SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Sermons on the Saints

Sermones de Sanctis

SABBATISMUS

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153)
Sermones de Sanctis · Sermons on the Saints

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SERMONS ON THE SAINTS BY SAINT BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX.

ON THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

SERMON I. How we ought to be converted according to his example.

1. It is with good reason, dearly beloved, that the conversion of the Teacher of the Gentiles is celebrated today with festive joys by the whole community of nations. For we see many branches have come forth from this root. Paul, having been converted, was made a minister of conversion to the whole world. And indeed, formerly while still in the flesh, but no longer walking according to the flesh, he converted many to God through the office of preaching; now also, living more happily in Him and with Him, he does not even yet cease from the conversion of men: I mean, by example, by prayer, and by doctrine. Finally, the memory of his conversion is frequented for this reason, that it is found useful even to those who remember it. For in this memory the sinner conceives the hope of pardon, that he may be provoked to repentance; and he who already repents receives the form of perfect conversion. Who should despair further on account of the magnitude of any crime, since he hears that Saul, while still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, was suddenly made a chosen vessel (*vas electionis*)? Who, weighed down by the burden of iniquity, should say: "I am no longer able to rise to better pursuits"; when on that very journey, in which, thirsting for Christian blood,

he exhorted a dire poison from his whole breast, the most cruel persecutor was suddenly changed into a most faithful preacher? For in this single conversion, both the magnitude of mercy and the efficacy of grace are magnificently commended.

2. Suddenly, says Luke, a light from heaven shone around him (Acts 9:1-8). O truly inestimable condescension of divine piety! He illumines with celestial splendor even from without one who is still incapable of light within: he who could not yet be infused is at least surrounded by divine clarity. And a voice was made. The testimonies of the light and the voice were made exceedingly credible, nor is there any doubt about the truth which thrusts itself forward through both windows, namely of the eyes and the ears. Thus indeed, thus in the Jordan also a dove appeared above the head of the Lord, and a voice sounded (Matt. 3:16, 17): thus also on the mountain, when He was transfigured before the disciples, both clarity was seen and the voice of the Father was nonetheless heard (Matt. 17:2, 5): Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Truly Saul was caught: there is no place for dissembling, there is no faculty of denying. In his hands are the letters of a most cruel legation, of execrable authority, of iniquitous power. Why do you persecute me? He said. Was he not persecuting Christ, who was butchering the members of Christ on earth? Or did they indeed persecute Christ, who fixed that most sacred body to the gibbet of the cross, and was he not persecuting Him who, with iniquitous hatred, raged against His body, which

is the Church (for she herself is also His body)? Finally, if He gave His own blood as the price of the redemption of souls, does it not seem to you that He sustains a heavier persecution from him who, by evil suggestion, by pernicious example, by the occasion of scandal, turns away from Him the souls which He redeemed, than from the Jew who shed that blood?

3. Recognize, dearly beloved, and dread the companionship of those who impede the salvation of souls. A truly horrendous sacrilege, which seems even to exceed the crime of those who laid sacrilegious hands upon the Lord of majesty. The time of persecution seemed already to have ceased; but, as has been made plain, persecution is never lacking to the Christian, nor yet to Christ. And now, what is more grievous, those who are indeed called Christians by Him persecute Christ. Your friends, O God, and your neighbors have drawn near and stood against You. The whole community of the Christian people seems to have conspired against You from the least even to the greatest: from the sole of the foot even to the crown of the head there is no soundness: iniquity has gone forth from the elder judges, Your vicars, who seem to rule Your people. It is no longer to be said, "As the people, so the priest" (Isa. 24:2); because even if the people were such, they would not be as the priest. Alas, alas! O Lord God, because they themselves are the first in Your persecution, who seem to love the primacy in Your Church, and to hold the leadership! They have occupied the fortress of Zion, they have seized the

fortifications, and then freely and authoritatively deliver the entire city to the fire. Their miserable conversation is the miserable subversion of Your people. And would that they harmed in this part alone! There would perhaps be someone who, forewarned and forearmed by the Lord's exhortation, would take care not to imitate their examples, but to observe their precepts, according to that: "What they say do, and according to their works do not look" (Matt. 23:3). But now the sacred orders are given for the occasion of base gain, and they reckon piety as a business. Indeed, they are found to be of most copious piety in undertaking, or rather receiving, the care of souls: but this care is minor among them, and the thought concerning the salvation of souls is the very last. Or indeed could any persecution be more grievous to the Savior of souls? Others also act iniquitously against Christ, and many are the antichrists in our times. Nevertheless, He rightly judges that persecution more cruel for the benefits received, and feels it more grievous for the power, which He sustains from His own ministers; although many others also seem to act against the salvation of their neighbors in manifold and many ways and on various occasions. Christ sees these things, and is silent; the Savior suffers these things, and dissembles. Therefore it is necessary that we also dissemble, and be silent for the time being, and especially concerning our prelates, the masters of the churches. Thus indeed, thus it pleases them also, that they may now escape human judgments, and that a heavy

judgment may come once for all upon those who preside, and the powerful may suffer torments powerfully.

4. I fear, dearly beloved, lest someone among us also be a persecutor of the Lord, because manifest reason has taught that to impede salvation is to persecute the Savior. What thanks can I give for the salvation of my soul to that brother who offers me the poison of fraternal detraction? Rightly are detractors described as hateful to God (Rom. 1:30), as persecutors. What of him who by his example provokes others to act more remissly, or disturbs by singularity, or disquiets by curiosity, or molests by his impatience and murmuring; or in whatever way saddens the Spirit of God who is in them, scandalizing one of these little ones believing in Him? Does not he also manifestly persecute Christ? Therefore, that both the name and the crime of persecutors may always be far from us, I beseech you, dearly beloved, let us always exhibit ourselves as kind and mild, supporting one another in all patience, and provoking one another to that which is better and more perfect. For what servant thinks it enough for himself not to persecute the Lord, but not even to obey the Lord? What grace will he have if, as he does not resist, so he does not even assist? Finally, if anyone is so faint-hearted that he considers it enough for himself neither to be a persecutor nor a coadjutor (*coadjutor*) of God, let him hear what He himself says: "He who is not with me, is against me; and he who does not gather with me, scatters" (Matt. 12:30).

5. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And he: "Who are you, Lord?" From this certainly it is given to be understood that clarity was truly surrounding him, not infused in him. Paul heard the voice of the Lord, but he did not see the face of the Lord; since he was being instructed for faith: and as he himself afterwards taught, "Faith is from hearing" (Rom. 10:17). "Who are you?" he says. For he was persecuting one unknown, and for this reason he obtained mercy, because he did this being ignorant in unbelief. Learn from this, brothers, that God is a just judge, who considers not only what is done, but with what mind it is done; and beware henceforth, lest anyone should reckon small matters as unimportant, however small they may be convinced to be [or: appear to be] when one sins knowingly. Let no one say in his heart: "These are light things, I do not care to correct them; it is no great matter if I remain in these venial and most minimal sins." For this, dearly beloved, is impenitence, this is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the irremissible blasphemy. Paul indeed was a blasphemer, but not against the Holy Spirit, because he did it being ignorant in unbelief. He did not say blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; therefore he obtained mercy.

6. "Who are you, Lord? And the Lord to him: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute." I am the Savior, whom you seek by persecuting. I am He of whom you read in your law predicted what you do not know to be fulfilled: "Because He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23). And he:

"Lord, what do you want me to do?" This indeed, brothers, is the form of perfect conversion. "My heart is ready," he says, "O God; my heart is ready" (Ps. 107:2). "I am ready, and I am not troubled, that I may keep your commandments" (Ps. 118:60). "Lord, what do you want me to do?" O word brief, but full, but living and efficacious, but worthy of all acceptance! How few are found in this form of perfect obedience, who have so cast away their own will, that they do not even have their own heart as their own, so as to seek every hour not what they themselves want, but what the Lord wants, saying without intermission, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" and that of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears" (1 Sam. 3:10). Alas! we have more imitators of that blind man of the Gospel than of the new apostle. "What do you want," says the Lord to that blind man, "that I should do for you?" (Luke 18:41). How great is Your mercy, Lord, how great Your condescension! Does the Lord thus seek to do the will of the servant? Truly that man was blind, because he did not consider, he did not dread, he did not cry out: "Far be this, Lord, You rather say what You want me to do!" For so it is becoming, so it is altogether worthy, that not my will be sought and done by You, but Yours by me. You see, brothers, that conversion was truly necessary in this place. Thus indeed, thus the faint-heartedness and perversity of many until this day requires that it be asked of them. "What do you want that I should do for you?" they themselves do not seek, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" It is

necessary for the ministers and vicars of Christ to consider what they wish to be commanded: they themselves do not consider what the will of the Preceptor is. Their obedience is not full, they are not ready in all things to comply, they have not proposed in all things to follow Him, who came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father. They discern and judge, choosing in what things they may obey the one commanding, or rather in what things it is necessary that their Preceptor obey their own will. And so those of this kind, even if they see themselves tolerated, and condescended to, and their infirmity indulged, let them make progress, I beseech you, and let them always be ashamed to be found as little children, lest they should ever hear. "What ought I to have done to you, and have not done?" and to those abusing the patience and kindness of the prelate, let the multitude of mercy shown become at last a heap of just damnation.

7. "Lord, what do you want me to do? And the Lord to him: Rise, and enter the city; there it will be told to you what you ought to do." O Wisdom truly disposing all things sweetly! Him to whom You speak, You send to a man to be instructed concerning Your will, so that the utility of social life may be commended; and having been taught through a man, he may also himself learn to assist men according to the grace given to him. "Enter the city." You see, brothers, that it was not without divine counsel that you entered this city of the Lord of virtues, to learn the divine will. Plainly, He who healthfully terrified you

and converted your heart to desiring His will, He himself said to you: "Rise, and enter the city." But hear how manifestly in the things that follow voluntary simplicity and Christian meekness are commended. "His eyes being open, he saw nothing: but he was drawn by the hands by those who accompanied him." Happy blindness, by which the eyes formerly ill-illumined in prevarication are at length healthfully blinded in conversion! Surely the fact that Paul remains for three days without food, persisting in prayer, pertains especially to those who, having newly renounced the world, do not yet breathe in celestial consolation. Let them therefore also sustain the Lord in all patience; let them pray without intermission, seeking, asking, knocking, because the heavenly Father will hear them in due time. He will not forget them to the end; He will come, and He will not delay. If for three days you shall have sustained Him not having what you may eat, trust that the merciful and compassionate Lord will not dismiss you fasting.

8. Then Ananias is commanded to lay hands on Saul; but as one well-instructed, he does not immediately acquiesce. For see if Paul himself did not afterwards deliver this doctrine to his disciple, saying: "Lay hands quickly on no man" (1 Tim. 5:22). "He saw," says the Lord, "a man laying hands on him, that he may receive sight." Brothers, when Paul had seen this, he was not immediately illumined. Did he not expect the hand of Ananias, because he foresaw him coming perhaps in dreams? (Acts 9). These things I say to

you, most dear ones, because I fear lest someone perhaps be among you who presumes himself to have been illumined by a dream alone; and no longer patiently suffers to be drawn by the hand, but professes himself a leader of others. For he to whom the care of administration has not yet been enjoined, to whom the dispensation has not yet been credited, to whom it has not yet been commanded that he should see and provide for those who, having open eyes, see nothing: why does he attempt to presume this, except because he meditates vain things, and follows as it were vain dreams? Let us beware of this vice, brothers: always, as much as in us lies, let us choose to be abject, and to be drawn by the hands; learning meekness and humility from Christ the Lord, to whom is honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON II.

1. Paul was converted today, or rather Saul having been converted was turned into Paul. For indeed he was made as that little child of the Gospel, of whom the Lord says: "Unless you be converted, and become as this little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). For perhaps he was speaking of himself. Truly the Lord himself is great and exceedingly praiseworthy, He himself is the little child who was given to us; yet He is not exhibited as great for the time being, but as a little child, that He may make Himself an acceptable and efficacious example of necessary smallness. To the little child, therefore, let your conversion

be, that you may learn to be a little child: you also, when you are converted, become a little child. Indeed, hear how evidently he manifests to you the little child, in whom He established the form of conversion, signally proposing those things which are of a little child to be imitated in himself. "Learn from me," he says, "because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). A twin smallness, humility and meekness. And that one interior, this one exterior smallness. Yet each is no small virtue: namely, which that so great Master professes as his sole teaching. Today therefore Paul was converted, today he ceased to be Saul. Today he was made humble and meek of heart. The confession of the mouth proves the humiliation of the heart, while he cries out: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" But more so the magnitude of the conferred grace proves it, which certainly, unless to one very humble, would not have been given in such abundance.

2. Furthermore, meekness, since it is a certain exterior smallness, as we have said, and for this reason is more manifest, is commended to us in three ways in this conversion. By a triple battering-ram, as it were, our meekness is struck: by the injuries of words, by the loss of things, and by the injury of the body. In these three is the entire exhibition of patience, the entire exercise of meekness. That virtue is proven, which none of these things seems to have been able to shake. It is pleasant to consider how Paul, having been tempted in all these things immediately in his very conversion, was truly found to be Paul, truly

already mild and patient in this part. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goad." A hard word indeed, a word of rebuke, full of threat. Certainly, as far as pertained to the body, he was struck and prostrated to the earth. Or was he also proven by loss? And greatly; since the light of his eyes was taken away from him, "and his eyes being open," as it is written, "he saw nothing" (Acts 9:1-8). The patience of Job was experienced and exercised in these three, whom God gave as a most celebrated example in this virtue. But we leave this to your industry to be investigated. It suffices for us to warn that the form of true conversion is constituted in great part in this meekness: so that those should be ashamed who, having been expected to be converted, are found altogether perverse and turned away, whether in the injury of bodies, or in the loss of things, or, what is more unworthy, in the injuries of words.

ON THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED MARY.

SERMON I. On the triple mercy.

1. Today the Virgin Mother leads the Lord of the temple into the temple of the Lord; Joseph also presents to the Lord, not his own, but His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. Just Simeon recognizes Him whom he was expecting; Anna the widow also confesses Him. By these four today's procession was first celebrated, which afterwards would be celebrated with the

exultation of the whole earth in every place and by every nation. Nor is it indeed a wonder if it was small then, since He who was being received was small. No place was there for the sinner: all were just, all were holy, all were perfect. But will You save these only, O Lord? Let the body grow, let the mercy also grow. "Men and beasts You will save, O Lord, when You have multiplied Your mercy, O God" (Ps. 35:7, 8). In the second procession now the crowds go before, the crowds follow; nor does the Virgin carry Him, but a little donkey. Therefore He disdains no one, not even those who have rotted like beasts in their own dung: He does not disdain them, I say, if only apostolic garments be not lacking, if their doctrine, if justice of morals, if obedience, if charity cover the multitude of sins, from this He will not judge them unworthy of the glory of His procession. Rather truly He is found to have reserved for us also that very mercy which seems to have been conferred upon so few. Why should He not reserve for posterity that which He also bestowed beforehand upon the ancients?

2. David, king and prophet, rejoiced to see this day: he saw it, and was glad. Otherwise, if he had not seen it, whence did he sing: "We have received, O God, Your mercy in the midst of Your temple"? (Psalm 47:10). David received this mercy of the Lord, Simeon received it, and we also have received it, and all who are preordained to life: since Christ is yesterday, today, and forever. For mercy is in the midst of the temple, not in a corner or a lodging place, because there is no respect of persons with God. It is placed in com-

mon, it is offered to all, and no one is devoid of it, except he who refuses it. Your waters flow out abroad, O Lord God: nevertheless Your fountain is Your own, and a stranger does not drink from it. He who is Yours shall not see death until he has seen the Christ of the Lord, so that he may be safely dismissed in peace. Why should he not be dismissed in peace, who has the Christ of the Lord in his breast? For He Himself is our peace, who through faith dwells in our hearts. How will you depart from here, miserable soul, who are ignorant of Jesus, the guide of the journey? For some have an ignorance of God. Whence is this? Surely because the Light came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light. "And the Light," he says, "shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:5). As if he were to say: "And waters flow in the streets, yet a stranger does not drink from them; and mercy is in the midst of the temple: yet no one approaches [or: nor yet do they approach] from among those whom eternal damnation awaits." He stands in the midst of you, O miserable ones, whom you do not know: so that dying, before you have seen the Christ of the Lord, you may not be dismissed in peace; but rather be snatched away by the roaring ones prepared for food.

3. "We have received, O God, Your mercy in the midst of Your temple." This thanksgiving is far from that voice of one groaning: "O Lord, Your mercy is in heaven, and Your truth reaches even to the clouds" (Psalm 35:6). For what? Does it

seem to you that mercy was in the midst when it was held only among the celestial spirits? But when truly Christ was made a little lower than the angels, and was made the mediator of God and men, and as a cornerstone he pacified through his blood the things that are in heaven and those that are on earth; from this clearly now "we have received, O God, Your mercy in the midst of Your temple." For we also were by nature children of wrath, but we have obtained mercy. Children of what wrath, and what mercy have we obtained? Surely children of ignorance, of sloth, of captivity: and we have obtained wisdom, virtue, redemption. The ignorance of the seduced woman had blinded us; the softness of the man drawn away and enticed by his own concupiscence had unnerved us; the malice of the devil had justly captured us exposed by God. Thus therefore we are all born: first indeed utterly ignorant of the way of the city of the dwelling; then weak and slothful, so that even if the way of life were known to us, we would nevertheless be hindered and detained by our own inertia; finally captives under the worst and most cruel tyrant, so that although we might be prudent and robust, we would nevertheless be oppressed by the condition of miserable servitude. Does not such great misery have need of much mercy and compassion? Or certainly if we have already been made safe from this triple wrath through Christ, who was made for us wisdom from God the Father, and justice and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30): how much vigilance

have we need of, most beloved, lest perhaps—which God forbid!—our last state be found worse than the first, if it should happen again to kindle wrath, since we are children of wrath now not by nature, but by our own will?

4. Let us therefore embrace the mercy which we have received in the midst of the temple, and with blessed Anna let us not be moved from the temple. "For the temple of God is holy, which you are," says the Apostle (1 Cor. 3:17). This mercy is near, the word is near in your mouth and in your heart. Finally, Christ dwells in your hearts through faith. This is His temple, and this is His seat: unless perhaps it has escaped you that "the soul of the just man is the seat of wisdom." Therefore what I frequently, indeed even always, desire to admonish my brothers, I beseech even now: let us walk not according to the flesh in the flesh, lest we displease God. Let us not be friends of this world, lest we be constituted enemies of God. Let us also [or: therefore] resist the devil, and he will flee from us, so that we may now walk freely in the spirit, and let our conversation be in the heart. Since the body which is corrupted weighs down, and unnerves, and effeminates the soul; and the earthly dwelling-place depresses the sense that thinks many things (Wisdom 9:15), so that it does not rise up to celestial things. Whence also the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (1 Cor. 3:19); and he who is overcome by the evil one is assigned as a servant to him. Furthermore, mercy is received in the heart, Christ dwells in the heart, in the heart He speaks peace to His

people, and upon His saints, and to those who are converted to the heart.

SERMON II.

On the origin and manner of the procession of Christ into the temple.

1. Thanks be to our Redeemer, who has so abundantly gone before us in the blessings of sweetness, multiplying our joys through the sacraments of His infancy. For having celebrated a little before His Nativity, Circumcision, and Apparition, today the festive day of His oblation has dawned for us. For today the sublime fruit of the earth is presented to the Creator; today a placable and God-pleasing host is offered in the temple by virginal hands, is carried by parents, is expected by the elderly. Joseph and Mary offer a sacrifice of praise, a morning sacrifice; Simeon and Anna receive Him. By these four a procession was celebrated, which is recalled to memory today with solemn joys throughout the four climates of the world. Since therefore we ourselves today, beyond the custom of other solemnities, are about to perform a procession, I think it not useless to look more diligently at its manner and order. We are to proceed two by two, having candles in our hands, and these also lighted, not with any fire, but with that which first in the church shall have been consecrated by the priestly blessing. Besides these, in our procession the last shall be first, and the first last: and we shall sing in the ways of the Lord, because great is the glory of the Lord.

2. Rightly indeed do we proceed two by two: for thus on account of the commendation of brotherly charity and social life do the sacred Gospels witness that the disciples were sent by the Savior (Luke 10:1). He disturbs the procession who takes care to walk alone: he does not only harm himself, but is also troublesome to others. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the spirit, nor careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Now truly as it is not good for man to be alone, so it is prohibited to appear empty in the sight of the Lord (Exodus 23:15). For since those also are accused of idleness whom no one has hired (Matthew 20:6): those who have already been hired, if they be found idle, what do they deserve? For faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Finally, our works themselves are to be done in fervor and in the desire of the heart, so that they may be burning lamps in our hands. Otherwise it is to be feared lest perhaps He begin to vomit us out as lukewarm, who speaks in the Gospel, saying: "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke 12:49). This clearly is the sacred and blessed fire, which the Father sanctified and sent into the world, and which is blessed in the churches, as it is written: "In the churches bless God the Lord" (Psalm 67:27). For our adversary also has, as a perverse emulator of divine works—he has, I say, his own fire also, the fire of carnal concupiscence; the fire of envy and ambition, which the Savior came not to kindle in us, but to extinguish. Finally, if anyone should

presume to offer this strange fire in the divine sacrifice, even if he have Aaron for a father, he shall die in his iniquity.

3. Furthermore, besides these things which have been said concerning social life and brotherly love, of good works, and holy fervor; the virtue of humility is very great and most necessary, so that we may prevent one another with honor: and let each one prefer not only his seniors, but even the younger ones to himself: which surely is the perfection of humility and the fullness of justice. And since God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7), and the fruit of charity is joy in the Holy Spirit; let us sing, as has been said, in the ways of the Lord, because great is the glory of the Lord (Psalm 137:5): let us sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things (Psalm 97:1). In all these things, if anyone perhaps neglects to profit and to go from virtue to virtue; let whoever is of this sort know that he is at a standstill, not in a procession, indeed rather even in regression; because on the way of life not to progress is to regress, since nothing as yet remains in the same state. Furthermore, our progress consists in this—as I remember having said more often—that we should never think we have apprehended, but always reach out to those things which are before, incessantly striving for the better; and continually expose our imperfection to the gazes of divine mercy.

SERMON III.

On the boy, Mary, and Joseph.

1. We celebrate today the Purification of the blessed Virgin Mary, which was done according to the law of Moses, forty days having passed from the Nativity of the Lord. For it was written in the law that a woman who, having received seed, had brought forth a son, should be unclean for seven days, and on the eighth day the boy should be circumcised: thence, intent upon washing and purification, she should abstain from entering the temple for thirty-three days: which being completed, she should offer her son to the Lord with gifts (Lev. 12). But who does not notice in the very beginning of this sentence that the mother of the Lord is entirely free from this precept? For do you think that Moses, about to say that a woman who had brought forth a son was unclean, did not fear to incur the crime of blasphemy against the mother of the Lord, and therefore premised "having received seed"? Otherwise, unless he had foreseen that a Virgin would bring forth without seed, what necessity was there for mention to be made of "received seed"? It is clear therefore that this law does not include the mother of the Lord, who brought forth a son not having received seed, as it had been predicted through Jeremiah, that "the Lord would make a new thing upon the earth." You ask what new thing? "A woman," he says, "shall encompass a man" (Jer. 31:22). She shall not receive a man from another man, she shall not conceive a man by human law; but within intact and whole bowels she shall enclose a man: so truly that with the Lord entering and going out, according to an-

other prophet, the gate of the east may persevere continually closed (Ezek. 44:2).

Do you think, therefore, that her soul could not be moved, and say: "What need have I of purification? why should I abstain from entering the temple, whose womb, knowing no man, has been made a temple of the Holy Spirit? why should I not enter the temple, who have brought forth the Lord of the temple?" There was nothing impure in this conception, nothing in the birth, nothing illicit, nothing needing to be purged: surely since this offspring is the fountain of purity, and came to make the purgation of sins. "What in me should the legal observation purify, who have been made most pure by the very immaculate birth?" Truly, O blessed Virgin, truly you have no cause, nor have you need of purification. But did your son have need of circumcision? Be among women as one of them; for your son also is thus in the number of boys. He willed to be circumcised, and should He not much more will to be offered? Offer your son, sacred Virgin, and represent the blessed fruit of your womb to the Lord. Offer for the reconciliation of us all a holy victim, pleasing to God. God the Father will altogether accept the new oblation and the most precious victim, of whom He Himself says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). But this oblation, brothers, seems delicate enough, where He is only presented to the Lord, redeemed by birds, and immediately carried back. It will come, when He will be offered not in the temple, nor in the arms of Simeon, but outside the city in the

arms of the cross. It will come, when He will not be redeemed by another's blood, but will redeem others by His own blood, because God the Father has sent redemption to His people. That will be the evening sacrifice, this is the morning one. This indeed is more pleasant, but that more full. For this is at the time of birth, that already in the fullness of age. Concerning both, however, you can receive what the prophet predicted: "He was offered because He Himself willed it" (Isaiah 53:7). For even now He was offered, not because He had need, not because He was under the edict of the law, but because He Himself willed it; and on the cross He was nevertheless offered, not because He deserved it, not because the Jew was able, but because He Himself willed it. I will voluntarily sacrifice to You, O Lord, because You were voluntarily offered for my salvation, not for Your necessity.

3. But what, brothers, do we offer, or what do we render to Him for all things that He has rendered to us? He offered for us a victim more precious than He had, surely than which none more precious could be: and we therefore let us do what we can, offering to Him the best that we have, which is indeed our very selves. He offered Himself; who are you that you should delay to offer yourself? Who will grant to me that such great majesty may deign to receive my oblation? Two mites I have, Lord, I mean body and soul: would that I could perfectly offer these to You in a sacrifice of praise! For it is good for me, and far more glorious and useful, that I be offered

to You rather than that I be left to myself. For my soul is troubled within myself, but in You my spirit shall exult, if it be truly offered to You. Brothers, to a Lord about to die the Jew offered dead victims; but even now: "I live, says the Lord, I will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live" (Ezek. 33:11). The Lord does not want my death; and shall I not gladly offer Him my life? For this is a placable victim, a victim pleasing to God, a living victim. But in that oblation of the Lord three are read to have been present; and in our oblation three things are nevertheless required by the Lord. In that oblation was Joseph, the spouse of the mother of the Lord, whose son He was thought to be; there was also the Virgin mother herself, and the boy Jesus who was offered. Let there be therefore in our oblation also manly constancy, let there be continence of the flesh, let there be an humble conscience. Let there be, I say, in the purpose of persevering a manly spirit, let there be in continence virginal chastity, let there be in the conscience childlike simplicity and humility. Amen.

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SAINT VICTOR, CONFESSOR.

SERMON I.

1. The life [or: virtue] and special glory of Victor provokes to virtue, not so much to glory, all who are of a right heart. It is not of a right, but plainly of a perverse mind, to seek glory before exercising virtue, and to wish to be crowned who

has not lawfully striven. "It is vain for you," he says, "to rise before the light" (Psalm 126:2). It is so. In vain he strives for the height of glory who has not first shone with virtue. In vain the foolish virgins rise to meet the bridegroom, whose lamps are extinguished: and therefore foolish, because they glory in empty lamps, not having the oil of virtue. Far be it from me to glory except in the glory of those whom the Prophet congratulating says: "O Lord, they shall walk in the light of Your countenance, and in Your name they shall exult all the day, and in Your justice they shall be exalted." And he adds: "For You are the glory of their virtue" (Psalm 88:16-18). Beautifully is the glory not of them, but of their virtue commended. For the glory which is without virtue surely comes unduly, is affected too hastily, is caught dangerously. Virtue is a step to glory; virtue is the mother of glory. Fallacious is the glory and vain is the beauty which she has not brought forth. She alone is the one to whom glory is justly owed, and securely bestowed.

2. To Saint Victor neither virtue nor glory is lacking; but in what manner both things, and in what order they proceeded in the man, it is worthwhile to observe. He fought bravely, he overcame manfully, and thus finally he is crowned with glory and honor. For how would a strong warrior, a humble victor, have remained without glory? Although neither in the day of his virtue was he without glory, being admirable for signs and wonders. We have, most beloved, in the life of Victor, both what we should worthily

admire and what we should healthfully imitate. I wonder that he gave wine in the desert, not from a vine, but from a fountain. I wonder and I am amazed that an infant still in the womb was a cause of fear to the fearsome demons, for he was foreknown by them, and already then designated by name. Nor was the name empty, where the flight of enemies and an extorted confession granted victory to the little child. Who likewise would not wonder at a thief caught by a demon, and again a man soon liberated by a demon? Who would not also consider it stupendous with all admiration, that a man surrounded by flesh, with the heavens open, should fix the eyes of the flesh on the supernal light, and see visions of God, and be moreover soothed by an angelic song, taught by an oracle? These and similar things we venerate in the holy man, we do not emulate. Rightly indeed, since they both can be left undone without danger to salvation, and cannot be usurped without danger to salvation. It is surely safer to emulate more solid things than more sublime things; and those which savor more of virtue, and less of glory.

3. Let us strive, therefore, to be conformed to his morals, since in his wonders, even if we wished, we would not be able to be like him. Let us emulate in the man a sober way of life, a devoted affection; let us emulate meekness of spirit, chastity of body, custody of the mouth, purity of mind; to place a bridle on anger and a measure on the tongue, to sleep more sparingly, to pray more frequently, to admonish ourselves with psalms,

hymns, and spiritual songs; to join nights to days and to be occupied in divine praises. Let us emulate the better gifts. Let us learn from him that he was meek and humble of heart. Let us emulate, I say, that he was generous to the poor, pleasant to guests, patient with sinners, kind to all. For this is better. In these is the form to which we should be impressed; in the miracles is the glory from which we should be restrained. Let those things gladden, let these things edify; let those move, let these promote. Let us feast, most beloved, called to the table of the rich man, a table abundant with breads, heaped with delicacies. Is he not rich who refreshes us with examples, protects us with merits, gladdens us with signs? Rich indeed, in whose solemn banquet today angels and men are gathered together: these that they may be refreshed, those that they may be delighted; these that they may profit, those that they may rejoice. His life, filled with good things, what is it but a table filled with food? And yet all things are not set before all, but that each may take what he sees to be expedient and suitable for himself.

4. And I indeed, with more healthful counsel, diligently consider what things are set before me. It is cautious for me to choose my own, and not to touch what belongs to another. I will not extend my hand to the glory of miracles, lest if I attempt what I have not received from above, I should rightly lose even what I seem to have received. I do not lift up my eyes with him to search out heavenly secrets, lest oppressed by glory I should recoil confused, fleeing late to the counsel of the

Wise Man, who says: "Seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thy ability" (Eccli. 3:22). New wine of reddening waters is brought to the table; I do not touch it, because I know it is not set before me, who likewise am not able to change elements or innovate natures. I see likewise that at the table of Victor he heard angels singing. Will I also see supernal singers exhibited to me: or certainly those harpers of the Apocalypse harping before me on their harps? (Apoc. 14:2.) He commands demons while still living in the body, he looses the one bound in the body, being already loosed from the body himself. They are foods, but not mine; indeed pleasant and savory, but my soul does not touch them, since I, being poor, do not have the wherewithal to return such things. But if I consider diligently, behold before my eyes on the table of the saint, the censure of judgment, the vigor of discipline, the mirror of sanctity, the form of life, the insignia of virtue. These things are taken by me without presumption, and they are consumed healthfully: and if I ignore them, they are strictly reclaimed from me.

5. Listen further to what things I consider to be rightly set before me. If you offer the bread of sorrow and the wine of compunction from the table of the rich man, I take them securely, I who am poor and needy. My tears shall be my bread day and night (Psalm 41:4), and I will mingle my cup with weeping (Psalm 101:10). This is my portion, I who have committed things to be lamented. And yet I shall not be weary, as I estimate, of this

food; since He who set it forth added knowledge, and also added sorrow. But even if examples of temperance, of justice, of prudence or of fortitude appear, I take them without hesitation, knowing that it is necessary for me to prepare such things. I do not doubt that these things are set before me, and that these things will be reclaimed from me. Are signs and wonders to be required from us, so that we may prepare them in turn for the rich man? Brothers, they are vessels unto honor for Him who invited us, not foods for the poor. You, therefore, who have been invited, consider diligently what He has set before you, and what for Himself. For not everything that is set on the table is set before you. What if it were offered in a golden cup? not the cup is set before you, but the drink: take the drink and put down the gold. Therefore, the father of the family communicates examples of good works and rectitude of morals to those of his household in such a way that he retains for himself the prerogative in miracles. In these things, however, and in those, He is to be glorified, whose gift it is to live holily, whose virtue it is to work signs, who in the perfect Trinity lives and reigns God forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON II.

1. Rejoice in the Lord, most beloved, who among the continual benefits of His piety has granted a man to the world, by whose example many might be saved. Again I say, rejoice, because having been taken from our midst he has drawn near to God, so that many more might be

saved through his intercession. The merciful and compassionate Lord has one from among men to whom He may forgive the sins of men: the pious and merciful advocate has a time and a place for interceding; indeed, a quiet place and a restful time. On earth he was seen, that he might be an example; into heaven he was lifted up, that he might be a patronage. Here he informs for life, there he invites to glory. He has been made a mediator to the kingdom, who was an inciter to the work. A good mediator, who now asking nothing for himself, desires to transfer everything to us, both the affection of the suppliant and the fruit of the supplication. For what should he seek for himself, who lacks nothing? The Lord preserves him, and vivifies him, and makes him blessed in glory: nothing will be lacking to him, placed in a place of pasture. This is the day of his glorious migration, the day of the joy of his heart; let us exult and rejoice in it. He has entered into the powers of the Lord; let us rejoice, because now he is more powerful to save.

