the Holy Spirit to be inflamed and burning in you it is necessary

that you be dry, and don't eat so often and drink so often, or sleep so much and so with the rest. Abstain, keep yourself from worldly things, from corporeal pleasures and the like and then the fires of the Holy Spirit will burn in you. Authority: A great battlefield was shown to the prophet Ezekiel, covered with dry bones, of which bones the prophet, speaking from the word of God, says, "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." The Lord says this to these bones: "Behold, I will send spirit into you and you shall live," (Ez 37:5). Dry bones are those persons abstaining from delights and vices and business. Into these God sends the Holy Spirit. It is clear therefore that abstinence is a proper and necessary disposition for obtaining the grace of the Holy Spirit.

I say that the apostles and disciples of Christ have it through this. For from the day of the ascension up to today they fasted and they abstained not only from food and drink but also from delights and business, knowing that abstinence was necessary. This we have from the three evangelists who say that the Pharisees came to Christ saying, "Master," and Christ, "What do you wish." "Tell us," he says, "why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (Mk 2:18). And Christ responds "Can the children of the marriage fast as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them. And then they shall fast, in those days," (Mk 2:19-20). From this text we have it that the apostles, from the ascension of Christ, because then he was taken away, then the bridegroom was taken from them, until today they fasted from food and drink and business, etc. Let this be the reason. If abstinence then is so necessary for having the Holy Spirit, and the apostles did this, what shall we say? They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, because today the fire of the Holy Spirit descended on them and set them afire.

Devout Prayer

The second very necessary disposition is affective or devout prayer, because some people pray in a way which properly speaking is not called prayer. They make certain recitations, when they are all dressed up, and women when they are all decorated. Such things properly are not called prayers. But affective prayers is when a man, on bended knees, raising his hands to

heaven, and with eyes and heart, just as one might plead before a pope or a king. Think that you were seeing Christ, in the cathedral of glory, and you were frightened, and then terror comes in your heart and you begin your prayer. This is the good and necessary disposition for receiving the Holy Spirit.

This is explained by comparison to breathing. He who breathes a breath from a warm mouth etc. and afterwards there is sensed fresh air. Devout prayer is breath warmed through devotion and moistened, when God gives tears to your prayer. Thus, the fresh breath of the Holy Spirit is experienced, because from his power he refreshes the soul against the fevers of sin, avarice and lust, etc. Authority: "I opened my mouth and breathed the spirit [*attraxi spiritum*]," (Ps 118:131) namely, in fervent prayer." Now the apostles and disciples of Christ, knowing that this disposition was necessary, from the day of the ascension, prayed fervently each day and night until today. Authority: Acts 1: "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus," (Acts 1:14).

Now we find here a good and subtle question about predestination. Some would say, "Did not Christ promise and ordain and infallibly predestine the sending of the Holy Spirit to the apostles? Why is it necessary for them to seek and to pray that he send it?" This question many people ask, saying, "If God has predestined me to be saved, why is it necessary that I struggle and do penance, because whatever God has ordained, that will happen?"

I respond and I say that God predestined, ordained and promised to send the Holy Spirit to his apostles and disciples. Nevertheless, it was necessary that they pray and ask for the Spirit. Therefore, can the promise fail? I say no. But although God has promised, nevertheless it requires a disposition.

For example, if the pope promises some balsam oil or chrism which are precious liquids, and you come to receive the balsam with a dirty jug, filled with leftover waste, the pope wouldn't give it to you. Because with the promise it is expected that there should be due preparation of the containers. And so when the Jesus "pope" promised the apostles the Holy Spirit, he said I promise to fill your vessels of conscience, of memory, of intellects and wills with the balsam of the Holy Spirit. On this account the apostles should

wash their consciences by abstaining, by praying etc. It is the same with predestination.

All those predestined are written already in the white book in gold letters. Not only is it written there that Peter or John or Magdalen shall be saved, but even the work through which they shall be saved, namely, because he was baptized, or he was merciful and patient and chaste etc. So also, with those predestined to be damned. All have been written in the black book. And not only is it written that such and such a person shall be damned, but also the works for which they are damned, because he was a sinner, proud, avaricious, lustful or vengeful, and finally, because he was impenitent. If therefore the foreknown and damned give up those works, the effect of their damnation shall not follow. Because it is so ordained that such an effect of damnation or of salvation follows from such works. This is the reason why the apostles were praying, although Christ's promise to them was certain. And so they said "Let us prepare because otherwise he will not send it to us." Gregory: "This predestination to the eternal kingdom is so disposed by the omnipotence of God that those chosen for this, by their labor, arrive, that by praying they might merit to receive what the omnipotent God, before the ages, has disposed to give to them."

Concord

The third necessary condition is fraternal concord; not to have any rancor, hatred, ill will or desire of revenge towards your neighbor. Because the Holy Spirit does not dwell in a town or a divided community. And there is a natural reason for this, because just as the human spirit requires the connection of the members for the life that it gives to the body, – because if the members are divided, the head is by itself and the feet and the hands, and the other parts, the spirit departs. It does not remain with the other divided member – so it is with the Holy Spirit. Think how the whole community is one body and it has many members, diverse members, like a human body. The eyes are the speculative part, the men of knowledge; the ears are the judges and the lords who have to hear justice; the noses are the devout filled with the odor of Christ and the saints; the mouth are the priests who prepare the sacrament of the Eucharist, by which all its members are fed and nourished, etc. The arms are the soldiers who defend the whole body, the workers are those who sustain the whole like the feet; the head is

Christ, "Whereas in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ," (Rom 12:4). And as long as we are united and joined in good peace and concord, – when the nobles have love for the commoners, the commoners honor the nobles, the clergy get along with the laity and vice versa, a husband with his wife and vice versa, the father with his son, and the son with the father – as long as that happens, the Holy Spirit vivifies the body of the community. But if the members are divided through injuries and resentments, etc. the Holy Spirit immediately departs. Authority: "These are they, who separate themselves, sensual men, having not the Spirit," (Jude 1:19). It is clear therefore that fraternal concord is necessary. This the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ had.

There had been discord and division between them, between the apostles; John and James on the one hand and the others, because their mother at one time had spoken to Christ about them. "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one at thy right hand and the other at thy left, in thy kingdom," (Mt 20:21). And the ten hearing this were indignant with the two brothers. Again, think how they sought pardon. And devoutly and reasonably, it is believed, that for the good and concord of them all, that James and John asked pardon of the others for their presumption and their preference which they had sought.

Secondly there was the discord among the apostles between themselves over which one of them was greater in the kingdom of heaven. As is clear in Luke 22:24ff. Think how, in these days, reconciling, they asked pardon.

Third between Thomas the apostle on the one hand and the others, because Thomas was stubborn and would not believe the other apostles telling him that Christ had risen. Think how he sought pardon of them for his stubbornness of heart, (Cf. Jn 20:24ff).

And again, between Magdalen and the other Marys, and the apostles, who when they told the apostles that Christ had risen, that they had seen him before the others, these words were judged to be hallucinations and they didn't believe them. Lk 24: "And these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them," (Lk 24:11). And they asked pardon of the women.

Think therefore, how the apostles and especially Thomas the Apostle asked pardon of the Virgin Mary, who, when she told them that her Son had risen from the dead and appeared to her, didn't believe her.

And so at the ascension Christ scolded them. As is clear in the last chapter of Mark: "At length he appeared to the eleven as they were at table and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again," (Mk 16:14).

So in these days he made peace with them: Text: "And when the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together, i.e. reconciled, in the same place" (Acts 2:1). If therefore today you wish to receive the Holy Spirit, make peace, in the example of the apostles, because otherwise you are not able to receive it. Authority: "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man can see God, looking diligently lest any man be wanting to the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up, do hinder," (Heb 12:14). Note: Peace of holiness is the peace which is good and true according to God, because other peace is evil, as the peace between sinners, thieves, and murderers etc.

Doctrinal Hearing

The fourth very necessary disposition for receiving the Holy Spirit is doctrinal hearing, to hear freely the word of God. I don't say the word of Ovid, Terence, Virgil and the others, because how can they or whoever does not have the Holy Spirit, give it to you? It is made clear by the image of flint which struck by steel shoots fire. Rightly it is so regarding preaching. The flint stone is Christ. Christ is also the rock, [...and the rock was Christ, (1 Cor 10:4)]. The steel or brass is the tongue of the preacher. Authority "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you," (Mt 10:20). Charcoal [*materia nigra*] is the people who are black from sin. They are ignited by the fire of the Holy Spirit, when in the first or second or third sermon the proud man, the vain, the pompous one, is humbled, and decides to live simply. Now the person is ignited with the fire of the Holy Spirit and so with the other sins. Authority: "While Peter was

yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word," (Acts 10:44).

The apostles experienced that doctrinal hearing of the word of God, because every day since the day of the ascension they had a sermon. If it is asked "Who preached?" I say that the Virgin Mary, whom Christ left behind in his place as teacher and master. "For it is she that teaches the knowledge of God, and is the chooser of his works," (Wis 8:4).

Before his ascension Christ promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles saying: "It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment," (Jn 16:7-8), but he did not tell them when, neither the day nor the hour. There was another promise on the day of the ascension, when he was on the Mount of Olives and about to ascend, he said, "For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence," (Acts 1:5).

The apostles, not knowing the specific day of this promise, on the day of the ascension, and on Friday, the next day and on Saturday were waiting, believing that on these days he would send the Holy Spirit. But when these three days passed, seeing that Christ had not sent them the Holy Spirit, they began to be saddened and to say to one another, "O when shall he send it?"

One of them responded, "Do not doubt, because tomorrow, which is Sunday he will send it. The reason which leads me to this conclusion is that on such a day God formed the light and divided light from darkness. So, it is reasonable that on such a day he would send us the light of the Holy Spirit. And Sunday came and he did not send the Spirit, and they wondered.

Another said, on Monday he will send the Spirit, because on that day he made the firmament, and he divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament, and therefore he shall come on such a day, because we need the firmament of courage, to divide the waters of virtue from the waters of vice. And he did not come.

Another said on Tuesday he will come, or the Spirit will be sent, because on that day God produced the plants for bearing fruit, therefore on such a day

he would send the Spirit, so we can plant the catholic faith that it might be able to bear fruit. And he did not come to those awaiting.

Another said on Wednesday the Spirit will be sent. The reason is because on such a day God formed the sun, the moon and the planets, so on such a day he would send the Spirit that he might create in us the sun of charity, the moon of hope, the stars of the virtues. And he did not come. Think how confused and saddened they were.

Another said on Thursday the Spirit would come, because on that day he ascended from our sight. So, on such a day he will comfort us. And he did not come.

Another said on Friday. Because on that day he had suffered, and we have the sorrows of his passion, and so on such a day we deserve that he would give the comforting Holy Spirit. And he did not come.

Another said on Saturday he shall come, because on that day we were dispersed, so that no one stayed with another. Thus today, so that we might be united together. Seeing however that Saturday passed and he had not come, and now that their calculations of the days had failed and since they were afraid of the Jews, the text says, "The disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews," (Jn 20:19), think how with good reason they were sad and desolate.

And so today, they were gathered together at the door of the room of the Virgin Mary, awaiting for her to come out as she usually did. The Virgin however had arisen in the middle of the night, according to scripture, "I rose at midnight to give praise to thee," (Ps 118:62), and she was praying her office.

When finally the Virgin Mary came out of her room and saw all the apostles and disciples weeping she said to them, "What is this my sons? Why are you weeping? Because my Son now reigns in heaven." And they said to her, "Our Blessed Mother, your Son promised to send the Holy Spirit to us, saying, 'I will not leave you orphans among the Jews' but now ten days have passed since he ascended and he has not yet sent us the Holy Spirit." The Virgin Mary replied, "Don't you doubt my children, because my Son does not have the limiting condition of ordinary men, who in poverty

recognize their friends, and when they are prosperous and honored, they no longer care or even remember them. But I shall give you the reason why he has not yet sent the Spirit. Are you unaware that when God delivered the people of Israel from captivity in Egypt, he descended on the fiftieth day in the form of fire on Mount Sinai to give the law?" And the apostles said, "Blessed Virgin, we know this well." And the Virgin replied, "This was a figure, that my Son on the day of his resurrection delivered from the captivity of hell all those believing in him and obedient to him. Today is the fiftieth day from the resurrection of my Son. So he will send the Holy Spirit now. So turn yourselves, all, to devout prayer, because that which has been ordained by God, is accomplished by prayers and devout orations."

Then Peter the Apostle, praying with the other apostles gathered at one side of the room said, "Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels." David had recorded it in Ps 50: 12.

Lazarus, with the other seventy-two disciples, on their knees on the other side were saying, "And who shall know your thought, unless you give wisdom, and send your Holy Spirit from above. And so the ways of them who are upon earth may be corrected, and men may learn the things that please you? For by wisdom they were healed, whosoever have pleased you, O Lord, from the beginning," (Wis 9: 17-19).

Mary Magdalen and the other holy women, on bended knees praying were saying, "Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit," (Ps 50: 14).

Finally the apostles said to the Virgin Mary, "Blessed Virgin, you too pray, because your Son hears you immediately." And it was then the third hour [about 9 am].

Then the Virgin, kneeling, prayed saying, "You shall send forth your spirit, and they shall be created: and you shall renew the face of the earth," (Ps 103: 30). Note: "and they shall be created," namely the virtues, infused graces, gifts and the perfections, and "you shall renew the face of the earth," namely through the preaching of your apostles and disciples.

When the Virgin Mary completed her prayer, suddenly there was from the heaven a great sound, like thunder, not earthly thunder, but delightful, as if

a voice responding to the Virgin Mary. This was heard only by those who were in Jerusalem. And suddenly, like a wind it descended from heaven, and that sound filled the whole house where the apostles were, and the whole house was filled with fire.

People came running toward the sound and they beheld the bright fire through the windows, but that fire was not burning but lighting things up, and they saw white smoke like the smoke from incense, and that fire divided itself into tongues which sat on each of them, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," (Acts 2: 4).

Thus, was fulfilled the prophecy of Joel: "Moreover upon my servants and handmaids in those days I will pour forth my spirit. And I will show wonders in heaven; and in earth, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood: before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass, that everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," (Joel 2:29-32). Note: "And I will show wonders in heaven," because at that time the sky above Jerusalem was seen to appear bloody, reminding that by the merit of the passion of Christ the Holy Spirit was sent to the apostles and disciples. And bright fire appeared on earth, which could be seen by all in the house where the apostles were. And the vapors of smoke like the smoke of incense, etc.

B255. Second Sermon on Pentecost

John 14:27-29 Douay transl.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. 28 You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I.

" Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," (Jn 14:27).

If you wish to think and diligently ponder the whole life of Christ from its beginning, from his birth up to the passion, among other virtues, he especially preached and wished there to be peace among Christians. And it can be stated such, he, at his birth wanted the angels to sing a new song, as is the custom of dominions, namely "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.," (Lk 2:14). In which it is shown how pleasing peace is to him.

If we look to his public life, when he was an adult and going about preaching and he entered the cities, towns, castles and homes, his manner greeting, and also his disciples', was to say "Peace be with you," as is stated by the evangelists. He does not just say "Good health!", or "Good day!", but "Peace!", in which is found all good. To the apostles and disciples and to others following him he said "Have peace among you," (Mk 9:49). Also, when he wished to send his disciples to preach, he said to them: "And when you come into a house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house," (Mt 10:12). On the night of the passion, about to leave his disciples, he wished them peace as his legacy. So, the theme says: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," etc. If one of the apostles had said to him, "Lord, when some lord dies, he leaves something to his own," etc., "also when a father dies, he leaves an inheritance to his children. Therefore you, who now wish to die for our salvation, etc, leave something for us." He replies, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Clearly, it is our sermon's theme.

Now I intend to explain what peace this is, and in what does it consist. I have come to see that it is threefold. First is ethical peace: personal, in oneself. Second, economic, i.e. domestic peace. Third is political peace, universal. The words are from the philosophers, and about this the theme says "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," etc.

Personal Peace

First, I say, is when a man has peace with himself, when the soul and body, spirit and flesh are in harmony. This is indeed difficult, to reconcile those two enemies, between which naturally there is war, for what one wants, displeases the other. Do you wish to understand how great this war is? Did you ever see someone tortured, stretched up by a rope, dragged down by a weight? Isn't that a great punishment or war? Each of us has such a war. The soul insofar as its nature is spiritual draws us upward. It wishes to contemplate, etc. But the weight of the flesh draws us down to worldly pleasures, delights and corruptions. About this war scripture says, "For the flesh lusts against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh," (Gal 5:17).

We need to see how we can make peace in this war. I say that it can happen in two ways, either that the soul humiliates itself and yields to the flesh and to all its pleasures, or the opposite. The first way is bad and reprobated. It is against God and reason and nature. It is as if a noble and generous lady would be at war against her maid, a servant, vile and unclean, and to establish peace that the lady were to subject herself to the servant in all things. This is wicked. So, Bernard says "It is not fitting that the lady be made a servant, nor that the servant be in charge." It's the same with a noble and generous soul of spiritual substance, if it would be subject to its fleshly servant. Such peace would not be good, because it is not fitting that the lady be made a servant.

Therefore, it is necessary that this peace happen the other way round, that the flesh, like a servant be humbled and subjected to the lady, the soul. This happens when a person by fasting, vigils and other hardships [*asperitatibus*] humbles the flesh, because the flesh like the slave resists the lady, but when it is wearied enough, as if exhausted [*lassa*], it is subjected to the soul. Penance was invented for this, to make personal peace within yourself. And

this way of making peace is good and reasonable, and what God wishes. So the holy man Job said: "Your tabernacle is at peace," (Job 5:24).

But many do the opposite. They do not know to keep up this war between the soul and flesh, and wishing to be at peace, yield to the flesh. Do you wish to know how it is sinful? There was a certain king having a daughter dear to him, to whom he wished to leave the whole of his kingdom. She was just like her father, like one egg to another. It happened that this king wished to go to the Holy Land, to visit the shrines. And he entrusted to a knight his daughter, along with her slave, who served her. He told the knight how very much he cared about his daughter, promising the knight that upon his return he would be greatly rewarded. After the king departed, this soldier fell in love with the slave, giving in to her in everything, and he despised the daughter of the king. He wished that the princess be subject to the slave. What does this knight deserve, when the king returns?

This king is Jesus Christ, Son of the Virgin Mary, King of Kings. The beloved daughter is the soul which is made precisely like him, more so even than a portrait, because it is created in the image of God. God says when he wishes to create man: "Let us make man to our image and likeness," (Gen 1:26). This is not said nor understood with regards to the body, because God is incorporeal, but with regards to the soul, which by nature is spiritual, noble, generous and beautiful. If you could only see one soul in its beauty, in so far as it is the image of God, you would not wish to eat nor drink. The beauty of the sun or moon is nothing compared to it. And it is loved by Christ, for he wishes to give his heavenly kingdom to it. And it seems that he loved it more than himself. For which reason he wished to be born and live in this world for 33 years, and finally suffer and die, out of complete love of his daughter. And he can say, "Give me the persons [literally, animas, souls], and the rest take for yourself," (Gen 14:21). The king wished to go overseas to visit the holy places.

This world is like the sea because of its waves and dangers, and little fish are eaten by big fish. And on the day of the ascension from this world he departed, and committed his daughter to a knight, because he committed your soul to you, and mine to me, and with a slave, namely the flesh, that it would serve the soul. And now we are committing adultery with the slave. We give in to the flesh, despising the soul, and we wish that the soul would

serve it. Why are you all dressed up? Is it not because of love of the flesh. Why have you prepared gourmet food? Is it not out of love of the slave? And you don't care about the daughter of the king. She is dying of hunger, and is naked and dirty. We often wash and bathe the flesh. And there is no mention of the daughter of the king, nor do we care about her. Men strive for land, and travel the sea over for the slave. And for the soul, the daughter of the king, we cannot even rest on Sundays. You will be condemned just as the knight. Think what the king will do to you when he comes, soon in the general judgment, or what will you say in your particular judgment. See, then how it is a sin to wish to please the flesh more than the soul.

Behold, I give you some advice. Every day you, like the slave, who twice a day is ordered to bring meals, namely lunch and dinner, should care about the daughter of the king. You should do the same for the soul, praying morning and evening, and before meals, signing yourself and saying the Our Father and Hail Mary, devoutly thinking about Christ in glory, who is adored by the angels and watches over you. And finally, by thinking how you will see the Virgin Mary at the right hand of her Son, you say, "Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed, etc." In the evening, too, you should never forget that dinner or supper. On Sunday you prepare a larger dinner by hearing a full Mass, and that you go to confession which is like washing your hands. You should adore Christ, true God and man in the host. Once a year you should dress up in new clothes. This happens in confession where you take off your old clothes, and put on the new, at Easter, completing the great feast by receiving Holy Communion. And this way you are able to give a good account of his daughter at the judgment of Christ the King, who honors you in paradise. About those who do the opposite, caring more about the body than the soul, David says, "Because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners. For there is no regard to their death, nor is there strength in their stripes. They are not in the labor of men," namely through penance, "neither shall they be scourged like other men," (Ps 72:3-5), but with demons.

Domestic Peace

Second is domestic peace, at home, when husband and wife and family stand in good peace and concord without conflict. Such peace is called domestic, just as the first is called personal. For achieving this peace and

keeping it, six rules [*doctrinae*] are necessary: two are for the husband toward the wife, and two for the wife toward the husband, and two of both the husband and wife toward the family at home.

First, it must be known, the husband ought to preserve his love toward his wife. The husband ought to love his wife, not hate her for some fault, from which she is a fine woman. There are some wretches [*miseri*] who love their wives only as long as the wedding bread lasts. When they are satisfied by it they despise them, and that is how war breaks out at home. Blessed is the man who always keeps the same love which he showed his wife on the first day or week [of their marriage.]

Second, the husband ought to provide for his wife. He should not desert her, but provide for her, but not with vanities, because if she be vain, the husband ought to say to her, "Woman, I am damned with you," etc., because vain wives not only doom themselves but also their husbands who give in to them. A husband should not leave his wife in order to become a hermit or a religious once the marriage has been consummated by sexual relations, unless with permission of his wife, and then there also ought to be permission of the bishop, and that the wife be such that there would not be a suspicion of sinning etc. Therefore, scripture says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it: That he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So also, ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife, loves himself." See this beautiful text in Ephesians 5:25-28.

The wife ought to have two [attitudes] toward her husband, namely reverence and diligence. First reverence, that she is willing that the husband be lord, otherwise if in opposition, a war shall break out in the home. For nature, scripture, and both divine and human law dictate that the man be the lord of the home. It is against nature, divine and human law, that the woman be the lord of the man. It is told of the beautiful and noble Virgin Mary, etc. with how much reverence and honor she spoke to her spouse, Joseph, a poor and elderly man. So scripture says, "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord. Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church," (Eph 5:22-23). Note, "as to the Lord," not

"opposed to the Lord," because it can be asked of the body of the wife that the woman ought not to consent [to sinning], moreover she should even permit herself to be killed, because she would be a martyr before she would consent.

Also, she ought to be diligent, that she conserve that what the husband has earned with great labors and dangers, lest the home be like a leaky sack. She should keep the home and herself clean, because then the husband would love such a wife, and so there is peace at home. Of this diligence Ecclesiastes 26: "The grace of a diligent woman shall delight her husband, and shall fat his bones." (Sir 26:16), that is she makes him fat all over.

Third, the husband and wife ought to have two [requirements.] toward the family. First about the education of the children. There are many who say it is enough that he gives the children food and drink, but they do not care to educate them or to instruct them, etc. Children ought to be nourished. Because just as the tender tree is leaned, etc. so sons when they are poor. This especially belongs to the mother, because when the children ask for bread in the morning, a good mother should say, "Now, son say the Hail Mary, you know that she is our queen in heaven," and "Now, let us genuflect," etc. You say the Hail Mary and see that he signs himself with the sign of the cross, and the children ought to tell their parents that they didn't lie, didn't steal, weren't contentious, that they confessed when they are five or six years old, and that they receive Holy Communion when they are twelve years old. The parents ought to lead them to church to hear Mass etc. and so the scripture says, "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." (Eph 6:4). Guilty is the gardener if the vines are twisted, because when still small they can be straightened. So you parents are like gardeners. You have planted vines in the vineyard of Christ, i.e. the church.

With respect to servants and captive slaves [*servos et captivos*], they should induce them to be baptized or that they be obliged to attend Mass, to be given an opportunity of hearing Mass and receiving communion, then such a home is blessed. To do the opposite of the aforesaid is the greatest sin. See what scripture says, "But if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than

an infidel," (1 Tim 5:8). Domestic peace consists in this, what a husband should have toward his wife, etc.

A brief epilogue. Such a home has peace and the blessing of God; therefore scripture says, "O Israel," i.e. a man seeing God, "if you had walked in the way of God," namely in these ways which I have said, "you had surely dwelt in peace forever." (Bar 3:13).

Universal Peace

The first peace is personal. The second domestic. The third is universal, when a community, village or city lives in peace, then it is universal peace. And this is a peace that is first in the heart, second on the lips, third in deed. In the heart because it does not have envy, anger, nor ill will toward each other, It is more sympathetic to those who hold office or rule, who ought not to be envied, because they have to give a reason for all those entrusted to them, just as everyone is sorry for a ship in trouble at sea and doesn't envy it. So, whoever has rule of people, is on a stormy sea in danger of sinking into hell, so much so that no prudent man ought to yearn to rule. Therefore, he is rather to be sympathized with than to be envied.

Second, this peace is on the lips, when we speak to, and greet each other. Because just as through the smoke of a chimney is revealed the fire in the house, so through greetings the fire of peace and love existing in the heart [is revealed], because the heart cannot be seen by anyone. No one should say "If he speaks to me, I'll speak to him," etc. It is told how the Virgin Mary was the first to speak to the ones crucified with her Son.

Third it consists in deed. There should be no quarrels and lawsuits. There are some who even in paradise would start arguments [*inveniret quaestiones*], etc. Therefore, the Apostle, Paul, says: "Already indeed there is plainly a fault among you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather endure wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? But you do wrong and defraud, and that to your brethren," (1 Cor 6:7-8). For this reason, the Apostle commands, "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men." (Rom 12:18).

Ordinary Time

B294 First Sermon for Trinity Sunday

John 3 Douay trans.

9 Nicodemus answered, and said to him: How can these things be done?
10 Jesus answered, and said to him: Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Amen, amen I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony.

"How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9).

This question is in the gospel today, but the solution is in John cc. 11 and 14. When our master Jesus Christ taught his disciples and he spoke to them wonderfully [miranda] of the divine persons, and he said these words about the Father, "In my Father's house there are many mansions," (Jn 14:2). Hearing this Philip said to Christ, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." (v.8) Christ answered Philip: "He who sees me sees the Father also," (v.8). From which account it is clear that the master Jesus Christ corrected the questioning Philip saying, "Why do you ask, 'Show us the Father?'" (v.9)

Philip, by speaking these words to Christ his master, raises the question: "Whether a disciple who hears the master speaking of things difficult to say and understand, can ask such a question of his teacher without being reprimanded, and when and why this might happen?"

It must be said that there are three conditions, which St. John sets forth. The first case or first condition is **when the lesson of the master is beyond the capacity of the human intellect**, that is when it exceeds human reason. This is the case in John chapter 3, where he says that Christ, our teacher, speaking to Nicodemus, among other things, says to him, "Amen, amen I

say to you, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (Jn 3:3). See the teaching and discipline of Christ. This teaching exceeds the natural genius of man or of the intellect, because for a man already old to be born again, that he enter the womb of his mother, is beyond human understanding. Therefore Nicodemus was not able to understand this teaching, and posed a question about it and asked him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again?" (v.4). And then the teacher Jesus Christ explained to him that there were two births. One from the womb of your mother. The other in baptism and the Holy Spirit. In this second way, he who wishes to see the kingdom of God can be born again.

The second case or condition is **when the lesson of the master is contrary to general or usual experience**, that is, when it exceeds all custom and vision. This case St. John states in chapter 6, where Christ teaching his disciples, among other things, said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh," (Jn 6:51-52). Behold, the teaching of Christ. This teaching exceeds all ordinary experience, that a man would give his flesh to others to eat and nourish them. This is never seen, or approved, or heard of. Therefore, those unwilling to accept this teaching argued among themselves, and forming a question asked: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 53). And then the master explained to them how he was the Son of God, true God and man, and how the bread would be converted into his flesh, and the wine into his blood, under the appearance of wine, and how this food indeed confers eternal life to those using it. A similar opinion in John, chapter 7, explains that when Jesus himself was teaching in the temple, the Jews knowing that he never had been a master nor had he studied, and he was teaching the wonders of sacred scripture, seeing this to be against the general custom of men and experience, they asked in amazement and said, "How does this man know scripture, having never learned?" (Jn 7:15). Jesus, however, solving this question for them, said, "My doctrine is not mine, but of him that sent me. If any man do the will of him; he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He who speaks of himself, seeks his own glory," (Jn 7:16-18).

The third case is **when the lesson of the teacher is contrary to the commandment or counsel of sacred scripture**, and this is when it goes beyond divine revelation. This case St. John explains in ch. 7, where he says that our teacher Jesus Christ, speaking and teaching to the Jews, among other things, said to them that he, the Son of Man, was the true Messiah, and he had to be raised up and hung on a cross. See the teaching of Christ. This reading seemed to the Jews to contradict and exceed divine revelation and sacred scripture. Since indeed sacred scripture says the Christ or Messiah or the Son of Man would never die, and Christ said and taught that he would die on the cross, he seemed to teach contrary to sacred scripture. And so the Jews not daring to seize him asked the question: "We have heard out of the law, that the Christ abides for ever; and how do you say: The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" (Jn 12:34). And then Christ explained to them how he was able to die according to his humanity, but he would live in eternity according to his divinity. So, the third case.

The answer is clear, to the question in which it is asked when might a disciple dare place a question to the teacher about the lesson without recrimination. It is clear then in three cases. First, if the master was saying something which exceeded the natural capacity of man and understanding. Second, if he was saying something contrary to ordinary natural experience. Third, if he was saying something which exceeded the revealed counsel contained in sacred scripture, especially if it imposes on the disciples something to believe in or hold to. In these situations, a disciple justly and without recrimination can form and ask a question of the teacher, "How can this happen?"

Truly St. John, the greatest in holy scripture, who is taught and tutored by Christ and his counsel and zeal for paradise, because through the mystery of the Trinity he and his teaching is approved. He, indeed, is such a great and admirable teacher, among other wondrous questions and teachings, states and says in 1 John, ch. 5, "And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one," (1 Jn 5:8).

This teaching seems to meet the aforesaid conditions. First it exceeds the understanding, reason and genius of man. Which is clear because according to our reason it seems that whatever thing that are distinct, are distinct in their nature. For example, in all kinds of creatures, heaven and earth are distinct, because heaven has the nature and form which is incorruptible, and earth, corruptible, and so corruptible and incorruptible are distinct. So by nature two stars in the heavens are distinct, like the sun and moon, although they are incorruptible, nevertheless they are distinct in place and magnitude and brightness. Even angels, by nature and essence are distinct, like a rock and a tree, are distinct by nature, a goat and a lion. Two men are distinct by their souls, because one is the soul of Peter and another is the soul of Matthias, and another is the soul of George. Thus, it is that wherever we find in created things the distinction of persons, we always find the distinction of essences and natures. Therefore, that we say that in the divinity there are three distinct persons, and not distinct by essence, or substance or by nature, exceeds reason.

If indeed the sons of Israel were not able to look on the face of Moses because of the brightness of his visage as is found in Exodus 34, because he had seen the essence of God and of the Trinity of persons, how can we attend to and touch upon the entirely sublime Trinity? How indeed is someone able to understand that the unity is trinity, and trinity is unity, when all numbers are distinct by nature and species, that they not be two equals? Because threes exceed twos and fours, threes, etc. How therefore can we grasp that the Father and Son and Holy Spirit are three persons, and undivided in substance, nature and essence? Human reason cannot grasp it. Therefore, it exceeds reason. Thus St. Bernard says in his sermon on the Holy and Inaccessible Trinity: "To inquire of the Trinity is perverse curiosity; to hold and believe as the church teaches, is faith and security. See it as it is. It is happiness." And because of this we read St. Augustine cautiously [reprehensum], who wished to explain this mystery to reason. We read about the time when he was composing the books On the Trinity. Check the story in our next sermon [Trinity Sermon ii, The boy at at the seashore.] Therefore, it is clear that it exceeds human genius.

Second it exceeds all experience and models. This is clear from the Apostle [St. Paul] to the Romans, ch. 1, and according to Dionysius, On the Heavenly Hierarchy. What we know of invisible and celestial realities, we perceive through the visible, only in visible and created things. Clearly it is the opposite with this mystery. Although we prove or rather declare this mystery of the most blessed Trinity through examples and similarities, nevertheless they all fall short. It's clear when an example is brought forward. It is said that in the apple there are three, namely, smell, flavor and color, and nevertheless it is only one. So, in the Blessed Trinity there are Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and nevertheless there is just one God. This example if looked at closely and well, is more against, than for. For of those three, none is first. Neither the color is the apple, nor the smell is the apple, nor the flavor is the apple. But in the Trinity, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. It is the same in other examples. All fall short of a perfect proof and explanation of this sublime mystery, which is that God is one and three. So we read about this in 4 Esdras, chapter 4, that when Esdras was marveling over some secrets of God and wished to understand, the angel said to him, "Go, weigh for me the weight of fire, or measure for me a measure of wind, or call back for me the day that is past," (4 Ezra 4:5), as if to say "You cannot comprehend these earthly things, how can you now comprehend celestial?" It is clear then that it exceeds all experience. About this see [St. Thomas I, q.32, a.1](#), where he elegantly shows that it is impossible through natural reason to arrive at an understanding of the Trinity of divine persons. And that he who tries to prove the Trinity of divine persons by reason, in two ways derogates from faith. See the reference above [to St. Thomas].

Third it seems to exceed the divine mystery revealed in the law on God's part, which he gave to the people of God. So God says, Deut. 6: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one." (Ex 6:4) Therefore God, it seems, posits unity and not trinity. The same St. Paul who was "caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2) and heard the hidden things of God, in 1 Cor 8, says the same, "For although there be that are called gods, either in heaven or on earth (for there be gods many, and lords many); Yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him," (1 Cor 8:5-6). It seems that Paul posits unity in divinity and not trinity. And because these

two, namely Moses and Paul who while living, here saw the divine essence, that the argument should be conceded to them, and none other, as Augustine. They posit unity in divinity [divinis], it seems, and not trinity. Therefore, to posit trinity seems against both the old and the new law, and consequently against the divine revealed mystery. The same is posited also in [Canon Law], the commandment to believe, expressly in: *Extravagantes, De summs trinitate, et fide catholica, ch. 1*. Therefore, rightly and without repercussions, according to the aforesaid triple conditions etc.

We who hear St. John's lesson, that "there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," (1 Jn 5:7), can form and state the question presumed in the words of the theme: How can this happen that in the divinity we believe there to be unity in essence and trinity in persons? And this, it seems, is contrary to human reason and true understanding. If you believe, you shall see. If you believe as one here on the way [during your lifetime], you shall see there as a comprehender [in the vision of heaven]. If you believe on earth, you shall see in heaven. In which words St. John solves three questions, which we can ask of him.

- First, if it is subtly difficult [subtilitate difficilis]
- Second, if its infallibly true, [veritate infallibilis]
- Third if it is attainable by understanding [scibilitate attingibilis].

Difficult but True

He responds that such can happen certainly and conditionally: If you believe, you shall see. The first and second question, namely that this sacrament of the Trinity and the most sublime mystery is wonderfully subtly difficult and certainly infallibly true, St. John shows, in Apocalypse 5, where he says he saw "a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice: Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man was able, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, to open the book," (Rev 5:1-4). And behold, "a Lamb standing as it were slain, having [seven horns and] seven eyes" (v.6) in great power rose up and opened the seven

seals of the book. And then four animals and twenty-four ancients who were present blessed God and gave him glory and honor. Though that book St. John understood the sacrament of the Trinity and the mystery of all the secrets contained and written, within and without, and of the invisible things which are in the heaven within, and of the visible things which are outside, marked with all properties and perfections in a more excellent manner. For the perfections which are in every visible and invisible thing, in a more excellent way are in the Holy Trinity. About this see St. Thomas [I, q. 4, a. 2](#). There he points out how all perfections of things are in God.