2. Today Victor, having laid aside the body, by which alone he seemed to be hindered from the entry into glory, as much more eager as he was more unencumbered, penetrated into the holy places, having been made like to the glory of the saints. Today from the latest and humble place, which he had chosen for himself by the counsel of the Savior, at the call of the supreme father of the family himself, a true friend ascended higher, and he has glory before those reclining at table with him. Today, the world being despised, and

the prince of the world being triumphed over, Victor truly ascended above the world, receiving from the hand of the Lord the crown of victory. And he ascended with an immense store of merits, preeminent in triumphs, glorious in miracles. The veteran soldier rests, and after the labors and sweats of the sacred warfare accomplished, he is happily placed, he is sublimely crowned. His soul shall dwell in good things. Do you ask where? With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Thus with such companions and in such a place she sits for herself; she sits exalted and shining, she sits joyful and praising; she sits delicate and adorned with her necklaces, surrounded by apples, supported by flowers; she sits, I say, for herself, void of cares, flowing with delights, abounding in leisure and quiet for attending to wisdom. She who sat and wept by the rivers of Babylon, sits now at the fountain of life, and her conversation is beside the torrent of pleasure, whose impetus gladdens the city of God. She found for herself a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and with the Samaritan woman she is given to drink of the water of salutary wisdom, so that she may not thirst forever. She is given of the fruit of her hands, and her works praise her in the gates, and she glories in the testimony of her conscience; the conscience, I say, of herself, not of another. She sits in the midst of angels, plainly worthy of their company, for whose desire she burns, with whose purity she shines, with whose chastity she is adorned. Among the apostles sits a man of apostolic grace;

nor is there reason why he should hide from the rank of prophets, since he glorified and bore in his body Him whom they foretold. Nor does our Victor think that he should be kept from the victorious choirs of martyrs, he who by a hard and long-lasting martyrdom sacrificed the living victim of his body.

3. The veteran soldier sits, quiet now with due sweetness and security; secure indeed for himself, but solicitous for us. For he did not, at the same time as the putrefaction of the flesh, strip himself of the bowels of piety; nor did he so put on for himself the robe of glory as to put on also forgetfulness of our misery and of his own mercy. It is not a land of forgetfulness that the soul of Victor inhabits; not a land of labor, that he should be occupied in it; it is not, finally, a land, but heaven. Does the heavenly habitation harden the souls it admits, or deprive them of memory, or despoil them of piety? Brothers, the breadth of heaven expands hearts, it does not narrow them; it cheers minds, it does not alienate them; it does not contract affections, but extends them. In the light of God, memory is made serene, not obscured; in the light of God, what is unknown is learned, not what is known is unlearned. Those supernal spirits who from the beginning inhabit the heavens, do they, because they dwell in the heavens, despise the earth, and not rather visit and frequent it? Does the fact that they always see the face of the Father void the ministry of piety? All are nevertheless ministering spirits, sent into ministry for the sake of those who re-

ceive the inheritance of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). What then? angels run to and fro, and succor men; and do those who are of us not know us, nor know any longer how to compassionate those things in which they themselves have suffered? those who know not sorrows, yet feel ours; and those who have come from great tribulation, do they no longer recognize that in which they were? I know who has said: "The just wait for me, until thou reward me" (Psalm 141:8). Victor is just, even expecting, without doubt, our retribution. He is not that cupbearer of Pharaoh, who kept for himself the grace he found, not at all remembering his prophet and fellow prisoner (Genesis 40). He is a minister of Christ, he follows Christ. He has not forgotten his promise, nor has he denied to the companion of his passion the fellowship of the kingdom. The disciple is not against the master; Victor cannot do anything except what he has seen the master doing. The works which He did, this one also has done likewise.

4. Having already entered the heavens, which even before he looked upon with blessed eyes when they were open, now truly with revealed face he contemplates the glory of God, absorbed indeed, but not forgotten of the cry of the poor. Blessed vision, by which he is transformed into the same image from clarity to clarity, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Small for the fight, great for victory, not yet departing from his mother's womb, and already casting out demons, with an increase of virtues and merits, Victor was translated while living among sinners. O man of exceptional sanc-

tity! who was holy before he was born, and Victor by deed before he was so by name. Still enclosed in the womb, he already triumphed over the enemy. O sanctity to be venerated even by the angels themselves! which with equal zeal, although with different will, the evil flee from and the good frequent. Nor could I easily say what proves the man holier, the favor of these or the dread of those. Finally inhabiting the lands in body, and the heavens in mind, he would at times hear the voices of supernal spirits, at times announcing something more familiarly, at times plausible with ineffable sweetness of song. Truly your soul, Victor, is one of the gems which appeared to you on the cross. Truly fixed to the cross, when inserted into divine glory, it put on for itself the same image of clarity which it found. To the winner He expanded His bosom, who to the fighter had given His spirit. O victorious soul, which like a sparrow flying through, has escaped the snares of the world! look back upon the incautious souls entangled in them, endangered in them, so that by your patronage we may be rescued.

5. O veteran soldier, who have exchanged the hard labors of Christian warfare for the rest of angelic happiness! look back upon your cowardly and weak fellow-soldiers, who among hostile swords and spiritual wickednesses are occupied in your praises. O illustrious Victor, who have triumphed most gloriously both over the earth and from heaven, nobly proud in despising the glory of the former, and piously violent in seizing the kingdoms of the latter! look down from heaven

upon the fettered of the earth, so that this may be the consummation of your triumphs, if we finally feel that you have conquered for us. For if your name comes from the reality, the perfect truth of the name will be judged from our liberation. And certainly something is lacking to the interpretation, as long as we, who are yours, are not at all liberated. How pious, how sweet, how pleasant it is, O Victor, in this place of affliction and in this body of death to sing to you, to worship you, to pray to you! Your name and your memorial are a honeycomb distilling on the lips of captives; honey and milk are under the tongue of those who are delighted by your memory. Come then, strong athlete, sweet patron, faithful advocate, arise to our aid, so that we also may rejoice over our rescue, and you may be glorified by a full victory. O almighty Father, we have sinned against You, having been made alien children; but we have drawn near in Victor, who while he conquered his own cupidity, may conquer also Your wrath, and also powerfully restore us to grace. O victorious Jesus, we praise You in our Victor, because we know that You have conquered in him. Grant to him, most pious Jesus, to glory so of his victory in You, that forgetfulness of us may not come upon him. Son of God, grant to him to be always mindful of us in Your sight, to take up and plead our cause in Your tremendous judgment, You who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign God for all ages of ages. Amen.

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SAINT BENEDICT THE ABBOT. SERMON.

1. As you gather together into one to hear the word of salvation, I have a great fear, my brothers, lest someone perhaps receive it less worthily, and not as the word of God ought to be received. For I know that the land which has frequently received the rain coming upon it, if it does not produce fruit, will be reprobate, and near to a curse (Hebrews 6:7, 8). And I certainly, if I could, would prefer to give you blessings, and not curses. Nay rather, the very blessing of our heavenly Father, not mine (which nevertheless you receive through my mouth, He Himself deigning so), I wish to remain always as a blessing for you, and not to be able to be changed into a curse.

2. We celebrate today the birthday of our glorious master Benedict: for him and concerning him a solemn sermon is due to you according to custom. His most sweet name is to be embraced and honored by you with all joyfulness; since he himself is our leader, our master, and our lawgiver. I indeed am delighted in the memory of him, although not without my own blush do I dare to record the name of this blessed father. For I have with you, from the imitation of him, the renunciation of the world and the profession of monastic discipline; but uniquely apart from you, I share with him the name of abbot. Abbot was he, and I too. O abbot, and abbot! One name, but in the other only the shadow of a great name. One ministry, but alas for me! how dissimilar the ministers, how much the ministration itself

is dissimilar! Woe to me, if I shall be as far from you, O blessed Benedict, in the future, as I am found to be far from the footsteps of your sanctity in the present. But it is not necessary for me to plead these things before you. I know that I speak to those who know me: I only ask that you might relieve this shame and this fear of mine with fraternal compassion.

3. Since nevertheless the dispensation has been entirely entrusted to me, even if I do not have within me what I might set before you, I will seek from blessed Benedict three loaves, with which I may feed you. May his sanctity, his justice, his piety refresh you. Recall, most beloved, that not all who were in the procession of the Lord spread their garments before Him. In that procession, I say, which with the Lord's permission we are soon to celebrate, when the people went to meet the Lord as He came to His passion and sat upon a young ass, not all were spreading their garments in the way, but some were cutting branches from the trees (Matthew 21:1-9). This was not a great thing: what they had received freely, they were giving freely. Nevertheless, not even they were entirely idle, nor are they read to have been excluded from the procession. My brothers, pious beast of burden of Christ, you who with the Prophet can say: "I am become as a beast before thee: and I am always with thee" (Psalm 72:23); you upon whom Christ sits, since the soul of the just is the seat of wisdom; and the Apostle preaches Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24): if I do not

have garments to spread before your feet, I will attempt at least to cut branches from the trees, so that some small thing of my ministry may not be lacking to so great a procession.

4. Blessed Benedict was a tree, great and fruitful, like the wood which is planted by the courses of the waters (Psalm 1:3). Where are the courses of the waters? Surely in the valleys; because the waters shall pass through the midst of the mountains. For who does not see that even the torrents of the mountains decline from the heights, and always turn towards the humility of the valley? Thus surely, thus God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Securely fix your foot here, whoever you are, beast of burden of Christ; lean upon this branch, walk the path of the valley. For doubtless the ancient serpent has established his seat in the mountain, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider falls backward: therefore choose the valley rather for walking, choose the valley for planting. For neither in the planting of trees are we accustomed to choose mountainous places, because they are frequently arid and stony. In the valleys is the richness: there the plants profit, there is the full ear of corn, there the hundredfold fruit arises, according to that: "And the valleys shall abound with corn" (Psalm 64:14). You hear that everywhere the valley is praised, everywhere humility is preached. Plant, therefore, there, where are the courses of the waters; because there is the abundance of spiritual grace; and the waters which are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord, that is,

heavenly blessings cause Him to be praised. Let us stand in this, most dear ones, and let us stand planted, so that we may not wither. Let us not be moved by any breeze, as it is written: "If the spirit of him that hath power, ascend upon thee, leave not thy place" (Eccl. 10:4). For no temptation shall prevail over you, if you do not walk in great and wonderful things above you, but remain with firm roots, rooted and founded in humility. Thus planted by the courses of the waters, this holy confessor of the Lord gave his fruit in his time.

5. For there are those who do not produce fruit: there are those who produce it, but not their own: there are those who produce their own, but not in its time. There are, I say, unfruitful trees, such as the oak and the elm, and other wild trees; but no one plants such in his garden, because they do not produce fruit: and if they produce any, it is not fit for human eating, but for porcine. Such are the children of this world, acting in revellings and drunkenness, in gluttony and voracity, in chamberings and impurities. For these things are the food of swine, which the true Jew is forbidden to eat (Deuteronomy 14:8), namely the Christian, who ought not to adhere to these things. For just as swine's flesh, when it is eaten, adheres to our flesh, so that it is now one flesh; so the transgressor of the Lord's precept associates to himself foul spirits, and by adhering to them becomes one demon with them. For also for this reason that animal is forbidden to be offered in sacrifices, because it designates foul and unclean spirits; who, having abandoned all cleanliness, pleasing

themselves only in foulness, always delight to be involved in the mire of vices and crimes. Whence also in the Gospel, that accursed legion, while it was being cast out from the man, asks for the swine as an animal similar to itself, and they are not denied (Mark 5:1-13). To these the unfruitful trees bear fruit, at whose roots the axe already seems to be laid.

6. On the other hand, the trees which produce fruit, but not their own, are the hypocrites, carrying with Simon of Cyrene a cross not their own: who, lacking religious intention, are pressed into service; and what they do not love, by love of the glory which they desire, they are compelled to do. Now in that which is said, "in its time" (Psalm 1:3), certain ones are reproved who wish to bear fruit before the time. For do we not fear for our own trees, when they bud sooner than they ought, on account of untimely flowers? So there are some whose fruits, because they arise too hastily, arise less prosperously. These are they who, in the beginning of their conversion, presume to wish to bear fruit for others continuously, hastening, against the decrees of the law, to plow with the firstborn of the bull, and to shear the firstborn of the sheep. Do you wish to know how solicitously this holy master of ours avoided that? And I set this branch before you; for for three years, known to God alone, he remained unknown to men. He bore much fruit indeed, as you yourselves see; but in his time. For neither did he believe it was time for bearing fruit, when he was weighed down by such a great

temptation of the flesh, that he almost yielded, almost departed. For I will not pass by even this branch, because although it is in a certain way bristly with the pricks of thorns, upon which Benedict of the Lord threw himself; nevertheless it is altogether useful: useful to the beast of burden of the Lord on account of the pits of temptations, lest it fall into them by consenting, but rather resist, and act manfully, and sustain the Lord lest it despair. Here, therefore, fix your foot, beast of burden of Christ, and learn that however much the bitter temptation may rage, you must not yield, nor believe for that reason that you have been abandoned by the Lord, but you shall remember that it is written: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 49:15).

7. Therefore, as I had begun to say, blessed Benedict did not believe it was then the time for bearing fruit, when he was still urged by such great temptations; but the time came, and in his time he gave fruit. Of his fruit are those three things which I touched upon above: his sanctity, his justice, his piety. The miracles prove the sanctity, the doctrine the piety, the life the justice. You see, O beast of burden of Christ, branches green with leaves, blooming with flowers, laden with fruit. Lean upon these, so that you may make straight steps for your feet. But how do I set his miracles before you? is it so that you might wish to perform miracles? By no means, but that you might lean upon his miracles: namely, that you might trust and rejoice that you have

been placed under such a pastor, that you have deserved to have such a great patron. For he is altogether very powerful in heaven, who showed himself so powerful on earth: according to the magnitude of grace, exalted by the magnitude of glory. For also according to the quantity of the roots the branches are known to come forth: and by as many roots as the tree is supported, by so many branches, as they say, is it decorated. Thus therefore, although we do not have our own, the miracles of our patron ought to be a great consolation to us. Doctrine indeed instructs us, and directs our steps into the way of peace. Furthermore, the justice of his life altogether strengthens and animates us; so that we may be so much more kindled to do the things which he taught, as we are certain that he taught no other things than what he did. A living and effective sermon indeed is the example of the work, making very persuasive what is said, while it shows feasible what is persuaded.

8. In this way, therefore, sanctity comforts, piety informs, justice confirms. For of how great piety was it, that he not only profited those present, but was also solicitous for those to come? Not only for those who then were did this tree bear fruit, but even to this day its fruit both remains and grows. Beloved clearly by God and men: whose presence alone was in blessing, as there are many beloved by God alone, because known to God alone; but also his memory even now is in blessing. For even to this day, for the triple confession of the love of the Lord, he feeds

the flock of the Lord with this triple fruit. He feeds with life, he feeds with doctrine, he feeds also with intercession. Aided incessantly by which, bear fruit also you, most dear ones, since you have been placed in this, that you should go and bring forth fruit. From whence should you go? Certainly from yourselves, as it is written: "Turn away from thy own will" (Eccli. 18:30). For also of the Lord we read that He went out to sow His seed (Matthew 13:3). Behold here also we have His seed, as also before His fruit. Let us imitate Him also, brothers; since for this He came, that He might deliver to us the form, and show us the way.

9. Perhaps also the Lord Himself is a tree, and we ought to take branches from Him also, which we may set before your feet: nay rather, not perhaps, but more truly He Himself is a tree and a heavenly plant, but planted in the earth, as it is written: "Truth is sprung out of the earth: and justice hath looked down from heaven" (Psalm 84:12). From Him therefore I set this branch before you, that as He emptied Himself, you may feel this same thing in yourselves: except that it is not so much I who set it forth, as the Apostle, with whom you have read: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 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" (Philippians 2:5-7). And you therefore, most dear brothers, empty yourselves, humble yourselves, sow yourselves,

lose yourselves. Sow the natural body, and the spiritual body shall rise again. Lose your souls, and you shall keep them unto life eternal. Do you wish to know how the Apostle himself, who taught it, did this? "Whether," he says, "we be transported in mind, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you" (2 Corinthians 5:13). What then for yourself? "I," he says, "am become as a vessel that is lost" (Psalm 30:13). He loses himself well who never does anything for himself; but all his intention and all his desire tends toward the pleasure of God, and the utility of his brothers. For unhappy is he who sows in the flesh, because from the flesh he shall reap corruption (Galatians 6:8). But elsewhere it is written: "Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters" (Isaiah 32:20). But how "upon all waters"? Perhaps even upon the waters of which it is read: "And let the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord" (Psalm 148:4): which are the angelic virtues and the heavenly peoples. Clearly so: "For we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9).

10. Let us therefore sow for men a good example through open works; let us sow for the angels a great joy through hidden sighs, and through other things of this sort, which are known to them alone. For there is joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance. Hence the Apostle was saying: "Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men" (2 Corinthians 8:21). For to God we are altogether known; but he said "in the sight of God,"

that is, in the sight of those who always assist His countenance. For it pleases them greatly, when they see you praying in secret, or ruminating on some psalm, or doing anything of that kind. Thus sow you also, thus bear fruit, most dear ones. Sow you also, because so many before you have sown; bear fruit, because they have sown for you. O race of Adam, how many have sown in you, and how precious the seed! how evilly you shall perish, and how deservedly, if such great seed shall have perished in you, together with the labor of the sowers! To what perdition shall you be delivered by the farmer, if all these things shall have perished in you? The entire Trinity has sown in our earth, angels likewise and apostles have sown, martyrs have sown, and confessors, and virgins. God the Father has sown; because His heart has uttered a good word. For the Lord has given benignity, and our earth has given her fruit. The Son also has sown: for He Himself is the one who went out to sow His seed. For the Father did not go out, but the Son proceeded from the Father, and came into the world; so that He who before was the thought of peace in the heart of the Father, should become Himself our peace in the womb of the mother. The Holy Spirit has also sown; because He also came, and there appeared to the disciples parted tongues as it were of fire. Thus the entire Trinity has sown: namely, the Father peace from heaven, the Son truth, the Holy Spirit charity.

11. The angels also sowed, when they stood firm while others were falling. For that Lucifer

said, no longer a light-bearer, but a darkness-bearer and an evening star: "I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14). O impudent and imprudent one! Thousands of thousands minister to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand assist Him (Daniel 7:10); and you will sit? The Cherubim, says the prophet, were standing (Isaiah 6:2; Ezekiel 10:3), and they were not sitting; what have you labored, that you should already sit? All are ministering spirits, sent into ministry for those who receive the inheritance of salvation; and you will sit? what have you sown, that you should already reap? It is not yours, it is not yours, this, but for those for whom it has been prepared by the Father. Why do you envy them? Surely they themselves shall sit; they, I say, the little worms of the earth, shall sit judging, and you not only shall not stand, but you shall stand there to be judged. Do you not know, says the Apostle, that we shall judge even the angels? (1 Corinthians 6:3.) They surely who went and wept, casting their seeds, but coming shall come with exultation carrying their sheaves (Psalm 125:6). Two are the sheaves which you seek, namely of honor and of rest. You affect the sitting and the height; but not so, impious one, not so: you shall not gather, because you have not sown. Those who have sown labor and vileness, shall reap honor likewise and rest. For for their double confusion and shame [otherwise, labor], they shall possess double in their land. Whence also a certain one was saying: "See my

abjection and my labor" (Psalm 24:18). Today indeed you have heard in the Gospel the Lord promising and saying to the disciples: "You shall sit on seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). Behold the rest of the session, and the honor of judgment. For even the Lord Himself did not wish to arrive at these things except through humility and labor. Whence also He was condemned to a most shameful death, questioned with torments, and saturated with reproaches: surely that the enemy may be clothed with confusion, he himself likewise and all who imitate him, and step aside from the way. He it is, O wicked one, He it is who shall sit on the throne of His majesty like the Most High, and co-highest with Him. This surely the holy angels considered, who when the evil one fell did not consent to that apostasy of his, leaving us an example, that in the manner they themselves chose to minister, so also we should do. For even those who flee from labor and catch at honor, let them know that they imitate him who sought the session and the height: and if the guilt of that one does not terrify them enough, let at least the vengeance terrify them. For all things happened to the contrary, so that he was formed to be mocked, and eternal fire has been prepared for him. To avoid these things, the holy angels sowed prudence for us, who first held it while others were falling.

12. But the apostles also sowed this same thing for us, when those who followed the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness before God, and the prudence of the flesh, which works death

and is an enemy to God, were withdrawing, they themselves adhered to the Lord. For those were scandalized hearing about the sacrament of the flesh and blood, and they no longer went with Him. But the disciples being asked whether they also wished to go away, replied: "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." We have need, brothers, to imitate this prudence; because many still walk with Jesus, until they come to eating His flesh and drinking His blood, that is, to communicating in His passions (for both that word and the sacrament itself signify this): but from then on they are scandalized and go back saying, that "this saying is hard" (John 6:67, 68, 69, 61). Let us be prudent with the apostles, and let us say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"; we do not depart from Thee, You will vivify us. Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). The world is not the only one that has delight, but much greater is the delight in Your words. Whence also the Prophet says: "How sweet are thy words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 118:103). To whom therefore shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, Lord; and they are above all things which the world can have. Not only life itself, but also the promise of eternal life and the expectation of the just, is a joy, and so great a joy, that everything which is desired is not able to be compared to it. This prudence therefore the holy apostles sowed for us. It is manifest that the martyrs sowed fortitude.

Furthermore the confessors sowed justice, which they followed in all their life; for this interest is between martyrs and confessors, as between Peter leaving all things at once, and Abraham expending the substance of the world upon good uses; for so those being consummated in a short space fulfilled a long time, but these dragged out long and manifold martyrdoms. It is clear that the holy virgins sowed temperance, who so trod down libido.

ON THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

SERMON I. On the words of Psalm 84:10, 11: "That glory may dwell in our land."

1. That glory may dwell in our land, mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed (Psalm 84:11). This is our glory, says the Apostle, the testimony of our conscience (2 Corinthians 1:12). Not indeed such a testimony as that proud Pharisee was having, bringing forth testimony concerning himself with a seduced and seducing thought (Luke 18:11, 12), and his testimony was not true; but when the Spirit Himself gives testimony to our spirit. Furthermore, I believe this testimony to consist in three things. For it is necessary first of all to believe, that you are not able to have remission of sins except through the indulgence of God: then, that you are able to have absolutely nothing of good work, unless He Himself has given this too: finally, that you can merit eternal life by no works, unless

that too is given to you freely. For who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed, but He who alone is clean? (Job 14:4.) Certainly what has been done cannot not have been done: yet He not imputing it, it will be as if it had not been. Which the Prophet also considering says: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin" (Psalm 31:2). Concerning good works indeed it is altogether certain, that no one has these from himself. For if human nature was not able to stand while yet whole, how much less will it be able to rise again by itself now that it is corrupted? It is certain that all things, as much as is in them, tend toward their origin, and are always more prone toward that part. So also we, who have been created from nothing, it is established that if we are left to ourselves, we always decline into sin, which is nothing.

2. Now indeed, concerning eternal life, we know that the sufferings of this time are not worthy of the future glory, even if one person were to endure them all. For human merits are not such that eternal life is owed by right, or that God would do any injustice if He did not grant it. For to say nothing of the fact that all merits are gifts of God, and thus man is more a debtor to God on account of them than God is to man; what are all merits compared to such great glory? Finally, who is a better prophet than he to whom the Lord himself bears such distinguished testimony, saying: I have found a man after my own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22)? Nevertheless, even he found it necessary to say to God: Enter not into

judgment with your servant, Lord (Psalm 142:2). Therefore, let no one deceive himself; because if he wishes to think well [otherwise, to calculate], he will find without doubt that he cannot meet with ten thousand him who comes against him with twenty thousand (Luke 14:31).

3. But these things which we have just said are not entirely sufficient, but rather should be considered as a certain beginning and, as it were, the foundation of faith. Therefore, if you believe that your sins cannot be blotted out except by Him against whom alone you have sinned, and into whom sin does not fall, you do well; but add further that you also believe this: that through Him your sins are forgiven you. This is the testimony which the Holy Spirit bears in your heart, saying: Your sins are forgiven you. For so the Apostle thinks, that a man is justified freely by faith (Rom. 3:28). So also concerning merits, if you believe they cannot be had except through Him, it is not enough until the Spirit of truth bears testimony to you that you have them through Him. So also concerning eternal life, it is necessary that you have the testimony of the Spirit that you are to reach it by a divine gift. For He Himself forgives sins, He Himself grants merits, and He Himself nevertheless rewards them with prizes.

4. Furthermore, these testimonies have been made very credible to me. For concerning the remission of sins, I hold the most valid argument to be the Lord's passion. For the voice of His blood has prevailed much more than the voice of the blood of Abel, crying out in the hearts of

the elect for the remission of all sins. For He was delivered up for our sins: nor is it doubtful that His death is more powerful and effective for good than our sins are for evil. Moreover, concerning good works, His resurrection is no less effective an argument for me, because He rose again for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Furthermore, concerning the hope of rewards, His ascension is his testimony, because He ascended for our glorification. You have these three in the psalms, the Prophet saying: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not imputed sin (Psalm 31:2); and elsewhere: Blessed is the man whose help is from you (Psalm 83:6); likewise elsewhere: Blessed is he whom you have chosen and taken up, he shall dwell in your courts (Psalm 64:5). This is true glory, an indwelling glory; because it is from Him who through faith dwells in our hearts. But the sons of Adam, seeking the glory which is from one another, did not want the glory which is from God alone: and thus pursuing glory flowing from without, they had glory not in themselves, but rather in others.

5. Do you wish to know from where the indwelling glory comes to man? I say it briefly, since the intention hastens toward mystical things. For I had proposed to investigate carefully those things alone in those prophetic words, but the apostolic discourse concerning internal glory and the testimony of conscience, occurring at first glance, has turned me back to moral things. Thus, therefore, does this glory dwell also here in our land, if mercy and truth have met each other,

and justice and peace have kissed each other. For it is necessary that our truth of confession [otherwise, conversion] should meet the prevenient mercy, and for the rest let us pursue holiness and peace, without which no one will see God. For whenever anyone is pricked in heart, already then mercy prevents him; but it will by no means enter, until the truth of confession meets it. I have sinned against the Lord, said David himself to Nathan the prophet, when he was being rebuked concerning adultery and homicide. And the Lord has transferred your sin from you, said the prophet (2 Sam. 12:13). Doubtless, mercy and truth have met each other. And this indeed, so that you may turn away from evil. Now indeed, that you may do good, you must sing to yourself with the timbrel and choir, so that the very mortification of your flesh, and the fruits of penance and the works of justice may be done in unity and concord (since the unity of the spirit is the bond of perfection); and you shall turn aside neither to the right nor to the left. For there are those whose right hand is the right hand of iniquity. That Pharisee, whom we mentioned above, was not like other men (Luke 18:11); but he himself bore testimony to himself, as we said, but not a true one. Certainly, whoever he is, in whom mercy and truth have met each other, justice and peace have kissed, let him glory securely; but let him glory in Him who bears testimony to him, in the spirit of truth indeed.

6. In order that glory may dwell in our land, mercy and truth have met each other, justice and

peace have kissed each other. If the Son is the wise glory of the Father, since no one is wiser than Wisdom itself; it is clearly evident that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, the glory of the Father. Because, therefore, it had been foretold in many ways and in various manners in the prophets (Heb. 1:1) that He was to be seen on earth and to converse among men; the Psalmist indicates in these words by what means that was done, and how, with those things fulfilled which had been foretold concerning Him through the mouth of all the prophets, glory dwelt in our land, as if he were to say more clearly: In order that the word might become flesh and dwell among us, mercy and truth have met each other, justice and peace have kissed each other. A great sacrament, brothers, and one to be searched into more diligently, if only words were not lacking both for the mystery and for the understanding itself. Nevertheless, I speak in some small way that which I feel, if perchance I may seem even to have given an occasion to a wise man. I seem to see, most beloved, the first man clothed with these four virtues from the very beginning of his creation, and, as the prophet mentions, clad in the garment of salvation (Isaiah 61:10). For the integrity of salvation is in these four, nor without all these can salvation consist; especially since they could not even be virtues if they were separated from one another. Man had received mercy, therefore, as a guardian and indeed an attendant, that she might precede him, she might follow him, and she might protect and preserve him

everywhere. You see what kind of nourishment God conferred on his little one, what kind of attendant He gave to the recently born man. But he also needed a teacher, as a noble and rational creature, so that he might not be guarded like some beast of burden, but brought up like a little child. For which mastery indeed no one could be found more suitable than Truth herself, who would lead him eventually into the knowledge of the highest Truth. In the meantime, however, lest he should be found wise to do evil, and sin should be to him as to one knowing good and not doing it, he also received justice, by which he might be ruled. Furthermore, however, the most kind hand of the Creator added peace, by which he might be cherished and delighted: a twofold peace indeed, so that there might be no battles within nor fears without, that is, that the flesh might not lust against the spirit, nor any creature be a cause of dread to him. For he freely gave names to all the beasts, and the serpent himself, what he did not presume by violence, he rather attacked him by fraud. What was lacking to this man, whom mercy guarded, truth taught, justice ruled, and peace cherished?

7. But alas! this man, to his great destruction and folly, went down from Jerusalem to Jericho: for indeed he fell among robbers, by whom he is read to have been first of all despoiled (Luke 10:30). Was he not despoiled, who complains that he is naked when the Lord comes? Nor indeed could he be reclothed, or receive back the garments taken from him, unless Christ were to

lose His own. For just as he could not be quickened in soul unless the corporal death of Christ intervened, so also he could not be reclothed without His despoliation. And see if his garments were not divided into just as many parts, on account of these four parts of the garment which the first and old man had lost, as the garments of the second and new man were also divided. Or perhaps you seek also the seamless tunic, which is not divided but falls by lot? I judge it to be the divine image, which is certainly not sewn on but implanted and impressed upon nature itself, and cannot be divided or torn. For man was made in the image and likeness of God, having freedom of choice in the image, and virtues in the likeness. And the likeness indeed perished, nevertheless man passes on in the image. For the image will be able to be burned in hell itself, but not consumed; to glow, but not to be blotted out. This, therefore, is not torn, but falls by lot. And wherever the soul reaches, it will be there at the same time. For the likeness is not so; but it either remains in good, or, if the soul sins, it is miserably changed, being made like the foolish beasts of burden.

8. But because we said that man was despoiled of the four virtues, it is appropriate that we say in what manner he was despoiled of each. Man lost justice when Eve obeyed the voice of the serpent, and Adam the voice of the woman, rather than the divine voice. Yet there was something remaining which they could lay hold of, and the Lord was hinting at that in His scrutiny; but they threw even that away, turning to words

of malice to excuse excuses in sins. For the first portion of justice is not to sin, the second to condemn sin through penance. He also lost mercy, when Eve so flared up in her concupiscence that she spared neither herself, nor her husband, nor the children yet to be born, adding all together to the terrible curse and the necessity of death. Adam also cast the woman, for whom he had sinned, before the divine indignation, wishing as if to turn aside the arrow behind her back. For the woman saw that the tree was beautiful to the sight, and sweet to eat, and she had heard from the serpent as if they were to be as gods. A threefold cord is difficult to break: curiosity, pleasure, and vanity. These alone the world has: the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. Withdrawn and enticed by these, the cruel mother threw away all mercy. So also Adam, who wrongly took pity on the woman so that he might sin with her, rightly did not wish to have mercy, so as to sustain [otherwise, or to sustain] punishment for her. The woman was also deprived of truth, first indeed wrongly distorting what she had heard, You shall die the death (Gen. 2:17); and saying, Lest perhaps we die: finally believing the serpent, who utterly denied it and said, By no means shall you die. Adam also was deprived of truth, where he was ashamed to confess it, holding out leaves, that is, the coverings of excuses. For she herself says: He who shall be ashamed of me before men, I also will be ashamed of him before my Father (Luke 9:26). They also immediately lost peace,

because there is no peace for the impious, says the Lord (Isaiah 48:22). For had they not found a contrary law in their members, they who had newly begun to be ashamed of nakedness? I was afraid, he said, because I was naked (Gen. 3). Not so, wretch, not so were you afraid a little before: you were not seeking leaves, although naked in body, just as now.

9. From this indeed (to follow the parable of the Prophet himself, who mentioned that they met him, and were reconciled in a kiss) a certain grave contention seems to have arisen among the virtues. For indeed truth and justice were afflicting the wretch: peace and mercy, being free from this zeal, judged rather that he should be spared. For these two are foster-sisters to each other, just as also the former ones. Whence it also happened that while those persisted in vengeance, and were striking the transgressor from this side and that, and were piling up present troubles with the threat of future punishment, those others withdrew into the heart of the Father, returning to the Lord who gave them. For He alone was thinking thoughts of peace, when all things seemed full of affliction. For indeed peace did not cease, nor did mercy give him silence, but knocking at the paternal vitals with a certain pious whisper, they spoke: Will God cast off forever? or will he not add to be still more favorable? Will God forget to show mercy? or will he shut up his mercies in his anger? (Psalm 76:8, 10). And although for a long time the Father of mercies seemed to ignore them, so that in the meantime he might satisfy the zeal of

justice and truth; nevertheless the importunity of the suppliants was not unfruitful, but was heard in the opportune time.