The book was sealed with seven seals because this sacrament and mystery of the Trinity has been closed [clausum est] with seven secrets. Only Christ as the slain Lamb can open it. Because no one but Christ the Lamb who suffered on the cross according to his humanity, is most perfectly worthy to reveal it, because he has seven eyes of the knowledge of all perfections. Just as indeed by Christ opening the seven seals we are taught the secrets, so we declare and open them to you.

1. The first seal is the secret, namely that **in this mystery of the Trinity there are three persons, not by nature distinct, but by relation, and one person is not the other**. And nevertheless there is but one nature and substance and essence, so that there are three divine persons, but God is just one, and each is God. Which if true it is clear because so says St. John, 5, ch. 1 canonical [epistle], "And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one," (1 Jn 5:7) and this the church confirms, Extra. de sum. tri et fi ca. c Firmiter credimus. This is especially wonderful. And how? Would it not be wonderful, referring to Peter, James and John if we would say that there are three human persons and nevertheless there are not three men, but just one man, that it might be said, Peter is a man, James is a man, John is a man, and that there be one man and not three men, and that in them there are not three souls, but just one soul. Truly it would be wonderful. So that in a proposition about the Holy Trinity there is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there are three divine persons, and nevertheless there are not three gods but just one God.

Certainly, it is wonderful. "How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. For these things can happen. Which is clear through an example from nature.

From an external spring, from the flow there emerges one pond and there are three pools of water, and nevertheless there are not three waters, but one water in nature. Similarly from the Father comes the Son and from both the Holy Spirit, and there are three divine persons but only one God. And it is true to say that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. But nevertheless there are not three gods, but just one God. Behold the first seal opened by the Lamb, Christ.

2. The second seal is that **one divine person, although it is not the other, nevertheless is in the other.** Which is clear, for Christ said to Philip as is found in John 14, "Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (Jn 14:11). And the church confirms this with the title and chapter cited above, Firmiter credimus. Would it not be wonderful that Peter is not Paul, and Paul is not John, and nevertheless Peter is in Paul, and Paul in John? It would be truly marvelous. So in the proposal. In the mystery of the Trinity the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Spirit, and nevertheless the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit in the Father and the Son.

Certainly, it is wonderful. "How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. But if it is wonderful, nevertheless it is possible, nor is it doubtful, because it is possible that this happen. That however it is such, Christ who is the Lamb, shows, through this example.

For in nature we posit that there be three men, many, loving each other mutually, namely Peter, Paul and John. The heart of Peter is not that of Paul, nor the heart of Paul that of John, but there are three hearts. But because they love each other mutually, the heart of one is in the heart of the other. And so what the one wants the other wants. For Augustine says that the spirit or heart is more where it loves, that where it lives. And Christ confirms this in Matthew ch. 6: "For where your treasure is, there is your

heart also," (Mt 6:21). And nevertheless, it is clear that the treasure is not the heart, nor the heart the treasure, and nevertheless the treasure is in the heart, and the heart in the treasure. And so it is written in 1 Jn 4: "And he who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him," (v.16) And so it is clear that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, and the Holy Spirit in the Father and the Son. About this [St. Thomas I, q. 42, a.5](#) where he says in the body of the article, that in the Father and the Son "There are three points of consideration as regards the Father and the Son; the essence, the relation, and the origin; and according to each, the Son and the Father are in each other." and vice versa. And the same judgment holds for the Holy Spirit as for the Father and the Son.

3. The third seal and secret is that, **of these three persons, one is ingenerable [ingenerabilis], namely the Father, the other begotten, the third breathed forth [spirata]. The first is from no one, the second is from the first, and the third is from the first and second.** And that this be true is shown by [Athanasius](#) who says, " For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit." And later it is stated, " The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." Note the whole. And this the church confirms, in the title and chapter cited.

This is wonderful. And would it not be wonderful, that some man would beget and not be begotten, and that he would beget and would generate without a woman? Certainly so, and that there would be a man whom a man had produced, and produced without a woman, and that he would be produced and not begotten? Truly it would be wonderful. So to our point. For God the Father was not generated, nor is from anyone. About this see [St. Thomas I, q.33](#). God the Son from God the Father has been generated, and generated without a mother, in speaking of his eternal generation, and the Holy Spirit from God the Father and God the Son is breathed forth [spiratus est] and proceeding, without a woman, and nevertheless was not generated.

This is exceedingly wonderful. "How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. And if it is wonderful, nevertheless it is possible, not doubtful, because it can happen. That it has happened, Christ, who is the Lamb, shows through this example from nature.

Adam proceeds from no man, because he was the first man. Eve from Adam alone, Abel from Adam and Eve together. These three have humanity, because each was human, and nevertheless no one from no one, namely Adam, and another from one, namely Eve, and another from two, namely Abel from Adam and Eve. Thus the proposition. Just as Adam had humanity and did not have it from someone else, so God the Father has divinity from no one. Just as Eve had humanity from one man, from Adam without a woman, so the Son of God had and has divinity from God the Father alone, without a wife. No wonder that just as the Son of God is generated from a mother with respect to humanity, without a man and father, so with respect to the divinity he is begotten from the Father without a mother. And just as a man, Abel, had humanity from two, from Adam and Eve, so the Holy Spirit had and has divinity from the Father and the Son equally.

4. The fourth seal is, that **although God the Father generates and generated from eternity God the Son, nevertheless neither the Father is prior to the Son, nor the Son posterior to the Father, but they are coeternal.** That this happens such, Athanasius shows saying, "And in this Trinity nothing is prior or posterior, nothing more or less. But all three persons are co-eternal to each other and co-equal," (Cf [Athanasian Creed](#)). And this also is confirmed by the title and chapter previously cited. This is exceedingly wonderful. Would it not be wonderful if Adam had not preceded Abel, and that the architect would not be prior than the house built by him? It would be wonderful. So in the proposition I say that God the Father begets the Son and that the Son would not be younger.

Certainly it is wonderful. "How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. Although it is wonderful, nevertheless it is possible, nor should it be doubtful. Because this can happen. That it was so, Christ shows through an example, thus.

From the sun a ray comes out, and from the ray proceeds splendor. Same for a candle if it is lit. So in the proposal, from God the Father, like from the sun, a ray comes out God, the Son, and from God the Father and the Son, God the Holy Spirit comes out, like splendor, because God the Father from eternity generated the Son, and God the Father and God the Son from eternity spirate the Holy Spirit. And consequently all three were eternal. About this see St. Thomas [I, q.42, a.2](#) There he says in the beginning of the body of the article that it is necessary to say the Son is co-eternal to the Father, which he there elegantly proves. The same judgment is of the Holy Spirit, because from his principle, namely from the Father and Son he necessarily is co-eternal.

5. The fifth seal is the secret that **everything which the Father has he gives to the Son and nevertheless he keeps it all for himself. And everything which the Father and the Son have they give to the Holy Spirit, and keep everything for themselves.** That this be true the Master of the Sentences declares Bk I and Athanasius cited above. And it is exceedingly wonderful And how? Would it not be wonderful that I, having ten florins and give them all to the church, and keep the same, so that truly it would be given and truly kept? So in the proposal, because God the Father gives all his perfections to the Son and simultaneously keeps them all. And both give the same to the Holy Spirit and keep the same for themselves.

Certainly, it is wonderful. "How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. But although it is wonderful, nevertheless it is possible, nor doubtful, because these can happen. That however it is so, Christ explains through an example from nature.

A master gives all his knowledge to the bachelor, and keeps it all to himself, because by giving it he is not deprived of it, and both give the whole to a student, and both keep everything for themselves. So in the proposition, God the Father wills and knows all, and gives all to the Son, and keeps it all for himself, and he is not deprived of those things, and the Father and Son communicate all to the Holy Spirit, and keep it for themselves.

6. The sixth seal is that **all power [posse], all will [velle], and so with the other perfections which the Father has, the Son has, and also the Holy Spirit has, and nevertheless God the Father can generate the Son, because God the Son cannot do this nor the Holy Spirit. And also the Father and Son can spirate the Holy Spirit other than themselves in person and nevertheless the Holy Spirit cannot do this.** That it happens so, the Master of the Sentences points out and confirms as previously [cited].

This is wonderful. "How can these things be done? "(Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. But although it is wonderful, nevertheless it is possible, nor doubtable, because these things can happen. Which is clear.

For an example is given, that the king of Castile has a noble city, and has the complete power of selling, or giving, or alienating it, and he gives it with all his power and dominion to the king of Aragon, and he transfers dominion, in this given case all the dominion and power [posse] which the king of Castile had in this city the king of Aragon has, and nevertheless the king of Castile has power, which he can give him, not only to the king of England, France etc. even also to the king of Aragon. And nevertheless this king of Aragon having been given what he can give to the kings of France and England, not however of Aragon, because it is his, therefore he cannot give it to himself. So in the proposition God the Father gives his whole power and will to the Son, and the Father and Son to the Holy Spirit, and whatever the Father can do and wills, the Son can do and wills, and whatever both will and can do, the Holy Spirit can do and wills. And nevertheless God the Father can generate God the Son, yet God the Son cannot generate God the Son, and God the Father and God the Son can and will to produce the Holy Spirit, and nevertheless the Holy Spirit neither wills nor can produce the Holy Spirit. Behold the sixth seal opened by Christ. About this see St. Thomas [I, q42, a.6](#). There he concludes and proves, that the Son is equal to the Father in power and the Holy Spirit to both, by which nevertheless, notwithstanding it does not follow, that he says the same, the Father can generate, therefore the Son. The reason for which he assigns in the solution to the third argument above ([I, q.42, a.6, ad 3m.](#)).

7. The seventh seal is that **the Father is omnipotent, and nevertheless does not have the power to be generated. The Son is omnipotent and nevertheless does not have the power to generate. And the Holy Spirit is omnipotent, and nevertheless does not have the power to generate or produce the Holy Spirit.** And both [uterque] of them are omnipotent, and neither has the power to call back the previous day, nor to make a violated virgin to not have been violated, as Thomas says [I, q.25, a.4](#) in the body of the article, and in the responses to the objections. That this truly happens, Athanasius points out, about the aforesaid generation and spiration. And the Master of the Sentences cited above. And the church confirms in the title and chapter previously cited. This is very wonderful. And how can this happen? Would it not be wonderful if it is said, Aristotle had all knowledge and nevertheless he did not know geometry or arithmetic.

Certainly, it would be wonderful. "How can these things be done?" (Jn 3:9). The seal was closed, but it is opened. But if it is wonderful, nevertheless it is doable, and not doubtable. Because these things can happen. That however it be so, is clear through an example.

Suppose that there was a master in theology, very great and perfect. Can he teach theology to a rock? Certainly not. But this is not because of his defect, but of the rock. Is he able to teach it to a child lying in a crib? Certainly not. It is not from a defect on his part, but of the child. So it is in the proposal, God the Father etc. nor the Son, etc, can make it that call back yesterday, etc. [revocent diem praeteritum] etc. But this is not from the impotency of God, but of the thing itself, because such a thing not is doable. Nevertheless God is called omnipotent, as if able to do everything, because he can do all that is possible, etc.

Behold the seventh seal opened, and consequently all seven.

Conditionally Attainable

The third solution, namely, of the third question is this, that this sacred mystery of the Trinity is knowable and graspable conditionally, "If you

believe, you will see." Which St. Augustine shows saying, "That to faith which is in this life, succeeds bright vision in heaven, and to hope, comprehension or grasp, and to charity, fruition. If therefore you wish to see in heaven, we believe in this life, because if you believe, you shall see. But since faith deals with invisible [realities] – for according to Augustine, "Faith is to believe what you do not see," – how do we believe what we do not see? How can this happen? To this Augustine replies in his book On faith of invisible things, and he shows through two examples, that we believe and do not see.

The first is this. Do you say that this shoemaker is your father? And if it is asked of you, "Did you see him beget you?" You will reply, "No." If therefore you believe your visible father, whom you see, you should believe your invisible Father, whom you do not see.

A second example from St. Augustine. You are sick. You consult a doctor for yourself, so you can get a certain medicine and you will be cured. Have you seen yourself cured? You reply, "No." Why do you say that the medicine helps? You say, "Because the doctor says so." And why do you believe the doctor? You reply: "Because he read it in the books of Avicenna or of such and such a doctor." And if it is asked, "Do you know that?" You reply, "No. But I hear and so I believe." Therefore, you believe what you do not see. Believe therefore so that you might see: "For if you believe you shall see." What now you see by faith in this life, you shall then clearly see face to face in glory. To which, may he lead us, who lives in the perfect Trinity, etc.

B304. Second Sermon on the Trinity

John 3 Douay trans.

1 And there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him. 3 Jesus answered, and said to him: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

" No man can do these signs which you do," (Jn 3:2)

These words come originally from John 3 and are recited in today's gospel for this Sunday and the present feast. For just as the church celebrates the solemnity of saints, and lest any be omitted, all the saints are venerated together in one solemnity on the feast of All Saints to make up for any neglect, so the church celebrates today a special solemnity for each divine person. It is very fitting to celebrate the distinction of persons and the unity of essence. I now have to preach about a more sublime and complicated matter in all of theology, or in any school, about the eternal Trinity, the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. So that our sermon be to the glory of God and the reverence and reformation of our souls, and the correction of sins, let us first salute the most holy Virgin Mary.

The secret and mystery of the holy and eternal Trinity, how there is one God the creator of all things and that one God is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is so sublime and transcending, that from the beginning of the world up to the end, nothing would have been known by the human intellect unless God had revealed it to us, because the human intellect cannot naturally comprehend such a sublime mystery. You already see how great is the height of heaven over our bodies, more incomparably higher is the Trinity over our souls. And just as a man created with his feet on the ground in no way can touch heaven with his finger, he can, however, do so spiritually. And this can happen in two ways, if heaven, for example, bowed

down, or if man would be elevated on high by God and would touch heaven, otherwise it is impossible to touch heaven with your finger.

So for the Holy Trinity about souls. The finger of the soul by which it touches [heaven] is the subtle intellect. Just as the body of a man with a finger cannot touch heaven naturally, so neither the finger of the soul can touch, understand or comprehend the mystery of the Trinity naturally, but indeed [bene] supernaturally, in two ways, either that heaven, that is the secret bends down, as happened in the blessed incarnation of the Son of God, and then it elevates men when that infinite height humbles itself descending from heaven to earth, assuming human nature, and reveals himself by his own mouth, preaching and declaring how one God is triune in persons. Consequently, we can touch with the finger of the intellect. Also because he raises men on high, like the apostles, martyrs, doctors, confessors through contemplation and perfection of life, who then touch with the finger of intellect the mystery of the Trinity. See how either through the humbling of heaven, or elevation of man we supernaturally touch that mystery. Authority: David in Ps. 143 says, "Lord, bow down your heavens and descend," the first way. "Touch the mountains and they shall smoke," (Ps 143:5), the second way.

The secret mystery of the Trinity he calls "heavens" saying, "Lord, bow down your heavens," that is the secrets. One heaven is that one God is three persons. Another that only the Father begets the Son. Another that from the Father alone the Son proceeds through eternal generation. Another that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both equally. Also, another secret is that in divinity there are four real relations, and five notions. About these he says, "Bow down the heavens." Behold the first way.

The second, "Touch the mountains and they shall smoke." He calls highest "mountains" the apostles, martyrs and doctors and confessors, who had an intellect raised through high contemplation and spiritual life. Earthly valleys are the worldly people; therefore, he says, "Touch the mountains and they shall smoke," not from the smoke of a lime kiln, but of the smoke of teaching and preaching and like the good smelling smoke of incense. By these two ways we know the secrets of the Trinity, otherwise no human intellect could have known or understood this mystery, because the Apostle says that God dwells in inaccessible light "Whom no man has seen," not

with the eye of the body or of the intellect, "nor can see: to whom be honor and empire everlasting. Amen." (1 Tim 6:16).

Question: Where does this defect come from, that we cannot see God? I say that it is not a defect of the object, but of the potency, because God of himself is visible, but the defect is on the part of our intellect, which is not proportionate to him. For the eye of the owl cannot see the sun, which of itself is well visible, but the eye of the owl is not proportioned. So, the mystery of the Trinity of itself is most bright and visible, but the defect is on the part of our intellect. So, the Philosopher [Aristotle] says, "Just as the eye of the owl is to the light of the sun, so is our intellect to the things most manifest in nature."

Therefore, I shall tell you a wonderful story from St. Augustine, the greatest and most subtle doctor, who wanted to write a book in which he would explain the secrets of the Trinity by using reasons, arguments and authorities from nature. When once he was walking along the seashore meditating on an explanation he was writing, as he was going along, he came upon a charming young boy, who was dipping water from the ocean with a silver spoon and was pouring it into a little hole which he had made with his hand. Thinking about the boy for a moment, St. Augustine asked him, "Son, what are you doing?" He replied that he wanted to put the whole vastness of the sea into this little hole. Augustine understood that the little hole represented his book, the silver spoon his bright and subtle intellect, the vast sea the infinite mystery of the Trinity. Then the boy disappeared. "O" said Augustine, "In vain I labor," and dismissing natural reasons and physics, by which the mystery of the Trinity cannot be understood, he proceeds another way, by returning to the revelations of Christ, who bowed down from the heavens and raised men, and to the authorities of the bible, and so he planned his book, saying with the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom 11:33).

Note knowledge is called "depth [altitudo] of the riches," which man has of the Trinity. The riches of this world are not properly riches, because they perish, but knowledge of the secrets of the Trinity is the "depth of the riches," which makes souls rich in this world through faith, and in heaven through glory. They give to them whatever they wish and whatever they desire. "Of the wisdom," that is, that savor of knowledge, because the

devout soul finds great savor in the contemplation of the Trinity and of knowledge, and this with respect to the blessed who already see clearly and can say: "As we have heard, so have we seen," etc., (Ps 47:9).

A proper judgment is the conclusion of counsel, by which the one presiding, having heard his counselors, decides, and he says this ought to be done, this is counsel. The judgment therefore of the Trinity are true conclusions namely that one God is three persons, that the Father generates the Son, just as the sun generates rays, nor is a wife necessary in such a generation. And just as from the sun and rays heat proceeds, so from the Father and Son proceeds the Holy Spirit. Such judgments are "incomprehensible" by a created intellect on its own. And "unsearchable his ways," or of those. Ways are arguments, reasons and proofs, because just as by a way [viam] a man goes to his destination, so through arguments and reasons man comes to the conclusion. He wishes therefore to say that not only judgments are incomprehensible, but also arguments reasons or physical or natural proofs cannot be discovered or investigated for proving the mystery of the Trinity.

But God for the consolation of the faithful gives us signs representing the most blessed mystery of the Trinity itself, and about these the theme speaks. "For no man can do these signs which you do," (Jn 3:2). And there are three signs. The first sign he gives in the rational soul, and this through creation. Second in material body and this through redemption. Third in the spiritual life through salvation. And because no one can make these signs, but God alone, therefore he says the theme, "No man can do these signs which you do," (Jn 3:2).

Through Creation

I say first that God gives a sign of the Holy Trinity in the rational soul through creation. And see what kind. In one body there is only one rational soul, which governs the whole body and members, namely, the head, feet, hands and all. So in the whole world there is only One God who governs and rules the whole world and the head which is heaven, and arms, namely the sun and moon and stars by which he works deeds, and the stomach, namely the elements. Already you see how much is the height [altitudo] of heaven, which is the head, over the feet, the earth. And just as the rational

soul has three in itself, [the intellect,] and the memory in which we understand the present, and the will by which we desire the future, like health [sanitatem]. When you are sick you desire health, and when poor, riches. Nevertheless, the memory, and intellect and will is only one soul. So in the world there is only one God, and that God is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

See how God gives the sign of the Trinity in the rational soul through creation, like a king using diverse metals to mint money, but only on the gold coins does he put his image. On the other coins he puts only his seal. So, God from the beginning of the world makes many creatures, like coins of diverse metals, but only on the gold coin, namely on man does he impress his image, by speaking of corporeal creatures. The sun, moon and stars, are silver coins. They have only a sign of the Trinity, and not the image. The elements are coins of lead. They do not have a trace.

Speaking of corporeal creatures, only man is made after the image of God, because just as gold among all the metals is the most noble, so man among all corporeal creatures is the more excellent. And just as he who makes coins imprints the image of the king on the florin, so God when he creates the soul imprints his image on it. God pointed this out from the beginning when he created all things saying, "Let there be light," and he says no more. Let there be luminaries, etc. But when he wished to form man, he did not say let there be man, but, as if he held a meeting [teneret consistorium], Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God said, "And he said: Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature," (Gen 1:26). It is clear how this sign is given in the soul by God through creation. About this sign David says, "The light of your countenance O Lord, is signed upon us: you have given gladness in my heart," (Ps 4:7). Note "the light of your countenance O Lord," that is, the image of the Trinity, "upon us," that is in the soul, which is above the body.

Morally. [Moral sense] Here we are instructed if anyone of you has the image of God in the soul, how worthy and reverently must you preserve the image of Christ. A traitor and infidel is the one who slices with a knife or burns with fire, or throws into the garbage, the image of Christ or of the Virgin Mary. You all would say, "O traitor, wretch," etc. The rational soul is

more properly the image of God than any painting. And some tear at it, like angry and vengeful murders. If it is said "O he killed my father." Response. If he is a traitor, therefore you are a traitor, and ought to be punished by God, in this world or the next. Therefore, God says, "Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed," and he gives the reason, "for man was made to the image of God," (Gen 9:6). Note "his blood shall be shed," this is understood either by a judge through a just sentence [per iustitiam], or by himself through penance. Who therefore kills or consents in the death of his neighbor, is a murderer, if outside of or contrary to the judgment of a court, etc. By self-penance one sheds his own blood with a whip. Others do not cut the image of God, but cast it into the fire, like the greedy, because avarice is like a fire which burns in the heart of the greedy person to get more either by charging excessive interest or through robbery, etc. About this Christ says, "Take heed and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses," (Lk 12:15). Note "of all," universally. Others throw the image into the toilet, like the lustful. What is lust but stinking excrement? [stercus putridum] Howsoever lust happens, it is damnation, but the marriage act can happen without any sin, moreover also sometimes with merit, but sometimes with mortal, sometimes venial sin. This is said against those who say simple fornication is not a sin, and against notorious prostitutes. Therefore, scripture says, "My son, keep thy soul in meekness, and give it honor according to its desert," because the image of God is worthy of honor, "Who will justify him that sins against his own soul? and who will honor him that dishonors his own soul?" (Sir 10:31).

Through Redemption

Second, God gives a sign of the Holy Trinity in the material body, and this through redemption. The sign which Christ receives on the day of redemption, which was on the day of Good Friday, is the cross. Just as the king of Aragon takes for his crest [red and orange] stripes, the king of France, the fleur de lis, the king of Castile, the lion and castle. So Christ the king of heaven and earth takes the sign of the cross, on which he was hung for our redemption, so no one believing him or obeying him would be suspended on the pitchfork of hell. About this the prophecy, "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and will set up my standard to the people."

(Isa 49:22), namely of the holy cross. Therefore, in this physical sign, both visible and audible, God gives the sign of the Trinity, because when you sign yourself, you say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen," "In the name" Behold the unity of essence. He does not say "in the names." The holy doctors say that if when the priest baptizes, he would say, "I baptize you in the names, etc.," he would not [validly] baptize. About this see St. Thomas [III, q.66, a.5, ad 6m.](#) And in 4 Dist. 3, a.2, q.1 ad 9m. Therefore, Christ said to the apostles and disciples, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Mt 28:19). He does not say "in the names." When he says "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," clearly he says the Trinity of persons.

Also, with respect to sight and hearing in the manner of signifying, he points out this manner of signifying, when it is said, "In the name of the Father," the hands are held high. Reason because the father never was sent from another, but he himself existing on the throne of his eternity sent his only-begotten son into the virginal womb, just as the sun gives out its ray, and nevertheless does not return from it. Therefore, when it is said, "and of the Son," you ought to hold your hands over the womb, when it is said "and of the Holy Spirit," the hand should be guided across from shoulder to shoulder, because the Holy Spirit was dispersed over the apostles and the disciples of Christ on the day of Pentecost. When you say "Amen," the hands are joined signifying the unity of essence. Some err much in their way of signing, when they say, "In the name of the Father," [longe faciunt dicentes] they make long saying that the Father is greater, this is heresy, because in this Trinity nothing is prior or posterior, nothing more or less. But all the three persons are co-eternal to each other and co-equal, as Athanasius says. Other put the Son on the right because the article of the creed says "He is sitting at the right hand of the Father." But this is wrong, because the Son and Holy Spirit are on the right hand of God, because to be on the right hand of God is nothing other than to be equal to God the Father. Others place the Holy Spirit on the right hand [a dextris], saying that on the left is the devil who then is struck down. And this never is found in the book of any authority. Therefore, the good way of signing is that about which you, etc.

And of this sign the Church says,

Signus salutis	Sign of salvation
Salus in periculis	Safety in dangers
Vitale lignum	Living wood
Vitam ferens omnium	Bearing the life of all.

(Hymn for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Salve crux sancta, Hymn of King Henry II)

Morally. Here it is clear that they err who do not sign themselves with the sign of Christ, but of the devil, as many clergy and laity do. What kind of injury would there be to a king if someone would remove from his palace his coat of arms, and place there the sign of his enemy? The standard [signum] of Christ is the cross, the sign of the devil is the circle or wheel. Authority: "The wicked walk round about," (Ps 11:3) David says. The palace of Christ is the body of a Christian, on which is placed the sign of the Cross of Christ the king, in baptism. But when you sign by making a circle, then you remove the sign of Christ from his palace, and you place there the sign of the devil. You ask, when you arise from your bed, how do you sign yourself? "In the name of the Father" etc., and then make a circle. Also, when you go to eat breakfast. Sadly, we include even some priests, who in the blessings of salt and water and bread make the sign of the devil, etc. What is worse even at Mass, and even when after Mass they give the blessing to the people which has great power from the presence of Christ. Some give the blessing with the sign of the devil by making a circle, saying, "In the unity of the Holy Spirit may the Father and Son and Holy Spirit bless you, Amen. Think how much the removal of his standard would have displeased the king, even more it displeases Christ. On this account David said in the Psalm, "O God, why have you cast us off unto the end: why is your wrath enkindled against the sheep of your pasture?" (Ps 73:1) Note "Why have you cast us off," etc. The Holy Trinity replies. "We do not see our signs." No longer is he a prophet, i.e. the priest prophesying, truly making the sign of Christ, therefore let this wicked vice be corrected.

Through Salvation

Third, I said that God gave the sign of the Trinity in the spiritual life, which was given through salvation, For the spiritual life, holy and good, is only one from its beginning up to the end, nevertheless it has three parts, so that a man is well ordered. First with respect to God. Second, with respect to his neighbor. And third, with respect to himself. And just as there is one God in

the Trinity of persons, so there is one spiritual life with three aspects [ordinationibus]. Behold the sign of the Trinity.

Of this sign Bernard says, "Signs have been given and certain indications, and manifest indicators of salvation that it is indubitable that one be of the number of the elect, in whom those signs remain. You know when you shall be well ordered regards God, when you bear honor and reverence to God. Then indeed the vassal is well ordered regarding his lord when he speaks reverently of him, so we regarding God by not swearing, not denying him, or blaspheming. Therefore you should not wonder if you have a bad time etc. [malum tempus] But I wonder that you do not fall into the abyss because of blasphemies, which you have done. From this God the Father is sought out, saying, "The son honors the father, and the servant his master: if then I be a father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear, says the Lord," (Mal 1:6). Let there be an law against oaths. Everyone should cry out against those who swear, just as against a wolf. etc.

Second, good order regarding the neighbor is not to harm the neighbor neither in damaging him in his goods, nor in reputation, nor in his person, but to foster benevolent love regarding him. Therefore, it will be necessary to avoid the game of dice, which game of dice very much harms the neighbor, in his goods and in body and also in the soul. Therefore, the Son shall judge them, because injury is done to him, who comes to save souls. The Father "has given all judgment to the Son. That all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father." (Jn 5:22).

The third good ordering, regarding oneself, consists in this, that after you have labored on Monday and Tuesday etc., you rest on Sunday, avoiding doing secular things. You should not walk through the market, unless absolutely necessity. You should not be doing business nor making deals etc. Note: Some miracle etc. Let there be a law that feasts be observed, and you shall prosper. Such a law befits the Holy Spirit, who requires rest in the soul in which it dwells. Therefore, scripture says, "From henceforth now, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors," (Rev 14:13). Thanks be to God.

B319. First Sermon on Corpus Christi

1 Cor 11:23-27 Douay translation.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. 24 And giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. 25 In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. 26 For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come. 27 Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," (1 Cor 11:23)

This word we have verbatim from 1 Cor 11 and it has just been recited in today's epistle. Since the whole feast today is about this holy and glorious sacrament of the altar, so also shall be our sermon. And we shall have many good ideas for the enlightenment of the mind and the consolation of the soul and some moral advice for the correction of life. But first the Virgin Mary is hailed.

For the declaration of this passage and the introduction of the material to be preached it must be known that the entire belief of the heart which we have of this holy sacrament and the verbal expression which we make of the same ought all to be founded on holy scriptures. So that our heart ought not extend itself more for believing nor the mouth for speaking unless to the extent that we have it from holy scriptures. The reason is because of the height and transcendental sublimity of this sacrament, which exceeds all natural understanding and philosophical science and all the powers of nature. So, whoever wishes to believe of this holy sacrament, or speak according to natural understanding, or philosophical knowledge, or the powers of nature would err and fail in many ways. Just as someone who would wish to count according to understanding how many palms or cubits [measures of length] there are from here to heaven, or how many steps from the east to the west, or how many grains of sand and drops of water there are, that person would err and fall short. And so scripture says, Eccl 3,

"Seek not the things that are too high for you," i.e. for the natural intellect, "and search not into things above your ability," namely philosophical knowledge, "but the things that God has commanded thee," (Sir 3:22), which is his mouth having two lips, namely the two testaments. Above is the New Testament, below the Old Testament. Therefore, the Lord says, "If you will separate the precious from the vile, you shall be as my mouth," (Jer 15:19). "Think on them always," (Jer 15:19).

So now, dismissing natural and philosophical reasons, I shall accept proofs [auctoritates] only from sacred scripture, because I do not want to say anything but what the Lord says in sacred scripture. And then I shall be able to speak the theme: "For I have received of the Lord," not from a philosopher, nor from Virgil nor by natural genius, but by the Lord, namely from sacred scripture, "that which also I delivered unto you," (1 Cor 11:23). The theme is clear. Among other wonders and secrets of this sacrament there are five principal ones, which I shall now speak about to you according to sacred scriptures.

- First, is the substantial change [mutatio substantialis],
- Second, is the work of the priest [operatio sacerdotalis],
- Third, the sacramental indwelling [habitatio sacramentalis],
- Fourth, the sense perception [perceptio sensualis],
- Fifth, the usual reception. [receptio usualis].

In this are the heights and difficulties of this sacrament. If it is said, "Whence do you have this brother." The theme replies: "For I have received of the Lord," and now I shall give it to you.

Substantial Change

The first wonder and sublime secret of this holy sacrifice is the change of substance. There is a double change, one is accidental, the other substantial. Accidental change is when the accident or quality changes in a creature, the substance remaining the same, as is the change from whiteness into blackness, or from health to illness, or from hot into cold, or from smallness into largeness like a child changes, but the substance remains the same. Such changes are said to be "accidental." Substantial change is when not only the accidents but also the substance changes, as if mud is changed into gold, or lead into silver. Not only accidents are changed but also the

substance. In this sacrament however, only substantial change happens and not accidental, because the substance of bread and wine do not remain once the conversion is done, but their accidents remain.

In this sacrament two rules of philosophy fail. First that which says that whenever substantial change happens accidental change also happens. Reason, because accidents don't migrate, that is, pass from subject into subject, because if mud is changed into gold, even its quality is changed. But in this sacrament it is the opposite. Because the substance of bread by the power of words is changed into the body of Christ, however the accidents are not, because the same whiteness and quantity and roundness, smell and flavor remain as before. Now in this sacrament by governing yourselves by the rules of philosophy, it is necessary to err and fall short. When the change is accomplished, we adore, but we do not adore that which we see, neither the whiteness nor the roundness, but Christ true God and man contained within, as truly and really, as he was in the womb of the Virgin or as he is in heaven. On this see St. Thomas [III, q.75, a.1](#). For just as soldiers adore the king behind the curtains, when he hears mass, although they do not see him, so we adore Christ under those accidents as if existing beneath the curtains.

A second rule of philosophy fails also in this sacrament, which says that no substantial change is total, because there always remains prime matter, which the Philosopher calls "hyle". Because if mud is changed into gold, the prime matter which is the term from which [terminus a quo, the mud], is the same with that which is the term to which [terminus ad quem, the gold], because the matter of all generable and corruptible things is the same. In this holy sacrament these rules fail, because nothing remains of the matter, nor of the substantial form of bread, because it entirely is changed into the body of Christ. On this see St. Thomas [III, q.75, a.5 & 6](#). So therefore it is necessary that man not rule himself here with philosophical rules which are lacking, but according to holy scriptures, in the Psalter, which says, "This is the change," namely the substantial, "of the right hand of the most High," (Ps 76:11) Natural changes are from the left, but this [is], "of the right of the most High." And it follows, "You are the God that does wonders," (Ps 76:15), namely the aforesaid. It is the same for the change of wine in the chalice into the blood of Christ.

Morally [using now the moral sense of scripture], you have here the teaching that you ought to adore Christ in the consecrated host without doubt and without condition. Some persons, presumptuous and shameless, fall into error saying when they adore, "I adore you, if you are Christ. [This deserves] Neither thanks nor gratitude [Nec grates, nec gratias] because even a stick or stone or dog can adore in this way, with conditions. So you should adore without condition. Reason, because condition includes doubt, and God wishes to be adored firmly with a whole heart, spirit, will and devotion. So David: "Bring up sacrifices, and come into his courts: adore the Lord in his holy court," (Ps 95:8-9). Note, "bring up sacrifices," here he speaks to the priests. "And come into his courts," here he speaks to the people. "Adore the Lord," namely both priests and people. "In his holy court," i.e. in the heart, without doubt and without condition.

Should someone say, "If the priest did not say the words, or if he had not been ordained, he did not consecrate, therefore," etc. I reply that the priest alone shall be damned, and it is not a danger to you. Thus you should adore without doubt, although you habitually have in your heart this, that if you would know the opposite that you would not adore, and this suffices. Nevertheless, this ought not to be expressed in words, but you ought simply to adore. See the first wonderful secret, which is, "For I have received of the Lord," in scripture, and "...I delivered unto you," (1 Cor 11:23)

Priestly Work

The second wonder of this sacrament is the priestly operation [operatio sacerdotalis]. The priest living here on earth has the power to open the heavens and make the Son of the Virgin Mary descend onto the altar into his hands. A great wonder is attributed to Moses, who made manna come down from the air, as we read in Ex 16:13. And of Elijah who made fire come down from the sphere of fire to burn the two squads of fifty soldiers, as we read in 4 Kgs 1, (Cf vv. 9-12). This wonder is greater, because the priest makes Christ descend not from the air, nor from the sphere of fire, nor from the heaven of the moon, nor from the heaven of Mercury, nor from the heaven of Venus, nor from the heaven of the sun, nor from the heaven of Mars, nor from the heaven of Jupiter, nor from the heaven of Saturn, nor from the heaven of the stars or firmament, nor from the crystalline heaven, but from the empyreal heaven. Behold, the priestly operation.