10. For perhaps it might be said that such an answer was given to those who were interceding: How long your prayers? I am a debtor also to your sisters, whom you see girt to perform vengeance on the nations; to justice and truth. Let them be called, let them come, and let us equally confer upon this word. Therefore the heavenly messengers hasten, and as they saw the misery of men and the cruel plague, as the prophet speaks, the Angels of peace wept bitterly (Isaiah 33:7). For who would more faithfully seek or ask for the things which are for peace, than the angels of peace? Certainly, from a common deliberation, truth ascended at the appointed day, but it ascended even to the clouds: not yet clearly bright, but somewhat obscure and still clouded over by the zeal of indignation. And it happened as we read in the Prophet: Lord, your mercy is in heaven, and your truth is even to the clouds (Psalm 35:6). But in the middle the Father of lights was residing, and each for its part was speaking what it held more usefully. Who do you think deserved to be present at that conversation, and will indicate it to us? who heard, and will relate it? Perhaps they are ineffable, and it is not permitted for man to speak. Yet the sum of the whole controversy seems to have been this. The rational creature needs pity, said Mercy, because it has been made wretched, and very miserable. The time for pitying it has come, because the

time has already passed. On the contrary, Truth: It is necessary, she said, that the word which you have spoken be fulfilled, Lord. It is necessary that the whole Adam die with all who were in him, on the day he tasted the forbidden fruit in transgression. To what purpose therefore, said Mercy, to what purpose did you beget me, father, sooner to perish? For Truth itself knows that your mercy has perished, and is nothing, if you do not at some time have mercy. Likewise, however, on the contrary even she was speaking: For who would not know that if the transgressor should escape the sentence of death foretold to him, your truth, Lord, has perished, and will no longer remain forever?

11. Behold, however, one of the cherubim [another adds, that is, the Angel of great counsel] suggests to King Solomon that they are to be sent; since to the Son, he said, all judgment has been given (John 5:22). And in his sight, therefore, Mercy and Truth have met each other, repeating the same words of complaint which we mentioned above. I confess, said Truth, Mercy has a good zeal, but would that it were according to knowledge. But now why does she judge that the transgressor should be spared rather than her sister? But you, said Mercy, spare neither; but with such indignation you rage against the transgressor, that you involve the sister as well. What evil have I deserved? If you have anything against me, tell me: but if not, why do you persecute me? A great controversy, brothers, and an excessively intricate dispute. Who would not say

there: It would have been good for us if this man had not been born? So it was, most beloved, it was entirely so: it did not seem how Mercy and Truth could be preserved at the same time toward man. And when Truth added that the injury was also turned back upon the Judge himself of her part [otherwise, to turn back the merits], saying that it must be entirely avoided lest the word of the Father should become void, lest the living and effective word should be emptied by any occasion: Spare, I pray, said Peace, spare words of this kind. Such an altercation does not become us: it is an unseemly contention of virtues.

12. Furthermore, the Judge bending down, was writing with his finger on the ground. For they were the words of Scripture, which Peace herself read in the ears of all (for she was sitting closer): This one says, I perish, if Adam does not die; and this one says: 976 I perish, unless he obtains mercy. Let a good death be made, and each has what she seeks. They were all astonished at the word of wisdom and the form of composition and judgment alike: for indeed it was manifest that no occasion of complaint was left to them; for it could be done which each was seeking, that he should both die and obtain mercy. But how shall that be done, they say? Death is most cruel, and most bitter, death is terrible, and to be dreaded at its very hearing. By what reason will it be able to be made good? But He: The death of sinners is the worst, He said, but the death of the saints can be made precious. Will it not be precious, if it shall be the door of life, the gate

of glory? Precious, they say. But how shall this be done? It can be done, He said, if someone dies out of charity, one who indeed owes nothing to death. For death will not be able to detain the innocent one, but, as it is written, the jaw of Leviathan will be pierced (Job 40:19), and the middle wall will be destroyed, and the great chaos will be dissolved, which has been fixed between death and life. Doubtless charity is strong as death, nay even stronger than death; if that strong one shall enter his court, he will bind him, and will indeed spoil his vessels, but even by his own passage he will make the depth of the sea a way, that the liberated may pass through.

13. The discourse seemed good, as being faithful, and worthy of all acceptance. But where will that innocent one be able to be found, who would wish to die not out of debt, but out of will; not out of bad merit, but out of his own good pleasure? Truth circles the orb of the earth; and no one is clean from filth, not even the infant whose life is but of one day upon the earth (Job 14:4, 5, according to LXX). But also Mercy traverses all heaven, and even in the angels, I might not say depravity, yet she finds a lesser charity. Doubtless this victory was owed to another, than whom no one should have a greater charity, so that he might lay down his life for useless and unworthy servants. For even if He Himself no longer calls us servants, this itself is of immense love, and of extraordinary condescension. But we, even if we were to do all things which have been commanded us, what else ought we to say, except that we are useless

servants (Luke 17:10)? But who would presume to meet Him upon this? Truth and mercy return at the appointed day, very anxious, not having found what they were desiring.

14. Then indeed Peace, consoling them apart: You, she said, know nothing, nor do you think. There is no one who does this good, there is not so much as one. Let Him who gave the counsel, bring the help. The King understood what she was saying, and said: It repents me that I have made man (Gen. 6:7). Punishment, He said, holds me, it is incumbent on me to sustain the punishment, to do penance for the man whom I created. Then therefore He said: Behold I come. For this cup cannot pass, unless I drink it. And immediately summoning Gabriel: Go, He said, say to the daughter of Sion: Behold your king comes (Zech. 9:9). He hastened, and said: Adorn your bridal chamber, Sion, and receive the king. Furthermore, mercy and truth preceded the coming king, as it is written: Mercy and truth shall precede your face. Justice prepares the throne, according to that: Justice and judgment are the preparation of your seat (Psalm 88:15). Peace comes with the king, so that the prophet might be found faithful who had said: There shall be peace in our land when he comes. Hence it is that at the birth of the Lord the choir of angels sang: Peace on earth to men of good will (Luke 2:14). But then also justice and peace kissed each other, which until now seemed to differ not a little. For the former justice, if there were any from the law, had not a kiss, but rather a sting, urging more by fear than

provoking by love. But nor did that one have reconciliation, as that justice now has which is known to be from faith. Otherwise what was it that neither Abraham, nor Moses, nor the other just of that time, could at their death lay hold of that peace of eternal beatitude, or enter the kingdom of peace, except that until now justice and peace had by no means kissed each other? From this indeed, most beloved, justice is to be pursued by us with more fervent zeal; since indeed justice and peace have kissed each other, and have entered into an indissoluble treaty of friendships: so that whoever shall have carried the testimony of justice with him, may now be received by peace with a joyful countenance and happy embraces, now sleeping and resting in the same.

SERMON II.

Concerning the sevenfold Spirit in Christ.

1. It is possible to consider, brothers, in today's solemnity of the Lord's Annunciation, as if a certain most pleasant plain, the simple history of our reparation. A new embassy is enjoined on the angel Gabriel, and the Virgin having professed a new virtue, is honored with the service of a new salutation. The ancient curse of women is excluded, a new mother receives a new blessing. She is filled through grace who knows not concupiscence, so that with the spirit of the Most High coming over her, she may bear a son who disdains to admit a man. The antidote enters to us by the same gate of salvation, by which the

poison of the serpent entering, had occupied the universality of the human race. It is easy to gather innumerable flowers of this kind from these meadows; but I behold in the middle an abyss of dread depth. A plainly unsearchable abyss, the sacrament of the Lord's Incarnation; an impenetrable abyss. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14). For who may investigate, who may reach, who may lay hold? The well is deep, and I have nothing in which to draw. Nevertheless, an exhaling vapor is accustomed sometimes to moisten the cloths placed over wells. For that reason indeed, although I fear to break in, being conscious of my own infirmity, frequently nevertheless as if over the mouth of this well I expand my hands to you, Lord, for that my soul is as a land without water to you. And now if there is anything which, with the mist ascending from below, a thin thought has drunk up; I will take care to communicate that small thing to you, brothers, without envy, as if from a wrung-out cloth pouring back even small droplets of heavenly dew.

2. I ask, therefore, by what reason the Son was incarnated rather than the Father or the Holy Spirit, when of the whole Trinity not only is the glory equal, but the substance is one and the same. But who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor? It is a most high mystery, nor does it behoove us to precipitate a judgment rashly upon things of this kind. Nevertheless, the incarnation of neither the Father nor the Spirit seems to have escaped confusion in the

plurality of sons, while one would be called the son of God, another the son of man. That also seems appropriate, that He should specially become a son to these, who was the Son, lest there should be any ambiguity in the name. Finally, this is the singular glory and excellent prerogative of Mary our Virgin, that she deserved to have one and the same son in common with God the Father, which certainly would have perished if the Son were not incarnated. But nor could any other occasion of hoping for salvation and inheritance be given to us. For having become the firstborn among many brothers, He who was the only-begotten, He would without doubt have admitted into the inheritance those whom He called into adoption. For if brothers, then also co-heirs. This Christ Jesus, therefore, the faithful mediator, just as in one person He coupled the substance of God and man by an ineffable sacrament; so also in the reconciliation itself, using the highest counsel, He did not desert the middle equity, attributing to each what was appropriate, honor to God, pity to man. For this is the best form of composition between the offended Lord and the guilty servant, so that neither by zeal for honoring the Lord should the servant be oppressed by a more austere sentence; nor again, while He is condescended to more immoderately, should that one be defrauded of his due honor.

3. Hear therefore and diligently observe the angelic distribution in the birth of this mediator. Glory, they say, to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke 2:14).

Finally, for the sake of this observation, neither the spirit of fear was lacking to Christ the faithful reconciler, by which He might always exhibit reverence to the Father, always defer to Him, always seek His glory; nor the spirit of piety, by which He might mercifully have compassion on men. Whence also He found it necessary to have the spirit of knowledge as well, through which the distribution of fear and piety alike might be made without confusion. And note that in that first sin of our parents 978 three authors indeed stood forth; but three things were manifestly lacking to the three. For I mean Eve, the devil, and Adam. Eve had not knowledge, who, as the Apostle says, was seduced into transgression (1 Tim. 2:14). But this indeed was not lacking to the serpent, who is described as more crafty than the rest of the animals; but the malignant one had not piety, who from the beginning was made a murderer. Adam indeed perhaps seems pious, by not saddening the woman; but he abandoned the fear of the Lord, obeying her voice rather than the divine. Would that the fear of the Lord had rather prevailed in him! just as it is signally read of Christ: Because there filled Him, not the spirit of piety, but of fear (Isaiah 11:3). For in all things and through all things the fear of the Lord is to be preferred to the piety of neighbors, and He alone is the one who ought to claim the whole man for Himself. In these three, therefore, fear, piety and knowledge, our mediator reconciled men to God; for in counsel and fortitude He liberated them from the hand of the adversary. For by counsel

He deprived the enemy of his ancient right, power being given so that He might lay hands on the innocent one: by fortitude He prevailed, lest he should be able to retain by violence those redeemed, while the victor returned from the lower regions, and the life of all rose with Him.

4. From then He feeds us with the bread of life and understanding, and gives us to drink of the water of salutary wisdom. For the understanding of spiritual and invisible things is the true bread of the soul, confirming our heart, and strengthening us for every good work in every spiritual exercise. But the carnal man, who does not perceive those things which are of the spirit of God, but they seem as foolishness to him, let him groan and mourn, saying: My heart is withered, because I have forgotten to eat my bread (Psalm 101:5). For behold, it is pure and perfect truth, that it does not profit a man if he should gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul. But when could the greedy man grasp that? Whoever tries to persuade him of it labors without cause. To what purpose this? Doubtless because it seems as foolishness to him. What is more true than that the yoke of Christ is sweet? Place it before a worldly man, and see if he will not repute it a stone rather than bread. And certainly by this kind of intelligence of internal truth the soul lives, and this is spiritual food. For man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3). Nevertheless, until truth tastes good to you, it is not passed to the interior things without diffi-

culty. But when you have begun to be delighted in it, it is no longer food, but drink: and it enters into the soul without difficulty, by which indeed the spiritual food of intelligence may be digested by the drink of wisdom, lest by the crafts [otherwise, affections] of the interior man himself, laboring with dryness, it should be more of a burden than a utility.

3. Out of all things therefore which had been necessary for peoples to be saved, nothing at all was lacking to the Savior. For He Himself is the one of whom Isaiah foretold: A rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall ascend from his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him (Isaiah 11:1-3). Carefully attend to that indeed, that he said this flower was to ascend from the root, not from the rod. For indeed if the new flesh of Christ had been created from nothing in the Virgin (which some have thought); the flower could have been said to have ascended not from the root, but perhaps from the rod. Now however, He who came forth from the root, is proved without doubt to have had common matter from the origin. For that the Spirit rested upon Him, declares that there was no contradiction in Him. For in us, because the spirit is not entirely superior, it does not rest, the flesh indeed lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: from which conflict the new man and true man may liberate us, in whom

there was nothing similar, who took up the true origin of our flesh, but did not take up the old leaven of concupiscence.

SERMON III.

Concerning the adulterous woman (John 8:3-11); concerning Susanna (Dan. 13); concerning Blessed Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

1. How rich you are in mercy, how magnificent in justice, in grace how munificent, Lord our God! There is none who is like you, most copious rewarder, most just remunerator, most pious deliverer! Freely you regard the humble, justly you judge the innocent, mercifully you save even sinners. These are, most beloved, which are set before us on the table of this rich head of the family by the testimonies of the holy Scriptures, today indeed, if we carefully attend, more copiously than usual. Doubtless those things which have met together provide this abundance for us, namely, the sacred time of Lent, and the most sacred day of the Lord's Annunciation. For today in our ears the indulgence of the Redeemer absolved the woman caught in adultery, today it liberated the innocent blood of Susanna, today also it filled the blessed Virgin with the singular gift of gratuitous blessing. A great banquet, where mercy, justice and grace are equally set before us! Is not mercy the food of men? Entirely salutary and effective for healing. Is not also justice the bread of the heart? And indeed best confirming it, as being solid food for nourishment. Finally, blessed

are they who hunger for it, for they shall be filled (Matth. 5:6). Is not the grace of its God the food of the soul? Sweetest indeed, and having in itself all sweetness and delight of flavor; nay indeed claiming all these equally for itself, it not only delights, but also refreshes and heals.

2. Let us approach this table, my brothers, and from each of the dishes let us taste even a little something. In the law Moses commanded to stone such as these, the Pharisees, sinners concerning a sinner, say concerning the adulterous woman. But He spoke to the hardness of your stony heart. But Jesus bent himself down. Lord, bend your heavens, and descend (Psalm 143:5). Bending himself down, and turned toward mercy (for He was not of a Jewish heart), He was writing with his finger, not now on stone, but on the ground. Nor this only once, but here also a twofold writing, just as with Moses two tables. And perhaps writing truth and grace, and again writing He seems to have impressed them on the earth, according to what John the apostle says: The law was given through Moses, grace and truth were made through Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Consider finally whether He could be seen to have read from the table of truth, whence He would refute the Pharisees: He of you who is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her. A word indeed abbreviated, but living and effective, and more penetrable than a two-edged sword. For how heavily stony hearts were pierced through at this word, how vehemently stony foreheads were crushed by this one pebble, the

very blush of confusion and the clandestine withdrawal proved. The adulterous woman indeed deserved to be stoned: but let him be eager to punish, who is not worthy to be punished even himself. Let him presume to exact vengeance from a sinner, who does not deserve to receive the same. Otherwise, closer to himself, let him begin from himself: let him first bear sentence on himself, and exercise vengeance. This is Truth.

3. But this is still less: for even if Truth refutes the accusers, it has not yet acquitted the accused. Let it write again, let it write grace, let it read, and let us hear. Has no one condemned you, woman? No one, Lord. Neither will I condemn you; go, and sin no more. O voice of mercy, o hearing of salutary joy! Cause me to hear your mercy in the morning, for in you have I hoped, O Lord (Psalm 142:8). Truly, hope alone finds a place for pity with you; nor do you place the oil of mercy except in the vessel of confidence. But there is a faithless confidence, capable only of a curse, when forsooth we sin in hope. Although that should not even be called confidence, but a certain insensibility and pernicious pretense. For what confidence is there for him who does not attend to danger? Or what remedy for fear is there, where neither fear is felt, nor the very matter of fear? Confidence is a consolation: nor does he need consolation, who rejoices when he has done evil, and exults more in the worst of things. Let us therefore ask, brethren, that it be answered to us how many iniquities and sins we have; let us desire our crimes and offenses to be shown to us.

Let us scrutinize our ways and our pursuits, and let us weigh all dangers with vigilant intention. Let each one say in his fear: I shall go to the gates of hell, so that we may now breathe only in the mercy of God alone. This is the true confidence of man, failing from himself and leaning upon his Lord. This, I say, is true confidence, to which mercy is not denied, the prophet attesting that the Lord is well pleased with them that fear him, and in them that hope in his mercy (Psalm 146:11). Nor indeed does a small amount supply us: in us indeed there is cause for fear, but in him cause for confidence. He is sweet and mild, of copious mercy; ready to relent over malice, abundant in forgiving. Let us certainly believe even our enemies, who found in him nothing else from which they might take occasion to build a calumny. He will have compassion, they say, on the sinner, nor will he at all suffer the one offered to him to be killed. Therefore, he will be held as a manifest adversary of the law, when he shall have acquitted her who was condemned by the law. Upon your own head, O Pharisees, the whole invention of your malignity is retorted. You distrust the cause, you who flee from judgment. For she indeed is acquitted without injury to the law, who is not left to an accuser [otherwise, who is left without an accuser].

4. But let us consider, brethren, whither the Pharisees go from here. Do you see the two elders (for they began to go out from the senior ones), how they are hidden in the orchard of Joachim? They seek Susanna his wife: let us follow them;

for they are full of wicked thought against her. Consent to us, say the elders, say the Pharisees, say the wolves, who a little before had been frustrated in the devouring of another little sheep, though she was wandering. Consent to us, and mingle with us. You who have grown old in evil days, just now you were accusing adultery, now you persuade to adultery. But this is your whole justice, and what you openly rebuke, the same you do in secret. Hence it was that you went out one by one, when he, conscious of all secrets, had so strongly struck your consciences, saying: He of you who is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her. Deservedly therefore Truth says to the disciples: Unless your justice shall abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). Otherwise we will say, they say, testimony against you. Seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, nor indeed did Moses command this in the law. Did he who decreed to stone the adulteress, command to accuse the chaste woman? Or did he who ordered the adulteress to be crushed with stones, also order testimony to be borne against the innocent? Nay rather, just as the adulteress, so also he commanded that the false witness should not go unpunished (Deuteronomy 19:16-21; Proverbs 19:9). But you who glory in the law, through transgression of the law you dishonor God.

5. Susanna groaned and said: I am straitened on every side. For on every side is death; on this side indeed of the body, on that of the spirit. If I do this, she says, it is death to me; and if I do it not, I

shall not escape your hands. Your hands, O Pharisees, neither the adulterous woman escapes, nor the chaste: your accusations neither the saint nor the sinner evades. You disguise your own sins when you find those of others; otherwise if anyone perhaps has not his own, you thrust your crime upon him. Yet what does Susanna do, between death and death, namely of the soul and of the body, straitened on every side? It is better for me, she says, to fall into the hands of men without the deed, than to forsake the law of my God. Forsooth she knew how horrendous it is to fall into the hands of the living God. For men indeed, when they have killed the body, have nothing further they can do to the soul: but he is to be feared, who has power to cast both body and soul into Gehenna (Matthew 10:28). Why does the family of Joachim delay? Let it rush through the back gate, for a cry is heard in the orchard; but the cry of heavy wolves, and of a little sheep bleating among them. But he does not suffer the innocent one to be devoured by them, who so worthily snatched even her who did not deserve to be snatched from their very jaws. Deservedly therefore when she was led to death, her heart was having confidence in the Lord, whom she had feared to such an extent, that she had postponed all human fear, and had preferred his law both to life and to reputation. For never had such a word been spoken at any time about Susanna. But both her parents were just, and her husband more honored than all the Jews. Deservedly therefore from the just Judge she obtained just vengeance

against the unjust, she who so vehemently hungered for justice, that for its sake she contemned the death of the body, the reproach of her race, the inconsolable grief of her friends.

6. And we, brethren, if we have heard from Christ: Neither will I condemn you, if we no longer wish to sin against him, if we wish to live piously in Christ; it is necessary that we suffer persecution, lest we render evil for evil, or curse for curse. Otherwise he who shall not have preserved patience, will lose justice; that is, he will lose life; that is, he will lose his soul. Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, says the Lord (Romans 12:19). It is precisely so. He himself will repay, but if you reserve vengeance for him, if you do not take away judgment from him, if you do not render evil to those rendering evil to you. He will do judgment, but for the one suffering injury; he will judge in equity, but for the meek of the earth. Already to you, unless I am mistaken, it is troublesome that the delicacies delay. Do not wonder: they are delicacies. They will not burden however much those who are satiated, nor indeed can they be loathed even by those who are belching.

7. The angel Gabriel was sent by God into a city of Galilee, whose name was Nazareth. Do you wonder that Nazareth, a small city, should be illustrated by a messenger of so great a king, and by so great a one? But a great treasure lies hidden in this small city; it lies hidden, I say, but it lies hidden from men, not from God. Is not Mary the treasure of God? wherever she is, there also is his heart. His eyes are upon her, everywhere he

regards the humility of his handmaid. Does the Only-begotten of God the Father know heaven? If he knows heaven, also Nazareth. Why should he not know his native land? why should he not have known his inheritance? Heaven from his Father, Nazareth from his mother he claims for himself, as he himself testifies that he is both the Son of David and the Lord (Matthew 22:42-45). The heaven of heaven to the Lord, but the earth he has given to the children of men (Psalm 113:16). It is necessary therefore that both yield to him into possession, because he is not only Lord, but also the Son of man. Hear also how he claims the earth for himself as the Son of man, but also communicates it as a bridegroom. The flowers, he says, have appeared in our land (Canticles 2:12). Nor does it differ from this, that Nazareth is interpreted as flower. The flower from the root of Jesse loves his flower-bearing native land, and the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys willingly feeds among the lilies. For beauty, sweetness of scent, and hope of fruit commend the flowers; a threefold grace. And God reputes you a flower; and he is well pleased in you, if neither the beauty of honest conversation, nor the fragrance of good reputation, nor the intention of future retribution be lacking to you. For the fruit of the spirit is eternal life.

8. Fear not, Mary; for you have found grace with the Lord. How much grace? Full grace, singular grace. Singular, or general? Both without doubt, because full, and therefore singular, because general: for you yourself have received

singularly a general grace. Therefore, I say, singular, because general: for you alone before all have found grace. Singular because you alone have found this fullness; general, because from that fullness all receive. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Singularly indeed he is the fruit of your womb; but through your mediation he has reached the minds of all. Thus indeed, thus of old was the dew all on the fleece, all on the threshing-floor; but in no part of the floor was it all, as it was in the fleece (Judges 6:37-40). In you alone that rich and exceedingly rich King was emptied; the exalted one, humbled; the immense one, abbreviated, and made less than the angels: finally, true God and the Son of God incarnate. But with what fruit? Namely, that we all might be enriched by his poverty, raised up by his humility, magnified by his lessening, and by his incarnation, adhering to God, we might begin to be one spirit with him.

9. But what do we say, brethren? into what vessel especially shall grace be poured? If, as we mentioned above, confidence is indeed capable of mercy, and patience of justice, what suitable receptacle for grace can we now exhibit? It is a most pure balsam, and requires a most solid vessel. And what is so pure, or what so solid as humility of heart? Deservedly therefore he gives grace to the humble; deservedly God regarded the humility of his handmaid. By what merit, you ask? By this forsooth, that human merit should not occupy the humble mind, so as to prevent the fullness of divine grace from flowing in freely. But

to this humility we must ascend by certain steps. For first, the heart of man, whom it still delights to sin, and who has not changed his miserable custom with a better purpose, is hindered by his own vices from being capable of grace. Secondly also, where he already proposes to correct his manners, and not to repeat his former iniquities henceforth; yet those same past sins, although they now seem in a certain way to be cut off, while they remain in him, they do not admit grace. But they remain until they are washed by confession, until by the succeeding worthy fruits of penance they are put out of the way. But woe to you, if perhaps ingratitude, more pernicious than vices and sins, should succeed. For what is so evidently opposed to grace? We grow lukewarm in the process of time from the fervor of our conversation, charity gradually grows cold, iniquity abounds, so that we are consummated in the flesh, who had begun in the spirit. For hence it is that we less know those things which have been given to us by God, being equally undevout and ungrateful. We leave the fear of the Lord, we omit religious solitude, being wordy, curious, facetious, even detractors and murmurers, spending time in trifles, fleeing from labor and discipline, as often as it is allowed without mark; as if indeed it were immediately also without harm. Why therefore do we wonder that grace, repulsed by so many obstacles, is lacking to us? But now if anyone, according to the Apostle, that the word of Christ, the word of grace may dwell in him, is grateful (Colossians 3:16, 15); if anyone is

devout, if anyone is solicitous, if anyone is fervent in spirit: let him beware for himself lest he trust in his merits, lest he lean upon his own works: otherwise grace does not enter a mind of this kind. Forsooth it is full, nor does grace now find a place for itself in it.

10. Have you considered that Pharisee praying? He was not a robber, nor unjust, nor an adulterer. Was he without the fruits of penance? He fasted twice in the Sabbath, he gave tithes of all that he possessed. But perhaps you suspect him of being ungrateful. Hear what he says: O God, I give you thanks. But he was not empty, he was not emptied, he was not humble, but puffed up. For he did not study to know what was lacking to him, but he exaggerated his own merit: nor was that a solid fullness, but a tumor. Therefore he returned empty, who simulated fullness. For that publican, who emptied himself, since he took care to exhibit an empty vessel, brought back more ample grace (Luke 18:10, 14). Let us therefore, brethren, if we desire to find grace, so abstain from vices henceforth, that we also worthily repent of our past sins. Nevertheless, let us also be solicitous to exhibit ourselves devoted to God and truly humble. For souls of this kind he looks upon with pleasure with that pious regard, of which the Wise man says: For the grace and mercy of God is upon his saints, and his regard is upon his elect (Wisdom 4:15). And perhaps for this reason he recalls four times the soul which he regards, saying: Return, return, O Shulammite; return, return, that we may look upon you (Can-

ticles 6:12): that namely she may not persist in the custom of sinning, nor in the conscience of sins; but neither in the lukewarmness and torpor of ingratitude, or in the blindness of elation. From which fourfold danger may he deign to recall and rescue us, who was made for us by God the Father wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns God for ever and ever. Amen.

ON THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. SERMON. On the lamp burning in a threefold way, and shining in a threefold way. Let that rebuke of the prophet, reproaching the Jewish conventicles and saying, Your assemblies are wicked (Isaiah 1:13), be far from these gatherings, brethren. These assemblies forsooth are not wicked, but plainly holy, but religious, but full of grace, worthy of blessing. For you come together to hear God: you come together to praise, to pray, to adore him. Each assembly is sacred, pleasing to God, familiar to the angels. Stand therefore in reverence, brethren, stand in solicitude and devotion of mind: and especially in the place of prayer, and in this school of Christ, and spiritual auditorium. Do not consider, most beloved, the things which are seen and are temporal, but rather those which are not seen, the eternal: judge according to faith, not according to the face. For each place is terribly to be feared: nor is a greater number of men to be believed to be present than of angels. Without doubt the gate of heaven lies open on both sides, that ladder is erected, angels ascend

and descend upon the Son of man. Truly that Son of man is a Giant: heaven is his throne, the earth the footstool of his feet. His magnificence is elevated above the heavens: yet he remains with us until the consummation of the age. Therefore the holy angels ascend and descend to God, because Christ is one, head and body.

2. Nor yet only where the head is, but wherever the body shall be, there also the eagles shall be gathered, although the head cannot be separated from the body. Finally he himself also says: Where two or three shall be gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20). But perhaps someone may say: Where is Christ now? Show us Christ, and it is enough for us. Why do you lead around curious eyes? Have you not come together for hearing, and not rather for seeing? The Lord God has opened my ear, says the prophet (Isaiah 50:5). He has opened my ear, that I may hear what he speaks: not my eye, that I may see his face, has he illuminated. Or certainly he has opened his own ear to me, he has not revealed his face. He stands behind the wall, he hears, and is heard: but he does not yet appear. He hears those praying, he instructs those hearing. Do you seek an experiment of him, of Christ who speaks in me? (2 Corinthians 13:3). I, he says, who speak justice (Isaiah 63:1). Why should he not speak with the mouth, which he himself fashioned? Why should the artisan not use his instrument, as it pleases him? Open, O Lord, not only their ears, but also my lips: for I will not prohibit my lips, O Lord, you know it. For you do all things

well; and you make the deaf to hear, and the mute to speak.

3. Hear therefore, brethren, what he speaks of John, whose solemn nativity is celebrated today. He, he says, was a burning and a shining lamp (John 5:35). A great testimony, my brethren: for he is great to whom it is borne, but he himself who bears it is greater. He, he says, was a burning and a shining lamp. For to shine only is vain, to burn only is little: to burn and to shine is perfect. Hear what the Scripture says: The wise man remains as the sun, but the fool is changed as the moon (Ecclesiasticus 27:12). For because the moon shines without fervor; now full, now small, now null it is seen. For a borrowed light never remains in the same state, but grows, fails, is attenuated, is annihilated, and does not appear at all. So they who have placed their consciences in the lips of others, are now great, now small, now null, according as it has pleased the tongues of flatterers either to vituperate or to praise. But indeed the splendor of the sun is fiery, and when it burns more sharply, it is also exhibited more lucid to the eyes. So the internal ardor of the wise man shines outside: and if both are not given to him, he always takes care to burn more, that his Father who sees in secret, may repay him. Woe to us, brethren, if we have only shone. For we shine indeed, and are magnified by men; but it is of the least account to me, to be judged by a human day. For he who judges me is the Lord, who requires fervor from all, but splendor not so. Fire, he says, I came to cast upon the earth; and what do I wish

but that it be kindled? (Luke 12:49). For this is a common command, this is what is required of all; nor is any excuse admitted, if it happens to be lacking.

4. Otherwise singularly it is said to the apostles and apostolic men: Let your light shine before men (Matthew 5:16): namely as to those kindled, and vehemently kindled, and by whom it is not feared from any blast or impulse of the winds. It was sent also to John; but they hear in the ear; John is instructed in the spirit as an angel. Forsooth so much closer to God, as the voice is near to the Word, to whom it is not necessary that anything which sounds outside be intimated by any other mediating voice. For not preaching, but inspiration taught John, whom the Spirit filled in the womb of his mother. Truly burning and vehemently kindled, whom the celestial flame so preoccupied, that he already felt the coming of Christ, who could not yet feel even himself. Forsooth that new fire, which recently having slipped from heaven, had entered into the ear of the Virgin through the mouth of Gabriel, again through the mouth of the Virgin and the ear of the mother entered to the little one: so that from that hour the Holy Spirit might fill his vessel of election, and prepare a lamp for Christ the Lord. He was therefore already then a burning lamp, but meanwhile still under a bushel, until he should be placed upon a candlestick, and should shine to all who were in the house of the Lord. For in that time he was only able still to illuminate his own bushel; to shine meanwhile to his mother alone,

revealing to her a great sacrament of piety by the very motion of his new exultation. Whence is this to me, she says, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For who indicated to you the mother of the Lord, holy woman? Whence do you know me? As soon as, she says, the voice of your salutation was made in my ears, the infant in my womb exulted in joy (Luke 1:43, 44).

5. Therefore he already then illuminated the bushel under which he lay hid: but he whom the burning lamp under the bushel did not escape, was a little after to illustrate the whole world with new splendors. He was, he says, a burning and a shining lamp. He does not say: Shining and burning; because from John's fervor splendor, not fervor from splendor, proceeded. For there are some who do not shine because they burn; but rather burn that they may shine: but these plainly do not burn with the spirit of charity, but with the study of vanity. Do you wish to know in what manner John burned, and shone? I think that in him a threefold ardor can be found, and splendor. For he was burning in himself by the vehement austerity of his conversation: toward Christ, by a certain intimate and full fervor of devotion; toward his sinning neighbors, by the constant liberty of reproof. He shone nevertheless, that I may say it in a few words, by example, by finger, by word, both showing himself for imitation, and the greater light which lay hid, for the remission of sins, and also illuminating our very darkness, as it is written: For you illuminate my

lamp, O Lord; my God, illuminate my darkness (Psalm 17:29); certainly for correction.

6. Consider therefore the man promised by the angelic oracle, conceived by a miracle, sanctified in the womb, and wonder at [otherwise imitate] the new fervor of penance in the new man. Having food and raiment, says the Apostle, with these let us be content (1 Timothy 6:8). This is apostolic perfection; but John even contemned these. Finally hear the Lord in the Gospel: John the Baptist came, he says, neither eating, nor drinking (Matthew 11:18); plainly nor dressing. For just as the locust is not food, except perhaps for some irrational animals; so neither is the hair of a camel a human garment. Why have you laid down your hairs, O camel? Would that you had rather laid down your hump. Why do you, irrational beasts and creeping things of the desert, seek out delicate foods? John, a holy man, sent by God, nay the angel of God, as the Father says: Behold I send my angel before you (Luke 12:27); this John, therefore, than whom no one is greater among the born of women, so chastises, so thins, so afflicts that most innocent body: do you hasten to be clothed in fine linen and purple, and to feast splendidly? Alas! is this the whole honor of the present day? is this the whole reverence of the Baptist? is this the joy of his nativity formerly prophesied? (985). For whose memory do you keep, O too delicate worshippers? whose nativity do you celebrate? Is it not his who in the desert was hairy in garment, consumed by hunger? What did you go out into the desert to

see, children of Babylon? a reed shaken by the wind? What therefore? a man clothed in soft garments? nourished in soft things? For in these your whole celebration is occupied: in pursuing the breeze of popular favor, in the glory of garments, and the pleasure of foods. But what are these to John? For neither did John do so, nor could he ever be delighted with such things.

7. Many, says the angel, shall rejoice in his nativity (Luke 1:14). That is indeed true: Many rejoice in his nativity: and to the pagans themselves, as we have heard, it is joyful and solemn. They celebrate what they are ignorant of, but not so ought Christians to have done. Now indeed even they rejoice in this nativity of blessed John the Baptist; but would that it were of the nativity, not of vanity. For what is it but vanity of vanities, whatever is under the sun? or what more has a man of all his labor, with which he labors under the sun? Brethren, under the sun is whatever is discerned with the eyes, whatever is seen to be subject to this corporeal light. For what is that, but a vapor appearing for a little while? (James 4:45). What is that, but grass, and the flower of grass? All flesh is grass, says the Lord, and all its glory is as the flower of grass. The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen; but the word of the Lord remains forever (Isaiah 40:6, 8). In this word let us labor, brethren; in which we may both live and rejoice forever. Let us work not for the food which perishes, but for that which remains unto eternal life. What is that? Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that

proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). Let us sow in this word, most beloved, let us sow in the spirit; since they who sow in the flesh, have only to reap corruption. Let us rejoice within, and not under the sun, but, according to the Apostle, as sorrowful, on account of humility and gravity: but always rejoicing (2 Corinthians 6:10), on account of internal consolation. Let us rejoice, most beloved, in the nativity of blessed John, and let us rejoice concerning the nativity itself.

Forsooth there is for us a copious cause of joy in the record of him, the matter of joys is manifold. He was a burning and a shining lamp, and the Jews wished to exult in his light; but he himself rather rejoiced in the fervor of devotion, he rejoiced at the voice of the bridegroom as a friend of the bridegroom. We must rejoice in both; in one indeed for him, in the other we must rejoice together for ourselves. For he burned for himself, but for us he shone. Let us rejoice in his fervor for imitation: let us rejoice also in the light, yet not remaining there, but that in his light we may see the light, namely the true light, which he himself is not, but to which he himself bears testimony. John came, says the Lord, neither eating, nor drinking (Matthew 11:18). That is an incentive of fervor for me, and a matter of humility. For who is there among us, brethren, who beholding the penance of John, presumes to magnify his own, I do not say, but to repute it of at least some moment? Who would dare to murmur in his labors, and say: It is enough what I suffer, let alone too much? For what homicides, what sacri-

leges, or what crimes was John thus punishing in himself? Let us be kindled to penance, brethren, let us interrogate our consciences, and let us be animated to exact vengeance from ourselves, so that we may escape the horrendous judgment of the living God. But whatever is less of fervor, let the humility of pure confession supply. For God is faithful, and if we confess our iniquities, if we expose our miseries, if we do not excuse our infirmities, he will forgive us our sins.

9. From this certainly behold also the fervor of John toward the offenses of neighbors. For this is a worthy and reason-agreeing order, that you remember starting from yourself. From my secret things, he says, cleanse me, and from those of others spare your servant (Psalm 18:13, 14). Generation of vipers, says John, who showed you to flee from the coming wrath? From how great a fervor of mind do you think these sparks proceed, nay rather desolating coals? Thus not sparing even the Pharisees (986): Do not, he says, say that we have Abraham for our father: for God is able of these stones to raise up children of Abraham (Luke 3:7, 8). But let this seem less, if he even fears the face of the powerful, and does not with the whole liberty of the spirit rebuke the sinning king, cruel and proud; with a certain sacred vehemence coming forth from the desert for this very thing, if he is moved either by his flatteries, or by the very terror of death. Herod feared John, it says, and having heard him he did many things, and heard him willingly. And he, sparing nothing on this account: It is not lawful, he says, for you

to have her. Bound also, and thrust into prison, he nonetheless strongly stood in the truth, and happily died for the truth (Mark 6:17-28). Let this zeal also burn in us, most beloved; let the love of justice, the hatred of iniquity burn. Let no one, brethren, stroke vices; let no one disguise sins. Let no one say: Am I my brother's keeper? Let no one, so far as in him lies, bear it with equanimity when he sees order perish, discipline diminish. For to be silent, when you could rebuke, is to consent: and we know that a similar punishment awaits those doing and those consenting.

10. Now indeed what shall we speak concerning the humble and altogether most fervent devotion of John toward the Lord? Hence indeed he exulted in the womb (Luke 1:44); hence he trembled in the Jordan being about to baptize him (Matthew 3:14); hence he was denying that he was worthy to loose even the latchet of his shoe, not only Christ, who he was thought to be (Mark 1:7); hence the friend of the bridegroom was rejoicing at the voice of the bridegroom (Luke 1:44); hence he was confessing that he had received grace for grace; but he was crying out that he had not the Spirit by measure, but the fullness of which all should receive (John 1:16). Shall you not be subject to God, my soul? (Psalm 61:1). Otherwise I shall not be a burning lamp, unless with my whole heart, my whole mind, and from all my strength I love the Lord my God. For charity alone is what kindles unto salvation; that alone which the Spirit pours in and inflames, whom we are prohibited to extinguish (1 Thessalonians

5:19). You have how John burned: and in this very thing how he shone, it has been indicated, if you have adverted. For you could not have known his ardor, unless he had shone.

11. Therefore he shone, as I mentioned above, by example, by finger, by word: in deed himself. Christ by the index, declaring ourselves to us by his speech. You, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, says his father; for you shall go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give the knowledge of salvation to his people. To give, he says, not salvation: for neither was he the light; but the knowledge of salvation, that he might bear testimony concerning the light. The knowledge, he says, of salvation, unto the remission of sins (Luke 1:76, 77). Can a wise man value the knowledge of salvation lightly? Let us suppose nevertheless that John had not yet come, had not yet signified to us concerning Christ. Where shall we seek salvation? I have sinned a great sin, which cannot be deleted by the blood of calves or of goats, because the Most High is not delighted with holocausts. My memory is infected with the dregs of this lees: there is no razor which can shave this membrane, because the whole has imbibed the whole dregs. If I shall have forgotten my sin, I am a fool and ungrateful; if it remains in my memory, it will rebuke me forever. What therefore shall I do? I will go to John, and I will hear the voice of joy, the voice of mercy, the speech of grace, the word of remission and peace. Behold, he says, the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29);

and elsewhere: He who has the bride, he says, is the bridegroom (John 3:29). Therefore he showed that God has come, because he is the bridegroom, because he is the Lamb. Because he is God, it is certain that he can remit sins; but whether he wishes, is still in question. He wishes surely, because he is the bridegroom, because he is amiable. And John is the friend of the bridegroom, because the bridegroom does not know how to have except friends. And although he wishes a glorious bride not having spot, or wrinkle, or anything of the kind; yet he does not seek such a one (for where would he find her?), but such a one rather he himself makes, such a one he exhibits to himself (987). Finally hear what he says through the prophet. It is commonly said: Shall a woman, if she has slept with another man, return to her former husband? But you have fornicated with many lovers. Return nevertheless to me, and I will receive you. (Jeremiah 3:1). Behold what he asks, behold what he wishes.

12. But you perhaps may fear that purgation of offenses which he comes to do, lest by burning and cutting he collide the bones and the marrow of the bones, lest he bring a pain heavier than death. Hear: he is a Lamb, he comes in meekness with wool and milk, justifying the impious by a word alone. For what is, according to the comic, easier to say? (Terence, Phormio 2.1.70). Only, he says, say by a word, and my servant shall be healed (Matthew 8:8). Why therefore should we hesitate henceforth, brethren, and not with all confidence approach to the throne of glory? [oth-

erwise, ascend.] Let us give thanks to John, and with him mediating let us pass over to Christ, because, as he himself says: He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:36). How decrease? In splendor certainly, not in fervor. He withdrew his rays, he collected himself [otherwise, recollected], lest he should become as one who brings forth his whole spirit. He, he says, must increase, who cannot be exhausted, from whose fullness all receive; but I must decrease, to whom the spirit was given by measure, and more work is to be given that I may always be able to burn than to shine. I preceded the sun, as the morning star; it is necessary to be hidden, the sun having now risen. I have nothing but a little oil with which I am anointed; I wish to possess it more safely in a vessel than in a lamp.

ON THE VIGIL OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL. SERMON. On the threefold help which we receive from the saints.

1. In the Vigils of the saints it is necessary that the spiritual man watch, who desires to celebrate their solemnities in spirit and in truth. For some are vigils of the carnal, others of the spiritual. Those prepare both neater cults and more sumptuous feasts; and perhaps in the vigils themselves they work works of darkness, they rejoice when they have done evil and exult in the worst things. You have not so learned Christ, you who have followed Christ, who have left all things, who with a vigilant eye ought to attend to the name of Vigils. For to this end vigils are proposed, that we may wake up, if we slumber in any sin or neg-

ligence, and preoccupy the face of the saints in confession. Not so the children of this age, not so they who are powerful to drink wine, and strong men to mingle drunkenness; who have fallen asleep in their crimes and misdeeds. Let this not be hidden from you, that they who are drunk, are drunk in the night; and they who sleep, sleep in the night: and in vain the name of the holy Vigils sounds to them, since they rather study to sleep than to watch. But you are not children of the night, nor of darkness, but of light and of the day (1 Thessalonians 5:5-8), so that the birthday days of the saints may not preoccupy you, and find you unprepared.

2. There are three things therefore which in the festivities of the saints we ought vigilantly to consider: the help of the saint, his example, our confusion. His help, because he who was powerful on earth, is more powerful in the heavens before the face of the Lord his God. For if while he lived here, he took pity on sinners, and prayed for them; now so much more, as he more truly recognizes our miseries, he prays for us to the Father: because that blessed native land did not change his charity, but augmented it. For not because he is altogether impassible, therefore has he been made incompassionate to us: but now rather he has put on the bowels of mercy, since he assists [otherwise exists] before the fount of mercy. There is also another cause, which more urges the saints to be solicitous for us, because, according to the voice of the Apostle, God provides for us, lest without us they should be consummated

(Hebrews 11:40), as holy David says: The just wait for me, until you repay me (Psalm 141:8). We ought also to attend to his example, because as long as he was seen on earth, and conversed with men, he did not decline to the right, nor to the left: but he held the royal way, until he should come to him who says, I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Behold the humility of his works, the authority of his words, and then you will see how he shone among men both by word and by example; what kind of footsteps he left to us (988), that we may walk through them, and not err in them. Truly, according to the prophet, The path of the just is right, the right track of the just for walking (Isaiah 26:7).

3. But also with more diligent intuition let us look into our confusion: because that man was like us passible, formed from the same clay from which also we were. What therefore is it, that we believe not only difficult, but also impossible, that we should do the works which he did, that we should follow his footsteps? Let us be confounded, brethren, and let us tremble at that voice, if perhaps this confusion may bring us glory, if perhaps this fear may generate grace for us. These were men who preceded us, who so wonderfully proceeded through the ways of life, that we scarcely believe them to have been men. So therefore in the festivities of the saints we ought both to rejoice and to be confounded: to rejoice, because we have sent patrons before; to be confounded, because we cannot imitate them. So always our joy in this valley of tears ought to

be seasoned with the bread of tears, so that not only the end, but also the beginning of joy may mourning occupy: because although great is the matter of joys, but very great is that of sorrows. I was mindful of God, cries the just man, and I was delighted: but also immediately he subjoins, My spirit failed, I was troubled, and I did not speak. (Psalm 76:4, 5).

4. But if we ought to think these things in the Vigils of each saint, what shall we do in the solemnity of the holy and greatest Apostles? I speak of Peter and Paul. The festivity of one would suffice to infuse exultation into the whole earth: but that of both is joined for a heap of joys, so that as they loved each other in their life, so in their death they are not separated. What was more powerful than they while they were on earth, to one of whom are delivered the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to the other the mastership of the Gentiles: one kills Ananias and Sapphira in the words of his mouth, the other gives whatever he gives in the person of Christ; and when he is weakened, then he is stronger and powerful? How much more powerful are they in heaven, who were so powerful on earth! And who have left us greater examples than those who were continually afflicted in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and in all those things which Paul enumerates (2 Corinthians 11:23-33; Hebrews 11:36-38), and at last by a happy martyrdom ascended the heavenly kingdoms? Truly they are to us a blush of confusion, whom we scarcely dare to look back upon, not to say imi-

tate. Let us therefore pray them that they themselves may render propitious to us their friend, our judge, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL.

SERMON I. On the triple custody which the apostles have over us, and on the three degrees of our conversation.

1. A glorious solemnity has shone upon us, which the illustrious martyrs, the leaders of martyrs, the princes of the apostles, consecrated by a most bright death. These are Peter and Paul, two great lights (luminaria), whom God constituted in the body of His Church as a twin light of the eyes. These were delivered to me as teachers and as mediators, to whom I may safely commit myself: because they both made known to me the ways of life, and with them mediating I shall be able to ascend to that Mediator, who came to pacify through His blood both the things which are in heaven and those which are on earth. For He is most pure in both natures, who did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth. How therefore shall I dare to approach Him, I who am a sinner sinning beyond measure, who have sinned beyond the number of the sand of the sea, since He cannot be purer, nor I more impure? It is to be feared lest I fall into the hands of the living God, if I should presume to approach or adhere to Him, whom such a great difference divides from me, as much as distant between good and evil. Therefore God gave me these men, who were both

men and sinners, and the greatest sinners, who in themselves and from themselves might learn how they ought to pity others. For those guilty of great crimes will easily grant pardon to great crimes, and in what measure it was measured to them, they will remeasure to us. The apostle Peter sinned a great sin; and perhaps than which none is greater: and as very swiftly, so very easily he followed pardon, and so that he lost nothing of the singularity of his primacy. But also Paul, who in the very bowels of the nascent Church raged as singularly as incomparably, is brought to the faith by the voice of the Son of God himself, and for such great evils was filled with such great goods, that he became a chosen vessel (vas electionis) to carry His name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15): a worthy vessel, and filled with heavenly dishes: from which both the healthy may receive food, and the sick may receive medicine.

2. It was fitting that such pastors and teachers should be constituted for the human race, who should be both sweet and powerful, and nonetheless wise. Sweet, that they might receive me mildly and mercifully; powerful, that they might strongly protect me; wise, that they might lead me to the way and through the way which leads to the city. What is sweeter than Peter, who so sweetly calls all sinners to himself, as both the Apostolic Acts and the series of his Epistles attest? What is more powerful than he, whom even the earth obeyed, when he gave back the dead, and the sea under his feet offered itself as

walkable (Matthew 14:29); who touched Simon Magus in the air with the spirit of his mouth, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven so singularly, that the sentence of Peter precedes the sentence of heaven? Finally, "whatsoever you shall bind," he says, "upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). But what is wiser than he, to whom not flesh and blood, but the Father who is in heaven, revealed with much bounty that wisdom which is from heaven? Most willingly I follow Paul, who out of too much sweetness mourns those who have sinned and have not done penance (2 Corinthians 12:21): who is stronger than every principality and power (Romans 8:38): who bounteously brought away the wisdom and the marrow of sacred senses not from the first or second, but from the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2).

These are our teachers, who from the Teacher of all have learned more fully the ways of life, and teach us even unto this day. What therefore did the holy apostles teach or do they teach us? Not the fishing art, not tent-making, or whatever is of this kind: not to read Plato, not to turn over the subtleties of Aristotle, not always to be learning and never to arrive at the knowledge of truth. They taught me to live. Do you think it is a small thing to know how to live? It is something great, nay, the greatest. He does not live who is inflated with pride, who is defiled by luxury, who is infected by other pests; since this is not to live,

but to confound life, and to approach even to the gates of death. But I think a good life is both to suffer evils and to do good, and so to persevere until death. It is commonly said that he who feeds himself well, lives well. But iniquity has lied to itself; because no one lives well, except he who does good.

Moreover, I judge that you, who are in the congregation, live well if you live orderly, socially, and humbly: orderly to yourself, socially to your neighbor, humbly to God. Orderly, that in all your conversation you be solicitous to observe your ways, both in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of your neighbor, guarding both yourself from sin and him from scandal. Socially, that you study to be loved and to love; to exhibit yourself mild and affable; to support not only patiently, but also willingly the infirmities of your brethren, both of manners and of bodies. Humbly, that when you have done all these things, you study to breathe out the spirit of vanity, which is accustomed to be born from such things; and however much you perceive it, to deny consent altogether. So also in suffering evil, since it is threefold, it behooves you to apply a threefold providence. For there is that which you suffer from yourself, that from your neighbor, that from God. The first is the austerity of penance (990); the second, the vexation of another's malice; the third, the scourge of divine correction. In that which you suffer from yourself, you ought to sacrifice voluntarily; that from your neighbor, to bear patiently; that from God, to sustain without murmur and with thanksgiv-

ing. Not so many of the children of Adam, who have wandered in solitude, in a waterless place (Psalm 106:4). They have plainly wandered, and they wander from the way of truth, who receding into the solitude of pride, do not wish to have a social life, whose singularity cannot be associated. But also in a waterless place; because compunctedby no shower of tears, they remain in a sterile and parched land in perpetual dryness. Therefore they have not found the way of the city of habitation; because grown old in a foreign land, they are defiled with the dead, deputed with those who are in hell.

5. He was not so solitary, of whom Saint Jeremiah says: It is good for a man when he has borne the yoke from his youth. He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace, because he has raised himself above himself (Lamentations 3:27, 28). Those wandered, but this one shall sit. For those always wander in heart; but this one does not sit, but shall sit solitary, when he shall have the honor of singularity, namely the badge of that judicial power which the saints shall possess in their land, when everlasting joy shall be to them. He shall also hold his peace, that is, he shall judge with tranquility, as the Lord of Sabaoth judges all things with tranquility. Why? "Because he has raised himself above himself," that is, when he was a youth, and felt the ardors of a slippery age, he put on the old man, leaving what he was, assuming what he was not. He raised, he says, himself above himself: because he does not look back to himself, but to Him who is above him.

For he shall sit, and shall hold his peace even now from the noise of diabolical suggestions, from the noise of carnal desires, from the noise of the world. Happy the soul which does not hear these tongues, though it may hear; that one much happier, if yet there is any, to whom they do not speak at all. This is the wisdom which the Apostle speaks among the perfect, hidden in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew (1 Corinthians 2:6, 7). So the apostles taught me both to live and to ascend [otherwise, to believe]. I give thanks to You, Lord Jesus, who have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and have revealed them to these little ones who followed You, and left all things for Your name's sake.

SERMON II.

1. These saints, whose solemn passion is celebrated today, have provided us with much cause for speaking about them, and much matter also. But I fear one thing, lest the words of salvation heard so many times begin to become vile to us as mere words. For a vile and volatile thing is the word of man, of no mass [otherwise, delay], of no weight, of no price, of no solidity. It beats the air, whence also it is called a word (verbum): and like a leaf which is snatched by the wind, it flows away, and there is no one who considers it. Let none of you, brethren, so receive, nay, let no one so despise the word of God. For I say to you: It would have been good for him if that man had not heard. The fruits of life are the words of

God, not leaves; and if leaves, yet they are golden. Hence let them not be valued at little, let them not pass through, let them not fly by. Collect also the fragments themselves lest they perish. For the earth, which has more often received the shower coming upon it and has not made fruit, is a reprobate earth, near to a curse (Hebrews 6:7, 8). So also that which is read in the Gospel of the sterile fig tree, if after the dresser of the vineyard has dug around it and put manure (stercora), it has nonetheless been found sterile (Luke 13:6-9), is not the axe now to be placed to the root of that tree?

2. And I say to you, if He finds less good in secular men, the Lord is going to have greater patience in them than in us, for whom He set apart the voluntary rain of heavenly consolations: for whom neither the hoe of discipline, nor the manure (stercora) (991) of poverty and vileness have been lacking. Or are not the abominations of the Egyptians, which we sacrifice to our God, manure (stercora)? Manure (stercora) plainly vile to the sight, but useful for fruit. Let him not shun this foulness, who desires fecundity: since from a deformed heap of manure (stercora), which is carried into the field, there shall rise a beautiful heap of sheaves, which shall be carried back from the field. Therefore let not precious vileness become vile to you; but value the reproach of Christ as more precious than all the treasures of Egypt. Nevertheless, to those having an earthly dunghill, even the heavenly rain itself is not lacking: which is the devotion of prayers, the pleasant

rumination of psalmody, sweet meditation, the consolation of the Scriptures. Finally, even this itself is the rain which you receive through my mouth, if ever from the river, whose impetus gladdens the city of God, and from the torrent of that pleasure some drops should happen to trickle upon you while we speak of them.

3. But I have necessity sometimes to dig around, since they have placed me as a guardian and a dresser in the vineyards. Alas! I who have not cultivated nor guarded my own, have necessity nevertheless, while I occupy this place, both to dig around sometimes and to apply manure (stercora). This is indeed troublesome, but I do not dare to dissimulate: knowing that the axe will do much more harm than the hoe; fire, than dung (fimum). Therefore it is sometimes necessary both to argue and to rebuke: nor am I ignorant that dung (fimum) is the reproving word, the word of reproach, and which if necessity does not excuse, is itself also less becoming to the one bringing it forth. But what are we doing, that by this dung (fimum) we see some indeed to be fattened, but others plainly both to be stoned and to be hardened? Hence for it is written: "By the dung of oxen the sluggard shall be stoned" (Ecclesiasticus 22:2). Is he not fattened, who being rebuked receives it benignly, answers meekly, willingly strives to amend? This plainly is a healthful and fecund fattening, that the just man may correct me in mercy and rebuke me; but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head. For from that fatness which the oil of the sinner generates, thorns and

thistles sprout more abundantly, and every root of bitterness germinates more copiously. Therefore he who names the rebuke of the just as "mercy," sufficiently indicates in what manner it is to be received, with how benign a soul, with how devoted a mind; and how much thanks is to be given to it. For so to us receiving it there shall be a healthful fattening, not fertile of vices, as the oil of the sinner, but that fruit of it which according to the Apostle we have in sanctification (Romans 6:22). But what are we doing to you, O sluggard, why at this mercy are you more irritated and exasperated? Have I not scattered good manure (fimum) in your field? Whence therefore has it stones? But you, enemy man; since he who loves iniquity, hates his own soul (Psalm 10:6): you, I say, enemy man, have done this; who proceeding not to shake out your sloth, but to excuse it, pervert the manure (fimum) into stones for yourself, and whence you ought to have been fattened, you are stoned. These things were said for this reason, brethren, that you might know how benignly it is to be heard, how devotedly to be received, how solicitously to be preserved whatever pertains to the salvation of souls, and not as the word of men, but as (what it truly is) the word of God, whether it be heard as consolatory, or commonitory, or even reproving. I have exceeded, I confess, almost forgotten of the festivity itself, but, as I judge, not to foolishness for you, if those things which you have heard have firmly adhered to the mind.

4. And now already let us try to speak something briefly about the solemnity itself. The feast day of the Apostles of Christ is being celebrated, to whom indeed I know very much honor is owed by us; but whether any can be exhibited, I hesitate enough. For "too much honored are Your friends, O God; too much strengthened is their principality" (Psalm 138:17). For what? if still placed on earth they could do all things, not indeed in themselves, but in Christ; what will they not be able to do today living in (992) eternal happiness with Him? Still mortal and about to die they seemed to have the empire of life and death, namely by a word alone mortifying the living and raising the dead: how much more now, when they are honored too much, too much strengthened is their principality? But what is it, brethren? while the blessed memory of the apostles is celebrated today, is a solemn commemoration of their birth or conversion, or certainly of their life or miracles, being celebrated? It is not, brethren, that solemnity of human birth, as a little before you celebrated the birthday of the blessed John. For he being born is honored, because he is born sanctified. Finally, in John alone birth is more celebrated than passion; because although he suffered for Christ when he died for justice and truth, nevertheless more evidently was he born for Him, namely a man sent by God, who was born for this and came into the world for this, that he might bear testimony to the truth (John 1:7). But neither the conversion of the apostles nor their miracles do we recount

today, as on certain other days the conversion of one, or the liberation of another from prison done by an angel, is recalled to memory by the festive joys of the Church. More specially do we venerate their death, than which nothing among men by human judgment is more abhorred.

5. Consider, brethren, the judgment of holy Church, according to faith, not according to the face of the one judging. For she recalls the death of the apostles in their principal solemnity. Today namely Peter was crucified, today Paul was beheaded. This is the cause of today's festivity, this the matter of present joys. In these therefore holding a feast day and a glad one, without doubt the Church has the spirit of the bridegroom, the spirit of the Lord: in whose sight, as you have in the psalm: "Precious is the death of the saints" (Psalm 115:15). For how many do we believe to have been present while the apostles were suffering, who by no means would envy those precious deaths of theirs? For they seemed to die in the eyes of the foolish, and their departure was estimated as affliction, and so indeed they seemed to die in the eyes of the foolish: "But to me," says the Prophet, "too much honored are Your friends, O God; too much strengthened is their principality." Brethren, the friends of God seem to die in the eyes of the foolish; but in the eyes of the wise they are judged rather to fall asleep. Finally, also Lazarus was sleeping, because he was a friend (John 11:11): and when He shall have given sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord (Psalm 126:2, 3).

Let us study, brethren, to live the life of the just, but much more let us desire to die their death. For the wisdom of the just prefers the last things (novissima), judging us there where it shall have found us. It is altogether necessary that the end of the present life should cohere to the beginning of the future, nor is a tolerable dissimilarity there. For as if anyone should wish to sew or bind together for himself two, so to speak, girdles, caring less about the remaining parts, he prepares uniformly the heads themselves which are to be coupled to each other, lest they disagree from themselves; so I say to you, however much the spiritual conversation shall have existed, if our consummation shall have been carnal, it does not cohere at all to that spiritual life, nor can flesh and blood possess the kingdom of God. "Son," says the Wise Man, "remember your last things (novissima), and you shall not sin" (Ecclesiasticus 7:40). Namely, because this recordation especially makes one fearful; fear expels sin, it does not admit negligence.

7. Hence also Moses says of certain ones: "O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last things!" (Deut. 32:29). In which words indeed I see three things commended to us: wisdom, understanding, and providence. I think truly they can be assigned to three times, so that a certain image of eternity may seem to be reformed in us, by moderating present things through wisdom, judging past things through understanding, and providing for the last things as a precaution. This indeed is the

sum of spiritual exercise, this of spiritual study: that we wisely dispose our present things, rethink in the bitterness of our soul our past things, and also (993) solicitously provide for the future. "Let us live soberly, and justly, and piously in this world," says the Apostle (Tit. 2:12): that namely in the present sobriety may be observed; that past times, which passed for us without the fruit of salvation, may be redeemed by just satisfaction; that we may oppose the shield of piety to imminent dangers of the future. For it is piety alone which is valid for all things, namely the humble and devoted worship of God: nor is it otherwise for us to provide for the last things, except that by turning over in diligent thought all the dangers which seem to hang over us, we learn to distrust altogether our own industry, and more so our merits, and to commit ourselves to divine protection alone by a certain pious affection of the mind, and by the effect of pious intention toward Him, whose "best gift and perfect gift" is a happy consummation and a precious death.

8. You have in the Gospel these three themselves, commended to you by the word of the Lord: "Blessed," He says, "are the poor, blessed are the meek, blessed are they who mourn" (Matt. 5:3-5). Blessed are they who are wise toward future things, rejecting present things through a certain internal flavor of the mind for the desire of heavenly things. Blessed are they who provide for the last things, receiving in meekness the engrafted word, which can save their souls, and by piety of heart tend toward the

future inheritance. Blessed are they who, understanding their former error, wash their bed with frequent tears. Do you see what the holy man desires, what he wishes to obtain for those for whom he prays? "O that," he says, "they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last things!" As if he were to say more clearly: O that there were in them the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, and of counsel! O that these may be found in us, brethren, that we may sweetly dispose all our things through wisdom, that by understanding we may condemn past sins, that we may provide for future things by counsel! O that we may be wise for the moderation of the present life! O that we may understand for the correction of the past! O that we may provide with devoted faith in God, so that we may have, by His mercy, a happy consummation! For this is the threefold cord by which we are drawn to salvation: an ordered conversation, a right judgment, and a devoted faith.

SERMON III.

On the reading of the book of Wisdom: "These are men of mercy." (Eccl. 44:10-11)

1. Deservedly, brethren, mother Church attributes to the holy apostles what is read in the books of Wisdom: "These are men of mercy, whose justices have not received oblivion: with their seed good things remain." For these are clearly men of mercy, either because they obtained mercy, or because they are full of mercy, or because they

were mercifully given to us by God. And see what mercy they obtained. Ask Paul about himself, or rather listen to him confessing spontaneously. "Who was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and unjust; but I obtained mercy" (1 Tim. 1:13). For who has not heard how many evils he did to the saints in Jerusalem? Not only in Jerusalem, but also through all Judea he was carried by the reins of insanity, that he might mangle the members of Christ on earth. Finally, driven by this fury he was going, but he was prevented by grace. He was going breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and he became a disciple of the Lord, to whom it would be shown how many things it behooved him to suffer for His name. He was going exhaling a dire poison from his whole body, and suddenly he was changed into a chosen vessel (vas electionis), so that already his heart might erupt a good word, a pious word, and say: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 4). This indeed, this change of the right hand of the Most High. Deservedly therefore he spoke: "A faithful word and worthy of all acceptance, that the Lord Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am the first" (1 Tim. 1:15). Accept this therefore for confidence and consolation in the blessed Paul, brethren, that the conscience of past crimes may not too much torture you already turned to the Lord; but only let it humble you, as it did him. "I am," he says, "the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9). So let us also be humbled under the mighty hand of God, and let

us have confidence, (994) because we too have obtained mercy, we have been washed, we have been sanctified. And this indeed for all of us, since all of us have sinned, and need this glory of God.

2. But in the blessed Peter I have another thing which I may add, the more dear as it is more rare; and the more singular, the more sublime. For Paul sinned, but he did it ignoring in his incredulity: Peter when he fell, had his eyes open. Moreover, where sin abounded, there grace also superabounded. Indeed of those who sin before they knew God, before they experienced His mercies, before they bore the sweet yoke and light burden, before they received the grace of devotion and the consolations of the Holy Spirit; of them, I say, there is copious redemption. And such we all were. But of those who after their conversion are entangled in sins and vices, ungrateful for the grace received, and after putting their hand to the plow look back, having become tepid and carnal, or after knowing the way of truth go back as manifest apostates: of them indeed you may find very few who after these things return to the former degree, but rather being placed in filth they become still more filthy. Over whom the prophet deplores: "How is the gold obscured, the best color changed?" and: "They who were nourished in saffron have embraced the dung" (Lam. 4:1, 5).

3. Yet if anyone is of this sort, we do not despair of him, provided only that he wishes to rise again quickly. For the longer he remains, the more difficultly he will escape. Blessed indeed is he who

shall take and dash the little ones of Babylon against the rock: for if they grow, they can hardly be overcome. My little children, these things I say that you may not sin. But even if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, who can do what we can do very little: only let him who has fallen not add to the evil that he may fall more deeply, but rather that he may rise again, trusting that pardon will not be denied to him, if nevertheless he confesses his sins from the heart. For if he of whom we speak, Peter, after so grave a fall returned to such eminence of sanctity; who for the rest should despair, if only he wishes to go out from his sins? Attend to what is written: "Going out, he wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). In the going out understand the confession of the mouth, in the bitter weeping the compunction of the heart. And attend that then first he remembered the word which Jesus had said: then first the word was to his heart, by which his infirmity had been predicted, when his presumed temerity vanished. Woe to you, who after a fall show yourself stronger to us. Why are you so rigid to your own perdition? Rather incline yourself, that you may be better raised up, and do not prohibit what is distorted from being broken, that it may be better consolidated. Why are you indignant at the crowing cock? Rather be indignant at yourself. "A voluntary rain," says the Psalmist, "You shall set aside, O God, for Your inheritance, and it was weakened." Good is the infirmity which is set aside for the inheritance, which does not repel the physician. For the hardened ones He will

break as a potter's vessel with a rod of iron: and "the inheritance was weakened," he says, "but You have perfected it" (Psalm 67:10).

4. You have surely heard what mercy our apostles obtained, so that already no one of you should be confounded over past sins more than is necessary, being compunct in the bed of his conscience. For what? perhaps you have sinned in the world; was it any more than Paul? But if also in religion; was it any more than Peter? Nevertheless they, doing penance in their whole heart, obtained not only salvation but also sanctity; they even attained the ministry of salvation and the mastership of sanctity. And you therefore do likewise, because for your sake Scripture speaks of those men being of mercy: namely on account of the much mercy which they merited to obtain.

5. You can nevertheless in this word also not inconveniently accept that the apostles were men of mercy, that is, full of mercy, or men of mercy, that is, mercifully given to the universal Church. For we know that these men neither lived for themselves, nor died for themselves, but for Him who died for them; but rather for all of us on account of Him. For how much will their justice profit us, when even their sins, as (995) has been shown, profited so much? Their life, their doctrine, and even their death itself acts for us. For in their conversion the blessed apostles conferred on us continence, in their preaching wisdom, in their passion patience. A fourth thing they do not cease to confer even to this day, being full of mercy, which is the fruit of holy prayers.

Although even in their very life you may still find what you may count, namely the confidence which they provided for us by the exhibition of miracles. And who can enumerate how many benefits have come to us through them? Well therefore does Scripture speak of them: "Since these are men of mercy"; and added: "Whose justices have not received oblivion" (Eccli. 44).