You know that when the Virgin Mary, greeted by the angel Gabriel, consenting, said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," etc., (Lk 1:38), at the last word, the heaven was open and the Son of God descended into her womb, and the angel and the Virgin adored him in the womb. Just as the voice [literally, the mouth] of the Virgin opened up heaven, so also does the voice of the priest, and more excellently. It shall not displease the Virgin Mary if I speak the truth, because the Virgin in opening heaven had to say eight words. [Ecce ancilla Domini : fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.] First, "Behold," second "the handmaid," etc. until she said the whole, and then the heaven was open and she conceived. The priest says only five words [Hoc est enim corpus meum], and when he says the last word, namely "meum" then heaven is opened and Christ is in the host. Also, the Virgin Mary opened heaven only once, but the priest, every day, and at every mass. Also, in the womb of the Virgin it was a baby that descended, not as large as an ant, and vulnerable and mortal. In the host he descends as large as he is in heaven, as he was on the cross, neither vulnerable nor mortal but glorious and invulnerable. Gregory: "Who of the faithful can have a doubt, in that hour of sacrifice, at the voice of the priest the heavens are opened, in that mystery of Jesus Christ the chorus of angels are present, the highest associate with the least, earthly things are joined to heavenly, and the same happens from visibles as well as invisibles," (Gregory the Great, Dialogues IV, c. 58), and it is found in [Gratian] *De Consecratione, dist. II, canon. 73: "What be the blood," vers.: "Who of the faithful."* Note how 'the heavens are opened' is understood like the telling of a secret. It is said. "He has opened his heart to me," not that it is wounded or divided, but because a secret is revealed. So, Delilah says of Sampson to the Philistines, "Now he hath opened his heart to me," (Judges 16:18). So, of the Son of God who is hidden in the empyreal heaven, when he descends into the consecrated host, that descent is said to be the opening of the heavens. "This is the bread that came down from heaven." If anyone eats of this bread, "he shall live forever," (Jn 6:59).

If someone says that Christ descends from heaven into the host, and so he departs from heaven, I reply that he does not leave heaven. For this note two comparisons [similitudines]. First, with a house having a hundred windows or even a thousand windows, in which the rays of the sun enter, and nevertheless they do not depart from the heaven. So Christ, the ray of

God the Father, descends into each host, and nevertheless does not leave heaven. Second, with my voice, which is in each of your ears. You see already how many ears there are here. Now I believe that each of you has two, etc. and in each of them is my voice, and nevertheless it doesn't depart from me. If a corruptible and transitory word can be in that way, how much more the eternal Word about which John wrote: "In the beginning was the Word," (Jn 1:1). Thus, David says, "The Lord is in his holy temple," and at the same time, "the Lord's throne is in heaven," (Ps 10:5). If the pregnant Virgin was the temple of God, so also the consecrated host is pregnant. The temple of God can be said where there are angels, as Gregory says, because a king does not travel alone, if we would not have eyes half-blind nor ears plugged up we would see and perceive them singing. Just as some saints, like St. Thomas Aquinas of the Order of Preachers, who composed today's [Divine] Office, in which we sing:

Panis angelicus	The Bread of Angels
fit panis hominum;	becomes the bread of men;
Dat panis coelicus	The Bread of heaven
figuris terminum:	ends all prefigurations:
O res mirabilis!	What wonder!
Manducat Dominum	Consumes him, the Lord,
Pauper, servus et humilis	a poor and humble servant.

Morally [the moral sense of the passage], it is clear how pure the priest ought to be, who has a judge and is surrounded by angels, and his hand and fingers are filled with angels. If he is good, the angels say, "O blessed one, you have a greater grace than we," etc. If he be evil, lustful, have a mistress [concupinarius], a gambler [lusor], the angels say to Christ, "Lord do you want us to kill this traitor?" Christ responds, "I do not wish the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live," (Cf Ez 18:23).

The next question which you already have strong in your hearts is this: If the priest be a man of evil life, lustful etc, does such a priest have that power of consecrating? For we all agree the good priest does. I respond that both the good and the bad priests, by saying the words, truly consecrate. For this, note the similarity between two pipes, gold and wood, through which water from the same spring flows into the garden to water the cabbages.

Which cabbages will do better? Is it not just as beneficial from the one [pipe] as from the other, from which comes the same water? For the goodness of the cabbages is not from the virtue of the pipes, but from the virtue of the water. So it is in our situation:

The spring from which the water of the whole world and knowledge flows is Christ. "The word of God on high is the fountain of wisdom," (Sir 1:5). The pipes through which the water of consecration passes are the priests. The hosts are the vegetables or cabbages from the land, [made] of wheat, not from any other material. The gold pipe is the good and devout priest, the wooden is the priest of bad life, who has a mistress, simoniacal, raunchy [ribaldus], and yet each truly consecrates, not by the power of the priest, but of Christ. Christ then, in the end, becomes the lord of the garden, who after he has used the pipes, puts the gold pipe in a box in the treasury of heaven. "If any man minister to me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my minister be," (Jn 12:26). A pipe of rotten wood is thrown into the fire to be burned in hell. So the Apostle [Paul]: "But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord," (1 Cor 11:28). Where the Gloss says quoting Ambrose: "He is so punished as if he had killed Christ with his own hands." See this priestly operation, and from where do you know this, brother? "For I have received of the Lord," etc., (1 Cor 11:23).

Sacramental Indwelling

The third secret wonder of this sacrament is the sacramental indwelling. O wonderful it is that the whole Christ dwells in such a small quantity. You ask how is this possible? Again how is it possible that when the host is broken, the whole Christ is not broken, moreover the whole remains integral, even in each broken particle. Here all rules of philosophy fail. Nevertheless for your consolation I will show you a comparison to the eye, from your image howsoever large you may be, which is received whole in a mirror. If there were a hundred thousand or even more mirrors in front of you, your image would be in all of them. And if you break a mirror, nevertheless the image is not broken, but in each of its fragments it remains integral. Shall not God the Father be able to do the same with his image, who is Christ? Christ is the image of the invisible God. (Cf 2 Cor 4:4, and

Col 1:15). The host is a mirror, someone said. Is it not like an image in a mirror, which is not corporeal, and of Christ in the host, which has a real body? I say that always, because the glorified body is more subtle than an image which is prevented from entering the mirror by a little handkerchief [panno]. Nothing can impede a glorified body; [it is] more subtle than light, than a voice, than even an image. Therefore, once the words are pronounced, immediately the whole body is in the host, like the image in the mirror.

Therefore of this consecrated host it can be said "For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness," (Wis 7:26). " For she is the brightness of eternal light," with respect to the divinity which is there. For which it must be known that by the power of the word alone it is there, namely under the appearance of bread, the body of Christ, but from real concomitance the soul is also there, because the body of Christ is there as a living body, which is not without a soul, nor without blood.

If in the triduum [triduo, three day duration of Christ's entombment] the Apostles had consecrated, only the dead body of Christ would have been there, which was [its state] at that time. But now it is alive, together with the soul and blood and divinity. By the power of the words only the body is there, but concomitantly the soul is there with its excellences and the divinity with all its perfections. Just as if some lord had invited a certain great lord or prelate to dinner, and he had arrived with his shield-bearers, by virtue of the words of invitation., only the lord himself or the prelate was invited, but from concomitance or association the shield-bearers were also there. Thus, the priest by consecrating with the power of the words, consecrates precisely only the body of Christ, but the soul, blood and divinity follow him. Therefore, think what you eat, when you receive communion, because there is something greater there than all things corporeal, namely the body of Christ, something there more excellent than spiritual creatures, namely the soul of Christ, and divinity is also there, which is above everything which God made or will make or can make.

And so the authority says, "For she is the brightness of eternal light," (Wis 7:26), namely with respect to divinity. Therefore, the host is round, which signifies the eternity of God. And "the unspotted mirror," (Wis 7:26), with

respect to the soul. Therefore, the host ought to be most pure and white. "and the image of his goodness," (Wis 7:26). with respect to the body through which he accomplished his goodness in the work of redemption.

Morally, we have here a teaching which if we wish to receive communion in a dignified way, we have three, namely, the brightness of eternal light through true belief without error and false opinion. Secondly, the mirror unspotted through chastity. Third that we have the image of his goodness through firm friendship, because just as Christ did not wish to take revenge on his enemies, neither, out of your love of him, should you. Therefore Christ, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God," (Mt 5:9). Note "peacemakers" from its etymology, i.e. making peace, and cursed is he who impedes peace about which it can be said, "Damned are the warmongers, because they shall be called children of the devil."

Sense Perception

The fourth secret wonder is sense perception, because the bodily senses seem to be deceived about the Eucharist, because one thing is perceived, which is believed, because the eye does not see Christ, but whiteness, nor is Christ heard, nor smelled. Why this? Christ well could have made it that just as the image is seen in the mirror, also he would be seen in the host, just as by many saints he has been seen there. But he did not want this for two reasons. First out of necessity. Second out of usefulness.

Of necessity, because it is necessary to receive communion, because just as all our evil comes to us from the eating of fruit, about which it is said of the Virgin Mary, "Blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus Christ." And it would be disgusting to visibly eat human flesh and drink blood. But just as a doctor covers up the pills offered or the host, lest it be distasteful to fastidious people, so Christ our physician, whose flesh is the pill of our salvation, because otherwise we cannot be saved, unless through communion, he hides [his flesh] lest it be seen, nor is the flavor of flesh perceived, etc. See the necessity. About which the prophet Isaiah said, "And they shall worship you," in the consecrated host, "and shall make supplication to you: only in you is God, and there is no God besides you. Verily you are a hidden God, the God of Israel the savior." (Isa 45:14). Note "only in you is God," just this saying is exclusive, it excludes other

sacraments, in which God is not, unless figuratively. Only in this sacrament really and personally. About this see St. [Thomas III, q.75, a.1](#). He does not say "similarly" but "verily". "For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed," (Jn 6:56), is so construed. That meat is truly my flesh and that drink truly is my blood.

The second reason is from usefulness, for our merit. The article about this sacrament is of especially great merit, because of the difficulty of the senses, which judge the opposite from this which we believe. If indeed you believe that the host be white, you have no credit [grates] because your eyes can see it. But it is of merit to believe that Christ is there whom you do not see. Gregory. Faith is without merit where human reason provides experience. But it is of merit to believe because he says that really. He is not able to lie nor deceive. Therefore we offer him great honor by simply believing, saying: Lord although my intellect cannot grasp this mystery, nevertheless I believe from what you say. He says: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed," (Jn 20:29). Many saints have seen Christ in this sacrament.

Regular Reception

The fifth secret wonder is regular reception., because he permits and wishes not only to be adored by us, but to be received according to the use and custom of the church. Priests, well prepared, should celebrate every day. Devout people, with good advice, every month. Others once a year, namely by mandate during Easter, otherwise they will never be received into heaven. The angels say:

O res mirabilis!	What wonder!
Manducat Dominum	a poor and humble servant
Pauper, servus et humilis	consumes him, the Lord.

O what a great wonder is this. Why it was instituted, what usefulness does it have? I say that he instituted this for two reasons. First, for his honor. Second for our progress. It is an honor to the victorious king to be received faithfully in the castle which he acquired by conquest [quae bellando acquisivit]. And on the contrary it is a disgrace when they are not permitted to enter it. About which John said, "He came unto his own, and his own

received him not," (Jn 1:11). But indeed, they let cattle, chickens, and hens enter. The second reason is for our furtherance. If a king or a Pope show great gratitude when well received, how much more will Christ the king and Pope do likewise, from whose worthy reception Christians inestimably grow? David: "He has made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: he has given food to them that fear him " (Ps. 110:4-5).

B326. Second Sermon on Corpus Christi

"Do this in commemoration of me," (1 Cor 11:24)

This passage is found in 1 Cor 11, and is read in the epistle of the present octave. Among all the sacraments of the church, the sacrament of the Eucharist more expressly and properly represents and demonstrates for us the love and charity of Jesus Christ for us, and the passion and death which Christ endured for us. I wish to preach about this. The matter will be devout, but first the Virgin Mary is hailed.

The holy sacrifice of the altar has two conditions or properties. First that it is full truth [veritas plena]. Second that it is a true figure [figura vera]. About the first because Christ fully and really, true God and true man, in soul and glorified body, is in the consecrated host, just as he is in heaven, although by physical eyes he is not seen by us, nevertheless he is there truly according to the prophecy, "Verily you are a hidden God, the God of Israel the savior," (Isa 45:15). And he is speaking about Christ. In this respect we celebrated this feast yesterday.

The second condition or property, that it is a true figure of the passion of Christ, which most appropriately is represented for us in this sacrifice. Because just as Christ was elevated and crucified between two thieves, so the consecrated host is elevated by two hands, the left and the right, which signify the thieves. And just as now the body of Christ was white, drained of blood, so the white host is elevated. Therefore, when it is seen, the Christian should think, "In such a way was my redeemer raised up on the cross." And just as Christ offered his blood to the Father as the price for all believing in and obedient to him, so the priest offers the chalice. See how it is a true figure. Therefore, the Collect [Opening Prayer at the Mass] of this feast [reads]: "God, you gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of your suffering and death...etc." Therefore, the theme speaks about this sacrament, "Do this in commemoration of me," (1 Cor 11:24).

I find that by divine ordination, so that it be remembered by us, the sacred passion of Christ is represented to our five senses, namely to sight, hearing,

smell, touch and taste. The passion of Christ is represented to all parts of understanding, because the Philosopher says, that "Nothing is in the intellect, without first being in the sense." Whatever is in the heart naturally, has to enter through some part of the sense. Therefore, in every part he leaves a sign of his passion saying: "Do this in commemoration of me."

Sight

First, the passion of Christ is represented to the sight, because the Lord wished that crosses be erected not only in churches or religious places, but in Christian lands also outdoors along the roads. Reason. That when you pass by on the road and you see the cross, you remember the passion of Christ, saying, "O Lord for love of me you were willing to suffer on the cross." Do not think that the crosses are in church or on the road so that you would adore the wood or stone, gold or silver, as the Jews thoughtlessly allege, but so that we may adore Christ crucified whom they commemorate. For us it is like this story. If a father or brother of someone was impaled on a pitchfork, and then buried. When the brother or son of the one hung up walked by that pitchfork and saw it, he would be completely upset and disturbed in himself, thinking that on this pitchfork my father or brother was impaled. So for us when we see the cross, we should immediately think, that on such a cross the Redeemer, my father and brother, was hung, and we should adore, saying, "We adore you, O Christ, etc."

Isaiah the prophet, five hundred years before Christ, was saying, "All you inhabitants of the world, who dwell on the earth, when the sign shall be lifted up on the mountains, you shall see, and you shall hear the sound of the trumpet," (Isa 18:3). Note "when the sign shall be lifted up," he does not say "which sign." Therefore, when he says simply, "sign," par excellence, it is understood of the sign of the cross, just as when we refer to the "Philosopher" absolutely, we understand it to be Aristotle; when we say "Apostle," Paul is understood par excellence. The same in the matter of the sign of the cross. Note "the sound of the trumpet" because when a Christian sees the cross, immediately in his heart these three should sound, "Jesus of Nazareth, Son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner, etc." Behold the sign for the eyes for seeing, and for remembering the passion of Christ,

Note that for 1,500 years before the passion of Jesus Christ the Jews already were adoring the cross, as is found in Numbers 21. Note the story of the serpents, from the fact that the Jews were murmuring against Moses and Aaron. And God sent serpents, etc. Moses prayed to God for the people "And the Lord said to him: Make brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live," said the king that, "Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: which when they that were bitten looked upon it, they were healed." (Num 21:8-9). Behold the first sign. Therefore "Do this," namely, erecting a cross, "in commemoration of me," (1 Cor 11:24)

Hearing

Second, the passion of Christ is represented to hearing, that through the ears the memory of the passion enters the heart. Nothing indeed moves the heart of a creature to devotion and contrition of sins more than the memory of the passion of Christ, nor is there anything that so much inflames the heart for his love and delight.

Note the likeness to this, about those two great friends, very much alike, and it happens that one of them steals something, for which he is arrested and was sentenced to be hung [ad suspendendum]. Knowing this, his friend, out of great love could not to bear that his friend was to be hung. On this account he went to the jail, and dressed up in the clothes of his arrested friend, and returned to his captive friend saying, "Go. I out of love of you will be hung, so that you can escape." And so it happened, the thief escaped, and that friend was hung. Now it is told how much he was bound to love that friend. Now to the extent that whenever it is remembered or spoken about him, immediately he wept out of love.

So properly it is about our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, he and mankind are two friends, very beloved, to the extent that the love of Christ for mankind exceeds all love. Whence the Apostle, "...for his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us," (Eph 2:4). "For his exceeding." Note the excess of love. Mankind, because of theft, namely that of Adam, had been sentenced to the hanging of hell. But what did the Son of God do? Surely Jesus Christ, as that faithful friend, came to the prisoner of this world, in the incarnation, and put on the clothing of the robber, humanity, "Who being in the form of

God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man," (Phil 2:6-7), and gave his clothing to his friend. The clothing of Christ is sonship of God through eternal generation. This clothing of sonship he gave to his friend through rebirth in time, in baptism, "He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God? And the Word was made flesh," (Jn 1:12-14). And the Son of God was hung for his friend; nor was he known, "For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory," (1 Cor 2:8). See what a reason we have for loving Christ. Can we have a greater? Certainly not. Therefore, when we hear them speak of him, and of his passion, immediately our heart ought to be moved and inflamed with his devotion, and love, for his service and avoidance of sins, by which he is offended.

Of this the prophet David, "The Lord said: I will turn them from Basan, I will turn them in the depth of the sea. That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thy enemies; the tongue of thy dogs be red with the same," (Ps 67:23-24). Note the secret Basan, according to the Hebrew is the same as confusion. He is in Basan who is in the confusion of sins, because he keeps no order, neither of prayer, nor of confession etc., and like a beast goes about from sin to sin. Of such the Lord says "I will turn them from Basan, although they be long accustomed to sin, I the Lord will convert them." And how? He responds, "I will turn them in the depth of the sea" of contrition. Because contrition is nothing but the bitter sorrow for sins. For example, When the religious who lives independently [ad libitum] not keeping the rule, etc. And God gives him the grace for contrition saying: "O wretch! What will become of me," etc. Then he is converted from Basan in the depth of the sea. Same for the priest and the laymen and women.

And how does this conversion happen in the depth of the sea? The father says to the son, "That your foot may be dipped in the blood of your enemies," (v.24). The lowest part of the body is the foot, the highest is the head. So also, in Christ there are two parts, that is two substances. And the superior part is the divinity, like the head. And the inferior part is the humanity, like the foot. But these two substances alone make up one person. He says therefore "from Basan, converted, in the depth of the sea," And

how? That his "foot may be dipped," that is his body, which was dipped in blood, the head through the crown of thorns, the whole body through scourging, his arms and hand by his elevation. Same for the feet.

"And the tongue of thy dogs," Christ is the shepherd, his flocks are Christians. "I am the good shepherd; and I know... my sheep".(cf. Jn 10:14). A shepherd having sheep needs dogs, otherwise the wolves etc. These dogs are the preachers who bark at the wolves of hell. Therefore, the preachers should speak often of Christ's passion. Therefore, he says, "And the tongue of your dogs," i.e., of the preachers, preaching about the passion of Christ. So it is that the sinner is converted. Who would be so unfaithful and obstinate that when he hears that Christ so cruelly has suffered for me, that he does not avoid sins, lest he offend Christ? And so, from the enemies, that is the demons, the sinner is liberated, not by the preachers, unless instrumentally, but by him, namely we are freed by making peace, by forgiving injuries, by him, Christ, because from his example who was considerate of and prayed for his executioners.

Note here how there is a double remission, one necessary, the other voluntary. It is necessary to remit the hatred of heart and the desire for vengeance. Voluntary, that he seek justice, which justly he is able to accomplish. My heavenly father will hand you over to the torturers (cf Mt 18:34-35), because "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences." (Mt 6:14).

Smell

Third, the passion of Christ is represented to smell, namely in incensing. Why do you believe that incense is used in church on great feasts, unless to remind us of the passion of Christ? Therefore, when you smell that sweet scent of incense, you should think, what the scent and what sweet smelling sacrifice the soul of Christ offered in the passion, which with so great patience it sustained for God the Father and the holy angels in heaven and the holy fathers in limbo.

I find five similarities between the body of Christ and a thurible [the ritual incense burning pot].

- First because the thurible is closed on the bottom but open on the top. So, Christ was closed with respect to things earthly and mundane, because he wanted nothing, nor did he carry money. In Mark 11 it is said, "and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, he went out to Bethany with the twelve." (Mk 11:11), where the Gloss says that he looked about if perchance after he preached, he might be invited by someone to supper, otherwise at dinner time the Apostles would collect grain etc. Same in the late evening if he was not invited by someone to spend the night, he would go out to the desert to sleep, on the ground, because such was his heavenly desire.

- The second is because when the thurible is brought out of the shop it is shiny, but later because of the fumes of its fire it becomes dull. So Christ when he emerges from the shop of the virginal womb – the silversmith who made him was the Holy Spirit – he was beautiful, beyond the children of men. David, "As a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber," (Ps 18:6). But by the fire of the passion it became stained, when he was wounded with rods [scopis], he seemed a leper, beardless, so that when the Virgin Mary saw him, she didn't recognize him, according to the prophet Isaiah, "And we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised," (Isa 53:2-3).

- Third is because the thurible is perforated; so the body of Christ was entirely perforated in the head by the crown of thorns, in the hands and feet by the nails, in the side by a lance, in the whole body by scourges.

- The fourth is because the thurible is filled with burning charcoal, so the body of Christ [is filled] with the charcoal of that fire about which he said, "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled?" (Lk 12:49). Of which charcoal are charity, love, devotion, virtue, and the like.

- Fifth because the incense put in it burns with the such sweetest white smoke, so the body of Christ when that most blessed and purest soul came out of it gave off the sweet odor of obedience to God the Father, to the angels from their reparation, to the holy fathers from their liberation, the human race from the redemption, to the dead by the resurrection of the dead. See why in the churches incense is used, so that even through our noses the memory of the passion of Christ might enter the heart.

About this an authority. The text from Revelation 8, "And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel," (Rev 8:3-4). Note "another angel." Christ was not an angel, but the creator and Lord of angels. But "angel" is the same as "who is sent." And because Christ, as man, was sent by God the Father, therefore he is called "Angel". Just as a friar minor who keeps the life and rule of St. Francis is called "another Francis," and a friar preacher, "another Dominic," so Christ, sent by the father is called "another angel," and he comes, namely into this world and stands before the altar, where he offers sacrifice for our redemption.

There was a cross on the hill of Calvary positioned where he stood, because he was not moved unless the crucifiers said so. When they said to him "Drop [your] clothes," he said, "Gladly," and so for the rest. Having the thurible, namely his holy body golden from valor, i.e. by power, in his hand, because it was in his hand to die or not. "No man takes it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again," (Jn 10:18). And he had been given much incense, which were the prayers of the saints, because they all desired his passion. The Angels, that their ruin be repaired. The holy fathers, that they be liberated. "And the smoke of the incense...ascended," (Rev 8:4). This the Apostle says more clearly, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness," (Eph 5:2).

Touch

Fourth, the passion of Christ is represented to [the sense of] touch through penitential affliction. The sense of touch gives us knowledge of hot and cold, of soft and hard, and of smooth and rough, which neither by sight, nor hearing nor smell can be known, but only by touch.

- We then perceive the passion of Christ however by the sense of touch when we do penance, then we feel the hardness and harshness of the passion of Christ. When man suffers, he is contrite and weeps for sins, then

he perceives the passion of Christ, who when he was in agony, i.e. anxiety, "his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground," (Lk 22:44).

- Second when man after contrition goes to confession, where before the confessor, as if before a judge you accuse yourself saying, "Father, I have done this and this, etc." Then you touch Christ when before the judge he was accused saying: "This charmer did this and this etc. You sense how it is hard to be accused before a judge.

-Third when the confessor according to the quality of the sinner gives you a penance, and you accept the penance, then you touch Christ who accepted his sentence, that he be crucified. He did not appeal. John even says, that he carried the cross himself.

-Fourth, when you punish yourself with disciplines, then you touch Christ who was gravely beaten and, completely bloodied, was led to be crucified.

-Fifth, when you fast, you touch Christ who in his passion fasted, and at the hour of dinner the table was set for him. The table was a stalk of reed, sponge meat, and a drink of vinegar with gall.

-Sixth, when you persevere in a good life and penance, nor give up for any reason, then you touch Christ who chose not to come down from the cross when it was said to him, "If he is the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross etc. He saved others; himself he cannot save." (Mt 27:42). Neither out of revenge nor because of derisions did he abandon his prayer. Moreover he continued and said 150 verses. Behold how the passion of Christ is felt by the sense of touch. Mark 6 says, "As many as touched him were made whole," (Mk 6:56).

But some touch Christ in other ways, namely with the sword of the tongue by attacking, by cutting, swearing and denying, blaspheming. These are worse than the Jews who did not break a bone. Such touch is not penitential but criminal. Rulers, be warned, that this vice be corrected. Otherwise behold what God says to rulers, "They that rule over them treat them unjustly, says the Lord, and my name is continually blasphemed all the day long," (Isa 52:5). Therefore don't be surprised if you have troubles.

Taste

Fifth, the passion of Christ is represented to [the sense of] taste in communion. To this he orders this holy sacrament where those devoutly

receiving communion sense the sweetness of its savor on the palate of the soul. Christ in his passion sensed two flavors, namely a sweet taste and other a bitter taste, in diverse respects.

And who can know the bitterness of the passion of Christ? The holy doctors and spiritually St. Thomas says in [III \[q.46, a.6\]](#). No pain of martyrs can be compared to his, neither of Lawrence, nor of Vincent etc. Therefore, he said, "O all ye who pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow," (Lam 1:12). This sorrow was in the sensuality, in the lower part. But in the higher part, namely in the mind, he had the sweetness of glory, as much as he has now in heaven. So, in communion man should perceive these tastes. First the bitterness of the passion. Think that this consecrated host be a silver platter where that lamb, son of that blessed sheep, of the virgin, cooked on the spit [veru] of the cross, between two fires, fear and pain. So, the bitterness of the passion of Christ is perceived to the taste of the soul. "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come," (1 Cor 11:26).

The taste of sweetness is perceived in communion by thinking about the fruit and graces, which we have from communion. We grow in grace greater through communion, than from any other work, because from good works, although merits are multiplied, nevertheless not from any work whatsoever is grace augmented, just as neither does a child grow from any slice [bolo] of bread. But when man receives communion worthily, he always grows in grace. Therefore, David said, "O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet," namely to those receiving worthily, "Blessed is the man that hopes in him," (Ps 33:9). See why the theme says, "Do this in commemoration of me," (1 Cor 11:24).

B501. Sermon on the Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Matthew 7 Douay Trans.

21 Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.

24 Every one therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock,

25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these my words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand,

27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.

"He who does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Mt 7:21)

These words are originally from Matthew 7 and are read as this Sunday's Gospel. This text is the word and teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ saying, "He who does the will," etc. (Mt 7:21). We have here a subtle question. Why did Christ say that he who does the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven, and not **his** will, or the will of the Holy Spirit? For the response to this it must be understood that just as the three divine persons have but one essence, divinity and eternity, so also, they have only one will, knowledge and power. The will of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is one and the same. Whatever the Father wants, the Son and Holy Spirit also wants, because it is the same will. In this way it happens that it is said that the sun melts snow, and it is not said that the rays or the heat, although they all work together. Same if it is asked what causes things to ripen. It is said the sun, and not the rays or the heat, and there is only one sun. So also is it in divine things, where the Father is the principle, not **from** the principle. Therefore, it is said, "Whoever does the will of my Father," etc. And according to this the Apostle says: "For of him," of the Father, "and by him," the Son, "and in him," the Holy Spirit, "are all things, " (Rom

11:36). The response to the question is therefore clear, because by naming the will of the Father, he names also his own will and that of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, he says, "Whoever does the will," etc.

So that we may enter into the kingdom of heaven after we depart from the misery of this world, let us see what is the will of God, what God wants of us. The will of God the Apostle declares to us in a certain scripture saying, "you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable [beneplacens], and the perfect will of God," (Rom 12:2). In this scripture it is shown that God wishes three things for us, according to the fact that the will of God is threefold.

First, he wishes penitential conversion [conversionem penitentialem], this is the good will of God.

Second, persistence in virtue [durationem virtuaalem], this is acceptable [beneplacens].

Third, celestial salvation [salvationem caelestialem], and this is the perfect will of God.

Because he who has these three, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore he states the theme, "He who does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Mt 7:21).

Penitential Conversion

First, God wishes penitential conversion, because whoever a man is, whether he is religious, or a cleric, or a layman, if he be a sinner and of wicked life, God does not wish his damnation but he wishes his penitential conversion, that he turn his back to the world and to creatures, and turn his face to God. This happens through penance, through contrition for sins and a purpose of amendment, by confessing, by doing his penance, by praying, hearing masses and sermons. This is the good will of God.

For a wise silversmith, after he made a cup of gold or silver, or a statue or crown, or jewelry, with great labor and expense, and if by some chance it falls into a dry and deep well, the silversmith doesn't walk away from it. Rather he climbs down [there] because the thing is precious. So too if it falls into the dust, he will clean it. If it falls into the sewer or is scratched by rocks or broken, it is fixed in a forge. If it falls into water or into fire, or if it is stained from old age, he doesn't leave it because of this, but he polishes and cleans it, and then its beauty returns.

So, God acts. God made a precious treasure of pure gold when he made man and woman. From the beginning God made vessels of brass and copper, when he formed corruptible corporeal creatures. [He made vessels] from silver, when he created incorruptible corporeal creatures [heavenly bodies], but [he made a vessel] of gold when he made man. A man is worth more than any corporeal creature. So man was not made by God like other creatures, etc. "Let us make man," etc. (Gen 1:26). And he does not say, "Let there be man," like he said for the other creatures. Behold, the vessel of gold, if by some chance it should fall, etc. Man falls into the deep well of pride, by lacking the moisture of devotion. A proud man believes he can ascend and descend with Lucifer. But the silversmith himself descends lest he be lost, when he gives him compunction of the heart, and he thinks within himself, saying, "What are you proud of, of your courage? Tomorrow you will lose it. Same of beauty, of dignity, office, of good works." Then a man is rescued from the well, when he is humbled. Then the vessel of gold returns to the table, to the grace of God from which it fell. Therefore Joel, ch. 2 "Thus says the Lord: Be converted to me," (Joel 2:12).

Second, he falls into the dust of avarice, when he extorts interest [facit usuram], or robs, etc. David says, "Not so the wicked," like the just, "not so: but like the dust, which the wind drives from the face of the earth.," (Ps 1:4), but God like a good silversmith picks it up and cleans it when he gives to him a heart for making restitution.

Third he falls into the sewer, the excrement of lust, when he sins by leaving his wife, or vice versa. Same for those not married. But the good silversmith washes it, when the lustful person weeps for his sins. The sins are washed away by the water of tears and the blood of discipline. "This" the lustful one, "is he that came," supply to him, "by water and blood," (1 Jn 5:6).

Fourth it falls on hard rocks by the sin of envy, then the hard weld [coniunctio] which is charity is broken. But God, the good silversmith, repairs the weld, when he gives to him a heart sweet and benevolent and loving to all. So the Apostle states, "But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection," (Col 3:14). See, it is made solid and joined.

Fifth, he falls into flowing water from the sin of gluttony. Water emerges from a spring and flows to the sea, so the sin of gluttony is the fountain of lust, because the glutton immediately runs toward lust.

Sixth he falls into fire through the sin of anger, which is nothing but fire. The angry person says, "By the body of Christ!" etc. and "I shall take revenge," etc., but this fire is put out by the water of forgiveness and patience, forgiving just as God forgives us our sins.

Seventh he becomes rusty [rubiginosum] from the sin of laziness, because just as a house which is not lived in, falls apart by itself, so a person who wastes time. But God the good silversmith repairs it.

See why God wishes penitential conversion. Authority: "Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live?" (Ez 18:23). Note: "that he should be converted." Just as when he was in sin, he held his face toward sins, he is converted by turning his back to sins and his face to God. And this is the good will of God. The Apostle, Paul, says: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," (1 Tim 2:3). Note that he wishes all men to be saved. But you might ask, "Why does this not happen?" Response: because you do not wish to give up and draw back from your sins. Although God wishes all to be saved, nevertheless he does not compel free will. Therefore infidels and bad Christians, hardened in sin, do not wish to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. This touches the infidels, because if they are to be saved, they must first come to the knowledge of the truth. Behold why the theme says, "Whoever wishes to be saved," etc.

Sustained Virtue

Second, I say that God wants from us a sustained virtue [durationem virtutem], when it is said the "acceptable...will of God," (Rom 12:2). After man has converted to God, he should endure and persevere in virtue. Before a man chooses a good way of living he ought to think hard about it, look around and see what manner of good living will be better and more useful for him, so that he might be able to save his soul. If his own understanding

does not suffice for this, he ought to seek counsel from discreet and wise persons. And after he had chosen his state, he ought to remain in that chosen state and persevere.

But many because of inconstancy revert to a change of status. This is clear, first for religious. The Carthusians say, "What am I doing? I now make progress for myself alone. Would it not be better to preach? etc. Behold a diabolical temptation. They ought to say, "It is true that it is good to preach, but I have chosen this way, therefore in this religious order I wish to continue." The mendicant religious too say, "Because the order did not provide me with clothes, but only with food, and not very well, therefore I need to have benefactors [familiaritates]. Would it not be better for me to be a Carthusian?" And so, the heart does not rest. Therefore, people like these never have devotion. The clergyman says, "You have to have a woman as a housekeeper, etc", and it is an occasion of sin. Therefore, if you were a religious, you would not need one, etc. Also, the laity are tempted to move out of the city, that they might live well. And those who are outside [are tempted] to come to the city etc. Thus, the devil tempts them so that few there are who are able to live quietly and peacefully.

Therefore, a man ought to reform himself and persevere in virtue, because God wills it so. Authority: In John's last chapter we read that St. Peter asked Christ about John the evangelist, saying: "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus said to him: So, I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to you? "(Jn 21:21). This is a prefiguration of what I said, namely, perseverance in virtue [duratio virtualis], because "John" means grace, or "in whom there is grace." God wishes that those who are in grace endure, and persevere. "If I wish him to remain? Lord, for how long, through the year or for many years?" He replies, "till I come," namely, in death. See the perseverance in virtue.

Note here the example of St. Benedict. A certain canon regular, having heard of his fame and that of his order, came to him seeking that he receive him in his order, because his own order was very lax. etc. St. Benedict replied saying, "The religious order [religio] of St. Augustine is as good as mine, so you should not change." The canon, now indignant, thinking strongly that St. Benedict was not pleased at his wish to enter his religion, responded asking, "Why therefore in your books do you praise the

perfection of life, if you do not want to receive me?" And Benedict said, "I praise the perfection of life, but I do not approve of the change of status." So, the Apostle, Paul, " Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called." (1 Cor 7:20). So God wishes.

Therefore, David said after he had returned to God, "O Lord, in your favor, you gave strength, or fortitude to my beauty (namely to my status, or spiritual life)," (Ps 29:8). So it is the acceptable will of God. David, "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him: and in them that hope in his mercy." (Ps 146:11). Note "in them that fear him," namely who fear to change their state, because just as the tree which is transplanted, dies, or nearly dies, so for a person who changes state.

Heavenly Salvation

Third, I say that God wants heavenly salvation for us all. Note, the sequence: first he wishes conversion; second, perseverance; third, salvation, because for this end he created us. Every agent intends to bring his work to the end for which it was made. So Christ said of himself, "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost," (Mt 18:11). A is lost in this life in which God placed us, but God in flesh comes showing us the way to paradise, saying, "This is the way, walk in it: and go not aside neither to the right hand, nor to the left," (Isa 30:21). O, the people say, if I should travel on this path, I would not be rich. Therefore, they extort interest, defraud, rob and so on with the other sins. See how they perish against the will of God, who does not wish to compel free will. So Christ says, "Even so it is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Mt 18:14). Therefore, God wishes heavenly salvation, and this is the perfect will of God, which leads to paradise. "He, who has begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus," (Phil 1:6) namely in death, when he receives the soul from the body.