6. Do you wish that yours also not receive oblivion? Beware of a threefold danger: and it shall flourish forever before the Lord. For you read: "Because you are tepid, I will begin to vomit you out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:16); you read: "If the just man turns himself away from his justice, etc., all his justices shall not be remembered" (Ezek. 18:24); you read what is to be said to certain ones in judgment: "I do not know you" (Matt. 7:23); to those without doubt who have received their reward. Therefore all tepid justice, all transitory justice, all sold justice, shall be in oblivion before God. But not so the justices of the apostles. Which appears enough from this, which follows: "With their seed good things remain." For the footsteps of the apostles remain in us even to this day; and their religion, because it is from God, cannot be dissolved. The clothes of the Israelite people persevered whole for forty years in the desert (Deut. 8:4); much more the clothes of the apostles placed upon the beast of burden (jumentum) of the Savior. "With their seed," he says, "of them." What is the seed, because he subjoins following: "Is the holy inheritance their grandsons?" The same truly are both the seed and the grandsons.

You remember, I believe: for I speak to those knowing the law: you remember, I say, the legal mandate, that a surviving brother raise up seed for a deceased brother without seed (Gen. 38:8; Deut. 25:5). Who is without seed? "Singularly," he says, "I am until I pass over" (Psalm 140:10). And therefore rising again: "Go," He says, "tell My brethren" (John 20:17). As if He were to say: They are brethren, let them do what brethren do. Therefore through the Gospel they themselves begot us; nevertheless not for themselves, but for Christ, because through the Gospel of Christ. Hence it is that Paul took it hard that some were said to be of them by whom they had been begotten through the Gospel, being indignant against those who said: "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, I am of Apollo" (1 Cor. 1:12; 1 Cor. 3:4); wishing rather all to be made and said to be of Christ. And so we are the seed of the apostles through preaching; but through adoption and inheritance the seed of Christ, and the grandsons of the apostles.

ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. SERMON I. On the twin reception, namely of Christ and of Mary.

1. The glorious Virgin ascending to the heavens today, without doubt crowded the joys of the supernal citizens with copious increases. For she is the one the voice of whose salutation makes even those exult in joy whom maternal wombs still enclose (Luke 1:41). But if the soul of the little one not yet born melted when Mary spoke, what exultation of the heavenly beings do we think that was, when they merited both to hear her

voice, and to see her face, and to enjoy her blessed presence? But for us, most dearly beloved, what occasion of solemnity is in her Assumption, what cause of gladness, what matter of joys? All the world is illustrated by the presence of Mary: so much so that even the heavenly country itself now shines more brightly, irradiated by the splendor of the virginal lamp. Deservedly therefore there resounds in the heights thanksgiving and the voice of praise; but it seems rather that we should mourn than applaud. For as much as heaven exults over her presence, is it not consequent that this our inferior world should mourn as much for her absence? Nevertheless let our complaint cease, because here we do not have a remaining city; but we seek that one to which today the blessed Mary arrived. In which if we are enrolled citizens, it is surely worthy also in exile, even above the rivers of Babylon, for us to remember her, to communicate in her joys, to participate in her gladness, and especially (996) her who with such copious impetus gladdens today the city of God, so that we ourselves may feel the droplets (stillicidia) dropping upon the earth. Our queen preceded us, she preceded, and she was so gloriously received that the little servants may confidently follow the Lady crying out: "Draw us after you; we shall run in the odor of your ointments" (Cant. 1:3). Our pilgrimage has sent ahead an advocate, who as the mother of the Judge, and mother of mercy (mater misericordiae), will suppliantly and effectively treat the affairs of our salvation.

2. A precious gift our earth has directed today into heaven, so that by giving and receiving, in a happy league of friendship, human things may be coupled with divine, earthly with heavenly, lowest with highest. For thither the sublime fruit of the earth ascended, whence "best gifts and perfect gifts" descend. Therefore, ascending on high, the blessed Virgin shall herself also give gifts to men. Why should she not give? Since neither faculty can be lacking to her, nor will. She is the Queen of the heavens, she is merciful; finally she is the mother of the only-begotten Son of God. For nothing can so commend the magnitude of her power or piety: unless perhaps either the Son of God is not believed to honor His mother; or anyone can doubt altogether that the bowels of Mary, in which that charity which is from God rested corporally for nine months, have passed into the affection of charity.

3. And these things indeed I might say for our sake, brethren, knowing that it is difficult that in such poverty that perfect charity, not seeking what are its own, can be found. Nevertheless, that I may meanwhile be silent about the benefits which we obtain for her glorification; if we love her, we shall surely rejoice because she goes to the Son. Plainly, I say, we shall congratulate her, unless perhaps, which be far from us! we be found ungrateful in every way to the finder of grace (inventrix gratiae). For Him whom entering into the castle of this world she herself had first received, by Him she is received today entering the holy city. But with how much honor do

you think, with how much exultation, with how much glory? Neither on earth was there a place more worthy than the temple of the virginal womb, in which Mary received the Son of God; nor in the heavens than the royal throne, on which today the Son of Mary sublimated Mary. Happy indeed is both reception; ineffable is both, because both are unthinkable. For why is that evangelical lesson recited today in the churches of Christ, in which the woman blessed among women is understood to have received the Savior? I believe that this which we celebrate may be estimated somewhat from that reception, nay rather that according to its inestimable glory this one also may be known as inestimable. For who, even if he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, could explain how, the Spirit coming upon her, the power of the Most High overshadowing, the Word of God, through which all things were made, was made flesh; and the Lord of majesty, whom the universe of creation does not contain, closed Himself within virginal bowels having been made man?

4. But who also could be sufficient even to think how gloriously the queen of the world proceeded today, and with how much affection of devotion the whole multitude of the heavenly legions came forth to meet her: with what songs she was led to the throne of glory; with how placid a countenance, with how serene a face, with how glad [alias, divine] embraces she was received by the Son, and exalted above every creature, with that honor which such a mother

was worthy of, with that glory which so became the Son? Happy indeed were the kisses impressed upon the lips of the suckling, to whom the mother applauded in her virginal bosom. But shall we not think more happy those which she received today in blessed salutation from the mouth of Him sitting at the right hand of the Father, when she ascended to the throne of glory, singing a nuptial song (epithalamium), and saying: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth"? (Cant. 1:1). Who shall narrate the generation of Christ and the assumption of Mary? For as much as she attained grace on earth above the rest, so much also in the heavens does she obtain singular glory. But if eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it ascended into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him: what He has prepared for her who bore Him, and, what is certain to all, for her who loved Him above all, who may speak? Happy plainly is Mary, and manifoldly happy, whether when she receives the Savior, or when she is received by the Savior: in both is the wonderful dignity of the Virgin Mother: in both (997) the to-be-embraced condescension of majesty. "Jesus entered," he says, "into a certain castle, and a certain woman received Him into her house" (Luke 10:38). But one must rather attend to praises, because this day is due to festive proclamations. But because the words of this lesson minister copious matter to us; tomorrow also, as we gather together in one, that which shall have been given from above must be communicated without envy, so that in

the memory of so great a Virgin not only the affection of devotion may be excited, but also morals may be built up for the profit of conversation, to the praise and glory of her Son our Lord, who is God above all, blessed forever. Amen.

SERMON II.

On the house to be cleansed, adorned, and filled.

"Jesus entered into a certain castle, and a certain woman, Martha by name, received Him into her house" (Luke 10:38). Opportunely enough it seems to me that in this place the prophetic exclamation should be assumed: "O Israel, how great is the house of the Lord, and huge is the place of His possession!" (Baruch 3:24). Or is it not huge, in comparison with which the most spacious breadth of this earth is called a castle? or is it not a huge country and an inestimable region, when from it the Savior coming, when He entered the orb of the earth, is said to enter a castle? Unless perhaps someone thinks another castle is to be understood, other than the court of the strong armed man, the prince of this world, whose vessels a stronger one has come over to plunder (Luke 11:21, 22). Let us hasten to enter into that amplitude of beatitude, brethren, where no one narrows another: that we may be able with all the saints to comprehend what is the length and breadth, the sublimity and the depth (Ephes. 3:18). Nor should we despair of that, since the heavenly inhabitant of the country himself,

and also the creator, did not flee the narrows of this our little castle.

2. But what do we mean when we say He entered into a castle? Even into the most narrow lodging of the virginal womb He entered. Finally also "a certain woman received Him into her house." Happy woman, who merited to receive not now the scouts of Jericho (exploratores Jericho), but rather the most strong despoiler himself of that fool who truly is changed as the moon; not the legates of Jesus son of Nave, but rather the true Jesus Himself, the Son of God. Happy, I say, woman, whose house, when the Savior was received, was found clean indeed, but plainly not empty. For who would say she was empty, whom the angel salutes as full of grace? Nor this alone; but he asserts that the Holy Spirit is still also about to come over into her. For what do you think, unless that He may even overfill her? For what, unless that, the Spirit already coming being full for herself, by the same coming over she may become overfull and overflowing for us also? O that those spices (aromata), namely the charisms of graces, may flow into us, that from such great fullness we all may receive! She namely is our mediatrix (mediatrix nostra), she is the one through whom we have received Your mercy, O God: she is the one through whom we also receive the Lord Jesus into our houses. For to each of us there are single camps, and single houses; and Wisdom knocks at the doors of each: if anyone opens to Him, He will enter, and sup with him. It is a common proverb, which is

turned in the mouths of many, but more in the heart: They say, he keeps a good castle who shall have guarded his body. The wise man nevertheless says not so, but rather says: "With all custody guard your heart, because life proceeds from it" (Prov. 4:23).

3. Let it be nevertheless, that one must yield to the multitude; let him guard a good castle who shall have guarded his body. That surely is to be asked, what custody is to be applied to this castle. Does that soul seem to you to have guarded the castle of its body rightly, whose members, as if a conspiracy being made, have handed over the dominion to its enemy? For there are those who have entered into a league with death, and have struck a pact with hell (Isa. 28:15). "The beloved was fattened," he says, "and kicked back; fattened, impinguated, dilated" (Deut. 32:15). This plainly is the custody which is praised by sinners in the desires of their flesh. What does it seem to you, brethren? must we yield to the multitude even in this part? Far be it! Let us rather ask Paul (998), as a strenuous leader of spiritual warfare. Tell us, Apostle, what is your custody of the castle? "I," he says, "so run, not as into uncertainty; so I fight, not as beating the air, for I chastise my body, and bring it into servitude, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:26, 27). And in another place: "Let not sin reign," he says, "in your mortal body to obey its concupiscences" (Rom. 6:12). A profitable custody indeed, and a happy soul, which shall have so guarded its body

that the enemy never claims it for himself. For there was a time when that impious one had subjected this my castle to his tyranny, imperiously commanding all the members. How much he harmed at that time, the present desolation and poverty still indicates. Alas! he left in it neither a wall of continence nor a bulwark of patience. He exterminated the vineyards, reaped the crops, uprooted the trees: because even this my eye was plundering my soul. Finally unless the Lord had helped me, my soul would have dwelt a little less in hell. But I speak of the lower hell (infernum inferiorem), where there is no confession, whence it is given to no one to go out.

4. For the rest, even then neither a prison was lacking to her, nor hell. For having been caught namely from the very beginning of the worst conspiracy and treason, she was delivered to prison custody in no other place than in her own house, and given to no other torturers than those of her own family. For her conscience was a prison to her, reason and memory were the torturers, and these indeed cruel, austere, and unmerciful: but far less than those roaring ones prepared for food, to whom she was just now to be delivered. But blessed be God, who did not give me into capture to their teeth. Blessed, I say, be the Lord, who visited and made redemption. For when the malignant one was accelerating to deliver her to the lower prison [alias, and to the torturers], but also to burn the castle itself with perpetual fires, so that a worthy retribution might also be made to the perjured members, a stronger one came over.

Jesus entered into the castle, who binding the strong man, plundered his vessels; so that those things which first were for contumely, He might make for honor. He crushed the brazen gates, and broke the iron bars, leading the bound one out of the house of the prison and the shadow of death. Moreover, his egress is in confession. For that is the broom (scopa) by which the prison having been cleansed and adorned, thereafter by certain beautifully greening rushes of regular institutions, he returns from the prison into the house. The woman therefore already has her house, she has where she may receive Him, to whom she stands obnoxious over such great benefits. Otherwise woe to her, if she refuses to receive Him, if she does not detain Him, if she does not compel Him to remain with her, because it is growing toward evening. For he who was first cast out returning, finds the house indeed cleansed and adorned, but empty.

5. For indeed her house is left to the woman deserted, which [alias, because] she neglected to exhibit as worthy for the hospitality of the Savior. How, you ask? Can a house cleansed by the confession of former crimes, and adorned by the observation of regular institutions, still be judged unworthy for the habitation of grace, for the entrance of the Savior? It can without doubt, if being cleansed as far as the surface, and strewn with greening rushes as was said, it be full of mud within. For who would think the Lord is to be received in whitened sepulchers of the dead, which from the outside seem beautiful,

but within filth and all gore have filled? For let it be that sometimes, as if delighted by the surface itself, He begins as it were first to apply His foot, to him who is of this sort, by indulging some first grace of His visitation: will He not leap back immediately with indignation? will He not flee away crying out: "I am fixed in the mud of the deep, and there is no substance"? (Psalm 68:3). For the appearance of virtue, and not the truth, is as it were a quality, not a substance. Neither truly can the thin surface of exterior conversation sustain His entrance; since He penetrates all things, and His habitation is in the inmost hearts. But if by no means the spirit of discipline inhabits a body subjected manifestly to sins, it surely not only declines the feigned one, but also flees and is elongated from him (Wisd. 1:5). Or indeed is it anything else than an execrable feigning, if you shave sin as far as the surface, (999) not uproot it within? Be certain that it will sprout more abundantly, and the malignant guest [alias, enemy] will enter the cleansed but empty house with seven others more wicked, he who had been cast out. For the dog having returned to its vomit, he will be odious much more than before, and he becomes a son of Gehenna (filius gehennae) manifoldly, who after the indulgence of crimes shall have fallen again into the same filths, as a washed sow in a wallowing place of mud.

6. Do you wish to see a cleansed, adorned, and empty house? Look at the man who has confessed and deserted manifest sins preceding to judgment, and now moves his hands alone to

the works of the commandments, with a heart entirely arid, led by a certain custom, plainly like the heifer of Ephraim (vitula Ephraim), taught to love the threshing. Of the exterior things which are valid for a little, he passes over not one iota nor one tittle; but he swallows a camel, while he strains a gnat. For in his heart he is a servant of his own will, a worshiper of avarice, greedy for glory, a lover of ambition; or fostering all these, or each single vice within: and iniquity lies to itself, but God is not mocked. For you may see sometimes a man so cloaked, that he seduces even himself, not at all attending to the worm which feeds upon his interiors. For the surface remains, and he thinks all things safe for himself. "Strangers have devoured his strength," says the prophet, "and he knew it not" (Hosea 7:9). He says: "Because I am rich, and need nothing: when he is poor, and miserable, and pitiable" (Rev. 3:17). For you may see also, when occasion is found, the gore (sanies) which was hiding in the ulcer boil up, and the tree cut down, not uprooted, sprout into a denser forest. Which danger if we wish to decline, it is necessary that we place the axe to the roots of the trees, not to the branches. Let not corporal exercise alone be found in us, valid for a little: but let piety be found, useful for all things, and spiritual exercise.

7. "A woman," he says, "Martha by name, received Him into her house; and to her there was a sister, by name Mary." They are sisters, and they ought to be housemates (contubernales). This one is occupied about frequent ministry,

that one is intent upon the Lord's words. Adornment belongs to Martha, but filling to Mary. For she vacates for the Lord, so that the house may not be empty. But to whom can we attribute the cleansing? For there will be, if we find this also, a house in which the Savior is received, both clean, and adorned, and not empty. Let us give it to Lazarus, if it so seems to you also. And indeed to him by right of fraternity with his sisters this house is common. But I speak of Lazarus, whom being four-day dead (quatriduanum) and just now stinking, the voice of power excites from the dead, so that he seems congruously enough to bear the form of a penitent. Let the Savior enter the house, therefore, and frequently visit it, which the penitent Lazarus cleanses, Martha adorns, and Mary fills being devoted to internal contemplation.

8. But perhaps someone more curious may require why in the present evangelical lesson no mention at all of Lazarus is made. I think truly that not even that disagrees from the proposed similitude. For the Spirit wishing the virginal house to be understood, not incongruously was silent about penance, which indeed accompanies evil. For far be it that this house be said to have had anything of its own pollution at any time, so that the broom of Lazarus should be sought in it accordingly. But if she drew the original stain from her parents; yet Christian piety prohibits believing her less sanctified in the womb than Jeremiah, or not more filled with the Holy Spirit than John: for neither would she be honored with

festive praises being born, if she were not born holy. Finally since it is certain in every way that Mary was cleansed from the original contagion by grace alone, since even now in baptism grace alone washes this stain, and the rock of circumcision (petra circumcisionis) once shaved it: if, as it is altogether pious to believe, Mary did not have her own crime, nevertheless penance was also far from her most innocent heart. Let Lazarus be, therefore, among those whose consciences must be cleansed from dead works: let him withdraw among the wounded sleeping in the sepulchers, so that in the virginal chamber Martha and Mary alone may be found. For she is the one (1000) who served Elizabeth, pregnant and aged, for about three months in a humble office (Luke 1:56); she who was keeping the words which were said of her Son, conferring them in her heart (Luke 2:19).

9. Let it move no one, therefore, that the woman receiving the Lord is called not Mary, but Martha: when in this one and supreme Mary both the business of Martha and the not-idle leisure of Mary is found. All the glory of the king's daughter is indeed from within: nevertheless she is surrounded with variety in golden fringes (fimbriis aureis). She is not of the number of the foolish virgins: she is a prudent virgin; she has a lamp, but she carries oil in her vessel. Or perhaps that evangelical parable has escaped you, which narrates that the foolish virgins were prohibited from the entrance of the nuptials? (Matt. 25:1-13). Their house was indeed clean,

for they were virgins: it was adorned, because all together, that is the foolish with the prudent, adorned their lamps; but it was empty, because they did not receive oil in their vessels. Hence it is, that the heavenly bridegroom deigns neither to be received by them into their houses, nor to admit them to the nuptials. Not so that strong woman, who crushed the serpent's head. For you have after many things in her praises, that "her lamp shall not be extinguished in the night" (Prov. 31:18). This is said for the taunt of the foolish ones, who when the bridegroom comes at midnight, complain too late, and say: "Because our lamps are being extinguished." Therefore the glorious Virgin proceeded, whose most burning lamp was a miracle of light even to the angels themselves, so that they said: "Who is this, who progresses like the rising aurora, beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun?" (Cant. 6:9). For she was shining more clearly than the rest, whom Christ Jesus, her Son, our Lord, had filled with the oil of grace above her fellows.

SERMON III.

On Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. (Luke 10:38-42)

1. "Jesus entered into a certain castle, and a certain woman, Martha by name, received Him into her house." What is it, brethren, that of the two sisters only one is read to have received the Lord, and she herself who seems inferior? For Mary chose the best part, by the testimony of Him whom Martha received. But Martha seems

the elder by birth, and action is known to claim for itself the beginning of salvation more than contemplation. Christ praises Mary, but He is received by Martha. Jacob loves Rachel, but Leah is substituted for the ignorant one. If he complains of fraud, he will hear that it is not of custom that the younger be delivered to nuptials first (Gen. 29:23-26). But if you think of this clay house (luteam domum), it will be easy to know how Martha receives the Lord in it more than Mary. For what the Apostle says: "Glorify and carry God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20), is said to Martha, not to Mary. This one namely uses the instrument of the body, when to that one it is rather an impediment. Finally "the body," he says, "which is corrupted, weighs down the soul, and the earthly habitation depresses the sense thinking many things" (Wisd. 9:15). Was it also the one working? Martha therefore receives the Savior into her house on earth: Mary rather thinks how she may be received by Him in the house not made by hand, eternal in the heavens. Perhaps nevertheless she too is seen to have received the Lord, but in spirit: for the Lord is a spirit.

2. To this one, he says—doubtless to Martha—there was a sister, Mary by name: who also sitting beside the feet of Jesus, heard his word. You see that each received the Word, this one in the flesh, that one in the voice. Martha, however, was busy about much service. Who stood, and said: Lord, is it no care to thee that my sister has left me alone to serve? Do you think, in the house in which Christ is received, the voice of

murmuring will be heard? Happy is the house, and blessed is the congregation always, where Martha complains about Mary. For for Mary to envy Martha is altogether unworthy, altogether illicit. Otherwise, where do you read Mary complaining: "Because my sister has left me alone to be at leisure?" Far be it, far be it that he who is at leisure for God should aspire to the tumultuous life of the official brethren! Let Martha always seem insufficient to herself and less suitable, and let her wish for more to be imposed on others in the work which she administers. But Jesus answered her: Martha, Martha, thou art solicitous, and art troubled about many things. See the prerogative of Mary, whom she has as an advocate in every cause. For the Pharisee is indignant (Luke 7:39), the sister complains, even the disciples murmur (Matt. 26:8): everywhere Mary is silent, and Christ speaks for her. Mary, he says, has chosen for herself the best part, which shall not be taken away from her forever. This is that one thing which is necessary; this is that one which the Prophet so diligently sought: One thing, he says, I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek (Psal. 26:4).

3. Yet what does it mean, brethren, that Mary is said to have chosen the best part? Where now will be that which we are accustomed to bring forth against her, if perhaps she should wish to judge the trouble, the inequality of the administering Martha: Better is the iniquity of a man, than a woman doing good? (Ecclu. 42:14.) Where will be also that: If any man shall have ministered

to me, my Father will honor him? (John 12:26.) And that: He who is greater among you, shall be your minister? (Matt. 20:26.) Finally, what consolation is it to the one laboring, as if for his taunt, to extol the part of the sister? I think one thing, therefore, of the two: either that Mary is praised for the choice, because that part, as much as is in us, is to be chosen by all; or certainly that neither should be said to have been lacking, nor the sentence to have been precipitated into either part, but for either part one should be ready for the obedience of the teacher. For who is faithful like David, entering and going out, and proceeding at the command of the king? (1 Kings 22:14.) Finally, "My heart is ready," he says, "my heart is ready" (Psal. 56:8); not once only, but also a second time, both to be at leisure for thee, and to minister to neighbors. This clearly is the best part, which shall not be taken away: this the best mind, which shall not be changed wherever you shall have called it. He acquires a good degree, he says, who shall have ministered well (1 Tim. 3:13). Perhaps a better one who shall have been well at leisure for God; but the best is he who is perfect in both. I say one thing yet, if however it be permitted to suspect that of Martha. For did she not seem to have reputed as idle her whom she asked to be given to her as a helper? But he is carnal, and perceives not at all the things which are of the spirit of God, if any one perhaps rebukes a soul at leisure for its leisure. Let him hear therefore that this is the best part, which remains forever. For does not the soul seem somehow rude which, en-

tirely devoid of divine contemplation, shall have entered that region where this is the one work of all, the one study, the same life?

4. But let us consider, brethren, how in this house of ours the ordering of charity has distributed these three: Martha's administration, Mary's contemplation, Lazarus' penance. Whatever soul is perfect has these at the same time; yet they seem to pertain more to individuals, so that some are at leisure for holy contemplation, others are given to fraternal administration, others in the bitterness of their soul rethink their years, like the wounded sleeping in the sepulchers. Thus clearly, thus it is necessary, that Mary think piously and sublimely of her God, Martha kindly and mercifully of her neighbor, Lazarus miserably and humbly of himself. Let each one consider his degree. "If there shall be found in this city Noah, Daniel, Job; they themselves by their justice shall be delivered, says the Lord: but they shall not deliver son or daughter" (Ezek. 14:14-16). We flatter no one: would that none of you would seduce himself! For those to whom no dispensation is credited, no administration committed, these must altogether sit, either beside the feet of Jesus with Mary, or certainly with Lazarus within the enclosures of the sepulcher. Why should Martha not be troubled about many things, who is solicitous for many? But to thee to whom this necessity is not incumbent, one of two is necessary: either not to be troubled at all, but to be delighted rather in the Lord; or, if thou canst not yet do that, to be troubled not about

very many things, but, as the prophet speaks of himself, "to thyself" (Psal. 41:7).

5. Again I say, lest any one should have an excuse of ignorance: it behooves thee, brother, to whom nothing pertains concerning the building or governing of Noah's ark among the waves of the deluge, either to be a man of desires, as Daniel was; or with blessed Job a man of sorrows, and knowing infirmity. Otherwise I fear lest He should vomit thee out of His mouth, being lukewarm and provoking nausea, He who desires to find thee either hot by consideration of Him and burning with the fire of charity; or cold by the knowledge of oneself, and extinguishing the fiery darts of the devil with the water of ignited compunction. But also Martha herself must be admonished, that this is especially sought among stewards, that one be found faithful. But he will be faithful, if he neither seeks the things which are his own, but the things of Jesus Christ, so that the intention may be pure; nor does he do his own will, but the Lord's, so that the action may be ordered. For there are those whose eye is not simple, and they receive their reward. There are those who are carried by the proper motions of their minds, and all things which they offer are contaminated, since indeed their wills are found in them. Come now with me to the nuptial song, and let us consider how the bridegroom, where he calls the bride, has neither omitted any of these three, nor added anything to them. "Arise," he says, "make haste, my love, my fair one, my dove, and come" (Cant. 2:10). Is she not a friend

(amica) who, intent on the Lord's gains, faithfully also lays down her very soul for him? For as many times as she interrupts her spiritual study for one of the least of his, so many times does she spiritually lay down her soul for him. Is she not fair (formosa) who, with face revealed beholding the glory of the Lord, is transformed into the same image from clarity to clarity, as by the Spirit of the Lord? (2 Cor. 3:18.) Is she not a dove (columba) who wails and moans in the clefts of the rock, in the hollows of the wall (Cant. 2:14), as if buried under a stone?

6. "A woman," it says, "Martha by name, received him into her house." It is certain that the official brethren, whom the regard for fraternal charity has deputed to various administrations, hold her place. But would that I myself might deserve to be found faithful among the stewards! For to whom does it seem more suitably adapted what the Lord says: "Martha, Martha, thou art solicitous," than to prelates, if however they preside in worthy solicitude? Or who is troubled about very many things, except him upon whom the whole solicitude of both Mary at leisure, and Lazarus repenting, but also of those very ones with whom he shares his burdens, is incumbent? See Martha solicitous, see Martha troubled about very many things. I speak of the Apostle, who admonishing prelates of solicitude, himself bears the solicitude of all the Churches. "Who is weak," he says, "and I am not weak? who is scandalized, and I am not on fire?" (2 Cor. 11:29.) Let Martha therefore receive the Lord into her house, to

whom namely the dispensation of the house is credited. She is a mediatrix, that she may obtain salvation equally for herself and for those subject to her, and receive grace, as it is written: "Let the mountains receive peace for the people, and the hills justice" (Psal. 71:3). Let the rest of her coadjutors receive Him, each according to the quality of his ministry; let them receive Christ, let them serve Christ, let them minister to Him in His members, this one in the weak brethren, that one in the poor, that one in guests and pilgrims.

7. While these are thus solicitous about much service, let Mary see how she may be at leisure, and let her see that the Lord is sweet. Let her see, I say, with how devoted a mind, with how tranquil a soul she may sit beside the feet of Jesus, providing Him always in her sight, and receiving words from His mouth, whose aspect is also delectable, and whose speech is sweet. For grace is diffused on His lips, and He is beautiful in form above the sons of men, yea also above all the glory of the angels. Rejoice and give thanks, Mary, who hast chosen the best part. For blessed are the eyes which see what thou seest, and the ears which deserve to hear what thou hearest. Blessed clearly art thou, who perceivest the veins of the divine whisper in silence, in which it is certainly good for a man to wait for the Lord. Be simple, not only without deceit and simulation, but also without the multiplicity of occupations, so that His conversation may be with thee, whose voice is also sweet, and whose face is comely. Beware of one thing, lest thou begin to abound in thy own

sense, and wish to know more than it behooves to know: lest perhaps while thou followest the light, thou shouldst dash into darkness, the noonday devil mocking thee, concerning which it is not of this time to dispute. For where has Lazarus come? where have you placed him? I address the sisters, who buried the brother by preaching and ministry, by example and prayer. Where therefore have you placed him? He is hidden in the dug ground, he lies under a stone, he is not easily found. Therefore it will not be incongruous to reserve a fourth sermon for the four-day dead (quatriduano), so that according to the Savior's example hearing: "Behold he whom thou lovest is sick" (John 11:3), we too may remain here this day.

SERMON IV.

On the four days of Lazarus, and the praise of the Virgin.

1. It is the time for all flesh to speak, when the Mother of the incarnate Word is assumed into heaven; nor ought human mortality to cease from praises, when the nature of man alone is exalted above the immortal spirits in the Virgin. But devotion allows one neither to be silent about her glory, nor can sterile thought conceive anything worthy, or unlearned speech bring it forth. Hence it is that even the princes of the heavenly court themselves, in consideration of so great a novelty, cry out not without admiration: "Who is this, who ascends from the desert abounding in delights?" (Cant. 8:5.) As if they would say

more clearly: How great is this one? or whence to her ascending certainly from the desert is there so great an abundance of delights? For equal delights are not found even in us, whom the force of the river makes glad in the city of the Lord, who are given to drink from the torrent of pleasure by the face of glory. Who is this, who from under the sun, where there is nothing but labor and sorrow, and affliction of spirit, ascends abounding in spiritual delights? Why should I not have called delights the beauty of virginity with the gift of fecundity, the insignia of humility, the distilling honeycomb of charity, the bowels of mercy, the fullness of grace, the prerogative of singular glory? Therefore ascending from the desert, the queen of the world, even to the holy angels, as the Church sings, was made beautiful and sweet in her delights. Yet let them cease to wonder at the delights of this desert, because the Lord has given benignity, and our earth has given its fruit (Psal. 84:13). Why do they wonder that Mary ascends from the desert land abounding in delights? Let them rather wonder at the poor Christ descending from the fullness of the heavenly kingdom. For it seems worthy of a far greater miracle that the Son of God was made a little less than the angels, than that the Mother of God is exalted above the angels. For His emptying (exinanitio) was made our repletion: His miseries are the delights of the world. Finally, though He was rich, for our sakes He was made poor, that we might be enriched by His poverty (2 Cor. 8:9). But

also the ignominy of the cross was made the glory of believers.

2. Moreover, our life also hastens to the monument, that it may bring back the four-day dead (quatriduanum) from the monument: and it seeks Lazarus, concerning whom a sermon is due to you today (if your charity well remembers), that he may be sought, and found by Lazarus. For in this is charity, not as if we have loved God, but because He first loved us. Act therefore, O Lord, seek him whom Thou lovest, that Thou mayest make him both loving and seeking. Seek where they have placed him: for he lies closed, bound, burdened. He lies in the prison of conscience (ergastulo conscientiae), he is held by the bonds of discipline, and as if with a stone placed over him he is pressed and oppressed by the burden of penance, especially because in the meantime the love strong as death is lacking, and charity sustaining all things; and in all these things he already stinks, O Lord: for he is of four days (quatriduanus). I believe the wits of many already fly ahead, so that they may understand which Lazarus I wish to say: him without doubt, who having recently died to sin dug a wall for himself, that he might see many and evil abominations of his depraved and inscrutable heart (Ezek. 8:8, 9), and according to another prophet has entered into the rock, hidden in the dug ground from the face of the fury of the Lord (Isai. 2:10).

3. But what is it: "Lord, he already stinks; for he is of four days"? For perhaps not everyone would immediately understand that stench, and

those four days. I think the first is the day of fear, in which, certainly as it radiates in our hearts, we die to sin, and are in a certain way buried in our consciences. The second, if I am not mistaken, is passed in the labor of the struggle (labore certaminis). For the temptation of depraved custom is accustomed to rise more sharply among the beginnings of conversion, and the fiery darts of the devil can scarcely be extinguished. The third nevertheless seems to be of sorrow; while one rethink his years in the bitterness of his soul, and does not so much labor in declining future things, as he deplores past things by mourning them. Do you wonder that I have called these days? But such burials are due: days of cloud and darkness, days of mourning and bitterness. The day of shame follows, not dissimilar to the three: when now the miserable soul is covered with horrible confusion, while it considers too much what and how great things it has committed, and in the eyes of the heart turns over the foul images of sins. A mind of this sort dissimulates nothing, but judges, but aggravates, but exaggerates all things: it does not spare itself as a hard judge against itself. Useful indeed is the exacerbation, and a cruelty worthy of misery, easily conciliating to itself divine grace, while for it the mind is jealous even against itself. Nevertheless, Lazarus, come forth, lest thou shouldst dwell longer in so great a stench. Putrid flesh is near to putrefaction; and he who is more vehemently confounded and wastes away, is near to despair. Therefore, Lazarus, come forth. Abyss calls upon abyss: the

abyss of light and mercy, the abyss of misery and darkness. His goodness is greater than thy iniquity: and where sin abounds, He makes grace to superabound. "Lazarus," He says, "come forth" (John 11:39, 43). As if He would say more clearly: How long does the darkness of thy conscience detain thee? how long in thy bed art thou pricked with a heavy heart? Come forth, proceed, breathe into the light of My mercies. For this is what thou hast read in the prophet: "I will bridle thy mouth with My praise, lest thou perish" (Isai. 48:9). More evidently also another prophet says of himself: "To myself," he says, "my soul is troubled; therefore I am mindful of Thee" (Psal. 41:7).

4. Now indeed what does He wish for Himself when He says: "Take away the stone," and after a few things, "loose him"? (John 11:39, 44.) Will he cease to do penance after the visitation of consoling grace, because the kingdom of heaven has approached; or will he cast away discipline, if perhaps the Lord should be angry, and he should perish from the just way? Far be this! Let the stone be taken away, but let penance remain, no longer pressing and burdening, but rather strengthening and confirming a vivid and robust mind: namely of which the food is, which he did not know before, to do the Lord's will. Thus also discipline no longer constrains the free, according to that: "The law is not set for the just" (1 Tim. 1:9); but it rules the voluntary, and directs into the way of peace. Upon this raising of Lazarus the prophet more clearly sings: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell"; because, as I remember to have

said on the second day of this festivity, a guilty conscience is a certain hell and prison of the soul. "Nor wilt Thou give Thy holy one" (not his own, but Thine certainly, whom Thou Thyself sanctifiest) "to see corruption." For by corruption the four-day dead was near, who had already begun to stink. He was near to being entirely dissolved, and the impious coming into the depth of evils would contemn; but prevented by the voice of virtue, and vivified by it, he gives thanks saying: "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life, Thou wilt fill me with joy with Thy face" (Psal. 15:10, 11). For to the contemplation of itself Thou hast called and led forth my soul from hell: while my spirit was anxious over me, beholding the face of my own conscience, which was too abominable. "He cried out," he says, "with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth"; with a loud voice indeed, not so much clamorous in sound, as magnificent in piety and virtue.

5. But where have we come? Were we not following the Virgin going above the heavens? And behold with Lazarus we have descended into the abyss. From the splendor of virtue the speech runs down headlong to the stench of the four-day dead. Why this, unless because we were being carried by our own weight; and the matter was drawing us, certainly the more abundant, the more familiar? I confess my ignorance, I do not hide my own smallness of soul. There is not indeed anything that delights me more, but neither anything that terrifies me more, than to have a sermon concerning the glory of the Virgin

Mother. For even if I were to be silent for the time about the ineffable privilege of her merits, and the altogether singular prerogative, all embrace her, honor her, receive her with such an affection of devotion, as is worthy, that although all long to speak of her; nevertheless whatever is said of the unspeakable, by that very fact that it could be said, it is less pleasing, less agreeable, less accepted. Why should it not taste less, whatever the human mind has been able to comprehend concerning the incomprehensible glory? For behold if I shall have praised in her virginity, many virgins after her seem to me to be offered. If I shall have preached humility, perhaps even a few will be found, who, her Son teaching, were made meek and humble of heart (Matt. 11:29). If I shall have wished to magnify the multitude of her mercy, there are some men of mercy, and also women. There is one thing in which she was seen neither to have a first like her, nor to have a following one, having the joys of a mother with the honor of virginity. "Mary," he says, "has chosen for herself the best part" (Luke 10:42). Clearly the best, because conjugal fecundity is good, but virginal chastity is better; but altogether best is virginal fecundity, or fecund virginity. It is the privilege of Mary, it will not be given to another, because it shall not be taken away from her. It is singular, but immediately it is also found to be unspeakable, so that no one can attain it, thus neither even speak it. What if you should also add this, whose mother? What tongue now, even if it be angelic, will be able to extol with

worthy praises the Virgin Mother; the mother, however, not of anyone, but of God? A double novelty, a double prerogative: a double miracle, but altogether worthily and most aptly fitting. For neither did another son become a virgin, nor did another birth become God.

6. Nevertheless, not this only, if you carefully attend, but you will also find other singular virtues altogether in Mary, which seemed to be common. For what even angelic purity would dare to be compared to that virginity, which was worthy to be made the shrine (sacrarium) of the Holy Spirit, and the habitation of the Son of God? If we weigh the prices of things from rarity, she who first on earth proposed to lead an angelic life, is above all. "How," she says, "shall this be done? because I know not man." An immovable purpose of virginity, which did not falter in any way even when an angel was promising a son. "How," she says, "shall this be done?" For not in that way in which it is accustomed to be done in others. I know man not at all, neither from the desire of a son, nor from the hope of offspring.

7. But how great and how precious is the virtue of humility with so great purity, with so great innocence, with a conscience altogether without fault, yea with so great fullness of grace? Whence to thee is humility, and so great humility, O blessed one? Clearly worthy for the Lord to look upon, whose beauty the king should desire, by whose most sweet odor he should be drawn from that eternal reclining of the paternal bosom. For see how manifestly the song of our Virgin and the

nuptial song harmonize with each other: namely whose womb was the bride-chamber (thalamus) of the bridegroom. Hear Mary in the Gospel: "He hath regarded," she says, "the humility of His handmaid" (Luke 1:34, 48). Hear the same one in the epithalamium: "When the king was," she says, "in his reclining, my nard gave forth its odor" (Cant. 1:11). For nard is a humble herb, and it purges the breast: so that it is manifest that humility is designated by the name of nard, whose odor and beauty found grace with God.

8. Let him be silent about thy mercy, O blessed Virgin, if there is anyone who remembers that thou hast failed him when invoked in his necessities. We indeed thy little servants congratulate thee in other virtues, but in this rather ourselves. We praise virginity, we wonder at humility; but mercy tastes sweeter to the miserable, we embrace mercy more dearly, we remember it more often, we invoke it more frequently. For this is she who obtained the restoration of the whole world, and impetrated the salvation of all. For it is certain that she was solicitous for the whole human race, to whom it was said: "Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace" (Luke 1:30), certainly that which thou wast seeking. Who therefore, O blessed one, can investigate the longitude and latitude, the sublimity and depth of thy mercy? For its longitude even to the last day succors all who invoke it. Its latitude fills the orb of the lands, so that the whole earth also is full of thy mercy. Thus also its sublimity has found the restoration of the heavenly city, and its depth

has obtained redemption for those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. For through thee heaven has been filled, hell evacuated, the ruins of the heavenly Jerusalem restored, and lost life given to those waiting in misery. Thus most powerful and most pious charity abounds both in the affection of compassion and in the effect of succoring, equally rich in both.

9. To this fountain therefore let our thirsty soul hasten: to this heap of mercy let our misery recur with all solicitude. Behold now with what vows we could we have led thee forth ascending to the Son, and have followed thee at least from afar, O blessed Virgin. Let it be henceforth of thy piety to make known to the world the very grace which thou hast found with God; by obtaining through thy holy prayers pardon for the guilty, healing for the sick, strength for the small in heart, consolation for the afflicted, aid and liberation for those in danger. On this day also of solemnity and gladness, may Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who is God blessed forever, bestow the gifts of His grace through thee, O clement queen, upon the little servants invoking the most sweet name of Mary with praise. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE B. V. MARY. Sermon on the twelve prerogatives of the B. V. Mary, from the words of Apocalypse 12:1: "A great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

1. One man and one woman indeed vehemently harmed us, most beloved: but, thanks to God, through one man and one woman nevertheless all things are restored; and not without a great interest of thanks. For not as the fault, so also is the gift; but the magnitude of the benefit exceeds the estimation of the loss. Thus namely the most prudent and clement artificer did not break what had been shattered, but remade it altogether more usefully, so that namely He might form for us a new Adam from the old, and transfer Eve into Mary. And indeed Christ could have sufficed; since also now all our sufficiency is from Him; but it was not good for us for man to be alone. It was more congruous that both sexes should be present at our restoration, neither of whom had been lacking at their corruption. Clearly faithful and most powerful is the mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, but men revere the divine majesty in Him. Humanity seems absorbed into deity, not that the substance was changed, but the affection deified. Not mercy alone is sung to Him, equally judgment also is sung (Psal. 100:1); because, although He learned compassion from those things which He suffered, that He might be made merciful, He has nevertheless also judicial power. Finally, "our God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24; Hebr. 12:29). Why should the sinner not fear to approach, lest, as wax melts from the face of the fire, so he himself should perish from the face of God?

2. Now therefore, that blessed woman among women herself will not seem idle: her place will

indeed be found in this reconciliation. For there is need of a mediator to that Mediator, nor is any more useful to us than Mary. Cruel indeed was the mediatrix Eve, through whom the ancient serpent infused the pestiferous poison even into the man himself; but faithful is Mary, who propounded the antidote of salvation to both men and women. For the former was the minister of seduction; the latter, of propitiation: the former suggested prevarication, the latter brought in redemption. Why should human fragility tremble to approach Mary? There is nothing austere in her, nothing terrible: she is all sweet, offering milk and wool to all. Revolve more diligently the entire series of the evangelical history: and if perchance anything rebuking, anything hard, or finally any sign of even thin indignation occurs in Mary, for the rest hold her suspect and fear to approach. But if, as they truly are, you find all things pertaining to her rather full of piety and grace, full of meekness and mercy; give thanks to Him who provided such a mediatrix for thee by His most benign commiseration, in whom nothing can be suspect. Finally, she has been made all things to all, and by a most copious charity has made herself a debtor to the wise and the unwise. She opens the bosom of mercy to all, so that from her fullness all may receive, the captive redemption, the sick healing, the sorrowful consolation, the sinner pardon, the just grace, the angel joy, and finally the whole Trinity glory, and the person of the Son the substance of human flesh; so

that there is no one who hides himself from her heat.

3. Thinkest thou, is she the woman clothed with the sun? Granted indeed that the series itself of the prophetic vision shows this to be understood of the present Church; yet this seems plainly to be attributed not inconveniently to Mary. For she is namely the one who, as it were, put on another sun for herself. For as that sun rises indifferently over the good and the bad, so she also does not discuss past merits; but shows herself exorable to all, most clement to all, and finally pities the necessities of all with a certain most ample affection. For all defect is also under her: and whatever there is of fragility or corruption, she exceeds and oversteps all other creatures by a certain most excellent sublimity, so that the moon is deservedly said to be under her feet. Otherwise we shall seem to have said nothing great, that this moon is under her feet, whom it is a sin to doubt is exalted above all the choirs of angels, above also the cherubim and seraphim. Moreover, the moon is accustomed to designate not only the defect of corruption, but also the foolishness of the mind, and sometimes indeed the Church of this time; the former indeed on account of mutability, the latter truly on account of the splendor received from elsewhere. Each moon truly, if I may so say, is placed congruously enough under Mary's feet, though in one way and another: since the fool is changed as the moon; but the wise man remains as the sun (Ecclus. 27:12). For in the sun there is both heat and stable

splendor; in the moon splendor alone, and that altogether mutable and uncertain, which never remains in the same state. Rightly therefore is Mary held to be clothed with the sun, who penetrated the abyss of divine wisdom deeper than can be believed: so that as much as the condition of the creature allows without personal union, she seems immersed in that inaccessible light. For by that fire are the prophet's lips purged (Isa. 6:7), by that fire the seraphim are kindled. Mary truly merited far otherwise, not as it were to be touched summarily, but rather to be covered on all sides, and surrounded, and as if enclosed by the fire itself. Most white indeed, but also most hot is the clothing of this woman: whose all things are known to be so excellently irradiated, that nothing in her, I do not say dark, but not even somewhat obscure, or less lucid, but not even anything lukewarm, or not most fervent, may be suspected.

4. All foolishness truly is far under her feet, so that she is altogether absent from the number of foolish women, and the college of fatuous virgins. Nay rather and that unique fool, and the prince of all foolishness, who truly changed as the moon, lost wisdom in his beauty, being trodden and crushed under Mary's feet, suffers a miserable servitude. For she namely is the woman formerly promised by God, who would crush the head of the ancient serpent with the foot of virtue: at whose heel he clearly lay in wait with many deceits (Gen. 3:15), but without cause. For she alone crushed all heretical deprav-

ity. One dogmatized that Christ had not been brought forth from the substance of His flesh; another hissed that she had not brought forth the little one, but had found Him; another, even after the birth, blasphemed that she was known by a man; another, not enduring to hear of the Mother of God, most impiously suggested the slurring of that great name Theotocos. But the lurkers were crushed, the supplanters trodden down, the detractors confounded, and all generations call her blessed. Finally and continually the dragon through Herod lay in wait for her when bringing forth, that he might devour the son when born, because there were enmities between the seed of the woman and the dragon.

5. Now if the Church is rather to be understood by the name of the moon, because namely she does not shine from herself, but from Him who says: "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5); thou hast the mediatrix, whom I commended to thee a little before, evidently expressed. "A woman," he says, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." Let us embrace Mary's footsteps, my brethren, and with most devoted supplication be prostrated at those blessed feet. Let us hold her, nor let her go until she has blessed us: for she is powerful. For she is namely the fleece in the midst between the dew and the floor, the woman between the sun and the moon, Mary constituted between Christ and the Church. But perhaps thou wonderest not so much at the fleece covered with dew, as at the woman clothed with the sun. Great indeed

is the familiarity, but altogether wonderful the proximity of the sun and the woman. For how does so fragile a nature subsist in such vehement heat? Rightly indeed dost thou wonder, holy Moses, and more curiously desirest to look into it. Nevertheless, loose the shoes from thy feet, and put away the coverings of carnal thoughts, if thou desirest to approach. "I go," he says, "and I will see this great vision" (Exod. 3:3). A great vision plainly, the bush burning without combustion; a great sign, the woman remaining unharmed clothed with the sun. It is not of the nature of the bush, when covered on all sides with flames, to remain nevertheless unburnt; not the power of a woman, that she should sustain the clothing of the sun. It is not of human virtue, but not even of angelic indeed: a certain more sublime one is necessary. "The Holy Spirit," he says, "shall come upon thee." And as if she should answer: Because God is a spirit, and our God is a consuming fire: "The power," he says, "not mine, not thine, but of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35). It is therefore no wonder if under such a shadow such a clothing is sustained.

6. "A woman," he says, "clothed with the sun." Plainly clothed with light as with a garment. Perhaps the carnal man does not perceive it: for it is namely spiritual, it seems foolishness to him. It did not seem so to the Apostle, who said: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14). How familiar hast thou been made to Him, O Lady! how near, nay how intimate hast thou merited to be made, how much grace hast thou found

with Him! He remains in thee, and thou in Him; and thou clothest Him, and art clothed by Him. Thou clothest Him with the substance of flesh, and He clothes thee with the glory of His majesty. Thou clothest the sun with a cloud, and thou thyself art clothed with the sun. For the Lord has done a new thing upon the earth, that a woman should encompass a man (Jer. 31:22), and none other than Christ, of whom it is said: "Behold the man, the Orient is his name" (Zech. 6:12). A new thing also He has done in heaven, that a woman should appear clothed with the sun. Finally He also crowned Him, and in turn merited to be crowned by Him. Go forth, daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him (Cant. 3:11). But this elsewhere. Meanwhile indeed enter rather, and see the queen in the diadem wherewith her son crowned her.

7. "On her head," he says, "a crown of twelve stars." Plainly a head worthy to be crowned with stars, which, shining far more clearly than they, adorns them rather than being adorned by them. Why should not stars crown her whom the sun clothes? As the days of spring, he says, the flowers of roses surrounded her, and the lilies of the valleys (Ecclus. 50:8). For namely the left hand of the bridegroom is under her head and already his right hand embraces her (Cant. 2:6). Who may estimate those gems? who may name the stars of which Mary's royal diadem is composed? It is above man to expound the reason of this crown, to indicate its composition. We, how-

ever, according to the module of our smallness, abstaining from a dangerous scrutiny of secrets, may perhaps not incongruously seem to understand these twelve stars as twelve prerogatives of graces with which Mary is uniquely adorned. For it is possible to find in Mary prerogatives of heaven, prerogatives of the flesh, prerogatives of the heart: and if this ternary should be multiplied by a quaternary, we have perhaps twelve stars with which the diadem of our queen may shine before all. To me indeed a singular brilliance gleams; first indeed, in Mary's generation; second, in the angelic salutation; third, in the coming of the Spirit; fourth, in the ineffable conception of the Son of God. Thus also in these a sidereal beauty plainly irradiates, that she is the first-fruits of virginity, that she is fruitful without corruption, that she is pregnant without burden, that she is a mother without pain. Nevertheless also in a certain special splendor there shine in Mary the meekness of shame, the devotion of humility, the magnanimity of belief, and the martyrdom of the heart. It will be for your diligence to look into each one more carefully. We meanwhile shall seem to have done enough, if we can briefly demonstrate them.

8. What therefore sidereal gleams in the generation of Mary? Plainly that she arose from kings, that she is of the seed of Abraham, that she is of the noble stock of David. If that seems too little, add that she is known to have been divinely granted to that generation on account of a singular privilege of sanctity; that she was

long before promised to the same fathers from heaven; that she was prefigured by mystic miracles; that she was foretold by prophetic oracles. For the priestly rod, while it flowered without a root (Num. 17:8), prefigured her; Gideon's fleece, while it was wet in the midst of the dry floor (Judg. 6:37, 38); the eastern gate in Ezekiel's vision, which was never opened to anyone (Ezek. 44:1, 2). Finally Isaiah, before others, promised that this rod would arise from the root of Jesse (Isa. 11:1); now more evidently that a virgin would bring forth. Deservedly this great sign is written to have appeared in heaven, because it is known to have been promised from heaven so long before. The Lord says: "He himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive" (Isa. 7:14). A great sign indeed He gave, because He who gave it is also great. The brilliance of this prerogative, whose sight does it not vehemently reverberate? Now in this, that she was saluted so reverently and most dutifully by the archangel, so that even then she seemed to be seen exalted upon the royal throne above all the orders of the celestial legions, and he was almost about to adore a woman, who had been accustomed hitherto to be adored equanimously by men; the most excellent merit of our Virgin, and her singular grace is commended to us.

9. Nevertheless also that new manner of conception shines, so that not in iniquity, as all others, but by the Holy Spirit coming upon her, Mary alone, and from sanctification alone, should conceive. For that she brought forth the

true God and Son of God, so that the same Son of God and of man, altogether one God and man, should come forth from Mary, is an abyss of light: nor could I easily say, that even an angelic eye does not grow dim at the vehemence of this brilliance. For the rest, truly, both the virginity of the flesh and the purpose of virginity, and especially the novelty of the purpose itself, evidently illustrate: that namely in the liberty of the spirit, transcending the decrees of the Mosaic law, she vowed an unviolated holiness of body and spirit together to God. For she proves the inviolable foundation of her purpose, in that she answered the angel promising her a son so constantly: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (Luke 1:34.) For perhaps she was first troubled at his word, and thought what manner of salutation this should be, because she had heard herself called blessed among women, who namely always desired to be blessed among virgins. And from then indeed she thought what manner of salutation this was, because now it seemed to be suspect. But where in the promise of a son a manifest danger to virginity seemed to be, she could no longer dissemble from saying: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" Meritedly therefore she both merited that blessing, and did not lose this one; so that both virginity from fecundity, and fecundity from virginity, should become far more glorious, and these two stars seem to illustrate each other with mutual rays. For it is a great thing to be a virgin; but to be a virgin mother, is far more ample by every

mode. Rightly also that most troublesome weariness, with which all other pregnant women are known to labor, she alone did not feel, who alone conceived without libidinous pleasure. Whence also in the very beginning of her conception, when especially other women are most miserably afflicted, Mary with all alacrity climbed the mountains to minister to Elizabeth. But she also ascended Bethlehem, with the birth now imminent, carrying that most precious deposit, carrying a light burden, carrying Him by whom she was carried. Thus also in the birth how lucid it is that she brought forth a new offspring with a new exultation, alone among women alien from the common curse and pain of those bringing forth. If we weigh the prices of things from their rarity, nothing can be found rarer than these. Since in all these she was seen to have no first like her, nor to have a following one. From which we, if we faithfully look into them, without doubt conceive admiration, but also veneration, but also devotion, but also consolation.

10. But for the rest, which still remain, they also require imitation. It is not for us to be promised divinely in so many ways and modes before birth, to be foretold from heaven: nor to be honored with the obsequies of so new a salutation by the archangel Gabriel. Moreover, she communicates the other two less to us: plainly her secret is her own. For she is the only one of whom it is said: "That which is born in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20): the only one to whom it is said: "The Holy one that shall be born

of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Let virgins be offered to the king, but after her: for she alone claims the primacy for herself. Much more truly she alone conceived without corruption, bore without burden, brought forth her son without pain. Therefore nothing of these is required of us; but plainly something is required. For if even the meekness of shame is lacking to us, if humility of heart, if magnanimity of faith, if compassion of mind, will the singularity of the gifts excuse our negligence? A most grateful gem indeed in a diadem, a star shining in the head, is the blush in the face of a bashful man. Or does anyone think that she lacked this grace, who was full of grace? Mary was bashful: we prove it from the Gospel. For where at any time does she seem to have been talkative, where presumptuous? She stood without seeking to speak to her son (Matt. 12:46), nor by maternal authority did she either interrupt his speech, or burst into the habitation in which the Son was speaking. Finally, in the whole text of the four Gospels, if we remember well, Mary is heard speaking only four times. First indeed to the angel, but when he had already once and twice addressed her: second, to Elizabeth, when the voice of her salutation made John exult in the womb, and she magnifying Mary, she herself rather took care to magnify the Lord (Luke 1:34-55): third, to the Son, when he was already twelve years of age, that she and his father had sought him sorrowing (Luke 2:48): fourth, at the wedding to the Son and the ministers (John 2:3, 5). And that speech indeed was a most certain

index of innate meekness and virginal modesty. For reputing the shame of others as her own, she could not sustain, she could not dissemble the defect of wine. Where plainly she was rebuked by the Son, as one mild and humble of heart, she neither answered him, nor yet despaired, admonishing the ministers to do what he should say to them.

11. Is it not read that the shepherds came from the beginning, and found Mary first of all? "They found," says the evangelist, "Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger" (Luke 2:16). So also the magi also, if thou recallest, did not find the child without Mary his mother (Matt. 2:11), and introducing into the temple the Lord of the temple, she heard many things indeed from Simeon both concerning him and concerning herself (Luke 2:34, 35), slow to speak, swift to hear. And indeed "Mary kept all these words, conferring them in her heart" (Luke 19:51): but in all these thou shalt not find that she made any word whatever concerning the very sacrament of the Lord's incarnation. Woe to us, who have breath in our nostrils! Woe to those of us who bring forth the whole spirit, who, according to that saying of the comic poet, being full of chinks, flow out on all sides (Terent. in Eunucho, I, II, 25). Finally so many times Mary heard her son, not only speaking to the crowds in parables, but also revealing the mysteries of the kingdom of God to the disciples apart, she saw him doing miracles, she saw him then hanging on the cross, she saw him expiring, she saw him rising again,

she saw him also ascending: but in all these how often is the voice of the most modest virgin, how often is the voice of the most chaste turtle-dove mentioned as being heard? Finally thou readest in the Acts of the Apostles, that returning from Mount Olivet they persevered with one mind in prayer. Who? if Mary was perchance present, let her be named first, who is above all, both by the prerogative of the Son, and by the privilege of her own sanctity. "Peter and Andrew," he says, "James and John," and the others who follow. "All these persevered with one mind with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus." Did she thus also exhibit herself as the last of the women, so that she was placed the very last of all? Truly carnal were the disciples as yet, to whom the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:39), when there was a contention among them concerning the primacy (Luke 22:24); while Mary, by as much as she was greater, humbled herself not only in all things, but also before all. Deservedly was the last made first, who, though she was first of all, made herself the last. Deservedly was she made lady of all, who exhibited herself as the handmaid of all. Deservedly finally was she exalted above the angels, who inclined herself with ineffable meekness even below widows and penitents, even below her from whom seven demons had been cast out. I beseech you, little sons, emulate this virtue, if you love Mary; if you strive to please her, emulate her modesty. For nothing is so fit for

a man, nothing so congruous for a Christian, and especially nothing so becomes a monk.

12. And indeed the virtue of humility shines forth clearly enough in the Virgin from this very meekness. For namely humility and meekness are foster-sisters, most closely confederated in Him who said: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). For as pride is the mother of presumption, so true meekness does not proceed except from true humility. Nor is humility commended only in Mary's silence, but it resonates more evidently in her speech. She had heard: "That which shall be born of thee Holy, shall be called the Son of God": and she answered nothing other than that she was his handmaid. Thence she came to Elizabeth, and immediately the singular glory of the Virgin is revealed to her by the Spirit. Finally she also wondered at the person of her who came, saying: "Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" She also commended the voice of her who saluted, adding: "As the voice of thy salutation was made in my ears, the infant in my womb exulted in joy": and she beatified the faith of her who believed: "Blessed art thou," saying, "who hast believed, because those things which were said to thee by the Lord shall be perfected in thee." Great praises indeed: but even devoted humility, not suffering itself to retain anything, rather poured all things back into Him whose benefits were being praised in her. Thou, she says, magnifiest the Mother of the Lord: but "my soul doth magnify the Lord." In my voice

thou sayest the son exulted in joy: but "my spirit hath exulted in God my savior"; and he also, as a friend of the bridegroom, rejoices with joy at the voice of the bridegroom. Thou sayest that she is blessed who had believed; but the cause of belief and of beatitude is the regard of heavenly piety, so that from this rather "all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:35-48), because God has regarded his humble and small handmaid.

Nevertheless, do we think, brethren, that holy Elizabeth erred in that which she spoke surely through the Spirit? Far be it! Plainly blessed is she whom God has regarded, and blessed she who believed. For this was the great fruit of the divine regard. For by the ineffable artifice of the Spirit coming upon her, such magnanimity was added to such humility in the secret of the virginal heart, that, as we have said before of integrity and fecundity, these also nevertheless become stars clearer from mutual respect, because namely neither did such humility diminish magnanimity, nor such magnanimity diminish humility: but when she was so humble in her own estimation, she was nevertheless also magnanimous in the belief of the promise, so that she who reputed herself as nothing other than a small handmaid, in no way doubted that she was chosen for this incomprehensible mystery, for this admirable commerce, for this inscrutable sacrament, and believed that she would soon be the true parent of God and man. This indeed the prerogative of divine grace works in the hearts of the elect, so that neither does humility make them pusillani-

mous, nor magnanimity arrogant; but rather they cooperate with each other, so that not only does no pride steal in from magnanimity, but from this humility is greatly promoted: so that they are found by that much more fearful, and not ungrateful to the giver of gifts; and in turn from the occasion of humility no pusillanimity steals in: but the less each one has been accustomed to presume of his own even in the smallest things, by so much more also in any great things let him trust in divine virtue.

14. The martyrdom indeed of the Virgin (which namely among the stars of her diadem, if you remember, we named the twelfth) is commended both in Simeon's prophecy and in the very history of the Lord's passion. "This one is set," says the holy old man concerning the little child Jesus, "for a sign which shall be contradicted: and thy own soul," but to Mary he said, "a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2:34, 35). Truly thy soul, O blessed mother, a sword has pierced. Otherwise only by piercing it, would it penetrate the flesh of thy Son. And indeed after that thy Jesus (of all indeed, but specially thine) had given up his spirit, the cruel lance plainly did not touch his soul, which (sparing not even the dead, whom it could not harm) opened his side, but it surely pierced thy soul. His soul namely was not already there; but thine plainly could not be torn away from there. Therefore the force of sorrow pierced thy soul, so that we may not unmeritedly preach thee as more than a martyr, in whom namely

the effect of compassion exceeded the sense of corporeal passion.

15. Or was not that word to thee more than a sword, truly piercing the soul, and reaching even to the division of soul and spirit: "Woman, behold thy son"? (John 19:26.) O what an exchange! John is delivered to thee instead of Jesus, the servant instead of the Lord, the disciple instead of the master; the son of Zebedee instead of the Son of God, a pure man instead of the true God! How should this hearing not pierce thy most affectionate soul, when even our breasts, though stony, though iron, the record alone cuts? Do not wonder, brethren, that Mary is said to have been a martyr in her soul. Let him wonder, who does not remember that he heard Paul mentioning among the greatest crimes of the gentiles, that they were without affection (Rom. 1:31). Far was this from Mary's bowels, far let it be also from her little servants. But perhaps someone may say: Did she not foreknow that he was about to die? And undoubtedly. Did she not hope that he was about to rise again immediately? And faithfully. Above these things did she grieve for him crucified? And vehemently. Otherwise who art thou, brother, or whence is this wisdom to thee, that thou shouldst wonder more at Mary suffering with him, than at Mary's son suffering? He even could die in body, could she not die with him in heart? Charity did that, than which no one had a greater; charity also did this, to which after that one there was none other like. Now thee, mother of mercy, through the very affection of thy most

sincere mind, the moon lying prostrate at thy feet, interpellates with devoted supplications, being constituted its mediatrix with the sun of justice: so that in thy light it may see light, and merit the grace of the sun by thy obtainment, whom he truly loved before all, and adorned, clothing thee with the stole of glory, and placing a crown of beauty upon thy head. Thou art full of graces, full of heavenly dew, leaning upon the beloved, flowing with delights. Feed today thy poor, O Lady; let the whelps also eat of the crumbs, nor to the servant of Abraham only, but also to the camels give drink from thy over-flowing pitcher (Gen. 24:15-20): because thou truly art the maiden pre-elected and prepared for the Son of the Most High, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

SERMON ON THE NATIVITY OF THE B. V. MARY. On the aqueduct.

1. Heaven embraces the presence of the Fruitful Virgin, while the earth venerates her memory. Thus, indeed, the presentation of all good is found there, and here its remembrance; there satiety, and here a certain thin libation of first-fruits; there the reality, and here the name. "Lord," it says, "thy name is forever, and thy memorial unto generation and generation" (Psalm 101:13). Generation and generation is certainly not of angels, but of men. Do you wish to know that his name and memorial is in us, and his presence on high? "Thus shall you pray," he said: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). A faithful

prayer, whose very beginnings remind us both of divine adoption and of earthly pilgrimage: so that knowing this, that as long as we are not in heaven, we are pilgrims away from the Lord, we may groan within ourselves, awaiting the adoption of sons, namely the presence of the Father. Significantly, therefore, the prophet also speaks of Christ, saying: "The spirit before our face is Christ the Lord: under his shadow we shall live among the nations" (Lam. 4:20). For among the heavenly beatitudes one does not live in shadow, but rather in splendor. "In the splendors of the saints," he says, "from the womb before the daystar have I begotten thee" (Psalm 109:3). This indeed the Father says.

2. But the mother truly did not beget that same one in splendor, but in shadow, yet not unless by that with which the Most High overshadowed her. Deservedly, therefore, does the Church sing—not indeed that Church of the saints which is on high and in splendor, but that which meanwhile is a pilgrim on earth: "Under his shadow whom I had desired I sat, and his fruit is sweet to my throat" (Cant. 2:3). For she had asked that the noonday light, where the bridegroom feeds, be shown to her; but she was repressed, and instead of the fullness of light she received shadow, and instead of satiety, she received meanwhile a taste. Finally, she does not say: "Under his shadow which I had desired"; but: "Under his shadow whom I had desired I sat." For she had not sought his shadow, but indeed the noon itself, full light from full light. "And his fruit," she says, "is sweet

to my throat": as if she should say, to my taste. "How long wilt thou not spare me, nor let me alone, that I may swallow down my spittle?" How long remains that sentence: "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet"? (Psalm 33:9.) And indeed he is sweet to the taste, and sweet to the throat, so that deservedly even over this the bride has broken forth into a voice of thanksgiving and praise.

3. But when will it be said: "Eat, friends, and drink; and be inebriated, most dear ones"? (Cant. 5:1.) "Let the just feast," says the Prophet, but "in the sight of God" (Psalm 67:4), surely not in the shadow. And of himself: "I shall be satisfied," he says, "when thy glory shall appear" (Psalm 16:15). But the Lord also said to the apostles: "You are they who have remained with me in my temptations; and I dispose to you, as my Father has disposed to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink upon my table" (Luke 22:28, 30). But where? "In my kingdom," he says. Blessed plainly is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Therefore let thy name be hallowed, through which in some way meanwhile thou art in us, O Lord, dwelling through faith in our hearts, since thy name is already invoked upon us. Thy kingdom come. Let that come which is perfect, and let that which is in part be done away. "You have," says the Apostle, "your fruit unto sanctification, but the end life everlasting" (Rom. 6:22). Life everlasting, an unfailing fountain, which irrigates the entire surface of paradise. Nor does it only irrigate, but it inebriates, the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which flow

with impetus from Lebanon: and the impetus of the river makes joyful the city of God. But who is the fountain of life, unless Christ the Lord? "When Christ," he says, "shall appear as your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory" (Coloss. 3:4). Truly fullness itself emptied itself, that it might become for us justice, and sanctification, and remission; not yet appearing as life, or glory, or beatitude. The fountain has been derived even unto us, in the streets the waters have been derived, although the stranger does not drink from them (Prov. 5:16, 17). That heavenly vein descended through the aqueduct, not however exhibiting the abundance of the fountain, but infusing droplets of grace into our parched hearts, to some indeed more, to others less. Full indeed is the aqueduct, so that others may receive from the fullness, but not the fullness itself.

4. You have already noticed, unless I am mistaken, whom I wish to call the aqueduct, who receiving the fullness of the fountain itself from the heart of the Father, brought it forth to us, if not as it is, at least as we were able to receive it. For you know to whom it was said: "Hail, full of grace." But do we wonder that she could be found, from whom such and so great an aqueduct should be made, whose summit indeed, like that ladder which the patriarch Jacob saw, should touch the heavens (Gen. 28:12), nay even transcend the heavens, and be able to reach that most vivid fountain of waters which are above the heavens? Solomon also wondered, and like one despairing he said: "A strong woman who

shall find?" (Prov. 31:10.) Indeed, for this reason the streams of grace were lacking to the human race for so long a time, because there did not yet intercede that so desirable aqueduct of which we speak. Nor will you wonder that it was waited for longer, if you remember how many years Noah, a just man, labored in the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight souls, were made safe, and that for quite a short time.