C387. Sermon on the Tenth Week of Ordinary Time: Call of Matthew

Mathew 9 And when Jesus passed on from hence, he saw a man sitting in the custom house, named Matthew; and he saith to him: Follow me. And he rose up and followed him.

10 And it came to pass as he was sitting at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.

11 And the Pharisees seeing it, said to his disciples: Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?

12 But Jesus hearing it, said: They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill.

13 Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners.

"For I am not come to call the just, but sinners," (Mt 9:13)

The official Gospel reading is this. Today's feast is great, if you wish to consider the person, because he is the first apostle and evangelist and glorious martyr, because about the apostle per se there is a feast, and about the evangelist per se, and of the martyr per se, therefore there are three reasons which come together to make this a great feast. Our sermon shall be about it. Let the Virgin Mary be hailed.

The proposed text is that of our Lord Jesus Christ saying, "For I am not come," etc. At first glance already you can see that this text has a problem, for Christ who loved both the just and the unjust, as well as the wicked and sinners, said, "For I am not come," etc. So a clarification is necessary, and so we shall enter the matter to be preached by declaring. Now listen. Such a difference I find between the just person and the sinner, just as between being near or close to God, and distant from God. The just man, good and god-fearing is so near to God that no creature is closer to him, neither his coat nor shirt nor skin is closer than God. And with respect to the understanding, because just as air at noon is near to light because it is entirely illuminated by the sun, so God is near to the intellect of the just and good, by enlightenment [per illustrationem], by illuminating the spirit, because the whole is filled with divinity, nor does he leave there the darkness of error, neither bonfire [usturam] of false opinions, to this extent, that not only are the just said to be luminous, but also to be light. "For you

were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord," (Eph 5:8). Also Mat 5: "You are the light of the world," (Mt 5:14).

Also, he is near to the will through charitable love, because just as you see fire around red hot iron, so the will of the just is inflamed by divinity for loving God above all things and your neighbor like yourself. "God is love: and he who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him," (1 Jn 4:16).

Also, God is near the just man with respect to life through honesty, and conversation, because just as a colored cloth is near to the coat or color, so the just person is tinted or colored with sanctity before God, with humble eyes, in ears hearing the things of God, in extending hands, in prayer, in the throat, through temperance in the body, by afflicting it, in memory of the passion of Christ. It is clear that the person is colored. etc. "You, O Lord, are among us, and your name is called upon by us," (Jer 14:9). Behold how a just person is near to God. So, David says, "The Lord is near to all who call upon him: to all who call upon him in truth," (Ps 144:18).

But the unjust person, the sinner, is far from God, not by a physical [locali] distance, because if so, the person would immediately be annihilated, but he is said to be distanced from a sinner by a formal difference, because just as it is said of two pieces of cloth, although joined, if one be fine and the other rough, they are said to be distanced, not locally but formally. So, it is of God and the sinner, because there is such a difference between so great a holiness and so great an iniquity. Therefore, David in Ps 118:155, "Salvation," Jesus, "is far from sinners; because they have not sought your justifications," that is your holiness [sanctitates]. It is clear therefore how the just are near to God, and sinners distanced from God.

Now it is clear that one who is near is not called, but he who is at a distance is called. This is what Christ was saying, "For I am not come to call the just." Reason, because already they are with him, although he shall come to save them, if they persevere, but sinners, that they be converted. The theme is clear.

This theme is generally appropriated to St. Matthew, apostle etc. I find that St. Matthew the evangelist, before his conversion was far from God, because he was unjust and a great sinner. Therefore, he was called by God

saying, "Come, follow me," (Mt 19:21). About this calling [vocationem] of St. Matthew four things must be said.

- First, his gracious calling [vocatio gratiosa],
- Second, the fruitful invitation [invitatio fructuosa],
- Third, the virtuous action [operatio virtuosa],
- Fourth, his glorious perfection [perfectio gloriosa].

Gracious Calling

As to the first, the manner of his conversion and calling was gracious. I have sought out how many jobs [officia] St. Matthew had, and I found that he had three bad jobs in this world, namely a dangerous job, a criminal job and a loathsome job.

The dangerous job is that of money lender, which he had. For in the city of Capharnaum which is on the lake, he kept the accounts, the money changer's table. The job is dangerous to the soul to handle so much money, because just as someone who handles oil, coal or fish is dirtied by them, so the one who handles money. And because of this the Scripture says, "He who touches pitch, shall be defiled with it," (Sir 13:1). Money is called "pitch." Reason, because it leaves lots of stains on souls of those handling money. First in their thoughts, and second in time wasted, occupied in negotiations. As a sign of this, coins, whether gold, or silver, then it is handled it leaves great stains on the hands of a man, because the reason is, that money lenders perpetrate frauds etc.

Second it is criminal, because it is usurious. So Bede says that after his conversion he distributed his property, because he used to seize things by usury. It is said that he used to lend ten for twelve, and so for the other kinds of usury, according to which it is required for profit to buy for less and sell for more,. Also by receiving profits by lending for collateral [super possessiones]. There are many who act in this way, and they excuse themselves saying, falsely, that the church permits it etc. This is contrary to the divine ordination, which would have it that all creatures freely distribute and share those things which God has shared with them. This is clear of the sun, which distributes light shared with it from God against darkness, and heat against cold, and its power to ripen. Same for fire which communicates its brightness and warmth. Same of the air for breathing, and water for

washing, and catching fish, the earth for plants etc. So therefore since the irrational creatures share, how much more should we? Therefore, there is a great sin in usury. This is the criminal job. But he who lends freely and without usury, is just, as the prophet says, "A man ...who has not lent upon usury...is just," (Ez 18:8,9).

The third job was loathsome [odiosum] and disgusting, because he was the tax-collector in the city of Capharnaum, collecting by law of the Emperor. Therefore, he is called a tax-collector, that is a publican, because he held the public office of tax-collector. This office is disgusting and loathsome, because sometimes he effects great injuries, from the authority which he has. Because of this reason, John the Baptist, to whom the publicans came asking "What shall we do that we may be saved?" replied, "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you," (Cf Lk 3:12). From these three jobs St. Matthew was distanced from God by three great distances.

But listen to how he was called – He was the sixth [apostle], because he [Christ] already had called five others – when Christ walked along the sea of Galilee, and St. Matthew was sitting at the counting table, at his great house by the lakeshore, taking care of his business, to be specific, about the business of collecting and changing money. Christ stood and looked at the publican, Levi by name, involved in his business, etc., who was unable to think either about God or about his soul. And Christ looked at him, that is regarded him attentively [attente respexit]. And St. Matthew, by the ordination of God, raising his eyes saw Christ before him, whom he did not know. But so great was the reverence and majesty of his sanctity, that Matthew gazed at him in admiration. Christ said to him, "Come and follow me." Immediately by divine power, the moment Christ pronounced these words, the ray of brightness illuminated his mind, and he recognized Christ to be the true Messiah, and his heart out of contrition for sins was saying, "Here am I: for you did call me," (1 Kg 3:9). Immediately, leaving everything, he followed him, walking away from his books and accounts etc. Reason says that he said to Christ, "Lord, I give you thanks, you have selected me as a disciple," etc. You can well believe that Christ said, "Go settle your business. Return an account and a tally to your superiors, and arrange a settlement [diffinitionem], and take back what you have lent out, without usury. Receive back only the principle. Believe it. That is what he did, announce publicly if he was contracted with anyone in any way

whatsoever through usury, or injustice, that he would give satisfaction for all. This is the way of satisfying for public usury, otherwise for what is secret, restitution ought to be made secretly. Whoever wishes to enter into paradise should act in this way. The sin is not forgiven, unless the restitution is accomplished. It is the rule of jurists, *14, q.6 Si res.* and of the theologians. Do not be deceived saying, "I shall put it in a will, etc." This is said against those who say, "If I make restitution, I would have to come down in class. The same about the son's inheritance etc. Therefore, it is necessary to keep monies like an apple or pomegranate [*mala granata*], that you examine it lest it be spotted or spoiled etc. So should you yourself do when you receive florins or other goods. You should examine it saying to yourself, "Let us see whether this has the worms of usury, or the stains of theft, and should be thrown out by making restitution, otherwise it corrupts another and another," etc. Have no doubt about it, you will lack for nothing. So, David says, "I have been young, and now am old; and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread," (Ps 36:5). But of the usurer the same David says, "I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon. And I passed by, and lo, he was not: and I sought him and his place was not found," (Ps 36:35-36).

Fruitful Invitation

As for the second, namely the fruitful invitation. It is said how after he restored all, he remained at home and with some money from a just man, he wished to host a great dinner for Christ, so that he might do as religious do when they enter an order, etc. Of this banquet we read in Luke 5, "And Levi made him a great feast in his own house," (Lk 5:29). St. Matthew's name was Levi. The details of this banquet is told in the text of Luke 5, "And there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that were at table with them," (v. 29). The intention of St. Matthew was that these also be converted. This reason St. Jerome states. St. Matthew was thinking, "If he converted me who was so wrapped up in business, he can also convert these." It is told how it was arranged by Christ that the gates would be open and the apostles would sit near the doors, and Christ amidst the publicans said the verse, "The eyes of all, " (Cf Ps 144:15, the friars' prayer before meals), and he sat himself down at the table with them. Then was fulfilled the prophecy, Can. 2:3: "As the *malus*," that is the apple, "is among the

trees of the woods," namely without fruit, "so my beloved among the sons." And during the pause between courses [inter cibum et cibum], as happens in great feasts, Christ in the manner of a lecture was saying, "Now hear this, we ought to praise God very much, who has made so much for the service of mankind, namely all animals and all fruit." And those sinners listened carefully, and although at first they laughed, they began to weep etc. And after they had eaten the cooked food Christ said, "Now think if this corruptible food gives such a taste etc., what ought it be from the incorruptible food of heaven, because when the king gives to his servants such savory food, what are those foods which he keeps for himself?" So, from these publicans many were converted to God and wept. Also after they ate, cooked in water, so much so that it is believed that all of those were converted. Such was the power of the words of Christ. And when they were almost at the end of dinner, the Pharisees looking in, because the doors were opened, said to his disciples, because they were eating near the door, "Why [does your master] eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" (Lk 5:30). As if they were saying. "It is clear what he is like. Tell me with whom you go with, and I will tell you what you do." Hearing this Christ called them to him. And they, puffed up, were before him saying, "What do you want?" Christ said, "You say to me when in a certain city there are many sick, who needs a doctor, the healthy or the sick?" And they, understanding, preferred not to respond. And Christ, "Do you not wish to answer? I say to you, the healthy do not need a doctor, but those who are ill." (Cf. Lk 5:31). This one was sick with pride, and now is cured, and that one with avarice, and so of the others. Therefore, Augustine says, "The great doctor from heaven comes to us, because great is the one lying sick through the whole world. Then he says, "I came not to call the just, but sinners," (v. 32). And the Jews, in confusion, withdrew. Clear then is the fruitful invitation, for because of the fact that he was converted, he worked to convert others.

Morally [in the moral sense of scripture], we have here a teaching how each of us ought to care if he is on the way of salvation, about his family, about his neighbors, a husband about his wife, and vice versa. About the family, that they confess, and receive Communion at Easter, that they attend Mass and hear sermons, and not work on feast days. "But if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," (1 Tim 5:8).

Virtuous Operation

As for the third, namely, virtuous action, or virtuous operation, namely of the works which he did after he was converted. It is said how after the resurrection of Christ, the ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit, the apostles divided up the world for preaching and converting mankind etc. And St. Matthew went to Ethiopia preaching, and working miracles, illuminating the blind, and so for the others. And he converted many peoples to Christ. Behold the virtuous actions, or the virtuous operations.

It is said that once when he was preaching that there was a great tumult and wailing in the people of the death of the only son of the king. And when the tomb was being prepared, a certain Christian, the eunuch whom Philip baptized in Acts 8 went to the king saying to him that a holy man was in the city, who could raise him from the dead, etc. The miracle is told as is found in the History. And the prophecy was fulfilled, "I called him alone, and blessed him, and multiplied him," (Is 51:2).

If you wish to learn morally through a question, what was the reason why St. Matthew alone converted that nation, namely all of Ethiopia, and Egypt, and since now there are so many preachers, what is the reason why we are not converting the Jews of today, etc. It is said that the apostles lived a holy life and preserved good teaching, and they wanted nothing more than the honor of God and the salvation of souls. So the Apostle said, "But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content," (1 Tim 6:8). In these times we are deficient in our lives, because we men do not wish to hear daily the miracles of the saints, etc., and neither do we [preach] good teachings, just that of the poets etc. Nor do we care for the salvation of souls, but only for things and friends, etc. The same for clergy selling sacraments. Not only are the infidels not converted, but even the faithful are scandalized [pervertentur] and lose their faith. Therefore the Apostle, "For all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's," (Phil 2:21).

Glorious Perfection

As for the fourth, namely the glorious perfection. For he was martyred, for the defense of a certain nun. First, the monastery, I have read [in the [Golden Legend](#)], was that which St. Matthew founded. It is said how after he

converted that land, the king which he had converted died, whose daughter, Ephigenia by name was with other virgins, dedicated to God by taking the sacred veil. And the king succeeding her father, a foreigner, wished to have her in marriage. The story goes, and how was it told to the king, that he would never have her unless with the permission of the apostle Matthew, because he was their prior. So the king called him saying that he would marry her. Then St. Matthew thought about it. If I tell him now, he might kill me, and my testimony would not be made known etc. Therefore he said to the king that on the following Sunday he would be at Mass [in officio] and he would there commend marriage. And so it happened. On the following Sunday the apostle said, how marriage was holy and instituted by God in the earthly paradise. Second, that it was honored by Christ in the first of his miracles. Third because from it the cathedral is filled, etc, namely of heaven. Fourth, it is conserving of human nature. Thus Christ wished that his mother have a spouse, etc. But afterwards he said, that a person would be a traitor, who would wish the spouse of the king to be given away as a wife etc. Note here well, in the legend, because of this St. Matthew was pierced with a lance and martyred.

It is said that it [marriage] with nuns and clergy is a sin, because it is a sacrilege. It is said to be like this, it would be a greater sin to throw the holy sepulcher of Christ into a latrine, than if the all the tombs of the saints were thrown in.

B895. Sermon on the Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time, Raising of the Girl and the Cure of the Woman

Mt 9 Douay transl. (from the Latin Vulgate used by St. Vincent)

18 And he was speaking these things unto them, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. 19 And Jesus rising up followed him, with his disciples.

20 And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. 21 For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. 22 But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, 24 He said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. 25 And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

"And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country." Mt 9:26

We have these words textually from Matthew 9. Our sermon will be on the holy gospel. If it pleases God, we shall have many good teachings etc. Let the Virgin Mary be saluted.

In the present sermon I wish take on the role of a gardener, who when he wants to spread seed or set good and useful plants in a garden, first arranges and orders them on boards [tabulis], then he plants the seed. So, I shall do. Reason, because in holy scripture. the holy gospel especially [singulariter] is called a closed garden, and not a field, "a garden enclosed" or shut. (Cf. Cant 4:12). Indeed, it would be an enclosed garden who would have the highest sides for its wall, and a narrow entrance and a good gate and strong bolts. So, the holy gospel is walled in with the highest wall, namely Christian faith, which ascends up to heaven, to the extent that no infidel, nor heretic, nor schismatic, can enter to destroy its fruits. The gate narrow and low [bassum] is humility. Therefore, no proud person can enter collecting the fruits of its secrets, nor by understanding. The firm gate is apostolic poverty, because of this it is although many may try, but nevertheless, they are not able to find the spiritual fruit, for a carnal person,

delicate [delitiosae] etc., cannot enter to eat the fruits of this garden, because they cannot taste its sweetness, because of the sweetness of vices they lose the taste and infect the palate, but it is open to the Christian, who with a humble heart and a poor spirit etc. such a one perceives its odor. Therefore Christ, who is the Lord of this garden, says, "Let my beloved come into his garden, " (Song 5:1). Note, "beloved," by Christ is the Christian, who in his heart has firm faith. Note, "into his garden." The gospel is the garden of Christ as owner [dominative], but it is said to be of the Christian finally [finaliter], because for it he was made. See how the holy gospel is called a garden.

Because of this in the garden of the gospel today I will dedicate three hours, according to the three principal parts, which it has according to the three excellences of Christ which are revealed in it.

- First is gracious humility [humilitas gratiosa],
- Second, virtuous kindness [benignitas virtuosa],
- Third, glorious height [sublimitas gloriosa].

In these however I shall not plant cabbages, nor spinach, but aromatic and powerful herbs of good doctrine. In the first I shall plant one aromatic herb which is called ethics or individual morality, for ruling one's own person. In the second another which is called general and political ethics, for ruling the community. In the third another which is called domestic or family ethics, for ruling one's own house. These plants shall be so sweet smelling [odoriferae], that I will be able to say, "And the fame hereof went abroad," etc.

Gracious Humility

I say first that in today's gospel the first excellence of Christ shown is that which is called gracious humility. This is shown in the first part of the gospel when it is said, "And he was speaking these things unto them, behold a certain ruler [princeps] came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus rising up followed him, with his disciples," (vv. 18-19). It is asked why Christ immediately followed this ruler [princeps], when in John 4:47-50, he rejected a vice-regent [regulus, little king] who asked to come?

Response, because this ruler had two [qualities], namely a firm belief in his heart that he could heal his daughter, as is clear in his petition saying, "But come, lay your hand upon her, and she shall live." Second, he had an ardent devotion to Christ. When he approached him, he adored him. These two [traits] immediately drew him. Note, an example from nature. The candle brightening and smoking, finally draws light to itself. Christ is called light, "He was the true light," (Jn 1:9). If therefore you have the brightness of faith in your heart, and the smoke of devotion, immediately you draw Christ to you. Apostle, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith," believing, "which works by charity," devotion, (Gal 5:6). Therefore, because that ruler had theist two, and the vice-regent not, therefore etc. See here the gracious humility of Christ.

So, this is the first part of this garden of Christ, laid out and ordered. Now we will plant the seeds of these aromatic herbs, namely of individual ethics, for ruling your own persons in a good life. And there are two, namely prayer, which preserves us from future sins. Second is confession, which purges past sins. Prayer is shown when it is said, "Behold a certain ruler came up," (v. 18) For he who wishes, etc., ought first approach Christ. He who wishes to supplicate the king, first approaches him. If it is asked, "And how can we approach Christ, since he is in heaven?" I say, it is not necessary that we approach him bodily, but intellectually, by thinking that you see him sitting on the throne. This is how a man approaches. And just as the one who speaks with the king, genuflects, and uncovers his head, so also in prayer, because the fact that a man approaches, he ought to pray. Therefore, it is said of the ruler, that he approached him, and made a supplication of him. See how he shows us to pray. Therefore David, "Come to him and be enlightened," (Ps 33:6). Whoever shall pray like this ruler, his prayer will be accepted; should he pray otherwise, he will not obtain anything. Here are the aromatic herbs, which preserve man.

Note here the example or miracle of the young merchant, devoted to the Virgin Mary, who every day by contemplating the twelve blessings [gratias] given to the Virgin Mary, according to the twelve parts of her person, said twelve Hail Marys. First, he thought about and was contemplating the head of Mary, filled with wisdom more than the patriarchs and the prophets, etc., and so he said the first Ave Maria. Then the eyes, how often she gazed at Christ. Third the ears, how she heard the sermons of Christ. Fourth the

nose, how she had sensed the smell of the body of Christ on the day of his birth. Fifth, her lips, how often she had kissed Christ. Sixth the breasts which had nursed the Son of God. Seventh the heart, filled with the fire of love. Eighth the arms by which she had embraced Christ. Nine, her womb, like the chamber of Christ. Tenth, knees, how she had prayed. Eleventh the legs, how she had journeyed at great effort when she had lost her son, when he was twelve years old. Twelfth, the soul filled with all perfection, and the body with penitential affliction. Note how when the aforesaid young man was going to the fair, on the way he came upon robbers, etc. From this miracle you are able to know how prayer made to God is an aromatic herb. Therefore, Christ said, "we ought always to pray, and not to faint," (Lk 18:1), every morning and evening.

Second this ruler demonstrated sacramental confession, which purges us from past sins when he said the words, "Even now my daughter is dead," (Mt 9:19). Immediately after mortal sin "my daughter, "that is my soul, "is dead." So for good reason and from good advice, sin should be confessed immediately, every day. Now many say, "I shall wait for Lent." and so a stain falls on your tunic. You should never say I shall wait for a year? Behold why he says, "Now dead?" Whoever does not wish to confess even in Lent, is punished first in the soul which is entombed in hell, second in body, because he should not be buried in blessed ground [the cemetery] *Extra de poe. et re. c. omnis. vide supra domi 18. ser 1, in fine.* [citation from Canon Law]. Note why the parish priest [curatus] ought to have in writing who confessed and who didn't. "He who hides his sins, shall not prosper: but he who shall confess, and forsake them, shall obtain mercy." (Prov 28:13) See why he says, "My daughter," etc.

Second, the first part says, "come, lay your hand upon her," (v.18). See here absolution. Before someone confesses, he is the dwelling of demons. For as many as he has mortal sins, so many demons he is said to have. Of St. Mary Magdalen the evangelists say that Christ cast out seven demons, that is seven mortal sins, because we don't read that she was possessed, but having made confession Christ came through grace. Therefore he said, "Come Lord." And Christ, "I shall come, etc.

It is the teaching of theology that in absolution not only does Christ come through grace, but also through a personal presence, and not only Christ but

also the whole Trinity. John 14:23, " If any one love me, he will keep my word," – namely that which he said through the lips of the Apostle James, "Confess therefore your sins one to another: and pray one for another," (Jam 5:16) – "and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him." See here the commandment of penance.

Penance is called the hand which has five fingers. The first is the thumb, and it is contrition of the heart. Second is the firm purpose of amendment. Third is penitential affliction, because just as the flesh was there the occasion of sin, so also it should do penance. Fourth is forgiveness of injuries, by thinking that you have inflicted major injuries on Christ. The doctors say that in this finger is the heart vein. Therefore, in weddings the ring is placed there, for reminding them that they should love one another wholeheartedly. The fifth is the restitution for injustices, both of reputation as well as of goods. Behold why he says, "Lay your hand," because thus God promises, "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he has committed, ... living he shall live, and shall not die," (Ez 18:21).

Virtuous Kindliness

I say second, that in the second part of the gospel is shown the second virtue of Christ, which is called virtuous kindliness [*benignitas virtuosa*], when it says, "And behold a woman," up to " from that hour."

"And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. 21 For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. 22 But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. vv. 20-22

See here the virtuous kindliness of Christ, because since this woman ought to be punished because she approached against the law, cf Leviticus 15, Christ not only did not punish her but even consoled her. And in this part should be planted aromatic herbs, namely political ethics, which are for the good rule of the community. And for this two points must be made. First, who is this woman who has etc.? This woman is the community, which abounds in notorious sins. Notable and notorious sins are called bloody in

sacred scripture. Authority: David, who sinned gravely by lust and homicide, because there are consequences, and he believed etc. Therefore, it was said to him: "Come out, come out, you man of blood, and you man of Belial," (2 Kg 16:7), and he asked pardon of God saying, "Deliver me from blood," Ps 50:16. How is this corruption of the community cured? I say by touching the cloak of Christ, which is sacred scripture. Reason, because just as by clothes a person is covered, so by sacred scriptures Christ. Therefore, the Jews alone saw the clothing. Of this garment Isa. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation: and with the robe of justice he has covered me," (Isa 61:10). Note when it is said in the plural, "with the garments," because sacred scripture is not contained in one book, but in many. Second, he says "with the robe of justice," because all sacred scripture is one, by which Christ is clothed. If therefore the community here suffers from a flow of blood, and already stinks of ill fame, and is slipping gradually and goes to destruction, the remedy is to touch the hem of Christ, namely sacred scripture, by doing those things which it says against the six deadly sins, and so it will be cured. The first sin is diabolical superstition. Second, blasphemy of divine things. Third the neglect of holy days. Fourth, gambling. Fifth, hidden orgies [lupanaria secreta]. Sixth criminal gangs. The community is not imperiled from secret sins.

Glorious Sublimity

Third, I say that the glorious sublimity of Christ in the third part of the gospel, where it says, " When Jesus was come into the house, " up to the end.

23 And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, 24 He said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. 25 And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

On this board [tabula] should be planted the aromatic herbs of economic teaching, for the good rule of the household [domus]. Christ does three things in the raising of this girl in which is shown the whole regime of the house. First, he casts out of the house the mourners, and those making a din, in which is signified the exclusion of bad associations. If you wish to rule

your house, you should drive the wicked out. Also, not only should you expel evil persons, but also evil customs. So if the family has a habit of not attending Mass, you should give them the opportunity, because it is necessary to render [to God] an account for them. Therefore scripture: " But if any man," i.e. the head of the household, "has not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he has denied the faith." (1 Tim 5:8).

Second, he "took her by the hand," (v. 25). See the protection of Christ. It shall keep your house in abundance and in peace and you can say with David, "You have held me by my right hand," of prosperity, "and by your will you have conducted me, and with your glory you have received me." (Ps 72: 24). Third saying to the girl, "Arise." Behold the collection [collatio] of spiritual grace, "Rise you who are sleeping, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten you," (Eph 5:14).

C238. On the Nativity of St. John, the Baptist

"The hand of the Lord was with him," (Lk 1:66) We have this text officially in the gospel of Luke chapter 1. The whole solemnity today is of this glorious and holy patriarch, prophet, martyr and friend of God, John the Baptist. Similarly, our sermon shall be about the same. God willing, we shall have many good instructions for the consolation of our souls and the correction of life. But first let the Virgin Mary be hailed.

This text, proposed as the theme and foundation for our whole sermon, says of St. John, that "The hand of the Lord was with him," (Lk 1:66) For a greater clarification of this passage, and as an introduction to the matter to be preached it must be known that in sacred scripture both in the old testament and also in the new is found that through the hand of God is understood the infinite power of God, through which all things are made. Just as we make things with our hands, and just as the hand of a man or woman has five fingers by which it functions, so the power of Christ has five attributes, like five fingers, by which God has made everything. The first is power, the second wisdom, the third mercy, the fourth grace and the fifth justice.

The first attribute of the power of God is called power, which is like the thumb. By this God makes the works of creation, heaven with the stars, the elements with their properties and contents, the compounds [*elementata*], namely men, grain, trees, mountains and valleys etc. The second is wisdom, like the index finger. By his the universe is governed, the heavens, the sun and moon. The third attribute is mercy, like the middle finger which is longer than the others, just as the mercy of God over all his works. David says: "The Lord is sweet to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works," (Ps 144:9). By this is fabricated the works of our redemption, because it was the greatest mercy to wish to be humiliated, that those believing in him and obedient might be exalted. He even willed to be hung on the wood of a cross, lest his own be hung over the furnace of hell. The fourth is grace, like the doctor feeling the pulse, enlightening him to knowing sins, and being converted and confessing etc. By this is worked out the works of justification of sins, as are the seven ecclesiastical

sacraments. The fifth is justice, like the little finger [*auricularis*, ear finger], because it now appears less than the others, for in this world the good are not rewarded, nor the wicked punished. By this is worked out the matter of retribution. Behold the five fingers of the power of God, by which God creates all things. Authority: "Who is ignorant that the hand of the Lord has made all these things? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all flesh of man," (Job 12:9-10). It is therefore clear that the hand of God is called his infinite power, by which all beings corporeal and spiritual, corruptible and incorruptible have been made. Since therefore the divine power has made wonderful things, and great excellences in St. John the Baptist, so says the theme, "The hand of the Lord was with him." I have found that the hand of the power of God has worked in St. John the Baptist five wonders, exalted and singular:

- The first is a glorious annunciation.
- The second, a virtuous generation.
- The third, a gracious sanctification.
- The fourth, a joyful manifestation.
- The fifth, a miraculous naming.

About these the theme speaks: "The hand of the Lord was with him," (Lk 1:66).

Glorious Annunciation

I say, first that the hand of the power of God has worked in St. John the Baptist a glorious annunciation, because before he was begotten or conceived in the womb of his mother, he was marvelously announced. The angel Gabriel himself, who to announced to the Virgin Mary the miraculous incarnation of the son of God, announced also to Zachary his father the birth of St. John. In fact Zachary, the father of St. John and Elizabeth his mother, had been married for many years, and they never had a child. Since however they both were feeble and old, just as Master Nicholas of Lyra says, but they were praying to God that he might send a Messiah promised to them, a savior of the world, because they were aware that the time was completed, and the prophecies, and they prayed as if wishing to say, since I was not worthy to have a child, at least, Lord, send the Messiah. And he while so praying, behold the archangel Gabriel appeared to him,

resplendent and shining, so much so that Zachary trembling was afraid, because the condition of the spirit whether good or bad is to be terrified and overwhelmed with fear when he appears. Reason: because from the weakness of the flesh we are not able to bear the sight of a spirit. And so St. Luke says of the Virgin Mary etc., "[she] was troubled at his saying," (Lk 1:29). However, a good angel immediately gives comfort. So immediately he said to him, "Fear not, Zachary, for your prayer is heard," (Lk 1:13), because the Messiah comes immediately and you shall see him. Also, I announce to you that "your wife Elizabeth shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his nativity. For he shall be great before the Lord," (Lk 1:13-15).

First he shall be great in the harshness of his life, for he shall not drink wine, nor any other inebriating liquor, nor eat bread or meat, or fish, or fruit, but his food shall be wild honey and locusts. His clothing will not be of gold, or silk, or wool or linen, but of camel's hide; he will not sleep on a bed, but on the ground, he will not dwell in the cities, but in the desert. Second, "he shall be great before the Lord," (Lk 1:15), in the holiness of his life, because before his birth he shall already have been sanctified. "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (ibid.). Third he shall be great before the Lord God in great usefulness, because, "he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God," (Lk 1:16), and to faith in the Messiah, and to repentance. Fourth he shall be great before God in dignity, because, "he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias," (Lk 1:17) because just as Elias is to come before the general judgment to preach against the Antichrist, so he shall come before the advent of the Savior, announcing him to the world and pointing him out. About this news Zachary had a special joy.

But considering his old age, seeing his hands wrinkled, thinking of the old age of his wife, and his sterility, he doubted. Here he failed, and he said to the angel: "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years," (Lk 1:18). The angel replied in the manner of a person indignant: "You doubt my words, I who cannot lie?" because a good angel cannot lie nor deceive, and he said: "In this you shall know the truth of what I am announcing to you. "you shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass, because you have not

believed my words,"(v. 20). And the angel withdrew. And Zachary remained mute. Behold here his glorious annunciation, because,"the hand of the power of God..." etc.

Morally. Here when it says that Zachary doubted, in which he erred, just like many people who doubt the secrets of the faith and divine truths, whom God revealed not only through the prophets but also through angels and through himself incarnated. But many say with Zachary "How can I know this? Wishing to dispute how it can happen that Christ so great becomes such a little consecrated host. Also how the host is broken and Christ is not broken. Arguments are natural. How can we know this? It is a great sin, especially because about this you have already an example in nature, namely in a mirror etc. And so [Ambrose](#) says (De Fide 1): "Put arguments aside where [faith](#) is sought." If one should say, doesn't Augustine and Thomas and the other doctors seek arguments? I say that reasons and arguments are good for bolstering understanding, but not for strengthening belief, nor as the basis of belief. If it had been said to St. Augustine, "Why do you believe there are three persons in the Trinity, and one God? Certainly he would not respond with such an argument or reason, but he would have said because thus Christ, true God and true man, preached and taught, and the apostles also determined. Therefore whoever now seeks an argument and reasons for the basis of faith, such with Zachary will be rendered mute at the time of the antichrist, because they shall fall immediately to him, because they make infinite reasons and arguments. But obedient persons, and simple shall stand firmly and securely. Our new things [nova] are pleasing to us, because our faith is not founded in arguments, but in obedience. And so Paul says: "And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power; That your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God," (1 Cor 2:4-5). Note "my preaching" etc., that is, I do not lay the foundations in logical or physical arguments, but in the power of God through faith and simple trust. And this is about the first wonder etc.

Virtuous Generation

I say, second, that the hand of the power of God operated in the virtuous generation of St. John, because he was begotten by his parents virtuously

and miraculously, because the power of his father for begetting was not sufficient, nor the power of his mother of conceiving, but the power of God supplemented, giving power to the father for begetting and to the mother for conceiving. Note, practically. This good man Zachary having completed his prayer returned home. He was indeed of the nobility of Jerusalem, and also Elizabeth his wife, and because of their old age they had already separated their beds. Each were sleeping by themselves alone in their own rooms. These holy old people observed this holy practice, because they cared not for carnal intercourse unless for the purpose of a child. And so when a woman was pregnant, they immediately separated their beds until the child was weaned. The same when they were old. This is found in the text of the bible, Genesis 18, the elderly Sara says and Abraham, an old man, when God promised them a son, "After I am grown old, and my lord is an old man, shall I give myself to pleasure?" (Gn 18:12). Zachary, therefore, coming from prayer, mute, entered his home and was not able to speak to his wife, nor to seek the debt by word, but by signs. And amazed Elizabeth was saying, "Hey, hey, hey sir, blessed God what do you have? What happened to you? Knowing nothing of the announcement of the angel, and she began to hug him. Think how the old Elizabeth wondered, but finally recognizing the will of her husband, she consented.

Note here that from the fact that they are married, one ought to consent to the other, whether they are young or old, nor ought one excuse the other because of some false devotion, otherwise she damns herself and the other. And so the Apostle writes: "Let the husband render the debt to his wife, and the wife also in like manner to the husband. The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband. And in like manner the husband also has not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another, except, perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer, " (1 Cor 7:3-5). Note here about the devout woman, when the husband would ask of her the debt, she would always find excuses. If on Sunday, "Hey, holy Mother of God, today, which is the day of the resurrection of the Lord, you wish to do that?" If Monday, she would say, "Hey, today a man ought to pray for the dead." If on Tuesday, "The church sets aside today for the angels." If Wednesday, "Today Christ was sold." If Thursday, "Hey, sir, because today Christ ascended into heaven." If Friday, "because today Christ suffered and died for us." If Saturday she would say, "Today is for the Virgin Mary, because on that day she alone kept faith." The husband

seeing that she always was finding excuses, called his servant girl saying "This evening come to me, you will sleep with me." She replied, "Gladly my lord. When the wife sees this, then she wished to hop into bed, but the husband did not. No lady, pray for us sinners! And never, from then on, did he wish to know his wife. He hated her, and he fell in love with the slave girl. He sinned mortally and damned himself because of the fault of his wife.

And so St. Elizabeth, although she was devout, holy and elderly, consented to that which was required of her by her husband, and conceived by him, and after three months she began to enlarge, and she was saying "O, misery, what is this? Could it be dropsy? Finally she recognized that she was pregnant. St. Elizabeth was greatly ashamed of this, so much so that Luke says that she hid herself for five months. I think that she made for herself ample sized jumpers or dresses that she might hide her tumescence lest people might say, "See, although she is devout, she nevertheless has time for lust," etc. Behold here the virtuous generation of St. John, because "the hand of the Lord...etc."

Morally, here is a consequence. If Elizabeth was so ashamed of this that one might presume that she with her husband used matrimony, how much shame ought there be for women or men who care for others? Such are traitors. And if the woman were strong, she might be able to kick out [*assignare campum*, allot open ground to] her traitor husband. And so St. Paul: "Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. For fornicators and adulterers God will judge," (Heb 13:4).