5. But how did this our aqueduct reach that so sublime fountain? How do you think, unless by the vehemence of desire, unless by the fervor of devotion, unless by the purity of prayer? as it is written: "The prayer of the just man penetrates the heavens" (Ecclus. 35:21). And who is just, if not the just Mary, from whom the sun of justice has risen for us? How therefore did she reach the inaccessible majesty, unless by knocking, by asking, by seeking? Finally, she also found what she was seeking, to whom it was said: "Thou hast found grace with God" (Luke 1:30). What? she is full of grace, and yet she finds grace? Entirely worthy to find what she seeks, she for whom her own fullness does not suffice, nor can she be content with her own good; but, as it is written: "He that drinks me, shall yet thirst" (Ecclus. 24:29); she asks for an overflowing for the salvation of the whole world. "The Holy Spirit," he says, "shall come upon thee" (Luke 1:35), and that precious balsam shall flow into thee with such abundance, and with such fullness, that it shall overflow most copiously all around. So it is: already we feel it, already our faces are made joyful in oil. Already

we cry out: "Thy name is oil poured out," and thy memorial unto generation and generation. This indeed is not in vain: and if oil is poured out, yet it does not perish. For this reason indeed even the young maidens, namely the little souls, love the bridegroom (Cant. 1:2), and that not a little; and the ointment descending from the head, received not only the beard, but even the very hem of the garment.

6. Behold, O man, the counsel of God, recognize the counsel of wisdom, the counsel of piety. About to irrigate the floor with heavenly dew, he first infused the whole fleece (Judg. 6:37-40): about to redeem the human race, he conferred the entire price upon Mary. Why this? Perhaps that Eve might be excused through her daughter, and the complaint of the man against the woman might henceforth be put to rest. Do not say any longer, O Adam: "The woman whom thou gavest me, gave me of the forbidden tree" (Gen. 3:12); say rather: The woman whom thou gavest me, has fed me with the blessed fruit. A most pious counsel indeed; but perhaps another lies hidden, nor is this the whole of it. This indeed is true, but it is little, unless I am mistaken, for your desires. It is the sweetness of milk; perhaps, if we press more strongly, the fatness of butter will also be drawn out. Therefore behold more deeply, with how great an affection of devotion he wished her to be honored by us, who placed the fullness of all good in Mary: so that accordingly if there is any hope in us, if any grace, if any salvation, we may know that it redounds from

her, who ascends flowing with delights. Plainly a garden of delights, upon which not only did that divine south wind breathe in coming, but also blew through in supervening, so that on all sides its aromas may flow and overflow, namely the charisms of graces. Take away this solar body which illuminates the world: where is the day? Take away Mary, this star of the sea, surely of a great and spacious sea: what remains but involving darkness, and the shadow of death, and most dense gloom?

7. With all the marrows of our hearts, therefore, with all the affections of our breasts, and with all our vows, let us venerate this Mary; because such is the will of him, who wished us to have everything through Mary. This, I say, is his will, but for our sake. For providing for the wretched in all things and through all things, he solaces our trepidation, excites our faith, strengthens our hope, drives away diffidence, and erects our pusillanimity. Thou wast afraid to approach the Father, terrified by the mere hearing, thou wast fleeing to the leaves; he gave thee Jesus as a mediator. What should such a Son not obtain with such a Father? He shall surely be heard for his reverence: for the Father loves the Son. Or dost thou tremble also at him? He is thy brother and thy flesh, tempted in all things without sin, that he might become merciful. This brother Mary gave to thee. But perhaps even in him thou mayest fear the divine majesty, because although he was made man, he nevertheless remained God. Dost thou wish to have an advocate

also to him? Run to Mary. Pure humanity indeed is in Mary, not only pure from all contamination, but also pure in the singularity of her nature. Nor would I say it with doubt, she also shall be heard for her reverence. Surely the Son will hear the Mother, and the Father will hear the Son. Little children, this is the ladder of sinners, this is my greatest confidence, this is the whole reason of my hope. For what? can the Son either repel, or sustain a repulse? can the Son not hear, or not be heard? Plainly neither. "Thou hast found," says the angel, "grace with God." Happily. She shall always find grace, and grace alone is what we need. The prudent Virgin was not seeking wisdom, like Solomon, not riches, not honors, not power, but grace. Indeed it is grace alone by which we are saved.

8. Why do we desire other things, brethren? Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks, she finds, and she cannot be frustrated. Let us seek grace, but grace with God: for with men grace is deceitful. Let others seek merit, let us study to find grace. For what? is it of grace that we are here? Surely it is of the mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed. Who are we? We perjurers, we adulterers, we homicides, we robbers, the very refuse of this world. Consult your consciences, brethren, and see, that where sin abounded, grace also superabounds. Mary does not pretend merit, but seeks grace. Finally she trusts in grace to such an extent, and is not high-minded, that she fears the angelic salutation. "Mary," he says, "thought

what kind of salutation this was" (Luke 1:29). Indeed she reputed herself unworthy of the angelic salutation. And perhaps she was meditating such things: Whence is this to me, that the angel of my Lord should come to me? Fear not, Mary, do not wonder at the angel coming: and one greater than an angel comes. Do not wonder at the angel of the Lord: and the Lord of the angel is with thee. Lastly, why shouldst thou not see an angel, since thou already livest angelically? why should an angel not visit a companion of life? why should he not salute a citizen of the saints, and a domestic of God? Plainly an angelic life is virginity: and they who shall not marry, nor be given in marriage, shall be as the angels of God.

9. Do you see that in this way also our aqueduct ascends to the fountain; nor does she now penetrate the heavens by prayer alone, but also by incorruption, which makes one near to God, as the Wise Man says? (Wisd. 6:20.) For the holy virgin was holy in body and spirit, to whom it would be specially to say: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Philip. 3:20). Holy, I say, in body and spirit, lest perhaps you should doubt anything concerning this aqueduct. Sublime indeed it is, but nonetheless it remains most entire. A garden enclosed, a fountain sealed, the temple of the Lord, the shrine of the Holy Spirit. Nor is she a foolish virgin, to whom there is not only oil, but a fullness of oil stored in the vessel. She has disposed ascensions in her heart, ascending equally by conversation, as we have already said, and by prayer. Finally she went into the hill country

with haste, and saluted Elizabeth, and was in her service for about three months, so that already then mother could say to mother what so long after the Son said to the son: "Suffer it now; for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice" (Matt. 3:15). Plainly ascending the mountains, her justice is as the mountains of God. For this was the third ascent of the Virgin, so that a threefold cord might with difficulty be broken. For charity was fervent in seeking grace, virginity was shining in the flesh, humility was eminent in service. For if everyone who humbles himself shall be exalted, what is more sublime than this humility? Elizabeth wondered that she had come, and said: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43.) But now let her wonder more, that after the likeness of the Son she also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Deservedly therefore that divine singer, foretelling in admiration of her, said: "Who is she that ascends like the rising dawn, fair as the moon, chosen as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" (Cant. 6:9.) She ascends plainly above the human race, she ascends even to the angels, but she also transcends them, and goes beyond every heavenly creature. Indeed she must necessarily draw above the angels the living water which she pours back to men.

"How," she said, "shall this be done, because I know not man?" Truly holy in body and spirit, both having integrity of the flesh, and the purpose of integrity. And the angel answering, said: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the

power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:34, 35). Do not ask me, he says; it is above me, and I shall not be able to reach it. "The Holy Spirit," not an angelic spirit, "shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee," not I. Do not stand even among the angels, holy Virgin; something more sublime to be given by thy ministry the parched earth awaits. When thou shalt have passed them a little, thou shalt find him whom thy soul loves. A little, I say, not because he does not incomparably super-excel, but because thou findest nothing intermediate between him and them. Pass therefore the powers and dominations, the cherubim also and seraphim, that thou mayest come to him, concerning whom they cry out to one another: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth" (Isa. 6:3). "For the Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The fountain of wisdom, the Word of the Father on high. This Word through thy mediation shall become flesh: so that he who says: "I in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:10); may nonetheless say, that "I proceeded and came from God" (John 8:42). "In the beginning," he says, "was the Word." Already the fountain gushes; but meanwhile only in itself. Finally "the Word was with God" (John 1:1), surely dwelling in light inaccessible; and the Lord said from the beginning: "I think thoughts of peace, and not of affliction" (Jer. 29:11). But thy thought is with thee, and what thou thinkest, we know not. For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who was

his counselor? Therefore the thought of peace descended into the work of peace: the Word was made flesh, and dwells now in us. He dwells plainly through faith in our hearts, he dwells in our memory, he dwells in our thought, and even to the imagination itself he descends. For what would man first think concerning God, unless perhaps he should fabricate an idol in his heart?

11. He was incomprehensible and inaccessible, invisible and altogether unthinkable. But now he wished to be comprehended, he wished to be seen, he wished to be thought. In what way, you ask? Indeed lying in a manger, resting in a virginal lap, preaching on a mountain, spending the night in prayer, or hanging on a cross, growing pale in death, free among the dead, and commanding in hell, or even rising on the third day, and showing to the apostles the places of the nails as signs of victory, finally ascending before them into the secrets of heaven. Which of these is not thought truly, not piously, not holily? Whatever of these I think, I think God; and through all things he is my God. These things I have called meditating wisdom, and I have judged it prudence to utter the memory of sweetness, which in nuclei of this kind the sacerdotal rod produced copiously; which drawing in the highest things, Mary poured back to us more abundantly. In the highest things plainly, and beyond the angels, she who received the Word from the Father's own heart, as it is written: "Day unto day utters word" (Psalm 18:3). Surely the Father is day: for day from day is the Salvation of God (Psalm 95:2).

Or is not the Virgin also day? And a brilliant one. A plainly glowing day, which proceeds like the rising dawn, fair as the moon, chosen as the sun.

12. Behold therefore how she reached even to the angels by the fullness of grace, and above the angels by the Holy Spirit supervening. In the angels there is charity, there is purity, there is humility. Which of these did not shine in Mary? But it was shown above, as indeed it could be shown by us: let us pursue the super-eminence. For to which of the angels was it ever said: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore also the Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"? Finally Truth has sprung out of the earth, not from an angelic creature: nor did he take hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. It is a great thing for an angel to be a minister of the Lord; but Mary merited something more sublime, that she should be the mother. The fruitfulness of the Virgin, therefore, is a super-eminent glory, and she was made so much more excellent than the angels by a singular gift, as she has inherited a more different name of mother than the ministers. This grace she found, being already full of grace, so that with fervent charity, entire virginity, and devoted humility, she should nonetheless become pregnant without the knowledge of man, and bring forth without a woman's pain. It is a small thing: that which was born of her is called Holy, and is the Son of God.

13. For the rest, brethren, we must take the greatest care lest the Word, which went out from the mouth of the Father to us through the mediation of the Virgin, return empty: but through the same Virgin let us nonetheless return grace for grace. Let us utter the memory, until we sigh for the presence, and let the streams of grace be returned to their origin, that they may flow more abundantly. Otherwise unless they return to the fountain, they are dried up, and being unfaithful in a little, we do not merit to receive that which is greatest. Plainly a little is memory compared to presence, a little compared to that which we desire, great compared to that which we merit: far below desire, but nonetheless above merit. Wisely therefore the bride also for this little congratulates herself not a little. For when she had said: "Show me where thou feedest, where thou liest in the midday" (Cant. 1:6); receiving small things instead of immense, and for a noonday pasture libating an evening sacrifice, she nonetheless does not murmur or grow sad, as is wont to be done, but gives thanks, and in all things shows herself more devoted. For she knows that if she shall be faithful in the shadow of memory, she will without doubt obtain the light of presence. Therefore, you who remember the Lord, be not silent, and give no silence. Indeed they who have the Lord present do not need exhortation: and what another Prophet says: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Sion" (Psalm 147:1), is of congratulation rather than of commonition. They who walk in faith

need admonition lest they be silent, and lest they give silence to him. For he speaks, and he speaks peace into his people, and upon his saints, and into those who are converted to the heart. Moreover with the holy thou shalt be holy, and with the innocent man thou shalt be innocent (Psalm 17:26): and he will hear one hearing himself, and will speak to one speaking to him. Otherwise thou hast given silence to him if thou art silent. But whence if thou art silent? From praise. "Be not silent," he says, "and give no silence to him, until he establish, and until he set Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isa. 62:6, 7). The praise of Jerusalem, a pleasant and becoming praise. Unless perhaps we think the citizens of Jerusalem, the angels, are delighted by mutual praises, and deceive concerning vanity into that very same thing.

14. Thy will be done, Father, as in heaven and in earth, so that the praise of Jerusalem may be established in the earth. For what is it now? Does the angel not seek glory from angel in Jerusalem, and man desires to be praised by man in the earth? Execrable perversity! but let it be of those who have ignorance of God, who have forgotten the Lord their God. You who remember the Lord, be not silent from his praise, until it be established and perfected in the earth. For there is an irreprehensible silence, nay and rather a laudable one. There is also a word not good. Otherwise the prophet would not say, that "it is good for a man to wait with silence for the Salvation of God" (Lam. 3:26). A good silence from boasting,

good from blasphemy, good from murmuring and detraction. For another, exasperated by the magnitude of the labor and the weight of the day, murmurs in his mind; and he judges those who watch for his soul, as they who must surely render an account. It is a clamor, but above all silence that clamor of an obdurate mind makes to be silent the voice of the word, which it does not suffer to be heard. Another fails in expectation from pusillanimity of spirit: and this is the worst word of blasphemy, which is neither remitted in this world, nor in the future. A third walks in great things, and in wonders above himself, saying: Our hand is exalted; thinking himself to be something, when he is nothing. What should he speak to this one, who speaks peace? For he says: Because I am rich, and need nothing. Moreover the sentence of Truth is: "Woe to you rich, because you have here your consolation" (Luke 6:24). On the contrary: "Blessed," he says, "are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:5). Let therefore the maledict tongue be silent in us, the blasphemous tongue, the boastful tongue; since it is good in this threefold silence to wait for the Salvation of the Lord, so that thou mayest say: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" (1 Kings 3:10). For voices of that kind are not to him, but against him, as the lawgiver said to those murmuring: "For your murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord" (Exod. 16:8).

15. Thus however you should be silent from these, lest you be altogether silent, lest you should give silence to him. Speak to him against

boasting in confession, that you may obtain pardon for past things. Speak in thanksgiving against murmuring, that you may find more abundant grace in the present. Speak in prayer against diffidence, that you may also follow after glory in the future. Confess, I say, past things, and for present things give thanks, and henceforth pray more studiously for future things: so that he himself also may not be silent from remission, from immission, from promise. Be not silent, I say, and give no silence to him. Speak, so that he himself also may speak, and thou mayest be able to say: "My beloved to me, and I to him" (Cant. 2:16). A pleasant voice, and a sweet eloquence. Indeed this is not the voice of murmuring, but the voice of the turtle-dove. And do not say: "How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" (Psalm 136:4.) It shall no longer be reputed strange, concerning which the bridegroom says: "The voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land." For he had heard one saying: "Catch for us the little foxes" (Cant. 2:12, 15): and perhaps from that she broke forth into a voice of exultation, so that she said: "My beloved to me, and I to him." Plainly the voice of the turtle-dove, which to both the living and the dead, by singular chastity indeed, perseveres for her partner, so that neither death, nor life may separate her from the charity of Christ. For behold, whether anything could have turned away this beloved from the beloved, lest he should persevere for her both sinning and turned away. Massed clouds were contending to pour over their rays, so that our iniquities might

separate between us and God: but the sun grew warm, and dissolved all things. Otherwise when wouldst thou have returned to him, unless he had persevered for thee, unless he had cried out: "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may behold thee"? (Cant. 6:12.) Be thou also therefore nonetheless persevering for him, so that by no scourges or labors mayest thou be turned away from him.

16. Wrestle with the angel, lest thou succumb; because the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Is it not a wrestling, "my beloved to me, and I to him"? (Matt. 11:12.) He has made known his love; let him experience also thine. For in many things the Lord thy God tries thee. He often turns aside, he averts his face, but not in anger. This is of probation, not of reprobation. The beloved has sustained thee; sustain thou the beloved, sustain the Lord, act manfully. Thy sins did not conquer him; let his scourges also not overcome thee, and thou shalt obtain a blessing. But when? When the dawn shall have been, when the day shall have already breathed, when Jerusalem shall have established praise in the earth. "Behold," he says, "a man wrestled with Jacob until morning" (Gen. 32:24). Make thy mercy known to me in the morning, because I have hoped in thee, O Lord. I will not be silent, nor will I give thee silence until morning; would that not even a fast. Indeed thou deignest also to be fed, but among the lilies. "My beloved to me, and I to him, who is fed among the lilies." Indeed above also, if you remember,

in the same Canticle it is evidently expressed, that the appearance of flowers accompanies the hearing of the turtle-dove. But attend, that he seems to indicate the place, not the food; nor does he express by what things he is fed, but among which. For perhaps he is fed not by food, but by the company of lilies; nor does he eat lilies, but he dwells among them. Indeed lilies please by odor rather than by flavor; and they are more apt for sight than for food.

17. Thus therefore he is fed among the lilies, until the day breathes, and the abundance of fruits succeeds to the beauty of flowers. For meanwhile it is the time of flowers, not of fruits, while we are more in hope than in reality; and walking through faith, not through appearance, we congratulate ourselves more by expectation than by experience. Finally consider the tenderness of the flower, and remember the word which the Apostle says, that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). For how great dangers seem to hang over the flowers! How easily the lily is perforated by the stings of thorns! Deservedly therefore the beloved sings: "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters" (Cant. 2:2). Was he not a lily among thorns, who was saying: "With them that hated peace I was peaceable"? (Psalm 119:7.) Moreover although the just germinates as the lily, but the bridegroom is not fed at the lily, nor does he please himself in singularity. Hear finally him dwelling among the lilies. "Where," he says, "two or three shall be gathered in my name, there am I

in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Jesus always loves middle things, the Son of man, the mediator of God and men, always reprobates bypasses and places of reclining. "My beloved to me, and I to him, who is fed among the lilies." Let us take care to have lilies, brethren, to extirpate thorns and thistles, and let us hasten to insert lilies: if at any time perhaps the beloved should deign to descend to us to be fed.

18. With Mary indeed he was fed, and that more copiously on account of the multitude of lilies. Are not the lilies the beauty of virginity, the insignia of humility, the super-eminence of charity? Yet there shall be lilies for us also, although far inferior: but not even among these will the bridegroom disdain to be fed; if indeed the hilarity of devotion shall have illustrated those thanksgivings which we predicted, the purity of intention shall have whitened prayer, and indulgence shall have bleached confession, as it is written: "If your sins shall be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; and if they shall be red as crimson, they shall be as white wool" (Isa. 1:18). Moreover whatever it is that thou preparest to offer, remember to commend it to Mary, so that grace may return to the giver of grace by the same channel by which it flowed in. For God was not impotent, and able to infuse grace without this aqueduct, as he willed; but he willed to provide a vehicle for thee. For perhaps thy hands are either full of blood, or infected with gifts, because thou hast not shaken them from every gift. And therefore take care to deliver that little which thou de-

sirest to offer, to be offered by those most grateful hands of Mary and most worthy of all acceptance, if thou dost not wish to sustain a repulse. Indeed they are certain most white lilies: nor will that lover of lilies complain that whatever it be which he shall find among the hands of Mary was not found among the lilies. Amen.

ON THE FEAST OF SAINT MICHAEL. SERMON I. On the offices of the angels towards us, and our reverence towards them.

1. The memory of the angels is celebrated today, and you demand a sermon due for so great a solemnity. But what should vile little worms speak concerning the angelic spirits? We believe indeed, and hold with indubitable faith, that they, blessed by the divine presence and vision, rejoice without end in the goods of the Lord, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have they ascended into the heart of man. What therefore should a man speak to men concerning these things, which neither he himself is sufficient to think, nor they at least to hear? Surely if the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart, the tongue must nonetheless be silent from the poverty of thought. However if it is much for us to speak concerning that clarity and glory, by which in themselves, nay in their God, the holy angels altogether super-excel our hearts; let us speak concerning that which they exhibit to us, grace and charity. For in the supreme spirits not only an admirable dignity, but also an amiable condescension is found. It is worthy therefore, brethren, that not capturing the glory, we should

so much more embrace the mercy, by which indeed it is certain that the domestics of God, the citizens of heaven, the princes of paradise, nonetheless abound. Finally the Apostle himself testifies, who being rapt even to the third heaven, merited to be present at that blessed court, and to know its secrets, that "all are ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation" (Hebr. 1:14).

2. Nor let this seem incredible to anyone; since the Creator himself and the king of angels also came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life for many (Matt. 20:28). Why therefore should anyone disdain that ministry of the angels, in which he precedes them, whom they minister to on high with all avidity and felicity? If even here thou doubtest, surely he who saw, gave testimony: "Thousands," he said, "of thousands ministered to him, and ten hundred times a hundred thousand stood before him" (Dan. 7:10). Another prophet also speaking to the Father concerning the Son, says: "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels" (Psalm 8:6). So plainly, so it becomes that he should conquer also by humility who was conquering by sublimity; and that he should be so much less than the angels, as he has enslaved himself to an inferior ministry: who is so much more excellent, as he has inherited a more different name than they. But thou mayest ask perhaps, in what he seems to be made less than the angels, when he came to minister; since, as we remembered above, they also are sent into ministry. In

this surely that he not only ministered, but was also ministered unto, and he was one and the same who ministered, and who was ministered unto. Deservedly therefore the bride in the Canticle of Canticles: "Behold," she says, "he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills" (Cant. 2:8). For ministering he leapt among the angels: but he also skipped over them being ministered unto. For the angels minister, but from another's, offering to God good works, not their own, but ours, and reporting to us his grace. Whence also the Scripture saying: "That the smoke of the aromas ascended in the sight of the Lord from the hand of the angel," solicitously premised that "much incense had been given to him" (Apoc. 8:4, 3). For they offer to God our labors, not their own; our tears, not theirs: they also report to us his gifts, and not their own.

3. Not so that minister, more sublime than all, but also more humble than all, who offered himself as a sacrifice of praise, who, offering his soul to the Father, ministers his own flesh to us even to this day. By the grace of such a great minister, it is no wonder if the holy angels minister to us worthily, and indeed willingly. For they love us, because Christ loved us. It is certainly said in a common proverb: "He who loves me, loves my dog too." We indeed, O blessed angels, are the little dogs of that Lord whom you love with such great affection; little dogs, I say, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fall from the table of our masters, who are you. And I have said these things, brethren, so that you may have

henceforth a fuller confidence toward the blessed angels, and accordingly invoke their aid more familiarly in your every necessity; but also that you may study to live more worthily in their presence, and more and more to conciliate their grace to yourselves, to catch their benevolence, and to entreat their mercy. For the sake of which thing, I think it necessary to explain to your charity other causes also, which themselves make the blessed angels solicitous for our infirmity; without their own anxiety, certainly, but not without our utility; nor to the detriment of their own happiness, but to the increase of our salvation.

4. It is certain without doubt that human souls, partakers of reason and capable of beatitude, are, if we dare to say it, kindred to the angelic nature: nor does it become you, O blessed spirits, against the precept of the law, to disdain your own likeness, which you ought to visit, although, as you yourselves see, it has been cast down into much vileness. But neither do we think that you, O heavenly citizens, are delighted by the destruction of your city, and by the ruin of the walls, which you yourselves see to be half-demolished. If you desire their restoration, as is worthy; frequently, I pray, before the throne of glory repeat the word of prayer, saying: "Deal favorably, O Lord, in thy good will with Sion; that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up" (Psalm 50:20). If you love the beauty of the house of God, indeed because you truly love it; let the living and rational stones experience your zeal, who alone can be built up together with you for its restora-

tion. This is, most dearly beloved, the threefold cord, by which from the lofty habitation of the heavens the supereminent charity of the angels is drawn to comfort us, to visit us, to help us, on account of God, on account of ourselves, on account of themselves. On account of God indeed, whose so great bowels of mercy toward us they also, as is worthy, imitate. On account of ourselves, in whom surely they pity their own likeness. On account of themselves, whose orders they wait for with all desire to be restored from us. For in the mouth of the little ones who are fed only with milk, and not yet with solid food, that praise of the divine majesty is to be perfected, whose first-fruits the angelic spirits possessing, surely enjoy with blessed delight: but they expect us so much more eagerly, as they are solicited by the expectation and petition of its consummation.

5. Since these things are so, consider, most dearly beloved, how much solicitude is necessary for us also, that we may show ourselves worthy of their frequency, and live in such a manner in the sight of the angels, lest perchance we offend their holy gazes. For woe to us, if ever provoked by our sins and negligences, they should judge us unworthy of their presence and visitation, so that we now have necessity to mourn also, and to say with the Prophet: "My friends and my neighbors have drawn near and stood against me; and they that were near me stood afar off, and they that sought my soul used violence" (Psalm 37:12-13); those having been elongated surely, whose presence could protect us and drive away the enemy.

But if we have so necessary a familiarity of angelic condescension, their offense is to be avoided by us, and we must exercise ourselves especially in those things in which we know they are delighted. For there are very many things which please them, and which it delights them to find in us: such as sobriety, chastity, voluntary poverty, frequent groans toward heaven, and prayer with tears and intention of heart. Yet above all these things the angels of peace demand of us unity and peace. Why should they not be especially delighted in those things which represent in us a certain form of their own city, so that they may wonder at the new Jerusalem on earth? But I say that, just as the participation of that city is in the same thing (Psalm 121:3), so we also may feel the same thing, let us all say the same thing, and let there be no schisms among us; but rather let us all together be one body in Christ, and each one members one of another.

1. You have heard, brethren, the Gospel reading thundering quite terribly against those who scandalize the little ones. Truth flatters no one, strokes no one, seduces no one, openly denouncing that "woe to that man through whom the scandal comes. It were better for him if that man had not been born" (Matt. 26:24). Born indeed anew, born to life, born of the Spirit, who surely is afterward consumed by the flesh. It is expedient for him, if there is anyone who stirs up scandals in this house, in this holy congregation, pleasing to God and quite grateful and familiar to his angels, that a millstone should be hanged

about his neck, and for the sweet yoke and light burden of the Savior, the heavy mass of earthly cupidity having been imposed on his shoulders, he should be drowned in the depth of this great and spacious sea, which is without doubt the wicked world. For it was less damnable for him to perish more in the world than in the monastery. For it is necessary that a man perish who has not charity, even if he should deliver his body so as to burn. And I have said this, brethren, not as if I think less well of you, or that this most wicked vice seems to reign in you; but that in that charity and unanimity, and peace in which you stand in the Lord, you may be solicitous to persevere and abound more. For what is our hope, and our joy, and our crown of glory? Is it not your unity and unanimity, in which I rejoice that you are found lovers of fraternity, and before all things having mutual charity in yourselves, which is the bond of perfection? On account of which I beseech you, so stand in the Lord, most dearly beloved. For in this all know, even the holy angels, that you are Christ's disciples, if you have love for one another.

2. Finally, if you hold in memory the threefold cause of angelic charity and solicitude toward us which we delivered to you in the preceding sermon, the utility of fraternal love can also from here be magnificently commended. For it is easy for a man to consider, who does not love his neighbor, that none of these causes which we then mentioned are available. For shall we be loved by the angels by the grace of Christ, if they

know from the lack of mutual love that we are by no means his disciples? Shall we be loved by them on account of ourselves, that is, the likeness of spiritual nature, if we are found not to love the consorts of our human nature: nay indeed if from those contentions which are among us, it shall consist that we are more carnal than spiritual? Finally, shall they love us on account of themselves, and the future restoration of their city from us, if (which God forbid!) that one thing by which alone we can be united and built up together with them, the glue of charity, should be lacking? How shall they hope that the perpetual walls of that city are to be rebuilt from us, if they know, if they see that we are not living stones who can cohere with one another; but rather dust which the wind casts away from the face of the earth, which the blast of a single word excites into a whirlwind, and the lightest breeze of any suspicion disperses? And let it suffice to have said these things for that which the Lord says: "If any-one shall scandalize one of these little ones." For I believe that hereafter you will avoid this most wicked plague with greater solicitude.

But that peace belongs rather to felicity: but the cutting off of scandals, and the victory over temptations, to fortitude: the former, I say, to glory, the latter to virtue.

3. Now who would not be moved by what follows in the Gospel: "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out"? For are we admonished to pluck out this corporal eye, or to cut off one of these hands, and similarly to cut off one foot? Far be

from us such a completely carnal and too ridiculous thought! Nay indeed, after the divine word has deterred us from exterior scandals sharply enough, as you have heard, it gives counsel as to what we ought to do concerning that scandal which we suffer interiorly, finding a contrary law in our members. For he knows our frame, that a scandal of this kind cannot so easily be avoided by us. Furthermore, that this scandal occurs in a threefold way, we may know by daily experience. For sometimes there is in us the simple eye of spiritual intention, and which should be called more of grace than ours: but our eye scandalizes us, and that which is truly from us, while our will importunately thrusts in another less chaste intention. But we have already upon this the salutary counsel of the Savior: "Pluck it out," he says, "and cast it from thee." But this will be done, if thou dost not consent, if thou rejectest, if thou resistest. In like manner it is to be understood concerning the hand and the foot. For when we are intent upon good works, our own will tries to draw us to other works, it is our hand which scandalizes us; but it ought to be cut off and cast from us, so that we do not consent to it.

4. So also desiring to profit in holy conversation, and to ascend through the steps of the ladder which appeared to Jacob, and according to what the Psalmist says, to "go from virtue to virtue" (Psalm 83:8), we more often suffer scandal from a certain foot of our pusillanimity and negligence, which surely tries to descend more and to go more remissly; but it is necessary that it

be cut off, so that the foot of grace, which stands in the direct path, may be able to run without offense, without scandal, without impediment. But as for what he says: that it is "better for us to enter into life with one eye, or hand, or foot, than having two to go into the gehenna of fire": he notes those who follow their own will, whether it be good or evil, equally, and enter by two ways, now following good things, now evil, according as their desires vary. For whom it had been deservedly more useful to adhere to grace in all things, and where the proper will opposes, to cut it off and cast it away from themselves. But it is when having been exercised for a long time in the cutting off of our own will we tame it to some extent, so that our soul may now learn not to be proud, but rather to be subject to God without any scandal or contradiction; nor is it now necessary to cast away our eye, namely that which adhering to the simple eye has itself also been made simple, or certainly is now no longer another eye, but one with it, the Apostle testifying: since "he who adheres to the Lord, is one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6:17). But what has been said of the eye, is to be understood of the hand and the foot in the same way. For whose will coheres from affection and with the desire of grace, so that he neither covets to do evil things, nor lesser good things, nor less well than grace suggests; this man is plainly a perfect man.

ON THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

SERMON I. On the Gospel reading, "Jesus seeing the crowds," etc. (Matt. 5:1-12.)

1. It is worthy to celebrate today's festivity of All Saints with all devotion. Surely if the solemnity of blessed Peter seems great, and is, or of blessed Stephen, or of any of the others; how great is this one, which is not of one only, but of all? But you are not ignorant, brethren, that it is the custom of seculars to prepare festive banquets for themselves on feast days: and by how much clearer the solemnity shall be, by so much more splendidly they feast. What then? Should not those also who are converted to the heart seek the delights of the heart, and compare spiritual things with spiritual? Therefore our banquet is already prepared, brethren, all things are already cooked, and the time for feasting has arrived. For it is worthy that the soul should first be satiated, because this portion is without doubt, and without comparison, better: especially since it is manifest that the solemnities of the Saints pertain more to souls than to bodies; and those things which are of souls, souls accept more, being joined to them indeed by a certain natural kinship. For which reason also these saints sympathize more with them, therefore they more desire the goods of souls, and are more delighted by their refreshments, since they themselves also were passible like us; and they themselves deplored the troubles of this pilgrimage and miserable exile; and they themselves experienced the heavy burden of this body, and the tumults of the world, and the temptations of the enemy. Noth-

ing therefore is doubtful, but that that festivity is more grateful and much more acceptable to them, which is intended for the feasts of souls, than that which is celebrated by seculars, fulfilling the care of the flesh in the desires of pleasures.

2. Nevertheless, whence is the bread of souls for us in a desert land, in a place of horror, and of vast solitude? Whence is spiritual food for us under the sun, where there is nothing but labor and sorrow, and affliction of spirit? But I know who said: "Ask and you shall receive": and that: "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more will your Father from heaven give a good spirit to those asking him?" (Matt. 7:7, 11; Luke 11:9, 13.) Nor am I ignorant how earnestly throughout this whole night and day you have begged that the living bread from heaven be given to you; not that which strengthens the body, but that which confirms the heart of man. For I would not dare to call you guests indeed, but we are beggars, living on the allowance of God. Beggars, I say, lying before the door of the very rich king, full of ulcers, and desiring to be filled, nay even to be sustained by the crumbs which fall from the table of our lords, whose solemnity we celebrate today. Surely they abound in delights, and they receive a good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. But we trust because there will be one who gives to us: for there is a great chaos and very much distance between the liberality and benignity of God, and the cruelty of the greedy rich man. Therefore our Father has given

bread today: for it is necessary that the Father of mercies be also the father of the miserable; he has given, I say, to us bread from heaven, and provisions in abundance: of which would that I were a faithful cook, would that my soul might seem a useful kitchen!

3. Indeed for preparing your dishes, throughout this whole night my heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire flamed out: that one without doubt which the Lord Jesus sent upon the earth, and willed to be vehemently kindled (Luke 12:49). For it is necessary to have spiritual food, and a spiritual kitchen, and a spiritual fire. It remains now that I distribute what I have prepared: but you, consider rather the Lord giving, than the minister distributing. For I, as much as is in me, am nothing other than your fellow-servant, who equally with you, both for myself and for you, as the Lord himself knows, beg for the bread from heaven and the nourishment of life. Therefore it is not I who give to you, but it is your Father himself who gives to you the living bread from heaven: he himself feeds you, both by works and by words, and also by the flesh of his Son, which is truly food. For I read also of works: "My food is that I should do the will of my Father" (John 4:34); and of words, since "not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3). Therefore now indeed we are to be fed by his deeds and words; after these things we are also to receive, he being propitious, the unblemished

sacrament of the Lord's body on the sacrosanct table of the altar.