Gracious Sanctification

Third, I say that the hand of the power of God has worked on St. John through a gracious sanctification, because while yet existing in the womb of his mother, Lk 1, not only was he filled with the Holy Spirit, but also abundantly filled [*repletus*]. Now hear the manner how he was sanctified. Chrysostom says that St. John, in the womb of his mother for five months, and for some days in the sixth month remained in original sin; but in the sixth month he was sanctified. In the sixth month of his conception the angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary, who then conceived the son of God, and then the angel said to the Virgin how the sterile Elizabeth had

conceived a son. And so because of this the Virgin Mary went to visit Elizabeth. And when she entered the house, it was said that it was Elizabeth who Mary venerated. Elizabeth rejoiced, and coming out to her saluted her. Then the Virgin Mary said to her, "O my blessed cousin, may it go well for you for you have conceived a son." These words were of such power, that just as the word of a priest in Baptism, by the power of Christ sanctifies the soul of the one baptized, so this word of the Virgin by virtue of the incarnate Son of God in her, existing in her, sanctified John the Baptist. The creature "is sanctified by the word of God," (1 Tim 4:5), says St. Thomas *In 4 Sent., d. 6, in literalibus*, that then the use of reason was accelerated in St. John, and he had the use of free will, and he rejoiced in the womb, like a soldier rejoices if the king would give him a thousand florins, or one castle as a special gift. So then St. John was completely happy and joyful. Bernard calls this joy a solemn dance [*tripudium*]. Then Elizabeth inspired by the Holy Spirit, recognizing that the Virgin Mary had conceived the son of God, with a loud voice said, "Blessed art you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk 1:42-43). I beg you to contemplate this for a moment. St. Elizabeth was old, the Virgin Mary was then a 14-year-old girl, and as they were embracing and kissing each other, the stomach of Elizabeth was above the stomach of the Virgin. And so, John was higher than Christ. For this reason, John withdrew himself in the womb of his mother giving honor to the son of God, just like a soldier honors his king wishing to sit on the same step. The soldier would immediately throw himself to the ground. Behold here the gracious sanctification.

Morally. St. John shows to us how much reverence we ought to give to the altar of Christ and to his ministers. The Virgin Mary was then the altar on which was the body of Christ, and when John approached to Christ through the embrace of his mother, St. John pulled himself back humbly bowing. Many err in this, by standing near the altar, even on a balcony above. I am amazed that they are not struck dead by the angels who are present there. As St. Gregory the Elder said, and is found in Numbers, ch. 1 that a man, unless of the tribe of Aaron, "if he approaches to my altar he shall die the death." Yet on that altar was not sacrificed the body of Christ, but animals. How much the more ought there be a greater reverence for the altar on which is offered the son of God? Think also what happens when immoral

clerics uncleanly handle him. David so great and holy a king with great reverence approached the temple of the Lord, and he himself said: "But as for me in the multitude of your mercy, I will come into your house; I will worship towards your holy temple, in your fear," (Ps 5:8). It is said of these who less justly happen in the churches, etc.

Joyful Manifestation

I say, fourth, that the hand of the power of God worked on St. John a joyful manifestation, because in the joyful birth he was manifested, because in birth he cannot be hidden. Secretly they can conceive, but not without clamor give birth. And because Zachary and Elizabeth were nobility, so they were known by all and people were saying "Did you hear the news? And what is it? That noble woman Elizabeth gave birth to a son. And the others replied. She didn't seem to us that she was pregnant, and still she was so old." But others, on the contrary, said, "Certainly true, but she hid herself." Then their friends and relatives would come to her and congratulate her saying: "O, it surely seems good that God loves you, because in such old age he gave you an heir." See how the hand of the Lord was with him in the joyful manifestation.

Morally. It is shown to us here how we ought to rejoice over a person sterile in good works, and aged in sins, and living a bad life, when they bear the fruit of good works and of merit, as Elizabeth's friends congratulated her. Note that this name Elizabeth is composed of three names, *El*, that is, God, *i* that is my, and *zabeth* that is seventh. Thus Elizabeth, "seventh of my God." This is the interpretation of this name Elizabeth. Now we see what this seventh of my God is. I respond and say that this seventh of my God is the human creature. Everything which God made comes from seven in seven. Seven are the principal creatures which God made: namely, earth, water, air and fire, the fifth essence, that is the heavens, the sixth is the angelic nature, the seventh human nature. Behold the seventh of my God. But many creatures grow old and antique, sterile without the fruit of good works and virtues. O how many religious and priests and men and women are sterile in the world, because they never bore the fruit of a good work, but rather dumped sins and bad lives and want to return to God, by proposing to do those things for which they are bound by their state. Then they conceive. They give birth when they do good works, when the religious keeps his

rule, vows and observances. Then they give birth. The same for the others. When all his friends and neighbors ought to rejoice and congratulate him, and thanking [*regratiando*] God to say, "O this blessed one, now in his old age gives himself to God." But today he does the entire opposite in the world. If there is some dissolute and ribald religious, no one says anything to him, moreover all commend and praise him. But if he wishes to keep his rule and live according as he vowed, immediately he is persecuted by others. The same for the cleric. The same for the lay person, man and vain woman, if he wishes to dismiss vanities and can say: "Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost," (Lk 15:6). Yet nevertheless that one is pursued by others, until they make him lose his soul with the rest.

Miraculous Naming

I say, fifth, that the hand of the Lord worked on St. John the Baptist a miraculous naming, for he was wonderfully named. After his birth, namely, on the eighth day according to the law of Moses, boys are circumcised. And just as now in Baptism we confer names, so then in circumcision it was imposed. When the rabbi had already grasped the skin etc. he asked of the mother what he was called. Those standing around spoke: "He is named after his father Zachary." But the mother, because of a revelation of the Holy Spirit, contradicted: "Not so; but he shall be called John," (Lk 1:60). The others were amazed at such a name. They said to her that no one in her family was called by this name. Then they turned to his father, and signaled to him what he wished to name him. The father was still mute. And here the Gloss says that he was even deaf, and so they asked him through a note what he is to be called. Requesting a writing tablet he wrote, "John is his name," which was to say "I do not impose this name, but the Lord does." Then the father suddenly recovered his speech saying "Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel etc." See how here this naming was miraculous.

Morally. Note this, and we shall begin with a question. Which name is better, Zachary or John? And it seems that John, because the mother said, "Not so; but he shall be called John." I respond "Zachary" according to the Hebrew meaning stands for "remembering God." That name "John" is better than Zachary in ten ways. For if some person is in sins and wishes to rid himself of sins, desiring to be saved by the grace of God, it is necessary that this person be first "Zachary," that is, "remembering God," whom he

offended, and that he have contrition for his sins. Second that he have a resolve not to return to sins etc. I say that the penitential works are nine, nevertheless John is not in the ninth work, but Zachary. But in the tenth work, namely in sacramental communion, because then they have the gift of grace, or the one in whom is grace, and then it is John. Behold the reason why she said, "Not so; but he shall be called John," was to suggest that he would be perfect in penitence and in the grace of God. Therefore Isaiah 49:1, "The Lord has called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he has been mindful of my name." And this is said in the person of St. John, because he imposed on him the name according to the grace and perfection which God should give to him. Therefore, "The hand of the Lord was with him," (Lk 1:66)

C246 Sermon on the Feast of SS. Peter & Paul

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona," (Mt 16:17)

The feast and solemnity today is of the two greater apostles, princes of the others, who were martyred for Christ on the same day and in the same city, Rome, under the same emperor, Nero. And so great is the dignity of each of them that the church celebrates the feast in honor of St. Peter today, and tomorrow in honor of St. Paul, because today is not sufficient to preach about both. But that the present sermon be with praise and reverence, etc., let the Virgin Mary be saluted.

And the theme is taken up again. The text for the theme and the basis of our sermon requires some literal explanation. For which it must be known that Peter, before he was the disciple of Christ, the apostle and universal Pope, was called Simon, but after he was a disciple of Christ, and an apostle, Christ constituted him as Pope and his universal vicar and gave him the name Peter. Just as happens even now, when the Pope is elected, his name is changed, as if he is changed into another person, and new creature, so Christ did, Matt 3, and he imposed upon Simon the name Peter. Peter's father was called John and sometimes in a gross manner he is called Joanna, and sometimes diminutively Joannet, sometimes he is commonly called Jona. Just as we commonly make in our language about some proper name, so the Jews were calling the father of Peter. And so Christ also named him. Sometimes, commonly, he is called Joannes, as where, "Simon of John [Simon Joannis]," i.e. son of John, "do you love me?" (Jn 21:15,16,17). Sometimes in an expanded way, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona," (Simon, filius Jona, Jn 1:42). Sometimes in a shortened way, as where, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona," son of Jona, that is Joannet (Mt 16:17). The theme is clear then, according to the literal exposition, and I am in the matter to be preached in the theme. Peter is called with two names and two names are used, namely Simon, and Bar-Jona, and each name has two interpretations, in which four virtues are shown in Peter, because of which he is blessed in heaven, namely

- Prompt obedience
- Harsh penitence

- Right intention
- And hard passion.

Prompt Obedience

As for the first virtue through which St. Peter is blessed, it is said to be prompt obedience, which is noted here when he is called Simon, which means "obedient." When a person hears and obeys words and commandments of God, and without any excuse fulfills the will of God, he is like a servant faithful to the will of his lord, he is obedient, and merits to be rewarded, that is to be released at the end of his service. So whoever promptly and obeys observes the words and commandments of God in this world, when he finishes his service, namely in death, justly shall have a reward and beatitude for his salary. So Luke 11: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it," (Lk 11:28) This obedience Peter had, as is clear from Mt 4 : "And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishermen). And he said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him," (Mt 4:18-20).

Practically. St. Peter before he was a disciple of Christ was a poor fisherman, because of the fact that he and his brother St. Andrew had only one boat and one net, and so they lived from their labors. So while they were fishing one day, adrift on the lake, the sea of Galilee, then Christ himself along the shore of the lake saw Peter and Andrew. He said to them, "O my good men, how are you doing?" They responded, "Lord, we want to catch some fish." Christ knowing that they would do better elsewhere than here, said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men," (Mt 4:19). "I shall teach you to catch kings, princes, dukes, counts, and generations of many peoples." In these words, "Come after me," etc., there are two [secrets].

The first is this. The Christian church is like a ship of three decks [cooperturarum]. The first deck, deep or lowest is of members of religious orders humbling themselves. And just as the lower deck is hidden, so the religious ought to be hidden in the cloister and the cell, not going about on the roads or doing secular business on the streets. The second deck signifies

the state of the priests, who ought to minister the sacraments of the church, ordinarily in the middle deck is kept the good merchandise of great value. So in the hand of priests and in their power stand the treasures of paradise, namely the sacraments, because of which we have eternal life. The third deck, is the status of the laity, who go here and there through the world like merchants, and like those on the ship who go through the decks doing the works of a sailor. Of this Solomon says, "She is like the merchant's ship," of a peddler, "she brings her bread from afar," (Prov 31:14).

The second secret is when he said, "I will make you to be fishers of men," (Mt 4:19), who are the preachers. Preaching is like a net, because just as with a net all is collected and it is drawn by one cord, so evangelical preaching uses several cords, namely, authorities, reasons, and parables, and all are collected. If preaching is well organized, and they draw one cord, namely the theme, which is the basis of a sermon, God sends those preachers. Jer 16: "Therefore behold the days come,..... I will send many fishers, says the Lord, and they shall fish them," (vv. 14, 16). He sends many fishermen because the apostles, martyrs, confessors and us, to whom he says, "Let down your nets for a catch," (Lk 5:4). He does not say, "fold them," he says this against those who have great knowledge but keep it folded, and are unwilling to fling it out for preaching, for catching fish. See why he says, "Come after me," etc., as if to say, "Leave the little boat, with which you now catch fish, and put yourselves in the great ship of the church, with three decks. "Leave the nets and you shall have gospel teaching [doctrinam evangelicam]; leave that sea and I shall make you fishers of men, of kings, knights and of others." By divine power Peter understood all this, when Christ said in his own voice, "Come after me," etc. He knew him to be the true Messiah, etc. Therefore, so that St. Peter would have evangelical teaching instead of nets, and so he could fish for men throughout the world on the ship of the church, he obeyed promptly. For the gospel says, "Leaving their nets," and boat, "Peter and Andrew unhesitatingly [incontinenti] followed him," (Mk 1:18). St. Peter, before Christ on his knees said in his heart, "Not with a net, nor a boat, you have placed in my heart the delight of fishing in the sea of this world with the incorruptible evangelical teaching of the church," and immediately he went off with Christ.

See the prompt obedience of Peter. It is said here against the defect of this world. For all are called by Christ, namely Christians, Jews, Muslims, and we refuse to go. He calls us by enlightening our hearts, giving recognition of sins, and immediately we ought to follow him, but it happens to us as it did to Samuel, who was called by God and he went to Eli. Note the story 1 Kg 3:4-5. Not so Job did, he said, "You shall call me, and I will answer you," (Job 14:15). Against such Christ said, "I called, and you refused: I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded," (Prov 1:24).

Morally. When he said, "I will make you to be fishers of men," (Mt 4:19). Note this religious and others show have the office of preaching, because all are fishermen, and the net is evangelical preaching. Therefore now cast out the net, and when someone hearing the preaching proposes to abandon sins, and vices, and has an intention of returning to God, then the preacher can say, "I have caught a fish." When a nobleman or knight [miles] because of preaching turns away from pomp, hatred or rancor against his enemy, we have caught a dolphin [delphinum]. O such fish and fishermen, how much they please God! Same of a noble lady, who abandons vanities, ornaments and the like and confesses, and proposes to live well, then he can say that we have caught a tuna [tonica]. When preaching converts a farmer or simple man, a flounder [fundulus] is caught. Same for a poor woman, an eel [sarpina?]. And on the day of judgment Christ will say to the preachers, "Come," now, "and dine," (Jn 21:12). And when they say What shall we lunch on? then he shall reply, "Bring here the fish which you have ... caught," (Jn 21:10). O what will become of that preacher who says, "Lord I have only caught seaweed and flotsam, namely money, praise, gifts, acquaintances and fame [scil. pecunias, raupas, comeras, familiaritates et famam]. Therefore, for love of God we labor to catch souls. For in the judgment everyone comes with the souls which he converted saying, "See the two fish which I have landed." O how many fish and how many souls St. Peter brought with him, who in his first preaching converted three thousand souls and men, See Acts 2 and 4.

Harsh Penance

As for the second virtue for which St. Peter is blessed in paradise is harsh penance [aspera poenitentia], which is shown when he is called Simon, which is understood in a second sense as imposing sadness [ponens

tristitiam], namely of penance, about which the Apostle says, "For the sorrow that is according to God works penance, steadfast unto salvation," (2 Cor 7:10). Note "that is according to God" i.e. when it displeases man about offenses made to God, such blessedness is merited, because he did true penance. Whence Mat 5:5, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted," namely in heavenly beatitude. Look now at the penance of St. Peter. How did he do penance? In eating, in drinking, in dressing. In eating you know that once when he was asked what was his lifestyle, he replied, "My daily diet is bread with olives and rarely with vegetables, only on great feast days." See his life, although he was Pope. But it is asked, How did it happen that so many capons, hens, pheasants, salted fish [salsianae] are now on the table of prelates? They call it bountiful [truffative], that those olives of St. Peter were pregnant and gave birth to the capons and the rest.

The same was asked about clothing, and he replied, "My clothing is a tunic which you see, with a cape, both in the winter as well as the summer." See the first clothing of the first vicar of Christ. But it is asked, how did it evolve that now the prelate wears so many sumptuous clothes etc, so many linings. It is said that the cape of Peter gave birth to them, etc.

So, his life was such that from his eyes flowed a fountain of tears, remembering his denial, and because of this as long as he lived, he cried, and he lived after the ascension of Christ for 37 years, as in the *Liber de viris illustribus*. St. Jerome says that he cried so much that he had a face scorched from the heat of the tears.

Note, penance for denial. He sinned by mouth denying Christ, therefore he did penance by mouth, eating only bread and olives, as if he was saying because you have sinned, you shall then fast. Second, he denied Christ, by warming his body, as John says (Cf Jn 18:18), so he did penance in his body, wearing only one tunic with a cape. Third just as his face was not ashamed to deny Christ, so he wept. These are the fruits of worthy penance. Luke 3, "Bring forth...fruits worthy of penance,"(Lk 3:8), for that through which one sins, by this is penance done.

Morally. St. Peter for his triple denial of Christ, because out of fear he denied Christ, did penance nevertheless for all his 37 years. What shall it be for those deniers, who not only three times, but a thousand times a day deny

Christ for the least thing, or for a minor incident, swearing great oaths, blaspheming Christ? O accursed denier, what shall happen to your soul? If St. Peter for a threefold denial did such etc., what should you do, who swear not out of fear of death, but out of a bad habit? Again, St. Peter said only "I do not know him." Think what will happen to your soul! For the love of God, steps should be taken so that these detestable oaths may cease.

I will give you three remedies. First, you women who have little children should instruct them to not swear. Second, that every swearer should set for himself this rule, namely that he should fine himself a certain amount for every time he swears, and give it to the poor on Sundays and so he would be cured. The third manner of correcting [swearing] pertains to the civic leaders, who by statute give an order that whoever swears using God's name should be punished in a certain way, etc. and to spare no one in this matter, which touches on the honor of Christ. But because the civic leaders do not correct, God is saddened by saying. "They that rule over them treat them unjustly, says the Lord, and my name is continually blasphemed all the day long. Therefore my people shall know my name in that day: for I myself who spoke, behold I am here," namely by punishing. (Isa 52:5-6). See the second virtue in this the meaning of the name "Simon," which is, imposing sadness.

Right Intention

As for the third virtue by which St. Peter is called blessed, is right intention, namely in all things which he was doing by preaching, celebrating and exercising other works of virtue, always looking to the honor of God, which is noted in this that he is called Bar-Jona, which means "son of simplicity," and not "of duplicity." When indeed someone looks to the world, for honors, and not to God, it is duplicity. This happens to them like a rooster which with one eye looks to the sky, and with the other grain. St. Peter in all things had a right intention directed to God. Whence in the Psalm, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to your name give glory," (Ps 113:9). Behold, simplicity. And these merit beatitude. Whence in Mat 5, "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God," (v. 8), here through contemplation, and in the next age through eternal possession. St. Peter does indeed have this virtue, because although he was Pope, and the vicar of Christ, he had such holiness that he could heal all the sick, and when his shadow touched

the sick, they would be cured. It is told how when they knew that he was about to pass through another village, they would place the sick so that his shadow would touch them and they would be healed. (Cf Acts 5:15). But even with all this he kept such a simplicity, that he had no hypocrisy or vain glory or presumption. He went about simply. He ruled and corrected himself. It is clear that he was the son of simplicity. And he was able to say, "I know my God that you prove hearts, and love simplicity, wherefore I also in the simplicity of my heart, have joyfully offered all these things," (1 Chr 29:9). "You prove the heart of a creature if he keeps a good and right intention, and if he is simple, you love him, and so in the simplicity of my heart I loved you and I have served you with a true heart."

Morally. This must be known that God first looks to the intention in our works. For if one would do all kind of good in the world, and would not have a good intention, it would merit you nothing. In other words, for example, it is a great work of merit to enter religious life, just as St. Thomas says II-II, q. 89, a. 3, ad 3m, that the vow of religion if made with a right intention since it is perpetual, is greater than a vow to travel on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which is temporal, so Alexander III says and it is found in *Extravagantes, De voto et voti red. c, scripturae*. And later Thomas adds, that it can reasonably be said that one obtains the remission of all sins by the entry into religious life, which is more useful than a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, with respect to promotion in good. This is greater than absolution from penalty. This Thomas says in the same place and in beautiful words of this same matter.

But this work, namely the entry into religion, is perverted and it is lost when the intention is perverse and temporary, as for example because you hope that your son will become abbot, or a master in theology, or a bishop, and so you induce him to enter religious life. Unless you hoped this, he never would have entered religion, because such an intention is not for God, but for the world. and merit is lost. Or if he enters so that he might live in peace, not for observing religion, this intention is perverse. For it is better for a religious to have been a thief, than to be a religious not observing what he ought. Also, to preach the word of God is worthy of great merit, because it is a great work, if the intention is right, but when someone preaches because of vainglory or for fame, or for money, having the intention for worldly things, all is lost and he is damned.

St. Thomas asks in Quodlibet 5, q. 12, a 2. in body, "Whether through penance one can recover the halo [laureolam] which has been promised to one preaching worthily, if he has lost it through vainglory? And he says that it is not, because it was not gained according to the judgment of the Lord, "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward," (Mt 6:2). He can nevertheless acquire the grace of God if he amends, or through good preaching he can gain anew another halo, but the one lost he can never recover.

The same in a just war, those who go forth do a great work if they have a right intention. Blessed are they who die for justice or the defense of the republic, they are glorious among the martyrs, although the church does not celebrate a feast day. But if they do it because of vanity, as many saying, "Out of love of my lord..." etc. O fool, in such a case it is necessary to set forth first love and divine respect and true justice, saying, "Let us do this out of love and zeal for justice." Therefore, we shall either sing in the temples of our enemies through the victory which we have, or with God in Paradise, from the fact that we have defended justice. But when you have a foolish intention, you lose the entire good work.

Similarly, to forgive injuries, to spare the enemies, is a great work if it is done for God and the love of Christ, but when it happens not out of reverence for or love of God, but out of respect for persons, all merit is lost. Practically speaking, if the Pope or a king would ask you that you forgive, perhaps you would forgive, and yet for Christ you did not forgive. It is said how Christ in judgment showing his wounds will say, "Behold, what I have done for you. Let us see what you have done for me. If you have forgiven out of love of him, he shall give you Paradise. But if you have forgiven out of love of the Pope, or of the king, or of some others, he will say to you, "Go to them, so that they might give you paradise, you who had to satisfy them. If you forgave with a pure intention out of honor of Christ, then Christ receives you by hand saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant," (Mt 25:21). Be careful that in all things you direct the intention to God, "That in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ: to whom is glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen," (1 Pet 4:11).

Hard Suffering

As to the fourth virtue, which is hard suffering [dura passio], when he is called Bar-Jona, which according to a second interpretation means "Son of a dove," Behold here his martyrdom. It is said when the priests of the old testament offered a dove to God, he first stripped its feathers [deplumabant]. Then broke its wings, then broke its neck and bent its head down, and such a sacrifice was very much acceptable to God, as is said in Leviticus, "It is a holocaust and oblation of most sweet savor to the Lord," (Lev 1:17).

That St. Peter was the son of a dove is clear in his martyrdom because of the patience which he had, and through eternal beatitude, "If also you suffer any thing for justice' sake, blessed are you," (1 Pet 3:14). It is told how St. Peter, after he had preached through many cities and towns and converted many gentiles in Antioch and elsewhere, came to Rome, and he there preaching against the mandate of the emperor Nero, who had ordered him not to preach the faith of Christ, was arrested. Christians wishing to free him were saying to him, "O Father, we shall free you, flee from all this." Finally, yielding he fled from there, and when leaving the city, Christ appeared to him with his cross on his shoulders. When Peter saw him he said, "Lord, where are you going?" As if he were saying, "I am leaving the city and you are entering." Christ replied, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." He was saying, "Once I was crucified in Jerusalem. Now I go again to be crucified." Christ was saying that after he had been crucified in Jerusalem in his own person, now again in place of Peter [in persona Petri] he had to be crucified in Rome. This Peter understood, and immediately he returned to the city, and Christ to heaven. And Peter told his Christian friends of the city how Christ had appeared etc. It is clear how he was acceptable and gracious to God.

He was returned to the custody of the emperor. Officials came and he was sentenced to be crucified on the cross which he had adored, saying to the officials, "Please, I beg of you, that you do not crucify me head up, as Christ my master, but point my head down. The officials said," Greater torment will be yours. We will accommodate you in this. When he was on the cross he never ceased to preach to those standing around him. He shows us here the lesson that we should never cease preaching, not because of cold nor heat, nor fatigue, but work for the conversion of souls. And to him, here

standing, Christ sent an angel with crowns of violets [violarum] and Christ appeared to him holding a book in his hands, which St. Peter read, and after which he said, "Lord Jesus Christ, I have given thanks to you, who have borne me to the hoped for end, Lord I commend to you these Christians, children generated in the womb of your spouse, namely in the church through baptism." And so he handed over his spirit to God, whom the angels of God bore to glory.

Morally. This cross of Peter was not like the cross of Christ, but I find that you place your hope in the cross of St. Peter, which can save none, not even St. Peter, unless by the power of Christ. So, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," (Gal 6:14). which is stronger.

Some in fact, although not in mind, hold hope in the sign of the devil which is a circle. For just as good religious in the beginning of the hours [of the divine office] call upon God with the sign of the cross saying, "O God, come to my assistance;" (Ps 69:2), they make a circle, because, "The wicked walk round about," (Ps 11:9). Tell the whole defective practice of those who do not sign themselves correctly at the entrance of the church, or at table, or a woman putting a child to bed. Same for the priests, although speaking well, they make a circle over the water, the bread, and what is worst over the Body of Christ. Show here how they sign themselves. Against this sign no danger can prevail. You should instruct your own. About this sign of the cross, read the prophecy in Cant 8, "Under the apple tree I raised thee up,... Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm," (Song 8:5,6).

C273. Sermon on St. James, Apostle

"[He] grows up into a holy temple in the Lord," (Eph 2:1) This is read in today's epistle. For a brief statement of these words, and for an introduction to our material, it must be known that there is clearly found in Holy Scripture this difference between the life of the good and just, and that of the wicked. For the life of the just -- of the good -- always grows and is augmented; the life of the wicked however shrinks and is diminished. The text indeed says, "But the path of the just, " that is, strictly the way of penitence, of the fear of God and devotion, "as a shining light, goes forwards and increases even to perfect day. The way of the wicked is darksome: they know not where they fall," (Prov 4:18-19). Note as if "the shining light goes forwards." From which it goes out, it continuously ascends, and brightens the more at the hour of prime than at dawn., and at terce than at prime, and so on. So, it is in the life of the just; it continually grows. The reason for this difference between the good and the wicked is, because just persons are in the grace of God. Behold here the light. And whatever they do, they deliberate, whether they be thoughts of the heart, or sayings of the mouth, or works of the body. What is more, natural functions are meritorious for them. About thoughts and the rest there is no doubt, from the fact that they are in grace, but of natural functions, like eating, that they might serve God. Same for sleeping, even laughter, that afterwards they might weep. All is meritorious, so that one good person always ascends. He is better today than yesterday, and tomorrow than today, and so the Apostle assigns a reason when he says, "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good," (Rom 8:28), even past sins, as the Gloss says. Reason: because when he thinks on sins committed, a just person becomes more humble, and so they sometimes are turned to merit. But sinners do not ascend, rather they descend from sin into sin. Gregory says "...a sin, which is not washed away through penitence, by its own weight soon drags (one) to another (sin)," (*Morals on the Book of Job*, Bk. XXV, ch. 9, n. 22). Behold the difference between the good and the wicked. And so wishing to show us the holy and perfect life of St. James, we have taken the theme of growth, how, living in this world, saying he "...grows up into a holy temple in the Lord," (Eph 2:1). The theme is clear.

And now I turn to the matter to be preached. I find that St. James grew in three stages:

- First, he grew as an apostolic disciple (*discipulum apostolicam*).
- Second he grew as an evangelical envoy (*legatum evangelicalem*),
- Third, as a celestial dweller (*habitorem caelestialem*).

Three strides which he made up to heaven are subtly touched upon in the theme, the first is touched in the first word, the second in the second, and the third in the third.

Apostolic Disciple

I say that St. James first grew in apostolic discipleship. With others he would have been very holy, and this is touched upon when he says, "He grows up into a holy temple in the Lord," (Eph 2:1). For it is a theological teaching that a person living a good life is the temple of God, because the Holy Spirit dwells in him, and there is no greater honor and more useful than to cling to the king and pope, Jesus. About this the Apostle says, "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16).

Now hear how St. James ascended that he might be an apostolic disciple. It is said that he was the brother of John, and a son of Zebedee, who when once they were at the sea of Galilee, Christ passing that way called them, saying, "Young men, come follow me." And his words had such power that they were illuminated in their intellect and enflamed in their heart, and "they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed him," (Mt 4:22). See how he grew from fisherman into an apostle of Christ.

Morally. James, coming to Christ, left behind his nets and his father. Here he sets an example for us religious, especially those who ought to follow Christ, that we leave behind our nets, that is our retinues (*retinentia*), according to its etymology, just as business and worldly occupations which religious, clergy and laity hold on to so that they are not able to follow after Christ. For example, about religious. For business is a greater trap which the devil has for entangling religious, that he involves them in dealings so that they dismiss preaching under some excuse, either securing peace, or

arranging a wedding, there they place themselves or visit that they might have friendships, or favors of the masters (ambasiatas dominorum). Many begin their holy life and preaching with great fervor and good intention, but the devil in the aforesaid dealings entangles them etc, which although they be good, nevertheless they let go of the best, namely preaching, which is the special duty in the church of God, as the Decretals has "Cum ex iniuncto," etc., "extra de haeret." The Apostle warns of these things, who was preaching to the unbelievers that they might be baptized, who out of devotion wanted to be baptized by him. Already you see that it is good to baptize, nevertheless he said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel"(1 Cor 1;17) as if saying "I give thanks to my God that I have killed no one." Again, the Apostle said, "It is not reasonable that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables," (Acts 6:2). And you, religious, you involve yourselves in businesses etc and you leave behind your nets etc. and scripture agrees saying to religious, "My son, meddle not with many matters..." "and if you be rich, you shall not be free from sin," (Sir 11:10). Note lest your acts might be in many things. Many are three or four etc. Two are not many. A religious has to do two things, namely to celebrate and to preach. These to David shows in Ps 106, saying, "And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of praise," the mass, which includes the whole seven of the canonical hours, "and declare his works with joy," (Ps 106:22), preaching in exultation, which preaching indeed includes study. If the religious might say, therefore can I not have money, he responds: Because if you were rich, you should not be immune from sins. The same for clerics, because many are entangled in businesses, others involve themselves in businesses in the houses of their lords, others appoint themselves procurators, others are shield bearers and associate with soldiers etc., others merchants, others moneylenders. And so the Apostle speaks against such, "No man, being a soldier to God, entangles himself with secular businesses; that he may please him to whom he has engaged himself," (2 Tim 2:4).

A cleric exercise three affairs: namely to celebrate, to minister sacraments, and to preach, or to serve the commands of the bishop. Many lay people too are entangled, because many are merchants, who would be nothing if they did not have a place in all associations. The same too for lawyers, who make themselves a part in all litigations, when it is said of the merchant. O nothing happens without him. The same about such civil servant or lawyer,

because although you might have secular businesses, nevertheless they are businesses which pertain to the home and for providing for the home, and you set aside superfluous business, etc. History tells about a great and clever merchant, entangled in many businesses, to whom God says, "By the multitude of thy merchandise, your inner parts were filled with iniquity, and you have sinned: and I cast you out from the mountain of God, and destroyed you, O covering cherub,"(Ez 28:16). There begins the construction "O Cherub," that is, the fullness of knowledge for doing business, etc. And so from the example of St. James nets are left behind, otherwise behold what Christ says, "And take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly," (Lk 21:34).

Second, his father is to be left behind, namely he about whom Jesus Christ said to the Jews, "You are of your father the devil," (Jn 8:44). They say how he begat sons of a wicked wife, whom he had taken from the beginning, namely of disobedience. They say how he was created in great dignity. and he was holier at that time than Michael. But because he was disobedient, wishing equality with God, then he took that wife, and from that same aforesaid wife begat a thousand thousands of children, demons obeying him and consenting in sin. Finally from the same wife he generated Adam and Eve, and today daily he begets, when he tempts men that they act against the commandments of God. When you perceive such things, immediately go after Christ, and you shall be able to say with David,"My father and my mother have left me: but the Lord has taken me up," (Ps 26:10).

Evangelical Envoy

Second, I say that St. James grew as a disciple as an evangelical envoy, which is pointed out when it is said that he "grows up into a holy temple," (Eph 2:1), because although all those who are canonized are saints, the apostles are more excellent. "He has sanctified those called," (Soph 1:7), that is, the apostles, whom he has especially called. It is said when Christ was to ascend into heaven on the day of the Ascension, having called the apostles he made them evangelical envoys saying, "Go into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature," (Mk 16:15). Now who was the first of the apostles who fulfilled this vocation, by going out into the world? Not Peter, nor Andrew, nor John etc. But James himself. St. James

having received permission from those in Jerusalem, the Virgin Mary and the apostles, journeyed to Spain, preaching Christ, for Christ had said to them, "you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth," (Acts 1:8). And so it was St. James himself who came to bear witness to the ends of the earth. His evangelical mission, therefore, is clear. One might object "It is true that he first went to Spain, but he did little good, because he converted only nine disciples there." It is said that just as Christ converted twelve apostles, who were twelve grains of wheat for bearing fruit, because the whole world was converted, so St. James. For those nine disciples were nine fruitful grains who converted all of Spain. In this he fulfilled the word of Christ who said, "In this is my Father glorified; that you bring forth very much fruit, and become my disciples," (Jn 15:8).

Second, he returned to Jerusalem, there he found the other disciples and apostles gathered, and he began to dispute there against the Jews and the priest of Hermes. They rose up against him by saying, "We will dispute with him. He never studied or wished to preach. It is said how St. James was preaching about the Trinity, how he was one God in essence and triune in persons. etc. , proving this by reasons and authorities and miracles. But the Jews and teachers were spoke out against him, deriding him: "It seems, indeed, that you are a fisherman, and never knew the scriptures, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,' (Dt 6:4)." It is told how he replied to them, offering an analogy from the one sun, where there is the Father generating, namely the substance, and the Son namely the ray generated, and the Holy Spirit, namely the heat. Again, in the aforesaid citation there are found three words, namely **Lord**, which is the name of power, which is attributed to the Father, **God**, the name of wisdom, which is appropriated to the Son, and **Our**, the name of goodness, which is attributed to the Holy Spirit.

Second, he preached that Christ is God and man, and the Jews contra, because it is against the scripture, "O Israel, if you wilt hearken to me, there shall be no new god in you: neither shall you adore a strange god," (Ps 80:9-10). I reply that although Christ began to be man recently, he however did not begin to be God recently. It is said to be like the son of a king or emperor now ten years of age, when he becomes a soldier, he nevertheless does not become anew the son of the king etc.

Third, when he preached about the passion of Christ, then the Jews opposed: "Why this? Since Moses said, 'The Lord is as a man of war, Almighty is his name,' (Ex 15:3). And besides, if he had been omnipotent, why is it necessary that he suffer and die? Could he not remit all by saying: 'Let us henceforth be friends.?' " I reply that mercy and justice are in God essentially, but in us, accidentally. And therefore just as God cannot dismiss his essence, so neither his mercy and justice. If he had forgiven all, where was his justice? If all were damned by the rigor of his justice, where would have been his mercy? So he wished to find a way, that he might show simultaneously both his infinite mercy and his justice. The mercy was shown because he, innocent and without fault, willed to suffer. Justice however, by paying a most sufficient price etc., "Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows," (Is 53:4).

Fourth, when he was preaching about the sacrament of the altar, etc. And the Jews opposed: "You say that the gentiles might come to your sacrifice, and you make them adore bread and wine, when nevertheless scripture says, "You shall love the Lord thy God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole strength," (Dt 6:5). I reply that from the beginning of the world up to the end, God wished to be adored in a corporeal form, since God in his substance cannot be seen, as in the time of Moses in the ark [of the covenant], and in the cloud, etc., and now in this image. Bread gives life. And about the use of bread David said, "Exalt you the Lord our God," this is said to clergy, "and adore his footstool," (Ps 98:5), i.e. the consecrated host, this is said for all the people. So the Jews were not able to contradict him, moreover St. James triumphed over all, and the prophecy of Christ was fulfilled, "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay," (Lk 21:15).

Celestial Dweller

Third I say that he grew as a celestial dweller, which is shown when it is said, "He grows up into a holy temple in the Lord," (Eph 2:1). "Who is like to you, O people, who are saved by the Lord?" (Dt 33:29). This is especially said of the apostles. Just as St. James was the first apostle to exercise the evangelical mission, so he was the first of the apostles who

entered paradise. And here it can happen such a consequence, because just as he is called James the Greater, although the other was older by some days, so also he entered paradise first and can be said to be greater than the other apostles. It is called his martyrdom. The Jews seeing that they could not overcome him with arguments, resorted again to king Herod, who desiring to please the Jews, issued a sentence of beheading against St. James. It is told that as he was led to martyrdom, he cured a man suffering from dropsy.

C277. Sermon on St. Ann

"You have your fruit unto sanctification," (Rom. 6:22). This text is found originally in Romans 6, and is read in the epistle of the current solemnity. Today's feast and solemnity is of that blessed and holy mother of the Virgin Mary, Saint Ann. And just as the business of the mass is about her, so shall our sermon be. And, if it pleases God about her life, we shall have many good teachings for the correction of sins and the instruction of our souls, and good information. But first let us "Hail" the Virgin Mary.

I present the proposed text of St. Ann saying, "You, blessed Ann, have your fruit, the Virgin Mary, in your sanctification." For the declaration of which it must be known that the question is between several persons, why holy mother the Church and the Christian people have not made a feast for the father of the Virgin Mary, holy and just, called Joachim, just as for her mother St. Ann. I reply that although Joachim was holy and a blessed friend of God nevertheless St. Ann was of a greater sanctity. Reason, because she had a greater relationship [participationem] with the Virgin Mary, her daughter. For a father participates somewhat with his children, but a mother who bears them for nine months, and after giving birth, nurses, feeds, sleeps with them and kisses them. Because therefore St. Ann had a greater relationship with the Virgin Mary her daughter, the fount of all holiness, who was holy already existing in the womb of her mother, think therefore how much holiness remained in St. Ann who bore her and nourished her, by giving her what she had, the Virgin Mary gave holiness to her mother, and so she was holier, more perfect, and more spiritual than her husband Joachim.

Note, the similarity to that of the rose, which is picked by one, and given to another, and that one carries it and holds it in a closed hand. In whom therefore does more of the fragrance of that rose or apple remain, in the one giving or the one receiving? Certainly, it is in the one receiving. So the Rose of Paradise and the Apple of Virtues, the Virgin Mary, was given by Joachim to St. Ann through generation, and St. Ann received, bore and nurtured, and nursed her for three years, more of the odor of sanctity therefore remained in her.

This is the reason why there is a feast of St. Ann, and not of Joachim. Thus the scripture text, the authority, which deals well with the proposition. "Rejoice, you just, in the Lord," you Christians, "and give praise to the remembrance of his holiness," of the holiness of St. Ann, (Ps 96:12). This reason the theme touches saying, "You have your fruit unto sanctification," (Rom. 6:22), greater than her father Joachim. The theme text is clear.

I find that St. Ann bore her fruit, the Virgin Mary, mother of the Lord Jesus Christ :

- By desiring at length (desiderando longe)
- By hoping firmly (sperando certe)
- By conserving worthily. (conservando digne.)

Desiring At Length

First, I say, that St. Ann bore her fruit, the Virgin Mary, by desiring for a long time. St. Jerome says, that St. Joachim a noble man from the town of Bethlehem, got married and for 20 years was without the fruit of marriage, not having offspring. Ann who was sterile and barren was the reason. She was so cold that her metabolism prevented conception. Because of this she was utterly depressed. Reason: marriage is ordered to the procreation of children; everything else was not worth a penny. Therefore, seeing that by her natural power she was not able to have a child, she grasped at the four ways that she might have one by the power of God.

- First, through devout prayers,
- Second, through giving alms,
- Third, by many fasts,
- Fourth, by a vow and promise.

Devout Prayers

For the first she went often to the temple to pray, that God might give them the fruit of marriage, because that is the end, -- so trees are planted in the garden, that they might bear fruit -- and they said, "Lord, you have placed us in the garden of marriage, etc." And weeping they begged for a child. So, on one occasion when St. Ann saw a sparrow's nest in the garden, in tears she said to God, "O Lord, you have given to this sparrow so many chicks, for which with great labor she provides. Lord give me a child." Behold he

first manner of turning to God, by praying, because no one else can give a son or a daughter, for creation is required for that. For God forms the body in the womb of the mother, like you form a statue of earth or clay, and then he creates the soul out of nothing. Knowing this Job said, "Your hands have made me, and fashioned me" – neither father nor mother – "wholly round about, and do you thus cast me down headlong on a sudden? Remember, I beseech you, that you have made me as the clay, and you will bring me into dust again. Have you not milked me as milk, and curdled me like cheese?" (Job 10:8-10).

Now you have to know that it is the sin of many who when they cannot have a child of their marriage turn to diviners and fortune tellers etc. And so repent and confess, and seek from God, because if the fruit of marriage be useful to your soul, infallibly he shall give it to you. The authority of Christ on this: "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you," (Jn 16:23). Note: "In my name," which is Jesus, that is, savior. It is asked in the name of the savior when a man ask something useful for salvation, and not for damnation.

Giving Alms

Second, Joachim and Ann begged God for a child through alms, because the angel said to Tobias, "Prayer is good with fasting and alms more than to lay up treasures of gold,"

(Tob 12:8). And because they were rich, not from usurious interest, but from their possessions. And Jerome says, that he divided his goods into three parts. The first he gave to God. The second to pilgrims, orphans and the poor. The third they kept for themselves and the family's house. Note how he divided his grain: The first part he sent to the temple, the second was set out for the poor, the third for themselves. The same for the wine, the oil and the rest. In this manner prayer is aided by alms, and vice versa. Therefore, scripture says, "Give alms out of your substance, and turn not away your face from any poor person: for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from you," (Tob 4:7).

Morally. We find this teaching, that if you are not able to give so much alms as you are bound, nor does the heart suffice, you should pay at least a tenth and first-fruits. There are some who say, "O shall I give my goods to

wicked sensual (concupinariis) clergymen? Certainly not!" It is said that it is given to God, and not to them. If however God has bad clergy, he shall castigate them, and by this you ought not to hold back from them their right. For if a king has bad soldiers, you ought not for this reason withhold from him what is due, because someone else would receive the commission for him. So too for God, because, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof: the world, and all they that dwell therein," (Ps 23:1). And he grants it to us for an annual account, and in a sign of his dominion he keeps for himself a tenth, but he does not eat it, but gives it to his servants. And when it is paid well, he keeps and conserves it, otherwise all is lost. When you believe you have grain or wine does not God say, "Because you paid me badly, I shall devastate all. And so come storms, hail etc." Therefore, Malachi said: "For you afflict me. And you have said: Wherein do we afflict you? in tithes and in first fruits. And you are cursed with want, and you afflict me, even the whole nation of you," (Mal 3:8-9). This is the remedy. "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord: if I open not unto you the flood-gates of heaven, and pour you out a blessing even to abundance. And I will rebuke for your sakes the devourer," (Mal 3:10-11). Note, "Bring". He does not say that it will be dumped into the vineyards and fields, that the beasts, and the pigs, etc. can eat.

Also, if you cannot give as much alms as St. Ann, at least return your thefts, extorted interest, loot, damages and acres. And so James says, " I made good all the damage: whatsoever was lost by theft, you did exact it of me, " (Gen 31:39).

Fasting

Third they petitioned with fasting, although they were noble and delicate, yet they kept all fasts and precepts and even more, saying, "That from our flesh may proceed the fruit of marriage, let us make the fruit of fastings. And each could say, "I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer shall be turned into my bosom," (Ps 34:13).

Morally, you have here the teaching that you should keep the fasts of the church. To this especially are bound those who can have one good meal.

Others, laborers, excuse themselves from the fast of the church, who nevertheless are not excused if they do not hear mass fasting. Also, they do not drink in the taverns in the place where they have a home. So, the Apostle, "What, have you not houses to eat and to drink in?" against those who drink in taverns, "Or despise ye the church of God," against those who do not come to mass fasting. (1Cor 11:22).

Vows and Promises

Fourth they sought a child from God by promises, because together Joachim and Ann made a vow that if God would give them the fruit of marriage, they would serve God in the temple. Just as now if you would promise to become a religious or a nun. But many are damned by promises and vows, making vows and not caring to fulfill them. It is a grave sin to break vows in any way, greater than homicide, because it is unfaithfulness. Therefore, the wise man said, "If you have vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it: for an unfaithful and foolish promise displeases him: but whatsoever you have vowed, pay it. And it is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised," (Eccl 5:3-4). When they are young, they make a vow to [on pilgrimage] to St. James (Santiago de Compostella), and the years go by, year after year, and they don't bother to fulfill it, and when they are old, they ask for a dispensation from the vow. When there a definite time is fixed, within which it ought to be fulfilled. If, however, there is not fixed a determined time, it must be understood that they are to fulfill it immediately. And because there are many who do not care about God; therefore, they are damned. And so, beware of vows. It is clear therefore how the fruit of St. Ann was a sanctification long desired.

Hoping Firmly

Second, I say that St. Ann bore her fruit, the Virgin Mary, by hoping firmly (*sperando certe*), when it was certified by the angel, whom God sent to her. For which note here the story how Joachim and Ann came from Nazareth to Jerusalem to the temple, to offer according to their custom. When Joachim who was a noble baron wished to make an offering, a priest looked at him saying, "And who are you?" He replied, "Father I am Joachim, your servant, who have come to offer sacrifice." And the priest said, "I will certainly not accept your offering, because you are cursed by God, because

you do not have a child. It is a sign that there is some hidden sin in you." And Joachim said to him, "Father, I do not know of any great sin in me, although I am not able to be excused of sin, because I do not have a child, and this displeases me very much." And the priest said to him, "Get out of the temple." And Joachim replied, "Father, do not shame me so much." And the priest said, "Surely, until you get out I will make no offering or sacrifice." Then Joachim, with great shame, left the temple. If a priest wished to act in such a way now, namely expel one of the nobles from church, immediately his knight would say, "By my body this one will die, etc. I shall find him." But Joachim patently withdrew and he did not return home out of shame because of his neighbors, but he went to his shepherds in the forest, and there, weeping, prayed saying, "O Lord, what is my sin, because I am so accursed." His wife Ann, however, who had been in the temple, when she heard that the priest so contended with her husband, and spurned him, left the temple and went home lest she harm the priest.

Here women have a model, how they should console their husbands who are upset by business, and when they come home, the wives ought to console them. But there are some who do not comfort them, rather sadden them even more. When however, St. Ann went home and did not find her husband there, she put aside every creaturely desire from herself, and on bended knees prayed for her holy and just husband that God might keep him. Behold the holy wife.

While Joachim so wept praying in the wilderness, the archangel Gabriel appeared to him, and Joachim was afraid, because this is the condition of the spirit, for flesh cannot stand the presence of a spirit. But the condition of a good spirit is to comfort immediately, saying to him, "Behold, your prayers are heard. Because of that patience which you had, God sent me to you, that I might announce to you that you, with your wife shall have a daughter, not a son, who shall be greater than all daughters, and shall be the mother of the Messiah king of heaven. And as a sign of this, go into Jerusalem, in the golden gate you will find Ann your wife, because I shall announce this to her also." And the angel withdrew, and appeared to Ann who was weeping at home, because she knew nothing about her husband. The angel spoke well saying that, "You shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy," (Jn 16:20).

Morally. According to what I said in the first part, Joachim and Ann persisted for twenty years, praying, giving alms, fasting and vowing, and with all this they did not have a child. And because he kept his patience in this shaming inflicted on him by a priest, immediately he had the promise of a child. It follows from this that before God, patience is better than prayers, alms, fastings or promises. Now think about it, for if you will to have patience in injuries or events, this virtue counts more with God for getting that which you need in this world, and salvation in the other, than anything else. Therefore, throw out rancor, hatred, and ill will. And so sacred scripture says: "For patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise," (Heb 10:36). Behold how St. Ann had her "fruit unto sanctification" by hoping firmly.

Conserving Worthily

Third, I say, [St. Ann bore her fruit, the Virgin Mary] by conserving worthily (*conservando digne*), in three ways.

First in the womb, in which the body is formed, and the spirit is created by God, on the same day and hour the Virgin Mary was sanctified. Nine months she was in the womb of her holy and blessed mother, and her mother, St. Ann took care that she did not ride about here and there, as men do, and took care to refrain from dancing, because by this many women lose the treasure committed to them.

Second, she cared after giving birth by nursing her. Thus did the holy women of old. But nowadays the wife immediately says to her husband, "Do you have a wet nurse?" And she does this so that she is able to show off her breasts etc. They prefer not to give milk to their child, and give to a bitch instead. They do evil, because just as the womb is the chamber of the child, so thus the breasts ought to be its pantry. But St. Ann herself wanted to nurse the Virgin Mary, because sons and daughters receive their good health balance (*bonam complectionem*) from the mother, but they lose it often from bad milk. Note here the example of that nobleman in Lombardy, because he had a wet nurse for his son, who having lost her milk, nursed the child with the milk from a pig, lest she lose her contract and salary. The son became and lived like a pig. See how the health balance is destroyed. The same for slaves who nurse the children of their mistresses.

Third, she cared for her in the temple. After St. Ann had weaned the Virgin, she said to her husband, "Lord, do you not remember the vow?" He replied, "Indeed. And so we fulfill the vow." He did not say "Let us wait until she is ten years old or more." Or when they are beautiful then they say, "We shall substitute another one for her, humpbacked or one-eyed." And immediately Joachim and Ann presented their daughter to God in the temple, where she remained for ten continuous years in the service of God. And so we can say, St. Ann, "You have your fruit unto sanctification," by conserving worthily.

Morally. Here you have an example of staying in the temple of God on Sundays and feasts hearing mass and a sermon. He who wishes to keep the feast well, ought to do five things:

First, to cease from all temporal business, not to get a shave (*facere barbi tonsura*), nor do any other servile work. Reason, because on Sunday, Christ ceased from all business and labors by rising, and so he wished that Christians representing that resurrection and quiet ought to rest on Sundays. Same for the saints, because on that day they rested in eternal rest. Who however does not wish to rest, shall labor forever in hell.

Second, that you hear mass fasting. The reason is stated why taverns ought not to be open before mass on a feast day.

Third that you should be on time for mass. For you ought to be there at the beginning, for the "I confess," which is for your sake.

Fourth, you ought to remain at mass until the final blessing is given by the priest.

Fifth, that you ought not talk during mass, but today it is abused, because they no nothing else but talk of vain things at mass, etc. "Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath," (Ex 20:8).

But for those who keep these five, it can be said: "You have your fruit," good works, "unto sanctification," (Rom. 6:22).

C301. Sermon on the Feast of St. Dominic

"You are the salt of the earth, " (Mt 5:13) This is the text to be read as today's gospel. Just as the whole office and the solemnity of the present day is about the most glorious father and confessor of our Lord, St. Dominic, so also is our sermon. God willing, we shall have many good teachings etc. But first let the Virgin Mary be hailed etc.

The Theme

For some explanation of this text and the introduction to the aforesaid material, it must be known that all corporeal visible creatures which are in this world, have one task in general, namely to represent and signify spiritual and invisible things. And this is one of the more principal reasons. Why did God create the world? To represent invisible and spiritual things. The reason is, because as long as we live in this life and are mortal, we cannot see spiritual things except through figures and like representations. The defect of this is on the part of flesh which impedes, because it can see only corporal things. It is like someone who would hold green sapphires or rubies in front of his eyes, and whatever he sees would be green or red. It is not a defect on the part of the eyes, but from the unknowing glass or gems to view reality only through its own color. So it is with us. The eyes of the soul have a body like a sapphire, and so they can see only corporeal things, but putting down the sapphires, namely the flesh, immediately they see spiritual things, angels, souls. See the defect, and so it is that in this life we do not see spiritual things. And this is the common teaching in philosophy in *III De anima*, and in theology. The Philosopher (Aristotle) says, "It is impossible for us to understand except through phantasms," i.e. likenesses. In theology also Dionysius (the Areopagite) says, "It is impossible for us otherwise to shine divine light unless it was covered over by a veil of images (figuratum).

Because of this God, knowing that spiritual things cannot be seen by us in this world, created the world in which each creature, howsoever tiny, represents and figures spiritual things. For example, none of you ever sees

Christ, nor the virgin Mary, nor one of the apostles in this world. So, a skilled painter paints images not to be adored, but to represent Christ, the Virgin Mary and the other saints. And so God the most clever artist of all paints this world like an easel filled with representational images. And so, the Apostle says, "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity: so that they are inexcusable," (Rom 1:20). This teaching therefore is clear through reason and authority, that all corporeal creatures have the same general task.

So, Christ wished that the invisible and spiritual perfection of the apostles and of those following the apostolic life, be prefigured through one corporeal creature, namely, by salt. And so Christ says to the apostles and those following the apostolic life, and especially to St. Dominic our father, "You are the salt of the earth, " (Mt 5:13). The theme is clear now. Next, the material which I want to preach to you.

Salt

I have noticed therefore three properties in salt through which it signifies to me the apostles and especially St. Dominic our father. First, salt heals infections. Second, salt preserves from corruption. Third, it delights us when we eat. From these three conditions salt represents St. Dominic, and so it is said to him especially, "You are the salt of the earth, " (Mt 5:13)

Heals Infections

First, I say, that salt heals infections. About this in 4 Kgs, ch. 2 the text says, that that holy prophet and friend of God, Elisha, came to the city of Jericho and the officials and rulers of the city came to him, saying to him that that city was noble and beautiful, having good lands, but it had a defect, because the waters, he said, are polluted and make the land sterile, and bloat the people who drink of that water. "And so, Father, you who are so holy and a friend of God, are you able to take care of this and provide a remedy?" The prophet responded: "It pleases me. Give me a new pitcher. And when they brought the pitcher, he said, "Now I need salt." When they brought it he sprinkled it on the waters. When he did this he said, "Thus says the Lord: I have healed these waters," (4 Kgs 2:21). The waters were

healed on that day according to the words of Elisha, which is found in 4 Kgs 2.

Here are four secrets to be revealed.

- First that it is the city of Jericho.
- Second what are these infected waters.
- Third, what is the new pitcher.
- Fourth what is the salt healing and purifying the waters.

Jericho

The city of Jericho signifies the church. Jericho according to the Hebrew meaning stands for "moon." Behold universal Christianity, namely, the church, rightly passes through the phases of the moon. For in the moon, we find seven phases or states. The first is the new moon. Second is waxing. Third, full. Fourth, waning. The fifth is the moon turning around (gyrans). The sixth is eclipsing. The seventh will be the perfect moon.

The same for the church. First it was like the new moon in the time of the apostles, because then Christianity first appeared, and strict, and then the Christians went about simply, there was little of the great pridefulness or vanities in the prelates like now. Second, next it was waxing, in the time of the martyrs, because many were converted because of the miracles which they were performing, and so the church increased. Third, in the time of the holy doctors it was full, for from their preaching and teachings, and examples of holiness they illuminated the whole world. In the time of Augustine all of Africa was Christian. Fourth, it was waning, at the time when the religious orders of Preachers and Minors began, because then because of sin they were perishing suddenly and quickly; and so these religious orders came to correct those sins. The fifth phase is turning around, when the moon gyrated, it is not seen for two or three days. So it is now, almost no obedience is shown to the pope. Some are saying that the pope is above the council, others the opposite. Sixth it shall be eclipsed, and this in the time of the antichrist, because then it shall appear to be dead. Just as some simple folk say when the moon is eclipsed, that it died, and would appear bloody all over. Such shall be the time of the antichrist because of the outpouring of Christian blood. Seventh, after the death of antichrist it shall be perfect, because then all shall return to the faith of Christ. Behold the phases of the church. And so the church is signified by Jericho, i.e., the

moon. About this last phase David says, "...as the moon perfect for ever, and a faithful witness in heaven," (Ps 88:38).

Infected Waters

Second we must see what these infected waters of this city are. These waters are the vices, sins and wicked manner of living of Christians, because before the coming of St. Dominic all peoples were infected. The faithful were given to forgetfulness, virtues were held in contempt. About this the Apocalypse, "...and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter," (Rev 8:11).

New Pitcher

But Elisha said, "Let's have a new pitcher." Behold, the Order of Preachers is called a pitcher (vas). Because it is made up of many brothers, it is called new and old, more so than all [other orders]. If we wish to speak with respect to the essential vows which are angelic chastity, apostolic or evangelical poverty, and general obedience. And as for the office of preaching, which is to travel about through the world, not to construct buildings, this is the religious order (religio) of St. Dominic as to its essentials.

Christ already ordained all this. The first Prior was Christ, because St. Thomas says in II-II, q. 88, a. 4, ad 3m, that the apostles leaving everything to follow Christ, vowed pertaining to the state of perfection, from which is implied that they vowed these, namely chastity, poverty and obedience to Christ. The same regarding the office of preaching, he commanded them saying, "Go into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature," (Mk 16:15). Behold the religious order (religio) of Christ. It is the very same as that of St. Dominic. Therefore, we have and we embrace three vows, namely, angelic chastity, evangelical poverty, complete (generalem) obedience, so let anyone of this order watch out for himself. So go preaching; don't settle down in one place. And so, the story of St. Dominic says, "He thought to institute an order which would be called the Order of Preaching Brothers. And would so be." (Jordan, Libellus, #40). Behold, therefore how it is a very old religious order (religio). And a good religious observing these on the day of judgment, when kings and great prelates shall

stand on the earth with others, he himself shall stand with the apostles elevated with the Judge, with Christ. Oh, what an honor this shall be!

Here is the answer to a litigious question, between clergy and religious. The clergy say that they were the original religious order, which is not so. For there were no clergy until Holy Thursday, yet there were religious before, namely the apostles who had taken the aforesaid vows.

But the religious order of St. Dominic is called a **new pitcher or** vessel with respect to ceremonies. We wear black cappas (exterior capes), and white scapulars. And that we eat in our refectory, and similar things. With respect to these ceremonies, it is a new vessel. About this vessel we can say what Christ said of Paul, who was the first in the office of preaching, first, that is, principal, and ultimate with respect to the vocation to the apostolate, "this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings," (Acts 9:15).

Salt

Fourth we must find the meaning of salt in the vessel. This says Dominic in the vessel of the order, from its first property, because salt heals from infection. So St. Dominic placed in a new vessel heals the infections of the sins of this world:

For the whole world was infected with great **envy** of one other, but St. Dominic comes preaching the love of God and neighbor. And God prefigured this. For his mother saw in dreams that she would bear a dog with a blazing torch in his mouth, who emerging from her womb seemed to set fire to the whole world. She was amazed at this, and enlightened by God, said that her son would be a great watchdog for the flock of Christ, who would bark at the wolves of hell. With fire in his mouth, he was to inflame the world to the love of God and neighbor.

He also heals from the infection of **lust**, because the infection of this sin before the coming of St. Dominic was so great, that almost no one was clean. But St. Dominic came preaching chastity and poverty, and peoples responded with devotion. This too God had already prefigured, because his godmother had a vision of St. Dominic having a star on his forehead, which

lit up the whole earth with its light. The woman, stunned, joyfully told of her vision. In this is implied that just as the star is pure and bright, so he should lead peoples to the brightness and purity of chastity.

Also, the whole world was infected with **pride**, pomp and vanity, but at the preaching and teaching and example of St. Dominic many people were humbled, setting aside the vanities of jewelry, armor, horses, gold and silver cups and similar things. This God showed, because when he was yet a cute nursing child, maybe one year old, he was seen frequently to lie down on his bed spread out on the ground, showing humility.

Also the world was infected with **gluttony**. For few observed Lent, or the fasts in the four seasons (Rogation Days), or the vigils of saints. St. Dominic gave evidence that he was purified from this infection, for scarcely ten years old, he already abstained from wine and fasted often on bread and water.

Also the world was infected with **avarice**, usury, theft, robbery, and deceits, but St. Dominic by preaching and through his example purified it. This is signified by a deed, when he was in Palencia where there was a great famine, and the poor were dying of starvation, the rich were saying, "Let us keep our goods for ourselves, and our children, because we don't know how long this shall last." But St. Dominic, sold his books and furniture and gave it all to the poor. His example provoked the rich to give alms.

Also about the sin of **anger**, because the people preferred not to dismiss or forgive injuries; they wanted vengeance. St. Dominic came preaching patience and he made peace. He demonstrated this by his actions. When he was preaching in Carcassonne, where there were many heretics, and they were throwing filth and garbage and other things at him, he bore up under it all patiently.

And so the world was **lazy** for spiritual goods. No one was cared to do penance. But St. Dominic showed them by word and example. Three times a day he disciplined himself with an iron chain.

It is clear then, that St. Dominic, like salt placed in a new vessel, healed and purified the waters of sin. And so about St. Dominic it can be understood

the word of Augustine in the Homily, "The Lord sent the apostolic salt for the preserving and extinguishing the corruptions of the waters of sinners," (See Augustine, [On the Sermon on the Mount, Book I, Matthew 5, ch. 6, # 17](#)).

Preserves from Corruption

I say that the second condition of salt is that it preserves from corruption. It doesn't just cure and clean what is already corrupt, but it also preserves. This is clear because when a man wishes to preserve meat or fish, he puts salt on them, which restricts moistures etc. Although this is clear, nevertheless there is a scriptural authority, of Tobias, who caught a fish, of which he ate a part, "...and they took it with them in the way: the rest they salted as much as might serve them, till they came to Rages the city of the Medes," (Tob 6:6).

So too of St. Dominic. For I find that this world should have been corrupted and destroyed for well over two hundred years and more. But the Virgin Mary, wishing still to preserve the world, put salt in it, namely St. Dominic, and saved the world. For in the stories of the saints and in the life of St. Dominic -- in two places -- we read of a vision which St. Dominic and St. Francis both experienced. When they were in Rome working for the confirmation of their orders, the pope and cardinals were raising difficulties over such new things, because they were seeking confirmation of a status which was both higher and lower.

A higher status, because it was both a contemplative life of study, and active. By performing spiritual works, by celebrating, and preaching, the starving are satisfied with the word of God, and those ignorant in the faith are instructed, etc. And the dead, that is sinners, are buried in the wounds of Christ. The captives of the devil, too, are redeemed. The campaign is engaged; the demons are conquered. O how many castles, i.e. sinners, are made subject to Christ by preaching.

Secondly a lower status, because greatly despised, because they were beggars, and so the pope was not inclined to confirm them, because they could repay nothing.

One night, when St. Dominic was praying in a certain church, and St. Francis in another, Christ was seen by them with three lances, wishing to destroy the world. These saints were saying to themselves, "O shall there be there no holy one in heaven who can call back this wrath?" And suddenly the Virgin Mary came, like a mother coming quickly to snatch her child from devouring wolves, saying, "O son, you are now bearing lances, you who are accustomed to bearing nails in your hands for the world." Christ replied -- Saints Dominic and Francis were listening-- "My mother, how much more should I do, since I have showered the world with so many graces? I sent the patriarchs, and prophets, and they killed them; and finally I myself came, etc. History tells, how up until now, I have not spared [graces].

These three lances, destructive of the world, are the three great tribulations about to come shortly over the world. First is the tribulation and persecution of the antichrist, which lance can be said that it pierces the whole world. Second shall be the conflagration of the world through fire; the whole world is burned, etc. Third is the judicial sentencing by Christ. Of these three lances, scripture testifies, allegorically in 2 Kgs 18 About Absalom, the traitor and rebel son of David. He was killed by three lances from Joab, the captain of the army. The story says, "So he [Joab] took three lances in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom," (2 Kgs 18:14).

Why did God wish that Absalom be killed by three lances, since one would have been sufficient, especially for a man suspended etc. It was a figure. For the son betraying God the Father is this whole world acting against the commandments of God, expelling their father, namely God from the world as much as possible. But the prince of the army, namely Christ, kills them with three aforesaid lances.

Even in the time of St. Dominic the world ought to have been destroyed by Christ and corrupted, but the Virgin Mary added the salt, namely Dominic, gaining an extension. Think here how the whole world is now in this extension, and we do not have a fixed time, but he said conditionally: "If converted, OK (bene), otherwise I shall no longer spare them."

Now let us see if the world in these [our] lands, is corrected. I believe that never were there so much pomp and vanities, etc. as there are now, nor such

lust, unless in the time of Noah. For the hotels [hospitia], and even the villas are filled with prostitutes. Mix bad apples with the good, and shortly all are rotten. Same for avarice and usury, because they change its name. Usury they call "contrived assessments," but when the intention is not buying or selling, but of lending, it is usury. Also, not for a just price. Whatever you receive beyond the allotted price, is usury and damnation. Same too with simony in the clergy; they ultimately have all the sacraments for sale in some way or other. Same for envy. If someone among religious has some excellence in disputation, or the science of preaching, others are envious. It is the same with clergy and laity about gluttony. Already you say that Lent is not observed, nor vigils of the apostles nor the rogation days observed etc. [quatuor temporum, literally the four times]. You know about anger; it is already worse against both God and reason. If someone does another injury, and they cannot get to him, they kill his innocent friend contrary to divine law, because it is against divine and human judgment to kill an innocent person. About sloth: the world comes to this, that all are judged to be lazy, unless they are doing business, but if someone takes some time off for a work of God and of prayer they are called lazy. In the evening [of time] it will be apparent who was lazy, and because the world is not corrected, moreover that it is worse, these religious orders, who were founded to correct the world are already destroyed. So, if St. Dominic or Francis should come now, they would not recognize their religious orders.

Since the world has not been corrected, does it not follow, then, that in a short time it will be destroyed before the coming of the day of judgment? So, for the other objections respond, "Behold the salt, namely St. Dominic." On his account we praise God saying: "Blessed be the redeemer of all, who providing for the salvation of mankind gave St. Dominic to the world."

Delights in Dining

Third, I say that the other condition of salt is that it delights in dining, giving flavor to food. To make this clear, a quotation: "But if the salt lose its savor," i.e. it fails in how it salts food, "wherewith shall it be salted? It," the food, "is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men," (Mt 5:13). The food of the souls are good works and spiritual things. Citation: "Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that which endures unto life everlasting," (Jn 6:27). And so Christ says, "I have meat to

eat, which you know not," (Jn 4:32). The "meat" of Christ about which he is satisfied are the works of virtue.

But this food was insipid before the coming of St. Dominic. The temporal lords, having abandoned the virtue of justice gave themselves over to tyranny. St. Dominic came, salting, recalling them to the virtue of justice, to being content with their returns, etc. The same for the insipid meat of prelates, because they cared more about their incomes than about souls. St. Dominic added the salt of his teaching by which they ought to care more for souls than their incomes. How many religious were living dissolute lives, caring nothing of their religious practices, but St. Dominic called them back to religious observance. How many irreligious clergy, praying their divine office only superficially (*nisi a.e.i.o.u*) and almost all were cohabiting, prowling the taverns, were led back? How many moneylenders, were buying for less than the fixed price, or selling expecting more [were converted]? How many cruel civil servants, permitting the poor to die of starvation, were returned to piety, mercy and liberality. How many self-indulgent women by his preaching did he return to chastity etc.

Finally God said, "O this salt, I wish that it be set on my table" And see how. The story is told how Christ appeared to him, inviting him to his glory. Then St. Dominic called twelve brothers in the Bologna convent, and before them composed his will such that it was fitting that he leave to his brothers a firm humility, namely that they take pride not because of sanctity or knowledge. Second he left to his brothers a treasure of poverty, by which the kingdom of heaven is purchased, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," (Mt 5:3). Third he bequeaths fraternal charity, and having kissed the brethren, and having received the sacraments, he died.

They tell of the glorious vision which God showed to him, of two ladders of which Christ was holding the top of the first, and the Virgin Mary the other. And crowned with a golden crown he entered glory. If one asks "Why two ladders? Is not one sufficient?" The answer is, to indicate that the order of Preachers sends brothers not only by one ladder, namely of the contemplative life, but also by the other, namely the way of the active life. The Celestines and those like them ascend by the latter of contemplation. The Knights of St. John, of St. James, of St. George, and the Brothers of

Mercy, ascend by the other scale, namely, of the active life. But the Brothers of St. Dominic by two, namely the contemplative by study, and the active, by preaching. "Have salt in you, and have peace among you," (Mk 9:49).

C324-332. the Assumption of the BVM

Luke 10:38-42

As they continued their journey, he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary (who) sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. **Mary has chosen the better part** and it will not be taken from her."

Mary hath chosen the best part. Luke 10. Just as the present feast and solemnity is of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and this feast is the end and the closure of the life of the Virgin Mary, so therefore it is to be spoken about her life. And we have not only intellectual speculations but also moral instructions. But if in our other sermons we turn to the Virgin asking for grace, how much more now ought we return to refer to her because we intend to preach about her, so that we might call forth devotion, let us now salute the Virgin Mary etc. And the theme is resumed.

For a shorter explanation and introduction of the matter it should be known that the human life of man or of woman has three parts, gradually rising., namely the first is good, the second is better, and the third is the best. The first part is the life of nature. And this is good temporarily. The second is the life of grace, and this is spiritually better. And the third is the life of glory. And this is celestial and the best. And because the Virgin Mary was not content that she would have a life of nature and grace, but also of glory, therefore, about her the theme says "Mary has chosen the greatest part."

The first part of human life is called the life of nature because as long as the soul is essentially joined to the body, this is good. Because it is in effect a creature of God, because "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected " it as is said in I Tim 4:4.

The second life is the life of grace, and this is better. And it is through the union of grace of God with the soul. As long as the grace of God is with the creature, it illuminates his understanding, to believe truly, inflames the will for loving sincerely, and it governs all the members of the body for functioning usefully. And of this David says in Ps 62:4 "For thy mercy is

better than lives: thee my lips shall praise." "My Lips," here he begins the construction, "For thy mercy is better," namely glory, preventing or justifying which is called here mercy, the reason is because there is not given merits of the creature but only the mercy of God. There are other graces following or cooperating, and they are acquired through one's own merits, but prevenient grace is not that kind. And so it is said Your mercy is better, i.e. prevenient grace or justifying.

The third life is the best and this is the life of glory. If it is asked why is it called the best, the Response is because the first life, i.e. of nature is lost by death. Also, the life of grace can be lost through mortal sin. But the life of glory not. Because from the fact that the soul enters paradise it is thus confirmed that it is impeccable, therefore that life is the best. And so Paul says, "For it is best that the heart be established with grace" at Heb. (13:9). Behold the three parts of the human life.

The Virgin Mary has a life of corporeal nature, because according to some teachers she lived 40 years. Epiphanius says that she lived 72. She had a life of spiritual grace above all other creatures. But she was not content with this, but daily she sought the life of glory. She desired to be with her Son in the life of glory to which today she has been assumed. And of this life is said the theme. The best part etc.

She held on to a good life. She kept a better life, but she chose the best life.

When you ask How is it the proposed theme of today's gospel about the Virgin Mary since it speaks only of the Blessed Mary Magdalen and Martha, therefore the text seems impertinent and improper today. But I respond to this question you shall see that all this material today will be in this gospel. I say that if you wish to receive the gospel today according to the **literal understanding** it is not to our point. But if you choose to take it in an **allegorical understanding** according to which the church receives it today there is no gospel more appropriate to the Virgin Mary in the whole bible. because the whole life of the Virgin Mary is included in this gospel.

For the holy gospel literally says three things of holy Martha, namely about her **active life**. And says the other three things about Mary Magdalen, i.e. of

the **contemplative life**, but according to the spiritual meaning these six virtues touch the most glorious Virgin Mary.

The first, that the gospel treats of blessed Martha and says that *Jesus entered into a certain village and the woman Martha by name accepted him into her home.*

First Active Work -- Incarnation

I. Behold now the first work of the active life of blessed Martha about Christ but allegorically. Behold **the conception of the Son of God**, because then Jesus entered the village of this rebellious world to subject it to himself. And this certain woman Martha, that is the lady, who is a lady and who is a greater lady than the Virgin Mary who received him in her home, namely into her virginal womb.

Three things should be noted.

- First, why this world is called a village.
- Second, that the woman received Christ.
- Third in which house did she receive him.

Of the first, it must be noted that this world is called a village because of the conditions and qualities of an impregnable village which are seven. All these were in the village of this rebellious world. **First** it is necessary that the village be on a high location. And so this world has been located high especially through pride, and so David speaking of the dwellers of this village says " the pride of them that hate thee ascendeth continually."(Ps. 73:23). **Second**, that it be in a well walled circle, so the village of this world was walled with walls of earth because avarice needs only earth. **Third**, that it have a good moat, so the village of this world was circled with a moat through lust, because just as in a deep valley wickedness is congregated, so about the sin of lust many corruptions are gathered, etc. on account of which Augustine says. "God seeing such a quagmire of corruption in human nature, he almost, that is for a moment, thought about not becoming incarnate." **Fourth**, that it be well provided with supplies, so the village of the world was well provided through gluttony. Philippians 3:19 "whose God is their belly; " etc. **Fifth**, that it be well located on a rocky impregnable ridge, so the village of the world was well situated because it was therefore inaccessible through envy, ...Behold the high

village. Whence Wisdom says I have thought about all the labors of man and I have considered his industries...envy of their neighbors Ecc. 4. **Sixth**, that it be well ordered with weapons for defense. So the world is armed through anger. **Seventh**, that it is possessed by trustworthy people, but it was the opposite because they did not prefer to be moved by penitential and meritorious works.

God, seeing the rebellion of this village said, "I must personally go to wage war. And on the day of the Incarnation Jesus entered into a certain village, i.e. the world. etc. Of this village Jesus allegorically says to his disciples, "Go ye into the village," namely by battling it with the fusillades of preaching, "that is over against you," Matt. 21:2.

And a certain woman, Martha by name, -- Martha means "lady". There is no lady of heaven and earth, but the Queen of Angels, the Virgin Mary, who received him into her home, namely into her virginal womb. Of this home the church sings, "The mansion of the modest breast, becomes a shrine where God shall rest, the pure and undefiled one, conceived in her womb the Son." when, she said "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Luke 1. Then she received him in her home. It is clear, therefore, how the first part of the gospel writes of the Virgin Mary.

Moraliter: Note here. For the great excellence was of the Virgin Mary because she received the Son of God into her home. This is like those who today receive communion, because just as he came into the Virginal womb, so he comes properly in the consecrated host, and we receive him more perfectly than the Virgin Mary, because she received him as mortal and vulnerable, and we receive him immortal and invulnerable. She only once, we however often. It is said here for the information of the people how someone should choose ten or twelve principal feasts for receiving communion. So against those who do not receive and do not receive him, it is said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name." John 1:11-12.

Second Active Work -- Serving

The second work of the active life of Blessed Martha is shown when the evangelist says, "But Martha was busy about much serving. For when Christ was in Martha's home, then Martha was unrestrainedly [incontinently] running through the house, ordering the handmaidens and servants, Give some bread and wine and the rest for refreshments. She was so eager to serve the Lord.

But someone might say, This has nothing to say about the Blessed Virgin. I reply, that's true, but not literally, but there is always much that is appropriate allegorically. Because just as the first work of Martha made for the Virgin with respect to the incarnation, so the second work she does for the Virgin Mary with respect to her actions for the Son of God after she had given birth. It is said how the Virgin Mary, at age 15 gave birth to Him, and she didn't have milk. And a woman who does not know man does not have milk. "O," Joseph said to Mary, "I shall go and find a woman to nurse the baby," etc. But the Virgin Mary would have none of it. On bended knees, as the devout doctors report, praying she said, "Father and Almighty Lord, you have given me this son, you who provide in every way for the animals on earth, the fish in the sea, give me milk for your son, and unrestrainedly God the Father sent milk for her from heaven. About this we have the authority of the church which sings "Not knowing man the Virgin Mother, painlessly gives birth to the Saviour of the ages, The Virgin alone nursed the King of Angels, With breasts filled from heaven." See how she was busy about serving Christ. She also served him in many other things. For you know how much mothers do things for their sons in clothing them and caring in other ways. Because she was not able to warm him properly because of the cold, she laid him in a manger that he might be warmed by the animals. Also, by brushing his hair and washing him when he was in exile in Egypt, weaving and sewing she provided for herself, her Son and for the old Joseph. Also when Christ went out to preach, the Virgin Mary followed his sermons. And when they were in a certain place, she prepared lunch for her Son. See therefore Martha, i.e. the lady, busy about many services. So today the church sings in the person of the Virgin Mary, "and in the holy dwelling place I have ministered before him." Sirach 24:14

Moraliter. Does it not seem to you a great excellence to receive Christ into your home and to minister to him? This grace you can have through a similar action, because when out of love and honor of Christ you

receive the poor and persons of good life, you can say that you are receiving Christ into your home and when you give and minister to the poor, you can say I have ministered to Christ.....

And to give nothing to the poor is to give nothing to Christ.

Third Active Work – Solicitous

The third work of the active life of Blessed Martha is shown when it is said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. Literal meaning. Blessed Martha was very solicitous of the service of Christ, it seemed to her that all from the house was had not been sufficient, so she ordered about her servants, relatives and friends. Allegorically this is properly appropriate to the virgin Mary because just as the first work of Martha for the Virgin Mary for procreation, and the second for conservation, so this third in the passion of Christ, in which Martha, i.e. the lady was solicitous. O who can express [Mary's] anxiety and turmoil which she had in the passion of her son.

1) First the Virgin Mary was solicitous of the salvation of the human race, but because she know no other future way but through the ignominious death of her son, she was devastated by maternal compassion, and was between two millstones, when she thought that no one could be freed from the bond of sins nor from the chains of the devil unless her son was bound by the Jews. etc. Behold her emotional turmoil.

2) Also she knew that no man could escape that hard sentence of eternal damnation which shall be given in the [last] judgment -- "Depart from me, you cursed," Mt. 21:41-- unless her son had tasted death. So she was disturbed.

3) She was also solicitous lest anyone be speared on the fork of hell, but because it could not happen unless first her sun was suspended on the fork of a tree, etc. So she was disturbed.

4) She was solicitous because no one could be released from the company of the devil, but this could not happen unless first her son was associated with robbers. And so her turmoil.

5) And she was solicitous that men, exiled from heavenly paradise could enter there --see her disturbed spirit -- because it could not happen unless her son would be raised up from Jerusalem.

6) Also she was solicitous that men would have the crown of glory, -- behold her turmoil -- because her son first had to be crowned with thorns.

7) Finally, she was solicitous, because men could not have eternal life, -- behold her turmoil -- in order for them to have it, her son had to die. It is clear why it is said "Martha Martha, i.e. lady, lady, you are solicitous...etc.

Moraliter We have already heard of the solicitude and turmoil of the Virgin Mary. In this same way we should imitate her, which happens through repentance, in which a man has solicitude and turmoil. Solicitude, because through repentance eternal glory is acquired, but turmoil, when from fasting or hair shirts the head or the stomach aches. Also, solicitude in the discipline or other penitential acts by which one evades the disciplines and punishments of hell, but disturbance follows when one perceives wounds in the body etc "Now all chastisement for the present indeed seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow: but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice," Heb. 12:11 "Chastisement" stands for all penitential actions.

It is clear here the whole active life of the Virgin Mary.

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Now let us examine the contemplative life of the Virgin Mary which she had most perfectly and is indicated through [Mary] Magdalen, about which the gospel today says three things.

First Contemplative Work -- Listening

First, Mary sitting at the feet of the Lord was listening to his word. Behold the contemplative life. Now we see whether this pertains to the Virgin Mary. It is said here how the Virgin Mary knew that Jesus, her son from the instant of his conception, had such understanding, of the kind which he has now in heaven. And this is the general teaching of all the doctors in theology. Think therefore when Christ was six or seven years old, how the Virgin Mary would make him sit in a chair, as some outstanding teachers, especially devoted to the Blessed Virgin say, and would seat herself at his feet. You believe that Christ would say to her that she should sit next to him, but she out of humility wouldn't do it. Finally, she said to him, "My Son, tell me something." He replied, "Mother, I would be happy to. What

do you want me to say to you?" And the Virgin said, "My Son I desire to know the glory of the blessed souls, how shall they be after your Ascension. Whether they will be at your right hand in heaven or at your left. Also whether they will be below the angels or above." And Jesus replied, "My mother, neither shall it be , nor the other, but for all there will be one congregation, because, then there will be one flock and one shepherd."

It is said that Christ told the Virgin that there will be nine orders or nine streets

according to John Apoc. 16.

1. The first street ascending is of the Angels, and in this order are gathered the repentant sinners, who from their sins through works of penance, etc.
2. The second order is of the Archangels, whose prince is Gabriel, he my mother , who announced to your my incarnations and in this will dwell the merciful, and devout persons. O the Virgin Mary said, how in a good place are born those who show mercy.
3. The third street is of the Principalities. And so of the others look in the sermon on All Saints, which begins Your reward etc.

Second Contemplative Work -- Reflection

The second work of the contemplative life of Magdalen is when Martha was solicitous of the service to Christ, Martha said to her sister "Help me," etc. and Magdalen gave her a deaf ear. And so she complained to Christ, not out of impatience, but --says the commentary that Martha saw that all the help in the house was not sufficient to serve Christ. But Blessed Magdalen rejected that active works so that she would have time for contemplation. So, the Virgin Mary in the Ascension of Christ, when she saw her son being raised from the earth and she perceived the souls of the saints, she asked her Son that she could ascend with him. And Christ said to her, "My Mother, you, for a short time shall take my place, and shall console my brother apostles, that in doubts they can come to you." From that day the life of Blessed Mary was contemplative in this way. For every day she was visiting the holy places. First to Nazareth, in the room where the Son of God was conceived, thinking how the angel had greeted her and contemplating those events she wept etc. Next she went to Bethlehem, where he was born, where the kings of the Orient had come. Then to the Temple where after 40 days she presented him. Next to the place of the Baptism. Then to the desert

where he fasted. Then to the place of his passion and burial. She lived twelve years after the Ascension -- 24 according to others -- and each day she visited such a place.

There is an objection here against the idea of the visitations, because Blessed Ambrose says that the Blessed Mary was not a vagabond, nor did she go about in public, but at home, quietly, she loved to be by herself. This he says in his book *On virgins*. How therefore does the *History* say that she visited these places. A good reconciliation is this, keeping both. This visiting happened every day, as the *History* says, but it was spiritual and contemplative, and she did not leave her home, as Ambrose says. She traveled in spirit. O blessed pilgrimage, without danger. About which St. Paul writes, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

This is said against those men and women who in going on pilgrimage break their neck, and become wretched, and because sometimes they set off as chaste virgins, but they return as prostitutes. It is reported of women going to Rome at the time of the indulgence and sleeping with other pilgrims in the streets, that many were corrupted and violated. This a foreign woman told master Vincent.

And beyond the physical dangers there are many dangers of the soul for religious and clergy going to Jerusalem, who cannot say their Divine office nor mass. So, make that pilgrimage spiritually, today and every day you can go to Nazareth to the room where the Son of God became incarnate, and so of the other places.

Third Contemplative Work – Desiring Union

The third work of the contemplative life of Blessed Magdalen is that which the theme says, "Mary hath chosen the best part." Behold here is today's story. It is said that when after 12 years passed and -- according to others 24 -- the virgin once was praying, saying "O son for how many years have I been among the Jews, and the apostles are dispersed throughout the world, and so [now] may you receive me with you." She was weeping. Christ here gives an example in his mother of desiring paradise, because he wished that paradise be ardently desired.

Then, suddenly the angel Gabriel appeared to her saluting her and carrying a branch of palms. So great was the brightness of the angel, that the virgin

at first did not recognize him, and she even asked his name. The branch signifies victory which the virgin had achieved over the world through humility, over the devil through poverty, over the flesh through most pure virginity. It is reported how she asked for two things. First that the apostles would be present at her burial. Second that no devil would be present to her death. Do not believe that she feared them, but she did this out of a sense of her honor, because they have done so much evil. Just like a king, who doesn't tolerate a criminal to walk before him, not that he fears him, but because he abhors him.

And the Virgin Mary got her wish, that all the apostles by divine power were gathered there. It is said how the people were in wonder when the apostles passed before their view through the clouds, and they found themselves all at the Virgin's door saying to each other, "Why has the Lord gathered us?" Note this [bene legenda]. And John who came first told them the reason, that it was because of the death of the Virgin Mary. And Paul and Denis were there, as Denis and Hierotheus report. It is said how in procession, two by two they presented their reverence to the Virgin. First Peter and Andrew etc. And the Virgin Mary received them with great joy indicating to each the service which they had performed for Christ her son, and the punishments which they had suffered, especially to Blessed Paul she said, "O Paul, in such a place you had been captured for my son" etc.

And as the Virgin spoke, Christ appeared, saluting his mother saying, "Hail blessed one, you who have conceived life, and discovered glory. To whom the Virgin [said] "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready."(Ps 56:8) " In the head of the book," namely of predestination, "it is written of me that I should do thy will: O my God." It is reported how she was greeted by the holy angels and blessed who had come with Christ, as some say.

And the question is, whether this joy is greater than other joys. For the Annunciation was a great joy, in which she had become the mother of God, and the Nativity and the Epiphany, and the Resurrection etc. The answer is given through a story. It is like the beautiful girl or young woman who rejoiced much when she became engaged to be married, but rejoiced more when she got married, and even more, as married, when she was visited by her husband, and more when her husband sent her precious jewels, even

more when her spouse was given an important office in the house of the king, and above all she rejoiced most on the day of their coming together.

About which the Virgin Mary rejoiced greatly. For the engagement she was drawn along on the day of the Annunciation, the conception of the Son of God. On the day of the Nativity, she was shown publicly. Espoused on the day of the Epiphany, in the presence of the three kings. Her spouse [Jesus] visited the spouse, his mother [Mary], on the day of Resurrection. He accepted the office in the curia of the empyreal heaven on the day of the Ascension. He sent most precious jewels on the day of Pentecost. But today is the day of the wedding, when without pain and punishment she handed over her soul into his hands, and the ministers, i.e. the angels singing psalms walked before, and so she was led to the house of the spouse to the glory of paradise, not only in her soul but Christ raised her up in body and soul. Thus, she lives and reigns in eternity. Therefore, Mary chose the best part for herself.

It is said here morally how each ought to desire this glory. We are not like beasts which look downwards, but God made us upright, that we might desire paradise. So David said, "As the deer longs after the fountains of water," etc. Ps 41:2.

D564 . Perseverance

On perseverance in good works at all time and not only in Lent, according to the most blessed Vincent, which sermon he preached in St. Giles in Britain, where there was an abbey of monks, and it was on the day of Saints Tiburtius and Valerian (Apr. 14), Thursday of the First Sunday after the Octave of Easter

"He who shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved," (Mt. 10:22).

Because some simpletons err saying that are we bound to live a good life only in Lent, I wish now to declare how we must live well not only in Lent but at all times. But first the Virgin Mary is saluted.

"He who shall persevere." etc. Authority: St. Gregory, an excellent doctor of the holy church wishing to declare the virtue and perfection of good works, briefly said so in his Easter homily, "The virtue of good works is perseverance." The reason is: Geometers say that the spherical figure is not perfect until the circle is completed to the point from which it began, or until the end is joined to the beginning. Give an example at hand in the manner from [compassu] So Christ is the beginning and the end of all things. Whence he says Rev 1, "I am Alpha and Omega," – The first letter of the Greek alphabet is alpha and the last, omega. In the alphabet of the Jews the first letter is aleph, the last thau. — He wishes to say: "I am Alpha and Omega," that is I am the beginning and the end of all good. If therefore Christ is the beginning of a good life, therefore it should also end in him, because "All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made," Jn 1:3, otherwise it would be a minor thing to begin a good life unless it is continued. Therefore, Gregory says "The virtue of a good life is perseverance." Therefore, the theme says, "He who shall persevere," namely from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, "unto the end," that is Christ, "he shall be saved," (Mt. 10:22). See the declared theme. Now, good people, out of love for you I have sought out in sacred scriptures how many ways, in general, in which we ought to persevere unto the end, and I have found in three:

- First, by doing good diligently,

- Second, by bearing evils patiently,
- Third, by praying to God reverently

Therefore, whoever shall persevere unto the end in these three, will be saved. The rest we shall see one at a time.

Doing Good Diligently

First, I say that we ought to persevere in doing good diligently not only for Lent but at all times, each one in his own state of life: priests, religious, and laity. Do you priests know what you should do and observe? Diligently and perseveringly, you should devoutly recite your office [officiare], maintain honorable associations, and celebrate with dignity. O what glory is prepared for such a priest.

Religious should keep their rule, vows, obedience, poverty, chastity and the ceremonies of the cloister. O what glory is prepared for such a religious.

The laity should keep the ten commandments and say your brief prayers [recitentur breviter]. For these a great glory is prepared, by persevering in good works up to the end. Dear people, you have heard well the reason. When a certain soul comes to the gate of heaven, God does not give him glory for a certain time, namely for one month, or year, or twenty etc., but he gives it without end. Do you want an authority? Mat 25: "The just, shall go into life everlasting." (v.46), that is, without termination and end. Therefore, it makes good sense that the service should correspond to the salary, because according to the salary ought to be the service. Therefore, from the fact that God gives glory, as long as he will be God, for ever and ever, you too ought to serve as long as you are a man. And this is the good proportion. You hear one beautiful authority of Christ about this matter, and about those who do the opposite, where there are two great secrets, Mat. 24, "And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold." (v, 12); "He who shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved," (Mt. 10:22). Here are two clauses. The first "because iniquity hath abounded" etc. This clause declares why many do not persevere in a good life. He replies, "And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold.".

For example. In religious who in the year of their novitiate are devout and ardent, keeping the rule and ceremonies completely, but after profession, or after a little while their devotion cools, their charity and love of God, when they witness the wickedness of others, who do not keep the rule, and who laugh at them. Therefore, the good life slips, saying, "O I can do this just as well, the way the other does it, etc, or the others do it this way." Behold how by witnessing the evil and iniquity of others he pulls back. Therefore, Christ says, "And because iniquity has abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold," (Mt 10:24), the many who were holding to a good life, which they let go because of seeing the evil of others.

Likewise in new priests ardent in devotion, they say their office devoutly, they fast, nor do they wish to drink in taverns, or play dice, just as it is forbidden them *Extra, de vita et hone. cleri. c. clerici. 2 Vivunt honeste*, but because the wickedness of others abounds and the sins of priests living a bad life and mocking the good, the charity of the good cools, saying when he sees other wicked ones, "O and why do I not keep a mistress like the others? or why do I not act this way etc." And so, because of the abundance of wickedness of the evil ones the charity of the good cools.

The same for the laity, men and women etc. Rightly it happens to such just as boiling [fervente] water in the winter, which if it is put into cold air, immediately cools and then freezes, but if it is put next to fire it does not freeze or get cold. So it is that good persons, devout and burning with charity and the love of God, when among evil people cool in their devotion, etc. Not so if they stand near the fire, namely Christ, and with good and perfect people. And check the authority which says this, Jeremiah 30: "For the multitude of your iniquity, and for your hardened sins I have done these things to you," (Jer 30:15), and it is spoken to Christianity [Christianitati]. There follows, "He who shall persevere," not caring about mockery or hurtful words, "he shall be saved," (Mt. 10:22). It is necessary that he persevere. Thus, if someone serves Christ in a good life for a hundred years, and abandons the good life one hour before death, he is damned and loses the whole service of one hundred years.

Now there is an argument to the contrary. If it is said, O it is amazing that for the lack of one hour, you would lose the service of a hundred years. For it is certain that it is not that way in the service of temporal lords, because

they are paid of a time of service and subtract the time which they did not serve, otherwise it would be hardhearted [crudelis], because if they served one for one month, they were paid for one month, if for one year, they are paid for such, etc. Why therefore did Christ not do the same, since he is the epitome of mercy? Why does he impose damnation for the lack of one hour? It seems unfeeling, because he ought at least to compensate that man for that time in which he served.

I reply that it is with good reason and justly that a man is damned and punished, if he does not persevere unto the end, even if for the whole lifetime he served Christ, and failed at the end. It is reasonable and just.

To understand this better you should know, dear people, that there once was a rich merchant, who had more than a hundred thousand [francs], etc. He went to the market where he bought some extremely valuable pearls and precious jewels, and gold fabrics and things of that sort. And he spent the hundred thousand on these. Having purchased them, he tied them up in a bundle and hired a man to whom he said, "See, I have wrapped this bundle in which I have placed all my riches, and I want to go home. Will you deliver it to my house? The man replies, Indeed, how many day's [dietae, much larger than a league, a "day's journey"?) journey? The merchant says, "Ten." He tells the merchant: "You shall give me ten francs, one for every day." The merchant said, "OK [placet mihi]." This person placed the bundle of the merchant on his back and he staggered a lot. When he was in the tenth day near the home of the merchant, about a half a league away [league, about 3 miles], the bundle was digging into his shoulder and his back hurt. He said to himself, "O, this package hurts me. I'll drop it here in a field." Then he went to the home of the merchant. And the merchant seeing him cried out, "Where is my bundle?" He replied, "I brought it near the village about a half a league, and I set it down in a field. Pay me my ten francs." "O you wretched traitor, you have lost all my goods which were in that bundle. What shall I do? And he took a sword and killed him. You say, "He should have paid?" Certainly not! Rather he deserved death, because he laid it down when he was near the home.

So, it is with us. Christ is the merchant, who comes from his home, paradise, to the market place of this world, to buy our precious souls. So he says to the world, "Give me the persons, and the rest take to thyself." (Gen

14:21). And he entrusts the bundle of a good life, filled with precious jewels, to him whom he inspires [tangit in corde] to live well. Whence to live and act well are works of God, and the defects are ours. Do you want an authority about this from the Old and New Testament? First from the Old: "For you have wrought all our works for us," (Isa 26:12). Second from the New, from the Apostle, Paul: "And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who works all in all." (1 Cor 12: 6), we are only instruments. One grace is to fast, another to pray, another to confess. Therefore, he said, there are "diversities of operations". And God wishes that we carry the bundle of the good life up to the gate of his house of his paradise, which gate is called the man's death, because no one enters paradise through another gate but only through death. David, "This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it," (Psalm 117:20). Note, "of the Lord" because the gate of death is of the Lord actively and passively. Actively because he so ordains that through death we enter it. Authority Heb 10: "And as it is appointed," supply, by God, "unto men once to die," (Heb 9:27). Also, it is called the gate of the Lord passively because he had to die. Luke, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26). And he promised that whoever would carry the burden of a good life up to this gate of death, he would give him the salary, not ten francs, but the kingdom of paradise and eternal glory. Authority. Mat. 6: "But he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Mt 7:21). Out of love of this friend, a good person carries the burden of a good life, although sometimes it is accompanied [attenditur] with labor. Nevertheless, as Gregory says, "The consideration of the reward diminishes the sting of the discipline. If therefore it is set down an hour before death, you cannot ask for your salary, but you would have merited punishment and damnation, just as the servant who curses [damnicant] his Lord, etc. Therefore, Christ comforting us says Mat 11: "Come to me, all you who labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls." (v. 28-29). Heavier, certainly is the burden of a bad life than a good. It is clear therefore how we should persevere in good diligently, because as Christ said, Mat. 10 and 24, "He who shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved," (Mt. 10:22).

Bearing Evils Patiently

Second, we should persevere bearing evils patiently. Gregory on the text of Luke ch. 8:15, "Bring forth fruit in patience," says, "There are no goods which we do, unless with a calm spirit we tolerate the evils of our neighbor." There are some who immediately become indignant. Therefore, it is necessary to bear evils patiently, etc. And I'll tell you both the reason and authority. The reason is such. You know that this world is like a turbulent sea, because a wave of the sea does not rise high, nor low, one after the other. So, in this world, there are some raised by prosperity, like lords, or great prelates, then cast down by adversity of an illness or of the loss of honor, or of friends. For as Boethius says in Book 2 of *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, prose four. No one is "... so entire happiness that he is not in some part offended with the condition of his estate?" Certainly, never in this world can a man stand secure and quiet. He is like a sea which always is moving. Because if a man is laughing now, soon he will be sad. If he is in prosperity, soon in adversity. O what kind of a storm of the sea? Therefore, David in Psalm 92:4 "Wonderful are the surges of the sea," namely of this world. And again, in Ps 103:25, "So is this," namely, the world, "great sea," etc. Just as no one can sail the sea for a long time without encountering a storm, so neither can we live a long time without troubles. But just as a good sailor does not give up because of the storm, but is on guard against dangers of reefs, crying out, Bring the ship about when the reef threatens. Another says, O hoist the sails etc. So we on this great voyage of life to the gate of paradise have a chance of storms [fortunae tempestatis]. First from the occasion of sins, the inclination of the flesh and of the world. O how is the storm of the soul, and of the flesh, and of the world. So, like sailors, bear evil patiently, not only in a good times when there are no temptations, but also when they come either from the flesh or from the world, or from the devil about faith, etc. And then it is necessary to abstain and keep yourself strongly by praying, doing penance, and turning to God, that he would grant you firmness in the faith, because God can help. And so, "He who shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved," (Mt. 10:22) You wish an authority for this? Paul, to the Hebrews "Persevere under discipline." (Heb 12:7) The tribulations of this world are called "discipline", by the Apostle. Reason, because for the example of discipline it had been done, which has six [acus] or punctures. And there are three of

disciplines, and each one has six punctures. The first discipline is true conversion, which has six: First is the painful contrition of the heart. Second, shame of confession. Third, the proposal of amendment. Fourth, which hurts a lot, is restitution. Fifth, the forgiveness of injuries. Sixth, the restoring of a person's good name. About which Augustine: "He should not be slow to offer healing medicine from the mouth itself whence the wound was inflicted." About this discipline, Ps 17:26, "And your discipline has corrected me unto the end," namely from sins, "and your discipline, the same shall teach me," namely, good works.

A second discipline is tribulation naturally necessary, as are illnesses which naturally come, nor can we avoid them and it has six sharp points, namely pains of the head: First is of fever. Second hunger. Third of thirst. Fourth, heat. Fifth, cold. Sixth is final, death. About this discipline scripture says, "My son, reject not the correction of the Lord: and do not faint when you art chastised by him: For whom the Lord loves, he chastises," (Prov 3:11-12). Where note that human illness, pains and miseries are called the "correction of the Lord," because he himself gives them. Reason: for correcting. Therefore, "reject [them] not" through impatience or indignation.

The third discipline is unjust and contrary persecution. Punctures are harms of the body inflicted by another, of goods, fame, friends etc. Of this discipline the apostle says, Heb 12: "Now all chastisement for the present indeed seems not to bring with it joy, but sorrow: but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice," (Heb 12:11). So, the Apostle says, where above, "'Persevere under discipline." (Heb 12:7). It follows, "God deals with you as with his sons;" (v. 7). Whence just as a father is known when several young men are doing something wrong, the father seeing his son among those in the street corrects only his son, giving him blows, not caring about the others. So it is a sign of sonship of God, when he corrects us with blows of troubles in the streets of this world. Otherwise with those whom he does not correct, it is a sign that they mean nothing to him, as Gregory says, "neither for grace nor for glory," etc.

Reverently Praying To God

Third we ought to persevere by praying to God reverently, and this morning and evening. How? So St. Thomas says [in I, q.23, a.8](#), and I Sent. dist. 41, a. 4, that also for those predestined they should be praying and he gives an example of the prayer of St. Stephen for Paul. And for Isaac, who prayed for Jacob still existing in the womb of his mother. Reason of this perseverance in prayer is because it is said in James ch 1: "Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down," (James 1:17). Note, "best," namely corporal goods, which are good insofar as they are ordained to sustenance of the body; better, because they are advantageous for the remission of sins and obtaining grace; "best", because they lead to eternal glory through works of mercy and others. Note: "every perfect good," with respect to sanctifying grace and infused virtues, "from above coming down," etc. through prayer, because prayer is like a channel or road through which the gifts of Divine mercy, both corporal and spiritual descend to us, however unworthy. Luke "Yet if he shall continue knocking," that is, praying, "I say to you, ...he will...give him as much as he needs." (Lk 11:8). I give an example from a prince of thieves, who daily, morning and evening reverently recited the angelic salutation [Hail Mary]. And on the day which he omitted it, the devil was about to take him to hell because of the evil which he committed. Note how a hermit came to him and had him call everyone from his house, and the devil who was in the form of a man servant [coquinae] for six years, waiting for the time when he might skip saying the angelic salutation etc. See the book from the [Priory of] Scala Caeli [Cordoba]. You ought to persevere, therefore, in prayer, just as David who said in Ps 65, "Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me," (Ps 65:20). Gloss, Augustine "Your prayer has not been turned away from you, and neither shall divine mercy be turned away." Amen.

D526. On Predestination

John 15:1-5 Douay transl. I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me, that beareth not fruit, he will take away: and every one that beareth fruit, he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.

"Abide in me, and I in you," (Jn 15:4). In this sermon I shall explain three doctrines or conclusions which basically and completely explain the matter of predestination. This teaching will be good for illuminating our intellects and enkindling our affections. But first, the "Hail Mary."

"Abide in me," etc. We have three conclusions in this sermon.

A. First, that God before the creation of the world, eternally chose the good with certitude, [certitudinaliter]

B. Second, that predestination or pre-knowledge does not take away free will, but it remains freely. [liberaliter]

C. Third that whether we have been foreknown or predestined, we ought to live well and perseveringly. [perseveranter]

A. Eternally certainly chosen

The first conclusion, that God, before the creation of the world, eternally chose the good, with certitude. Because before he created anything, the heaven or angels, he knew how many prelates, how many religious there would be in the world, from whom so many were to be saved, and so for every status. I shall explain this through a parable about a king wishing to celebrate the wedding of his son. He did five things.

- First he wrote the invitations, who and how many there would be, and he decided their quality and quantity and condition.
- Second he chose and arranged the place or the hall where they would eat.
- Third he arranged for the food.

- Fourth the servants, distinguished and experienced,
- Fifth, he arranged a place where the invited could be made ready, where they are able to change their clothes, etc.

And then, the execution of the banquet followed. Now you understand the whole plan of God before the creation of the world, and then God willed to hold the wedding banquet for his son assuming human nature in the oneness of person. Because just as a husband and wife are not two but one flesh, as is said in Matthew 19, so divinity and humanity in Christ are one person. This nature was married in the hall of the Virgin's womb. Of this wedding Matt 22 speaks, "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son," (Mt 22:2). And before he spent anything, that is "created," he chose saying, "So many prelates shall eat at the banquet," and so for the other states, and that eternal choice is called predestination, that is prior— before creation – destination. He also foreknew the damned, but it is not called election or predestination, because he did not choose someone for damnation, but he foreknew that such a person would be damned, etc. About this election scripture says, Eph 1: "He chose us [in him] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in his sight in charity. Who has predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ," (Eph 1:4-5).

Second, he arranges the place. God seeing in the book of predestination so many noble ones invited, for this reason he created the empyreal heaven, not for himself, because he already was living in the palace of his eternity, Isa 57: "[Thus says the] High and the Eminent one who inhabits eternity: and his name is Holy... on high," (v. 15). Of this home, Bar 3: "O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of his possession! It is great, and has no end; it is high and immense," (vv. 24-25). And like a palace of a king preparing for a wedding it is sublimely decorated. So also, the empyreal heaven. About which see St. Thomas I, q. 66, a. 3, when Christ speaks on the day of judgment, Mt 25, "Come, blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," (v. 34).

Third he orders a variety of foods, namely the grades of glory and enjoyments, the orders and distinctions of the angels and saints. About which Christ in Jn 14, "In my Father's house there are many mansions," (v.2). And in Luke 22, he says, "You may eat and drink at my table, in my

kingdom," (v. 30). You realize that there is no [actual] drinking there etc., but metaphorically in experiencing glory.

Fourth, he creates the angels as the servants and ministers of the banquet. If it is said, "The servants are more noble than the diners," the response is that we are parents of the bride, human nature. And so the king wishes that we be seated. If the king were to take as his wife, the daughter of a shepherd, the nobles and knights would respect her parents. So Christ took human nature, and wished that the angels would serve. Hebrews, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister to them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" (Heb 1:14). Note, "all," universally etc.

Fifth, he makes the world, so that here we might prepare ourselves, and wash our hands of sins through penitence and change our clothes. If you are wearing the old shirt of pride, change it and put on the new shirt of humility. And so for the rest. Eccle 3: "He has made all things good in their time, and has delivered the world to their consideration [dispositioni]," (Eccles 3:11), other translation is "to their disputation [disputationi, Vulg.]," namely active and passive, so that they might dispose themselves and be disposed, by dignifying themselves for the banquet. See now what predestination is. And the first conclusion is clear, which also is written in Romans 8: "For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable [to the image of his Son,]... And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified." (vv. 29-30).

But there might be an argument to the contrary. One might say, "From these aforesaid five causes, the fifth, that this world has been made for preparing oneself, is opposed to the first, because if we are predestined, whether we prepare ourselves or not, we shall be there, because the knowledge of God cannot fail. I reply that this argument embodies ignorance or inattention. As if the king had invited many nobles to his wedding etc. And they would say, "Why do I have to prepare?" Would that not be stupid? Rather, they ought to say, "Because the king invited me, I must prepare well, because if you come ill prepared, you would not enter, when you are at the gate, namely the gate of death. Ps. 117: "This is the gate of the Lord; the just shall enter into it," (v. 20). But, you say, "Divine predestination can never fail?" I reply that no change of creatures argues or places a change in God.

Remember the story in Mt 25 of the ten virgins invited etc. Note it is said "ten," because of the observance of the ten commandments, and "virgins," because of the purity which they should have, who are to enter. Five were prudent, because they prepared themselves. And five were foolish, because they did not prepare themselves, arguing from the reason of infallibility, alleging the aforesaid reason and argument: Because we were invited, we shall be received there. And so he calls them foolish. Note, and they who were prepared entered with him to the wedding, and the gates were closed to the unprepared. Ovid the poet, "It is harmful to postpone, when you are prepared." Finally, the remaining virgins arrive. From this God is not variable and changeable in his knowledge, but the banquet includes the disposition of those entering.

It is clear the stupidity of many saying, "Why do I need to prepare?" I reply that if God by his very voice had said to you, "You shall be saved," and to another, "You shall be damned." It is understood conditionally. For even if it were possible that someone unprepared entered, he would be expelled, as Christ himself says in Matthew 22, "And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he said to him: 'Friend, how did you come in here,'" (Mt 22:11-12). Draw the conclusion. If those who are inside are unprepared, they will be expelled, how shall you enter unprepared? And so Matt 24: "be ready also, [because at what hour you know not the Son of man will come.]" (v. 44). If it is said, "O therefore God and his predestination is changed," it is not true, but predestination includes preparation. God is not changed, as Boethius says in III De consol., met. 9, but the creatures are changed.

Note the example of a ship without a sailor on the sea and the rock etc. So, this world is a river. Whence 2 Sam 14: Behold, "We all die, and like waters that return no more," (v. 14). And it seems to us that the rock, that is, God is moved or changed, it is not true. And so, we prepare ourselves through a good life because otherwise it will go badly for us. Behold the word of God through the mouth of the prophet, Ezekiel 33: Thus says the Lord: "Yea, if I shall say to the just that he shall surely live, and he, trusting in his justice, commits iniquity: all his justices shall be forgotten, and in his iniquity, which he has committed, in the same shall he die," (v. 13).

Likewise for pre-knowledge it says there, "And if I shall say to the wicked: You shall surely die: and he does penance for his sin, and does judgment and justice. And if that wicked man restores the pledge, and renders what he had robbed, and walks in the commandments of life, and does no unjust thing: he shall surely live, and shall not die," (Ez 33:14-15). Just as, therefore, predestination includes disposition, so pre-knowledge indisposition. And so, God says, Jeremiah 18, "I will suddenly speak against a nation, and against a kingdom, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy it. If that nation against which I have spoken, shall repent of their evil, I also will repent of the evil that I have thought to do to them," (Jer 18:7-8). If you wish you can see the whole chapter Nabuchodonosor in Decretals 23, q. 4, where there is much about this.

B, Free Will Remains

The second conclusion, that divine and eternal predestination of the good and foreknowledge of the evil does not take away nor impede free will, moreover he remains in his liberty, otherwise he would be saved without merits, and he would be damned without demerits, because if someone did not have free will, he would not have sinned. This conclusion is stated in Ecclesiastes 5: "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel," (Sir 15:14). The interlinear Gloss, in liberty of free will, there follows "He added his commandments and precepts. If you will keep the commandments ..., they shall preserve you. He has set water and fire before you: stretch forth your hand to which you will. Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him" (Sir 15:15-18), Note, "from the beginning," of the world and of the life of each. Note the difference between commandment and precept, because commandments are affirmative precepts, which lead to virtues. And precepts are negative, which restrain from sins and oblige always. Otherwise for commandments, because from some just circumstances they should not be observed, even without sin one can do the opposite. But of negative [precepts] no situation of the world can one do the opposite without sin, for example [puta], "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," (Ex 20:7). You are well able to swear an oath when necessary, but not in vain etc.

Note "he has set water," the good and devout life, "and fire," namely eternal, life, namely eternal and death, namely of Gehenna. "Good," of glory, "and evil" of punishment, "that which he shall choose [shall be given him]," (Sir 15:18). Now someone might say, "I want the good of glory," etc. you have a "wish"[velleitatem], but not a "will" [voluntatem], as St. Thomas says III, q.21, a.4, and in II Sent, dist. 33, where he says a wish is of impossibles. Proof. Just as he who says that he wants to go to the right but turns left, therefore lies; so, many want to go to paradise in word, but in fact they take the way of hell, namely of pride and vanity. Because therefore you take this way, you do not will to go to paradise but you will to go that opposite way. The same for the greedy and lustful person.

But God does not force someone to go to hell, rather he calls them back. Note the example of the spy in the tower, seeing two ways, the hard but safe way, and the delightful, straight, but dangerous way, full of robbers. And he cries out to the travelers saying that having abandoned the dangerous way they set out upon the other, and the travelers preferred not, rather they scoffed at [truffantur] the guide. The vision of that guide or spy does not force anyone to go via one way or the other, although he sees what they will be. This spy is God, high in the tower of eternity. Isaiah: God, "the High and the Eminent that inhabits eternity," (Isa 57:15), sees time past, present and future, because all things are present to him. There are two ways, the carnal and delightful life, and the spiritual, the difficult and hard penitential life. All want to go by the first way. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in there," (Mt 7: 13).

About the second he says in the same place, "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leads to life: and few there are that find it!" (Mt 7:14). And he cries out through preachers or prophets warning, Isa 30, "This is the way, walk ye in it: and go not aside neither to the right hand, nor to the left," (v. 21). Right, when the good way is abandoned out of love of creatures. Left, when out of their fear you say, "O you wish that I dismiss this young man or that I take him back? I shall dismiss my son that he takes back. The knowledge of God does not take away free will, nor impedes it, rather it helps it by the precepts, ordinations, preaching, warnings and inspirations, and he wills that we all be saved. Authority 1 Tim, 2: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who wills that all men be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one

God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a redemption for all," (vv. 3-6). Therefore, he does not take away free will.

C. Live a good life perseveringly

Third conclusion. However, we all are, whether predestined or foreknown, we ought to try to live a good life perseveringly. It is a rule of theology, that when God ordains some end, he ordains also the means to that end, without which he cannot come to that end. Even if he does not say, he is understood to have said, as is clear, because if the king makes someone governor, he understands that he should act justly, even if it is not stated in the mandate etc. Note how those to be saved are written in the book of predestination: "John shall be saved by his innocence. Peter through repentance," etc., so that not only is the end or the term written, but also the way or means through which it is attained. The same for the foreknown etc. If the pope appoints a bishop, it is understood that he be a priest, even if he does not say it. Same in nature, about rain from clouds. Same for predestination. And so, there is a triple fault in those who say, "Why do I need to do good?"

The first is ignorance, because when it is written in the book of predestination that such a person is to be saved, it is stated also the way and the means by which, through his humility or mercy, etc. And so to regard the end without the means is ignorance, and such a one fails by saying, "Why must I work?" Rather certainly it is necessary to work. Otherwise, you take away one part of the predestination, namely the way and means through which [the end is attained]. And so Gregory, 1 Dialog. *And it is placed 23, q. 4, c. to be obtained.* This perennial predestination to the eternal kingdom is so arranged by the omnipotent God that the chosen arrive there through effort, postulating that they merit to receive what the almighty God had disposed to give them before the ages. So you do not wish to go to hell. Remove the way and means, namely sin and you shall not go. "Woe to the wicked unto evil," (Isa 3:11).

The second defect is stupidity, to say, "Why must I do good?" Note how God knows all future things. He knows if today you shall eat dinner, just as if you shall be saved. If you say "Why must I prepare food for lunch," etc., no one makes an argument about lunch. Yet he argues about the soul. Same

if you are ill: "Why do I need to call a doctor?" Because God already knows if I will be cured, etc. If you wish to be healed, the way is through doctors. And so, they ought not to be dismissed. Also, God knows if this year you shall have a crop [bladum], so why is it necessary to plow. Response: Because this is the means. Also, God knows if the king will have a victory over his enemies why is it necessary to have armed men? Response: because that is the means to victory.

The third defect is the greatest error. To deny the trinity is an error against only one article [of faith], and so for the others, but to say that the predestined ought not to do good is an error against all the articles, which it destroys. Why does God will to be incarnated? I respond: That men might ascend into heaven. And did God not know whether men are to be saved? Why did he need to be incarnated? And so for the others. Same what purpose faith, baptism etc. because before them God knew who would be saved. It is a great error to presume the end without the means.

Now therefore the final conclusion is, as the theme says, "Abide in me," through a good life, "and I in you," (Jn 15:4) through grace. And so 2Pet 1, "Brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things, you shall not sin at any time. For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," (2 Pet 1:10-11).

B776. Sermon on Spiritual Aging

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind," (Eph 4:23)

These words are read in the epistle of this Sunday. Let us salute the Virgin Mary.

In these words, the Apostle Paul suggests that mortal sin makes the soul senile and old, when he says, "And be renewed," etc. Tacitly he presupposes this. I will base my sermon on this, and we have insights and advice [speculationes et moralitates]. We know that old age and aging are conditions and properties of corporeal, corruptible, and mortal creatures. It does not happen to spiritual creatures. It is many thousands of years since Michael [the archangel] was created, and he is just as young today as on the first day of his creation. It's the same for Gabriel, Raphael and the others. Old age and antiquity [senectus et antiquitas] do not have a place in them. See St. Thomas [Summa theologiae] [I, q.50, a.5 \[ult.\]](#) about the incorruptibility of angels.

The same is true for souls. So the soul of a man a hundred years old, or even a thousand, is as young as the soul of a child one day old, because they are spiritual substances, and they do not grow old or age. Authority. "Your name is as oil poured out: therefore, young maidens have loved you." (Song 1:2). Note "oil poured out," namely, Christian faith everywhere preached and spread. Here, the name of Christ is called "oil," elsewhere "ointment," because it is the medicine of the soul, for at the moment in which a child or adult is baptized, their soul is cured, and it is "poured out" in heaven, because by it the wound is cured, the case of bad angels, and [poured out] on earth, because the faith of Christ in every generation was preached by the holy apostles. Therefore the "young maidens," namely, spiritual creatures, on which old age does not settle, "loved you too much," (v. 2) that is very much.

Senescence or aging only happens in corporeal creatures, but not in all, because the sun, moon, stars, planets and the heavens, although they are corporeal creatures, nevertheless they are not corruptible from the composition of contraries. But old age happens and comes upon corruptible, mortal creatures. A house is called old or new, a garden, a ship etc., and our bodies grow old, and also those of animals etc. It is therefore evident that senescence and aging are properties or conditions of corporeal animal

creatures. Authority. "And that which decays and grows old, is near its end," (Heb 8:13). If therefore we wish to speak properly about old age, our souls are not old, but the Apostle presupposes and suggests that our souls grow old and age from mortal sin, because every defect which old age gives to the body naturally, the same defects sin gives to the soul spiritually, or morally. Therefore, the theme says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind," etc., (Eph 4:23). The theme is clear.

I have sought out and found that there are six defects which old age brings naturally to the body.

- First is the whitening of the hair [dealbatio capillorum],
- Second, the dulling of the senses [obturatio sensuum],
- Third, the wrinkling of the skin [corruptio cutis],
- Fourth, the bowing of the head [incurvatio capitis],
- Fifth, weakness in the limbs [debilitatio in membris],
- Sixth, the approach of death [appropinquatio mortis].

Sin brings on these six defects to the soul spiritually or morally. Therefore the theme says: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind," (Eph 4:23).

Whitening of The Hair

I say first that the first defect which old age gives to the body is the whitening of the hair. Although indeed in youth a man had black hair, commonly in old age, it naturally turns white. Reason. Because the moisture and coolness of the head and scalp rots the roots of the hairs, and so the hair turns white. Just like in autumn the leaves of the trees, once green, grow pale and fall, so it is with the hair. And although this is clear and certain nevertheless there is this scriptural authority: "The Ancient of days sat... and the hair of his head [was] like clean wool," (Dan 7:9). Now we shall see if mortal sin does this to the soul.

The hairs of the soul are the various thoughts, innumerable, volatile, and voluble, like hair. How many indeed are the thoughts of a man waking, sleeping, here and there etc, on the earth and at sea, to the extent that what David said of his thoughts, "They are multiplied," namely, my thoughts, "above the hairs of my head," here and there, "and my heart has forsaken me," (Ps 39:13). For this reason, Job said, "Various thoughts succeed one another in me, and my mind is hurried away to different things," (Job 20:2). I say that someone existing in grace has black hair, i.e. thoughts of humility, thinking of one's own failures, because to the extent that a person is better,

holier, and of a more perfect life, to that extent does he think more of his faults, saying within himself, "O you wretch [miser], these graces which God placed in me are so corrupted, like wine in a bad barrel, because I have not kept these graces and virtues pure and holy, etc. This precious liquor of grace has turned bad from the defect of the container." Behold humility. In this way the Blessed Virgin Mary was very humbled by thinking of the graces received from God, and out of humility considered herself to be almost nothing. Therefore, the holy fathers ordered for a time, that when something is said in the choir, that they make a "venia" [monastic gesture for pardon for a ritual mistake in choir], as if seeking pardon, because it is impossible that something of ours be done without some defect, either in the deed, or in thought. This is why scripture says of a devout person, "His locks [are] as branches of palm trees, black as a raven," (Song 5:11). "Locks," i. e. thoughts, "like branches," that is the leaves, "of the palm trees," which are straight, which signifies that all good things which they do they attribute to God, saying: "Lord, if I have done anything good, it is by you, because on my part my thoughts and works are as black as a crow from their defects." The old age of mortal sin turns black hair white.

Certain ones, accustomed to sinning are quick to say, "So what if I have sinned? David also sinned. If I have fallen, a saint like him also fell. I fast and give alms, I do such and such, and that other fellow does not." See the white thoughts, sins, of those who out of presumption do not acknowledge their own defects. About this presumption, read Luke 23, about a certain man who was considered to be holy, who was saying, "O God, I give you thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week..." (Lk 18:11-12). This man had white hair. He acted stupidly, and praised himself before God, and all was grey [canus] in him, not acknowledging any defect. So, it happens to you, when you go to confession. Some say: "Father, ask me, because I don't remember any sin." First of all, they are lying. But if the confessor would query, "What about your neighbor?" not only would they tell of mortal sins, but also venial. You all are grey, not recognizing your defects. It is a sign of an evil life to have such white thoughts, praising or commending oneself. Therefore, the Apostle, "And be renewed," etc.

Dulling of The Senses

The second defect is the stopping up [obturbatio] of the senses, namely when the sight is clouded [ingrossatur, thickened], and one needs glasses. Also the hearing does not hear, nor does the smelling smell. Same of taste and touch. Natural reason. The heavy [grossi] humors indeed abound in old people and dull the senses. Authority. The soldier [Berzellai] said when he was invited by David, "I am this day eighty years old, are my senses quick to discern sweet and bitter? or can meat or drink delight thy servant? or can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" (2 Kg 19:35).

Now let us see if any sin induces this defect in the soul. I say that people who live in sin have the senses of the soul so obstructed, that they perceive nothing of the evils of the soul, but of the evils of the body they well are aware of. V.g. If a man walks on the road barefoot, he will immediately feel a thorn. But when you go to soothsayers for your health, as if they are able to give you health, and the devil pierces your soul with a lance, you do not feel it. So, the evils of the body you perceive immediately, but not of the soul. If someone storms through the house in a rage you know it at once, yet you put up with a notorious witch [divinum notorium] etc., and you do not recognize it. This sin suffices, that the anger of God would descend on you. Also, if you should find a pebble between the teeth [lapillus interdentes] in your table forks [scutellis], you would notice it immediately. But when you hold a big rock in your mouth, by swearing and blaspheming, or by defaming your neighbor, you don't notice it. See how sin makes you lose your senses.

Wrinkling of The Skin

Third, I say that the third defect which old age brings is the breakdown or wrinkling of the skin. Youths have soft skin and smooth hands and faces. The old man however is wrinkled all over. Natural reason. Because the youth is fleshy and it fills out the skin, but in old people the flesh shrinks. Therefore, the skin wrinkles. So, Job, when it is told him that he was young, pointing out the opposite he said, "My wrinkles bear witness against me," (Job 16:19). If when a person stands in a good life in grace, the soul is young and fleshy. The smooth skin of the soul is external conduct, and just as the skin covers the flesh, blood and bones, so conduct. A good, holy and virtuous person is the same internally as he is outside of himself; how he is in the home, so he is in town; how in private, the same in public. So, if

someone says that he is humble, he is humble, if he shows himself to be poor on the outside, so he is in his heart. Same of chastity, abstinence, penance, patience and diligence, all is smooth skin.

But sin makes the skin of conduct wrinkle. When indeed a man falls into sin, he is ashamed to make it public, and he shows himself to be other than what he is internally. On the outside he shows himself to be humble, he bows his head, but inwardly pride abounds, like Lucifer, the skin is wrinkled. He shows himself to be a lover of poverty, chastity, sincerity [claritatis], abstinence, patience, diligence, but within he is totally the opposite, all is wrinkled. Some show themselves to be friends on the outside, saying, "If you want anything, I am all yours." But behind his back if they are able they accuse and defame and when they cannot do anything, some go at night and cut his vines, etc. saying, "He can't prove it, and we will deny it." Such people are bound to restore the damages, if they wish to be saved, otherwise neither confession, or anything else will benefit for salvation. The same for a notary changing someone's will, or clauses of the will out of ill will. Same for false witness in accusing a neighbor, all is wrinkled.

Do you want to know what sin is? Christ said through the mouth of John, about someone smoothing or wrinkling, "I know your works, that you are neither cold, nor hot. I would you were cold, or hot. But because you are lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth," (Rev 3:15-16). Hot or cold is the one who reveals himself externally how he is internally. He is cold who, evil within, shows himself so externally. If inside he has ill will, hate and rancor, against another he shows it outside. He is hot who, good inside, shows himself so outside. If a friend on the inside, he also shows it outside.

But lukewarm is the one who externally shows himself a friend, but inwardly he is an enemy; he greets you externally and defames you behind your back. If it is asked, "Is it not better to be lukewarm than cold?" I say, "No!" because a man can refrain from being cold, not from being lukewarm. If a religious, or clergyman or lay person is warm, no evil follows, because they are good. If cold, it is not credited to them, therefore no evil follows. But when he is lukewarm, then he causes harm, because they confide in him, and he deceives. A good woman should not confess to a bad religious, or clergyman, or lay man, but because she trusts the lukewarm, and she is defrauded. Behold why he says, "I would you were

cold, ...But because you are lukewarm, and neither cold, not hot, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth."(v. 16), and this when Christ says in judgment, "Depart from me, you cursed," (Mt 25:41), because the lukewarm corrupt the whole world. Therefore "be renewed in the spirit of your mind," (Eph 4:23)

Bowing of The Head

I say fourth, that the fourth defect which old age brings on is the bowing of the head. A young man goes erect, an old man bowed over. Natural reason. Just as a fire emits flames upward, so the heart of a young man is so warm, that it makes him go about upright, but when the warmth of the heart diminishes from old age, the head bows over. Sin works this defect in the soul. Someone who is without sin has the "head" of the soul, namely, thoughts, erect, by thinking of God, paradise, heavenly things, and he ardently desires to be there, to the extent that if God would say to him, "You have to leave here for a year." He would say to him, "O Lord, must I be separated from you and journey for so long?" The heat of devotion raises his head, but mortal sin makes the head bow down to the earth, like beasts, which because they have no business in heaven, look at the ground. A sinner does not delight in looking to heaven, just as a thief neither [delights in] looking at a judge presiding from his chair above him. An example from the gospel about a certain publican. The "publican," however, "standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven;" (Lk 18:13), because sin draws thinking and desiring downward to earthly things, saying, "O if I can have this or that." So, they descend downward to hell.

Of this the miracle of the gospel tells of a certain young woman, beautiful, who used to go about upright, and suddenly was inflicted with a curvature, and could not elevate her head so as to look at others. All were amazed at her, not knowing why, but Christ knowing the cause said, "Woman, you are delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God," (Lk 13:12-13), and Christ said, "And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond...?" (Lk 13:16).

Thus, the woman stands for the human soul, rightly advancing, who lived well, joyfully looking forward to her inheritance spelled out by her father in his will. The clause of the will said: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom." (Lk 12:32). But when he

sinned, he lost the warmth of devotion and became bent over, but when Christ touched the heart with his hands, giving contrition, it straightened. Therefore Christ, "look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand." (Lk 21:28). "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind," (Eph 4:23).

Weakness of The Limbs

I say that the fifth defect which old age brings is the weakness of the members. A young man is strong and robust; an old man feeble, so he is propped up with a cane. "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein" (Isa 1:6). This sin works in the soul. When a soul is in grace it is strong, inasmuch as it cannot be pressured to sin by all the demons, but after sinning it is so weak that it immediately falls. Just as women, a virgin or otherwise, before she sins, is firm in resisting, but when shame is lost, when corruption happened, they are weak and afterward easily fall and are seduced. Therefore, women, turn yourselves away, lest you drop the reins of modesty. "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore is she become unstable," (Lam 1:8). So, when a person is in grace, he has knees, hands and all his members strong for praying, and is not too tired [attaediatur] to genuflect, to elevating the hands, nor for fasting, the hair shirt, or the discipline. But from the fact that he is in sin, he is immediately weakened [attaediatur]. "For she is become weak unto good that dwells in bitterness," (Mic 1:12). Bitterness stands for sin, which leads the soul to the bitterness of damnation. Therefore, "be renewed in the spirit of your mind," (Eph 4:23).

Approaching Death

Sixth, I say that for the sixth defect which old age produces is the approach of death. Although the young man dies as well like the old, nevertheless naturally the young man is more distant from death, because he ought to live twenty or even fifty more years. An old man however, is already at the gates of death. "And that which decays and grows old, is near its end," (Heb 8:13). Sin does this to the soul; it makes the soul to be near infernal death, nearer than shirt [camisa] is to the body, because immediately when it leaves the body, it doesn't delay for a year, or for a month to descend to hell, but in an instant. "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment, they go down to hell," (Job 21:13). Therefore, David in the person of a sinner

said, "There is but one step (as I may say) between me and," eternal, "death." (1 Kg 20:3).

If, therefore, mortal sin works these six defects in the soul, which old age works in the body, therefore it can well be said, morally speaking, to be the old age of the soul. Therefore, "Be renewed." Man is renewed by contrition, confession, and taking on or accepting penance, and by making satisfaction, and forgiving injuries. And to the extent the injury is greater, to that extent the merit of remission is greater. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." (Eph 4:23)

C380. Sermon on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

Philippians 2: 5-8

5 For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. 8 He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.

"He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." (Phil 2:8)

Holy Mother the Church celebrates today a feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross, which we honor twice in the year. The first is the Discovery, in the month of May (May 3). The second today (Sept. 14) on the Exultation. Reason, because after the Holy Cross was discovered by St. Helena, it came into the possession of the infidels, who contemptuously held it. But Heraclius, the Most Holy and Christian Roman Emperor, extracted it from the possession of the infidels and exalted it honorably, and today is the feast of that exaltation. So that our words be fruitful, let us now say the Hail Mary.

It is a common Catholic doctrine of sacred theology that although Christ had other innumerable ways of redeeming and saving mankind, he nevertheless chose to save us through his cross, and to redeem obedient and believers for himself. St. Thomas in his ([Summa theologiae](#)) [III, q.46, a.4](#), assigns seven reasons why this was fitting. I shall speak of one, the second, as an introduction of this material to you.

This reason is, because when satisfaction needs to be made for some sin, it is reasonable that the satisfaction corresponds to the sin. For example, if someone sins against God or neighbor by thinking evil in his heart, or by speaking evil, or doing bad things, for such a person to make fitting satisfaction (*condigne satisfacere*), he ought to take on pain in the heart from this sin, and to strike his heart. If one sins by mouth by defaming or swearing, proper satisfaction ought not only to be confessed by mouth but he should also to seek pardon from God and neighbor by mouth, if he offended him. Therefore, if through the eyes you have sinned by gazing etc.

proper satisfaction is to weep, etc. Also, if you have sinned by ears, by listening to evil things about a neighbor, healing is made by hearing mass and sermons etc. If through taste, by breaking the fast of the church, etc., to abstain, and so the satisfaction corresponds to the offense. If you have sinned by hand, extend it in prayer. If you have shed blood, the proper penitence is to shed your own blood by the discipline. So it says in Genesis 9: "Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed." (v. 6). If you have sinned by the body through carnal sins, you ought to wear a hair shirt (cilicium). See how appropriate satisfaction is made when the penalty corresponds to the offense. Scriptural proof is taken from that which [Christ, in fact John the Baptist] said in Luke 3 " Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance," (v. 8). The fruits of penance are worthy when they correspond to the offense.

Now we shall see how the offense against God was committed, from which flowed to mankind all perdition and all evil, from which we are "exiles in this valley of tears." (from the hymn *Salve Regina*). Was it not from the theft (ex furto) of a certain apple, contrary to an expressed commandment? Therefore restitution, reparation, or amends ought to happen by the fruit being restored to the tree. Therefore, Christ the redeemer of all, our fruit, about whom it is said to the Virgin Mary, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,"(cf. Lk 1:42), chose by the tree of the cross, that the fruit of infinite worth be restored to the tree. An ancient Greek history says that the wood of the cross was from that same tree of which Adam received the fruit. Therefore, when Christ was placed on the cross, the fruit was restored to the tree.

About this David in the person of Christ says, "My enemies are grown strong who have wrongfully persecuted me: then did I pay that which I took not away." (Ps 68:5). Note, here two things are touched upon in this verse of David, namely the evil intention of the Jewish enemies of Christ who were not intending satisfaction, but the persecution of Christ. Therefore, he said, "My enemies are grown strong who have wrongfully persecuted me." Second, the intention of Christ is touched upon. So, he says, "then did I pay, etc."

The teaching then is clear, because although Christ had other ways of redeeming us, nevertheless this way, through the cross, was appropriate, in

which the satisfaction corresponded to the offense. This the Holy Mother the Church touches in the Preface (of the Mass) saying, "You decreed that man would be saved through the wood of the cross. The tree of man's defeat became his tree of victory; where life was lost, there life has been restored through Christ our Lord." It is clear therefore that an appropriate manner of our redemption was through the cross. Therefore, the theme says, "He was made obedient for us" not for himself, not only for the Father, but also for the judges and crucifiers, "even unto death, etc." The theme is clear. I am preaching on this material. The theme says, "He became obedient even unto death." And it adds, "Death on a cross," not by another death.

I find that Christ was in danger of death five times, and chose to accept only the cross.

1. First he was in danger of death from the sword.
2. Second in danger of being hurled down.
3. Third in danger of stoning
4. Fourth in danger of poisoning.
5. Fifth, in danger of crucifixion.

And he chose this one, about which the theme states: "He became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." (Phil 2:8).

The Sword

First I say, etc. and this immediately when he was born, from Herod the king, who when he heard of the signs and miracles surrounding the birth of Christ: of the angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest," of the brightness of the night, the visit of the shepherds, the adoration of the animals, the star and the arrival of the three kings, etc., and the prophecy of Anna and holy Simeon that he was the true Messiah, Herod thought to kill him, lest he lose his kingdom, for he was a foreigner and he was afraid that one day the Jews would rise up against him.. On this account he sent armed men into the town of Bethlehem to kill all the children, because he did not know who this Jesus was. But Christ willed to flee into Egypt.

About this there is a prophecy. Job in the person of Christ said, "[They] slew the servants [pueros, children] with the sword, and I alone have escaped ..." (Job 1:15). The question is this. Why did Christ choose not to die this kind of death? Because if he had wished, even this death would

have been for the salvation of those believing in and obedient to him. The literal reason has already been said, because the satisfaction ought to correspond to the offense, therefore he willed not to die in such a way, but on the cross. The moral reason is, that he might instruct us to flee death by the sword of St. Peter, about which John 18: "Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear." (Jn 18:10) This sword is the sentence of excommunication, which when it is used, cuts one off from the body of the Church. And just as a member cut off from the body received none of its influence, so no one excommunicated has any part in the divine works which take place in the Church.

See how this death is to be fled. I choose to die even more quickly, than to be excommunicated for an hour, not to say for a year, because there is nothing worse for a member than to be cut off from the body. Note when he says, "Simon Peter having a sword," he implies that the sentence of excommunication should not be given except by a prelate, because Peter was a prelate. Second, when he says he "drew it," he hints that the sentence ought not be given except by a prelate as if by waving the sword saying, "Beware, beware," even through a third warning, because otherwise it would mean nothing, not strike you with the blow. [quia alias nihil valeret, te not faceret ictum.] Third when he said, "And he struck the servant of the high priest," he implies that the prelate ought to serve excommunication only on his subjects, because a bishop cannot excommunicate in another diocese. Fourth when he says, "And he cut off his right ear," The right signifies spiritual things, the left, temporal. It is indicated that the judgment of excommunication ought not be given except against disobedience in spiritual things, that if a husband or wife does not wish to remain with him or with her, unless they have a legitimate reason, the prelate can excommunicate them and so for the rest. This sword strikes so strongly, that it can kill the soul with eternal death. "Flee then from the face of the sword, for the sword is the revenger of iniquities," (Job 19:29).

Hurled Down

Second, I say that Christ was in the danger of being hurled down, as is found in Luke 4. It is told how Christ was dwelling in Nazareth, where he was living in a most holy way, yet he was not well known. Nicholas of Lyra

says that he worked the craft of his putative father Joseph, who was a carpenter, and later went to Capharnum where he preached and worked many miracles, and then returned to Nazareth. And the rulers and magistrates of the town said to him, "...as great things as we have heard done in Capharnum, do also here in thy own country," (Lk 4:23). Christ replied insinuating that because of their unbelief and derision, because they were skeptical of him [truffabant de eo], as Mark has, ch. 6, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? are not also his sisters here with us? (Mk 6:3). See, he preaches and yet he did not study."

Then he pointed out that they were not worthy, because miracles require a disposition, and not vain glory. For this reason, Mark 6 says, " And he could not do any miracles there, only that he cured a few that were sick, laying his hands upon them." (Mk 6:5). It is told how they, indignant, led him out with a crowd to the brow of the hill and they wanted to throw him down. Jesus, however, " passing through their midst, went his way." (Lk 4:30).

Think here about the Virgin Mary who was present in the town, when she beheld her son being led to the cliff, how much sorrow she had, etc. The question is. Why did he choose not to die in this way, because if he had wished...etc? The literal reason has been told. The moral reason is so that we might be warned lest we die through falling, having ascended the mountain of pride. For the devil seeing that those who walk simply and humbly, go straight to heaven. "O," the devil says, "I shall make all ascend to the heights." Which is to say, the religious who lives simply, keeps his rule, the vows and customs, such takes a straight road to paradise. But the devil speaking to their imagination says, "If you wish to live such, you will never rise! Why do you not work that you might be a master [of theology], you can yet be the confessor of a king or a bishop," and when he is high, he loses all devotion and suddenly falls and dies and is hurled into hell.

The same for the simple priest, because at the instigation of the devil he ascends. Same for the laity. They demand interest so that they might get ahead. Also, that he might gain public office, binds himself with others directly or indirectly, and they do well because of the wealth of the community, and when they are in office, they steal, they do this and that so that they might keep their hand in office. O how many are they by this

ascent. Of this David says to the devil "For deceits," namely yours, "you have put it to them:" that is this imagination of ascending, "when they were lifted up you have cast them down." (Ps 72:18) Same for the women living simply, caring for the home, for children and family, these rightly go straight to paradise. But the demon says, "You have taken to your husband as such, therefore why to you not do as others do, give to him a bad dinner and supper."

Beware therefore, and walk simply, and plainly, because when a man falls from a higher place, so much more the fall is more dangerous. So Job in the person of a sinner speaking to the devil says, "You have lifted me up, and set me as it were upon the wind, and you have mightily dashed me. I know that you will deliver me to death," (Job 30:22-23).

Stoning

Third, I say that he was in danger of death by stoning, as is clear in John 8, when Christ was preaching to the Jews and declared to them his divinity saying, "Amen, amen I say to you: If any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever. (v. 51) Abraham, ...and the prophets are dead. Whom do you make thyself?" (v. 53) Christ was speaking of the death of hell and the Jews were thinking of bodily death. And Christ speaking more clearly of divinity said, "Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am, " (v.58) "I am" is the name of the divinity. "I AM WHO AM," (Ex 3:14). The Jews hearing that he said that he was God, wished to stone him. The text says that Christ hid himself, that is, he made himself to be invisible to them, and they searched for him asking "Where is he?" But the Virgin Mary and the Apostles, seeing him followed.

Question, why did he not wish to die in this way? Because it was etc. The moral reason is that we might be warned from the death of stoning from the sin of avarice, because an avaricious person is hard like stone, and cold. Hard, because he offers no sweetness to his debtors, but hard and harsh he demands payment and interest etc. Cold, because he is without the fire of charity. Seeing the poor dying of starvation he does not care to rescue them – and he has the money – and the jailed, the enslaved and the poor girls are not able to receive any benefits. Thus Job speaking morally of the

avaricious says, "His heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil," (Job 41:15)

The stones of avarice are the species of avarice. One stone is the one which is called robbery [rapina], and this stone strikes the head of the lords. Another stone is called simony of the church officials [prelates], giving benefices or sacraments for money. This stone strikes the heart. Another is called usury, which breaks the arms, that is, the workers. It is said in defense of this notion of avarice, usury, "If this person or community takes my money, why am I not able to receive something for its use [proper carentiam]?" This argument includes an error not only in its conclusion but in its premise. When he says "My money," he speaks falsely, because the lord is now bound to render an account to another, and you are bound, even to Christ, because "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, etc." (Ps 23:1) The rich are only the administrators. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God," (1 Cor 4:1). Christ is like the king appointing treasurers, that they might minister first in to his necessities, not vanities. Second in giving or lending to the poor, because God wishes such. It is wrong if they dispense against the will of the Lord. He knows how to punish. Thus the conclusion is erroneous, by saying that usury is not a mortal sin. Another species, to connive to buy things for a lesser price, or to sell for more than the usual profit, because it is usury. Another is the withholding of salaries from servants, etc., secret theft. It is said against those who believe that secret theft of produce [furtum secretum fructuum] is not a sin, "you dash your foot against a stone." (Ps 90:12) And, "Go not in the way of ruin, and you shall not stumble against the stones," (Sir 32:25)

Poisoning

I say fourth that he was in danger of death by poisoning. The evangelists do not clearly say this, but for this there are arguments both from reason and prophecy. The reason is this, because while Christ went about preaching, he did not preach for money, but after preaching [on Palm Sunday], "looking around about," no one invited him, "and he return to Bethany," as is found in Mark 11:11. The Gloss says that he looked around, to see if someone might invite him to dinner saying, "Lord since you have given good spiritual food to us, come and we shall give you dinner," etc. Now someone

who had so many enemies as Christ, might accept every invitation, even that of his enemies. Think how they could set forward potions, and this reason might dictate.

And about this is the prophecy, "But thou, O Lord, have shown me, and I have known: then you showed me their doings. And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim: and I knew not that they had devised counsels against me, saying: Let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more," (Jer 11:18-19) And the prophet speaks in the person of Christ. But Christ chose not to die in this way. Practically speaking when he was eating, first they gave him fruit or figs, and soups are offered, and sweet foods, and good wines, and he did not eat, keeping to his modest diet. Even if he had eaten, he took care not to harm himself.

Why did he choose not to die this way, because even that death would have been sufficient for redemption? Moral reason, that we might avoid the deadly poison of lust. For just as a poison is placed in sweet foods, so also does the devil, that the food of lust might seem sweet to us and yet in it is the poison of mortal sin. For a man and woman joined in matrimony do not sin in keeping the manner etc. but in all others, whomsoever, there is lust, and there is mortal sin and damnation follows. It is believed that the greatest number of the damned are made so by the sin of lust.

So it is necessary to avoid such a death and to restrain the body through abstinence, by mortifying its inclinations, avoiding occasions of sin, and by prayer. Otherwise, St. Bernard says, that it would be a greater miracle to live chastely than to raise the dead. Therefore, the whole world is corrupt. "All have turned out of the way; they have become unprofitable together: there is none that does good," that is, of chastity, "there is not so much as one," namely, of adults, etc. So a wise man says, "Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the color thereof shines in the glass: it goes in pleasantly, but in the end, it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk," (Prov 23:31-32). And he declares in the next verse "Your eyes shall behold strange women," because it is good to look upon your own wives, "and your heart shall utter perverse things," (v. 33). Note. It is not understood as the color of wine but of beautiful women, "in the glass," in the weaker glass of the body. Reason, because it "goes in

pleasantly" that is evil in thought, saying " O how much a comfort it would be," etc. and in the end, namely when man consents, "it will bite like a snake, and like a basilisk," which poisons by sight and vision, etc. Not so the other serpents. Behold the sin of lust, because by sight alone does a woman... With this poison David was poisoned and killed, but God raised him through repentance. Thus Job 6, " ...or can a man taste that which when tasted brings death?" (v. 6) No one howsoever hungry would eat food which he knew to be poisoned, rather he would permit himself to die naturally, because then he would not have killed himself, nor would he drink poisoned drink however thirsty he was. So neither should the lustful taste because unless he were an unbeliever, he would know that this food is poisoned unto death.

Crucifixion

Fifth I say that he was in danger of death by crucifixion. This is the death he chose. So, the Jews said in counsel, "This man Jesus cannot die by the sword, nor by being thrown down, nor etc. Therefore, we shall see whether we can kill him on a cross." And when Christ was in Galilee, the Jews readied the cross in Jerusalem. Christ knowing this called out to his disciples and said to them, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified," (Mt 20:18-19). He fled from the other deaths, but he came promptly to this one. And in the garden, he went out to the Jews saying "Whom do you seek?" which is to say "You may take me, because this death pleases me." Again, when sentence was passed on him to be crucified, "And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place...", (Jn 19:17) as if to say, "I do not appeal, rather this death pleases me," and he received the cross. It is said how he was obedient on the mount of Calvary, when he was asked to undress himself, and more like that. Behold the love for the death of the cross, as if he were saying, " But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord," (Gal 6:14).

The literal reason why he chose this death has been said in the introduction. But the moral reason is this. Other deaths which Christ fled, signified bad deaths, which we should flee. But this death of the cross signifies a good

death which we should choose. The inestimable pain of Christ hanging on the cross signifies contrition, which we should have for sins, by inclining the head in contrition which ought to be made with a bowed head and not face to face. It is said how the penitent ought to be uncovered, and the confessor covered, for modesty, and the danger of the confessor looking on a young woman. His right hand pierced signifies that from good justice you should give alms. The left for returning usuries and theft etc. Two feet nailed signify two feet by which we walk and are sustained, the right is nailed with devotion, the left with abstinence. The opening of the side signifies the opening of the heart, for forgiving injuries and sparing enemies and those sinning against you. See the moral reasons why he wished to die on a cross. So the Apostle says, "They that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences, "(Gal 5:24), and that this was necessary is clear because Christ says, "And whosoever does not carry his cross," which is said from crucifying, behold penitence, "and come after me, cannot be my disciple," (Lk 14:27) See why the Theologian says, "He became," for us, that is for our redemption and moral instruction, "obedient, unto death," not of the sword, not by being hurled down, nor by stoning nor by poisoning, but "to the death of the cross."