4. We read in the Gospel today, that "Jesus seeing the crowds, went up onto a mountain." For the people followed the Lord preaching in cities and towns: whose souls he saved, whose bodies he healed; and they adhered to him, delighted equally by his speech and by his look: whose voice surely was sweet, and his face beautiful, as it is written: "Beautiful in form above the sons of men, grace is diffused on thy lips" (Psalm 44:3). Such is he whom we follow, to whom we adhere; altogether desirable, into whom not only peoples, but also the holy angels themselves desire to look. What sweeter thing shall we set before you? Surely these are the delights of the angels. Taste therefore, and see, that the Lord is sweet. And to this sweetness, to this flavor, to this wisdom, which is truly drawn from hidden places, all that is desired cannot be compared. For what? Dost thou wonder at the splendor in the sun, the beauty in the flower, the flavor in the bread, the fecundity in the earth? But all these have been given by God: nor is it doubtful that he has reserved much more for himself than he has given to creatures.

5. Now let us not think this to be idle either, that he went up onto a mountain, namely that which was predicted so long before as by a prophet crying from afar: "Go up upon a high mountain, thou who evangelizest Sion; exalt thy voice in strength, thou who evangelizest Jerusalem" (Isaiah 40:9). In which ascension, if

you have nothing better, I think that is to be understood which the blessed Luke mentions at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, saying: "The first discourse indeed I made concerning all things, O Theophilus, which Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1). Certainly not according to the custom of the Pharisees, who bound heavy and unsupportable burdens, and laid them on the shoulders of men, but with their own finger they would not move them (Matt. 23:4). Is this not good bread of the soul, and greatly confirming the heart of man? Faithfully I follow thee, Lord, wherever thou shalt go, and securely I walk the way of thy commandments, knowing that thou thyself hast preceded through it. Securely, I say, I run the way of thy commandments, since I know that from the highest heaven was thy going out to run this way, and thy meeting was even to the height of it through this way. I cannot now, brethren, masticate each thing in this manner: you be clean and ruminating animals, that it may be as it is written: "A desirable treasure rests in the mouth of the wise" (Prov. 21:20). For perhaps both the shortness of the hour and the greatness of the matter compel me to gird up and cut short the word.

6. "Jesus seeing the crowds, went up onto a mountain." Seeing with a look of compassion, because they were as sheep wandering, not having a shepherd. Why is it that before he began to teach, he went up onto a mountain, except that in this very thing he taught that the preachers of the word of God have necessity to tend toward

sublime things by the desires of the soul and by holy conversation, and to ascend the mountain of virtues? "And when he had sat down, his disciples came to him." "When he had sat down," it says. Otherwise who could approach that lofty giant? Most benignly indeed he inclined himself, and emptied himself even to sitting down, so that he says to the Father: "Thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up" (Psalm 138:2). For he sat, so that to him, whom not even the angels themselves could touch while standing, even publicans and sinners might approach, Mary Magdalene might approach, and the Thief from the cross might approach. "And when he had sat down, his disciples came to him." They approached not so much by the step of the feet, as by the affection of the heart, and the imitation of virtues. But well it is said that not the crowds, nor anyone of the people, but the disciples came: so that just as the Old Testament is read to have been given on Mount Sinai, Moses alone ascending, and the people waiting below (Exod. 24:12-18); so also now the mountains might receive peace for the people, and the hills justice; and as if in certain darknesses, and in secret, there should be said to the apostles what afterward they would say in the light, and they would hear in the ear what they would preach afterward upon the housetops. Whence also follows:

7. "And opening his mouth, he taught them." He opened his mouth now, who before had opened the mouths of the prophets. Hence is it that it is read in the psalm, the Prophet saying:

"Lord, thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall announce thy praise" (Psalm 50:17). But now he who in many ways and in many manners had once spoken in the prophets, finally spoke by his own mouth, as if he said: "And I who spoke, behold I am here" (Isa. 52:6). Blessed are they who heard Wisdom speaking in the flesh: blessed are they who heard the words of the Word of God, which proceeded from his own mouth. Nevertheless, what they heard is still reserved for us; because we also can hear, although not from him. "Opening his mouth he taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit." Truly his mouth is opened, in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. And truly this is the doctrine of him who speaks in the Apocalypse: "Behold, I make all things new" (Apoc. 21:5): who through the Prophet had predicted before: "I will open my mouth, I will utter things hidden from the constitution of the world" (Psalm 77:2; Matt. 13:35). For what is so hidden as that poverty should be blessed? Nevertheless Truth speaks, which can neither be deceived nor deceive; and it is she herself who says that "blessed are the poor in spirit." Thus you, senseless sons of Adam, seek riches, desire riches even until now: when already the beatitude of the poor has been divinely commended, preached to the world, believed by men? Let the pagan seek them, who lives without God; let the Jew seek them, who received earthly promises: but with what face, rather with what mind does the Christian seek riches, after Christ has preached that the poor are blessed? How

long, alien sons, how long shall your mouth speak vanity, so that you call a people blessed to whom these things belong, these visible things, these present things; when the Son of God opening his mouth has spoken the truth, that the poor are blessed, and woe to the rich?

8. But attend diligently, that he does not name the poor simply, on account of the plebeian poor by miserable necessity, not by laudable will. I hope indeed that this very misery of their affliction will profit them before the mercy of divine goodness: yet I know that the Lord in this place spoke not of such as these, but of those who can say with the Prophet: "Voluntarily will I sacrifice to thee" (Psalm 53:8). Nevertheless, not even every voluntary poverty has praise before God: for even philosophers are read to have left all their things, that being freed from worldly cares, they might be able to be at leisure more freely for the study of vanity; and they were unwilling to abound in earthly wealth, that they might abound more in their own sense. These are distinguished by what was said, "in spirit," that is, by spiritual will. Blessed therefore are the "poor in spirit," namely by spiritual intention, by spiritual desire, on account of the good pleasure of God alone, and the salvation of souls, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But who is he who speaks thus, who thus beatifies the poor, and thus enriches them? Thinkest thou, can it be true? It will be without doubt, since he who promises is truthful and powerful. If the enemy murmurs, it shall be answered to him: "Is it not lawful for

me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good?" (Matt. 20:15.) If thou wast justly humbled because thou didst wish to exalt thyself against me; should not those who humble themselves on account of me, be deservedly exalted? And truly, brethren, if that most miserable one was cast down from heaven, because he affected loftiness, coveted height, presumed sublimity: is it not consequent that they are blessed, who spontaneously depose themselves into the humility of poverty, and according to the promise of the Lord, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," which that one lost? And attend how wisely Wisdom has ordered, opposing the first remedy against the first sin. As if he should say more openly: Wilt thou obtain heaven which the proud angel lost, who trusted in his own strength and in the multitude of his riches? Embrace the vileness of poverty, and it shall be thine. It follows:

9. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." Well, very well. For so it was becoming, poverty having been commended, that meekness also should be preached; since for those relinquishing all things, the first temptation is usually concerning the troubles of the body and the unaccustomed affliction of the flesh. But what will poverty profit, if (which God forbid!) the poor man should fall into murmuring, having become exasperating and impatient of discipline? Very well also after the promise of the kingdom another lesser kingdom is given as if for an earnest, that according to the Scripture, we may have "the promise of the life which now is, equally as

of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8); and from the exhibition of present things there may be a firm expectation of future things. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." This land I understand to be our body: which if the soul wishes to possess, if it desires to reign over its members, it is necessary that it be itself meek, and subject to its superior; since it will find its inferior such as it shall have exhibited itself to its superior. For the creature is armed to avenge the injury of its Creator. And therefore let the soul know, which finds its flesh rebellious to itself, that it is also less subject than it ought to be to the superior powers. Let it become meek itself, and be humbled under the mighty hand of the Most High; and let it be subject to God, and equally to those prelates whom it has to obey in his stead: and immediately it will find its body obedient and subject. For it is Truth which speaks: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." And see if against the wound of the second sin the second medicine has not proceeded. For first after the ruin of the angelic prevarication Eve sinned, agitated by the unrest of spirit, and casting off the sweet yoke and light burden of the Lord's interdict; since she was unwilling to wait, so that from the hand of the Lord, from whom she had already received other things, she might also merit the perfection of beatitude, but she attempted to snatch it by the counsel of the serpent. On account of this she lost paradise, the land of delights: on account of this in her own body she found a contrary law. But perhaps now

at this voice of the Lord thou art hot with the desire of meekness, and thou complainest over the asperity of thy heart, and certain bestial motions and untamed ferocity. Attend therefore to what follows:

10. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Whips tame an untamed horse; contrition of spirit and assiduity of tears tame an ungentle soul. Therefore in all thy works remember thy last things: the horror of death, the tremendous crisis of judgment, the fear of burning Gehenna thou shouldst by no means suffer to be removed from the eyes of thy heart. Think of the misery of thy pilgrimage, rethink thy years in the bitterness of thy soul; think of the dangers of human life, think of thy own fragility: and if thou shalt persevere in this kind of thought, I say to thee, thou wilt feel little whatever seems to be troublesome outside, while thou art occupied with all thy heart concerning the interior trouble. But neither will the Lord suffer thee to be without consolation, since he is the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation; and that which Truth promises will be altogether fulfilled: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Moreover, that also which thou hast read in Solomon agrees with this sentence: "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting" (Eccl. 7:3). Therefore thou wouldst be blessed, Eve, if after the fault thou hadst sought the consolation of tears, and being converted to penance thou hadst more quickly obtained pardon. But now thou hast sought a

most miserable consolation from the similar fall of thy husband, and with the worst poison, namely the most wicked vice, thou hast infected all thy posterity: so that until today one accounts the perdition of another as his own consolation. A completely miserable consolation of Eve, and of those who imitate this misery! But "blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." But what else is this consolation, than the grace of devotion proceeding from the hope of pardon, and the sweetest delight of good, and the taste of wisdom, although small, with which meanwhile the benign Lord refreshes the afflicted soul? But that taste is nothing else than a provocation of desire, and an incentive of love, as it is written: "They that eat me, shall yet hunger; and they that drink me, shall yet thirst" (Ecclus. 24:29). Therefore immediately is subjoined:

11. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled." He who hungers, let him hunger more; and he who desires, let him desire more abundantly still; since as much as he could desire, so much is he to receive. Nay indeed not according to the imperfection or measure of the desire, since indeed until he has it perfectly, he cannot perfectly desire; nor can he perfectly have it, until he perfectly desires; but he is to receive a good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled." To the weaker palate of the heart, and to the soul still languishing, justice seems to be a hard and insipid thing; but they who

have tasted, behold they themselves know how blessed are they who hunger for it, for they shall be filled. O truly happy and glorious satiety! O holy banquet! O desirable feasts! where surely no anxiety, no fastidiousness can be, since there will be highest satiety and highest desire. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled." Now indeed I believe this word proceeds against Adam, who seems to have held some portion of justice, in that he sympathized with the woman; but if he had hungered for justice, he would have cared without doubt to render what he owed, not only to his wife, but much more to the Creator. For he owed to his wife compassion indeed and discipline, as to an inferior. For the man is the head of the woman (Ephes. 5:23). But he owed to God obedience and subjection. But what do we think, brethren, that very many even until today judge that deed heavily, and yet foolishly imitate it? They are indignant against Adam, because he obeyed the voice of his wife more than God; and they themselves daily hear their own Eve, namely the flesh, more than God. Brethren, if now we saw Adam present placed in that article, thoughts ascending into his heart, being straightened between the prayer of his wife and the precept of the Creator; would we not cry out against him, saying: "Beware for thyself, miserable man, see that thou do not do it; the woman is seduced, do not acquiesce to her"? Why therefore, as often as a similar temptation apprehends us, do we not similarly persuade ourselves? For "blessed are they who

hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled." But what can all our justice be before God? Shall it not be reputed, according to the prophet, "as the rag of a menstruous woman" (Isaiah 64:6) and if it be strictly judged, shall not all our justice be found unjust and lacking? What therefore will be of sins, when not even justice itself can answer for itself? Therefore earnestly crying with the Prophet: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, Lord" (Psalm 142:2), let us recur with all humility to mercy, which alone can save our souls, and let us solicitously weigh what follows:

12. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And observe how Zacchaeus briefly encompasses both in one word, saying: "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any man of anything, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). You see how much this man hungers for justice, since it does not suffice him to restore an equal measure, unless he restores fourfold. Great also is the mercy, in that he gives half of his goods to the poor. Nevertheless, I will not keep silent about what I feel. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: of the Lord plainly, not yours. For I give glory not to you, but to His name. Zacchaeus indeed, whose praise is in the Gospel, gave half of his goods to the poor; but I see many Zacchaeuses here who have left nothing of all things for themselves. Who will write for me this Gospel of these Zacchaeuses, nay rather of these Peters, who may faithfully speak to the Lord: "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee" (Matt. 19:27)? But it is

already written in the eternal Gospel, in the book of life it is written and sealed: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Now indeed, brethren, this sentence touches the cruelty of Adam, who seemed before to have sinned by the love of his wife. For behold we know, O Adam, that she is bone of thy bones, and flesh of thy flesh, and by her love thou didst sin. Let us see now how much thou lovest her. The Lord comes holding a fiery sword in vengeance of the prevarication: oppose thyself to the danger for her sake, and say: "Lord, the woman is weaker, the woman is seduced: mine is the iniquity, mine the sin, let the vengeance proceed against me alone." But he does not speak thus: "The woman," he says, "whom thou gavest me, gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). O perversity! Thou refusest to undergo punishment for her, and thou didst not refuse to admit the fault! How, alas! hast thou confounded all things! perniciously merciful where thou oughtest to have been severe; and more perniciously cruel where it was necessary to bestow mercy? For thou oughtest in no way to have transgressed for her sake, but to have satisfied for her with a willing mind. For so it ought to be, brethren, that a man never sins for the sake of another, which belongs to justice: and willingly bears another's sins, which belongs to mercy. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled." "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." It follows:

13. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Blessed plainly, and altogether blessed, are they who shall see Him into whom the angels desire to look, to see whom is eternal life. "To thee my heart hath said, my face hath sought thee: thy face, O Lord, will I still seek" (Psalm 26:8). "For what have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth?" "My flesh and my heart hath fainted, O God of my heart, and God is my portion for ever" (Psalm 72:25, 26). When wilt Thou fill me with joy with Thy countenance? Woe to me for the uncleanness of my heart! which hindering, I do not yet deserve to be admitted to that blessed vision. With how great solicitude, brethren, with how great study is labor to be given, that the eye may be cleansed, by which God is to be seen? And I indeed feel myself to be defiled with a triple filth; the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of temporal glory, and the conscience of past offenses. For there are in the soul certain movements of both desires, which I can neither by reason nor by strength extinguish, as long as I am in this wicked world, and am held bound in the body of death. Nevertheless, against these filths I oppose the remedy of prayer; and therefore as the eyes of servants are in the hands of their masters; so our eyes are unto the Lord our God, until He have mercy on us, who alone is clean, and can make clean one conceived of unclean seed. So also against the conscience of sin the remedy of confession is instituted; and all things are washed in confession. Behold these are the things which

cleanse the eye of the heart, prayer and confession.

Furthermore, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They shall see indeed in the end face to face; they shall see also now, but through a glass in a dark manner; and now they know in part, to know perfectly hereafter. For every one in whose conscience sin still lives enclosed, either sins in hope, and so feels about God as if sins were less displeasing to Him; or sins in despair, feeling God to be unmerciful. To both of whom it is deservedly said: "Thou thoughtest unjustly that I should be like to thee" (Psalm 49:21): since neither sees God, but iniquity lies to itself, forming for itself an idol instead of Him who He is not. But blessed are the pure in heart, for they alone see God, they alone feel about Him in goodness: as He is truly good, so that no one is good but He alone. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Wretched therefore are Adam and Eve, who turned into words of malice to excuse excuses in sins, while they flee the cleansing of confession, remain with an unclean heart, and are cast out from the face of the Lord. It follows:

14. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Deservedly shall they be called by the name of children, who have fulfilled the work of a child. For He is the one through whom being reconciled we have peace with God: He who has made peace in His blood between those things which are in heaven and those things which are upon earth, the me-

diator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And observe how in the three prior ones indeed the soul is reconciled to itself; in the two which follow, to the neighbor; in the sixth, to God; in the seventh it also reconciles others, as if received into the favor of the Lord, and gifted with a happy familiarity. For by poverty, meekness, and weeping the soul is renewed in a certain likeness and image of eternity encompassing all times, while by poverty it merits future things, by meekness it claims for itself present things, by the mourning of penance it also recovers past things, as it is written: "I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Isaiah 38:15). Furthermore, by justice and mercy we perfectly cohere to our neighbor, while whatever we do not want to be done to us, we do not do to others through justice; and whatever things we want men to do to us, we also do to them through mercy. Now reconciled to ourselves, reconciled also to our neighbor, we are faithfully reconciled to God through purity of heart. But blessed are they who, not ungrateful for their own reconciliation, and piously solicitous for their brethren, labor to reconcile them also, as much as they prevail, both to themselves and to God. For with what praises is he worthy, with how great affection do you think that brother is to be embraced, who living without complaint among his brethren, with all solicitude takes care lest there be anything in him which ought to be borne by others; and whatever is burdensome in others, he bears most patiently? who reputes the scandals of each as his own; who

speaks with the Apostle: "Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? who is weak, and I am not weak?" (2 Cor. 11:29.) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." For God is not the God of dissension, but of peace: and therefore it is worthy that the children of peace be also called children of God.

15. Now the eighth beatitude which follows is the prerogative of martyrs: for which tolerance neither time nor strength seems to be for us. Justice is now honored more as far as the face is: either none or few sustain persecution for it. Happy nevertheless, if there be any, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, that where no one persecutes them. But if tribulation shall be manifold, then also we must exult more manifoldly, not looking at those things which seem to be inconveniences; but at the rewards, which are not seen. For those things which are seen are temporal; but those which are not seen are eternal. "Blessed shall you be," He says, "when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall cast you out, and shall say all manner of evil against you, lying, for my sake." Rejoice in that day, and exult: for behold your reward is great in heaven, far greater than is the labor on earth. Nevertheless what does it mean that the same promise is made to the poor and to the martyrs, unless because voluntary poverty is truly a kind of martyrdom? "Blessed is the man," says the Prophet, "that hath not gone after gold nor hoped in the treasures of money." Who is he, and we will praise him? For he hath done wonderful things in his life" (Ecclus.

31:8, 9). What is more wonderful, or what martyrdom is heavier, than to hunger in the midst of feasts, to be cold in the midst of many and precious garments, to be pressed by poverty in the midst of riches, which the world offers, which the wicked one ostentates, which our own appetite desires? Shall he not deservedly be crowned who has thus striven, rejecting the world promising, deriding the enemy tempting, and, what is more glorious, triumphing over himself, and crucifying the itching concupiscence? Finally, therefore, the kingdom of heaven is promised equally to the poor and to the martyrs, because by poverty indeed it is bought, but in passion for Christ it is perceived without any delay.

SERMON II.

On the state of the saints before the resurrection.

1. Because we celebrate today, most beloved, the festive and most worthy of all devotion memory of all the Saints, I think it worth the effort to make a sermon to your charity, with the help of the Holy Spirit, concerning their common happiness, in which they already enjoy blessed rest, and the future consummation which they await; in such a way indeed, that I shall not follow the conjectures of my own opinion, but the authority of the divine books; lest I should seem to prophesy from my own heart, but I shall lean, as far as I am able, upon the testimonies of the Scriptures. For there will be, the Lord granting, a triple utility of this sermon, in order that having recognized,

even from some part, the happy retribution of the saints, we may study thereafter to adhere to their footsteps with more abundant solicitude, and to sigh for their company with more fervent desire, and also to commend ourselves to their patronages with more propense devotion. For it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that those whom we pursue with solemn veneration, we should also follow with a similar conversation: those whom we preach as most blessed, to their beatitude we should run with all greediness: in whose praises we are delighted, by their patronages we should be uplifted. Nor indeed is the festive memory of the saints found to be little fruitful, driving away languor, tepidity, and error: when by their intercession our weakness is helped, by the consideration of beatitude our negligence is excited, by their examples also our ignorance is instructed. Therefore, since I do not doubt that you are perfectly instructed to imitate the footsteps of the saints, by today's reading of the holy Gospel, and by the sermon of the Lord Himself, the ladder being surely raised before your eyes, through which the whole choir of saints, whom we venerate today, has ascended; nor am I ignorant that almost the whole time of this night and day has been spent in religious devotion for imploring their suffrages: I will now attempt to speak even some small thing concerning their happiness, which He Himself shall have given, who both already magnifies and glorifies them, whom He previously called and justified.

2. We read in the Prophet: "Return, O my soul, unto thy rest, for the Lord hath done well to thee; because he hath delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from falling" (Psalm 114:7, 8); and in another psalm: "Our soul hath been delivered as a sparrow out of the snare of the hunters" (Psalm 123:7). I seem to myself to have found in the series of the divine Scriptures many similar words of men, who rejoice that they have been delivered not without much admiration, words of perfect security and immense happiness, the voice of thanksgiving and of joy, which according to my wisdom I do not judge to agree at all with those who still inhabit clay houses, and eat their bread in the sweat of their face. For who of them shall glory that he has a chaste heart? who would dare to glory that the snare is broken, his feet delivered from falling, while the Apostle surely cries back and says: "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12)? Whence also concerning himself: "Unhappy man that I am," he says, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24.) And in another place: "Brethren," he says, "I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing, forgetting those things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I pursue towards the palm" (Philipp. 3:13, 14), etc. And likewise: "I," he says, "so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway"

(1 Cor. 9:26, 27). This plainly is the trumpet of warfare, these are the words of a strenuous leader fighting bravely. For the superior things indeed seem rather to be of one triumphing, or certainly not yet indeed triumphing, but now returning from the battle with victory, and awaiting the day of the great triumph with a joyful and secure conscience.

3. For what does the brave soldier, the faithful servant, say on returning from the battle? "Return now, O my soul, unto thy rest." For while thou didst serve as a soldier to the Lord in the body of death, there was no rest, both because of the labor of the contest, and because of the danger of the exit as yet uncertain. Hence the tumults of temptations excited, thence the fear of succumbing more heavily solicited. Yet even then, brethren, the soldier of Christ had glory, although he had not rest. For that strenuous and most brave soldier, of whom we also made mention a little before, says: "Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience" (2 Cor. 1:12). Which testimony of conscience I think is not to be understood thus, as if the conscience itself were to attest to itself. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth (2 Cor. 10:18). It is therefore the testimony of conscience, in which the Apostle glories, not what the conscience perhibits, but what the Spirit of truth speaks in it, perhibiting testimony to our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). For it is the testimony of a conscience not perhibiting, but perceiving. For

when truth applauds, when justice attests, it is without doubt the voice of God commending, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit perhibiting, as if to a soldier fighting manfully his own king, for whose love and honor he fights, standing near should gladly applaud him, praise his brave deeds, cry out that victory is near, and promise the rewards now prepared and an eternal crown. In which testimony the approved and strenuous soldier indeed glories; yet he by no means rests, but fights so much the more sharply and manfully. Therefore while they yet fight, the elect of God indeed rejoice, but only of the first-fruits of the Spirit, who both helps their infirmity by His virtue, and consoles their pusillanimity by His attestation. Whence also that Apostle of whom we were speaking: "The kingdom of God," he says, "is not meat and drink, but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

4. Now indeed when the time of warfare is consummated, the saints have joy even in their own spirit, until that day arrives, in which they may deserve to enter into the joy of their Lord, being about to have joy also in their very body. For so we have in the Psalm: "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us; thou hast given gladness in my heart." Whence? Plainly from those things which follow: "By the fruit of their corn, wine, and oil" (Psalm 4:7, 8). For such a soul has heard the voice of one saying: "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates" (Prov. 31:31). Whence also John is commanded to write in the Apocalypse, that "blessed

are the dead who die in the Lord." Why blessed? "For henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors" (Apoc. 14:13). Whence also in that very psalm of which we were speaking a little before, to those words which we placed above is added: "In peace in the selfsame I will sleep and I will rest" (Psalm 4:9). And concerning works we have in the Apocalypse: "For their works follow them" (Apoc. 14:13). But for what do they follow, unless that they may praise them in the gates? For what do they follow, unless that they may be multiplied by their fruit, and receiving of the fruit of their hands, the calves may be fattened, which from the prophetic testimony, when the walls of Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, we know are to be placed upon the altar of the Lord? (Psalm 50:20, 21.) For meanwhile that they are under the altar, and not above, let Him teach us whose testimony is made credible exceedingly, who, as he writes in the Apocalypse, heard even their voices under the altar itself (Apoc. 6:9, 10). Still therefore the light of the Lord's countenance is signed upon them: and although not full, they have yet much gladness in their heart, until that day comes, in which He will fill them with gladness with His countenance. Meanwhile, I say, those souls return unto their rest, until the day comes, in which they may deserve to enter into the rest of the Lord. Still their works praise them in the gates, until He comes, when there shall be praise to every man from God. You see, brethren, how great is the unity of the Scriptures, how with

one sense and almost the same words they speak concerning the beatitude of souls.

5. Now indeed let none of you suspect some small rest or joy of theirs, who being entirely free from every trouble recount their years in the sweetness of their soul; they rejoice for the days in which they were humbled, the years in which they saw evils; with pleasant admiration and wonderful pleasantness they consider the dangers which they escaped, the labors which they endured, the contests which they won; and for all these things with certain and undoubting faith they expect the blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God and of their Savior, who will raise up and reform their bodies, configured to the clarity of His own body.

6. How great is their happiness, how immense their joy! who surely exult with a triple joy, from the recordation of past virtue, from the exhibition of present rest, from the certain expectation of future consummation. For concerning that future consummation we have their voice at the end of that psalm of which we were speaking above. For each soul says, to whom it has already been given to arrive at this rest: "In peace in the selfsame I will sleep and I will rest; because thou, O Lord, hast singularly established me in hope." Singularly, I say, in hope, not now between hope and fear, where before I was tossed not without very great solicitude and anxiety. So also concerning the present rest of the saints we have written in another psalm: "Return, O my soul, unto thy rest, for the Lord hath done well to thee." Well, I say,

He has done, although not yet best. Finally hear how well: "Because he hath delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from falling" (Psalm 114:7, 8): that is, from all sin and from the punishment of sin, from fear also and from the danger of falling back He has entirely delivered. This is the sweetest bed of the soul, which it now washes or waters with no tears, when God wipes away every tear from its eyes. This the bed, in which it is no longer pricked, nor turned in its anguish, while the thorn is fixed. For it has gone out of that land, which germinated thorns and thistles for it. This plainly the bed of the soul, which is by no means now turned in its infirmity; since all things which were of infirmity, have likewise passed away. This is, I say, the sweetest and most salutary rest of the soul, a clean, quiet, secure conscience. Let therefore the purity of its conscience be the mattress of the blessed soul, let tranquility be the pillow, let security be its coverlet: so that in this bed meanwhile it may sleep delectably, may rest happily.

7. Now indeed concerning the recordation of past virtue you have in the hundred and twenty-third psalm manifest words of theirs, which I also commemorated above. For they consider and with much admiration recount, from what snares, and how great dangers they deserved to be delivered by divine help, and exulting in the Lord they say: "If it had not been that the Lord was with us, let Israel now say, if it had not been that the Lord was with us, when men rose up against us, perhaps they had swallowed us

up alive. Our soul hath passed through a torrent, perhaps our soul had passed through a water insupportable"; and they add: "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us to be a prey to their teeth" (Psalm 123:1-6). But also the words which the Apostle spoke, the time of his resolution already being imminent, presumed from that state in which he now happily rests, seem also now to agree with him much better: for now indeed he speaks securely: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: for the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). These are, I tell you, brethren, these now are all the occupations of the saints, this their food, this their sleep: and therefore the Holy Spirit willed those words to be written which we have brought forth, and other similar things, that from these their state might in some measure become known to us.

8. Far otherwise nevertheless are they affected in meditations of this kind, and much more are they delighted, than either our thought can take in, or our speech can explain. For hear how the prophet labors urging, and multiplying words, and yet not being able thus worthily to magnify what he intends. "How great," he says, "is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee!" What however did he add? "Thou hast perfected it," he says, "for them that hope in thee, in the sight of the sons of men" (Psalm 30:20). There is therefore a multitude of sweetness, which is hidden, great

indeed and very great, yet not yet perfect; since it will be perfected in the manifest, not in the hidden, when the saints will not rest under the altar, but will reside upon thrones as judges. For unto rest the holy souls put out from their bodies are immediately admitted; but to the full glory of the kingdom not so. "The just wait for me," says the Prophet, when he was still detained in the custody of this body, "until thou reward me" (Psalm 141:8). And the divine voice to the souls [...] their bodies' resurrection demanding. "Wait a little time, until the number of your brethren be filled" (Apoc. 6:11). But now the sermon must be closed: for the solemnities of the masses still to be celebrated call us. What therefore still remains of the same matter, let us reserve for another sermon.

SERMON III.

How holy souls shall be without spot and wrinkle.

1. You have observed, unless I am mistaken, from those things which were said in the preceding sermon, that there are three states of holy souls: the first indeed in a corruptible body, the second without a body, the third in a body now glorified. The first in warfare, the second in rest, the third in consummated beatitude; finally, the first in tabernacles, the second in courts, the third in the house of God. "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" much more however are the courts desirable, according to what he adds: "My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of

the Lord" (Psalm 83:1, 2). But since in those very courts there is some, as you hear, fainting, altogether blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord. I was glad plainly in those things which were said to me, brethren, that we shall go into the house of the Lord. But if you ask, whence I presume it so faithfully: thence without doubt, because many of us already stand in the courts, waiting until they receive their bodies, until the number of the brethren be filled. For into that most blessed house they enter neither without us, nor without their bodies, that is, neither the saints without the people, nor the spirit without the flesh. For it is not fitting that integral beatitude be bestowed, until the man be integral to whom it is given; nor the Church, being imperfect, be gifted with perfection. Therefore when they sought the resurrection of their bodies, as we have already said in the prior sermon, they received a divine response, saying: "Wait a little time, until the number of your brethren be completed" (Apoc. 6:11). They have received however already single stoles; but they shall not be clothed with double ones, until we also are clothed: as concerning the patriarchs and concerning the prophets the Apostle says: "God providing some better thing for us, that they should not be perfected without us" (Hebr. 11:40). For the first stole is itself, which we have said, the felicity and rest of souls: but the second is the immortality and glory of bodies. Whence also they say: "Revenge, O Lord, the blood of thy saints which has been shed" (Apoc. 6:10), not as if desirous of revenge,

nor from zeal for their own vengeance; but from the desire of the resurrection and glorification of their bodies, which surely they do not doubt is to be deferred even until the day of judgment.

2. Furthermore, the altar itself, concerning which we must speak, I for my part judge to be nothing other than the very body of the Lord Savior. I believe moreover that I also have His mind on this matter, especially when I hear Him promising in the Gospel: "Wherever the body shall be, there also the eagles will be gathered" (Luke 17:37). In the meantime, therefore, the saints [otherwise, the happy souls] rest blissfully beneath the humanity of Christ, into which indeed even the angels themselves desire to look, until the time comes when they are no longer placed beneath the altar, but are exalted above the altar. But what did I say? Can anyone attain, I will not say of men, but even of angels, the glory of Christ's humanity, let alone surpass it? In what manner, then, shall I say that those are to be exalted above the altar, who now rest beneath the altar? By vision indeed and contemplation, not by pre-eminence. For the Son will show us Himself, as He has promised (John 14:21), not in the form of a servant, but in the form of God. He will show us also the Father and the Holy Spirit, without which vision indeed nothing would suffice for us; for this is eternal life, that we may know the Father as the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent (John 17:3), and in them, which is not doubtful, also the Spirit of both. Passing by, He will indeed minister to us new delights, entirely

unexperienced by us until that time, of His manifest contemplation. Whence also blessed John in his Epistle says: "Now we are the sons of God, but it has not yet appeared what we shall be"; and he adds: "But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). Hear at last the bride in the Song of Songs speaking confidently, and by hope indeed already placed above the altar. "His left hand, without doubt that of the bridegroom, is under my head, and his right hand will embrace me" (Song 2:6). For the blessed soul transcends the incarnation and humanity of Christ, which is indeed rightly called His left hand; so that it may contemplate more sublimely His divinity and His majesty, which it not unfittingly calls His right hand.

3. For in a threefold manner, brothers, in that eternal and perfect beatitude we shall enjoy God, seeing Him in all creatures, having Him in ourselves, and (what is ineffably more joyful and more blessed than all these) knowing the Trinity also in itself, and contemplating that glory without any enigma with the pure eye of the heart. For in this will eternal and perfect life consist, that we may know the Father, and the Son with the Holy Spirit, and see God as He is: that is, not merely as He is in us or in the other creatures, but as He is in Himself. Whence those two things which we have mentioned appear to be, as it were, surrounding and like the husk of the wheat: but this knowledge, the summit of blessedness, is the marrow of the wheat, the fat

of the corn, with which indeed the holy city of Jerusalem is satiated (Ps. 147:14). But how great is that blessedness, so hidden is it from our eyes; for neither has the eye seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it ascended into the heart of man, how great a brightness, how great a sweetness, how great a joyfulness awaits us in that knowledge. That is the peace of God which surpasses all understanding; how much more all our speech? What therefore has been given to none to experience, let none attempt to express. "A measure," says the Lord, "full, and pressed together, and shaken down, and overflowing they shall give into your bosoms" (Luke 6:38). Full with the universality of creatures, pressed together in our inner man, shaken down in the outer, overflowing in God Himself. There is the summit of felicity, there is the supereminent glory, there is the overflowing blessedness.

4. For how he is to be seen in creatures, how to be had in ourselves, we can even in part conjecture, from those very things, indeed, which we have already received, the first-fruits of the spirit. But that knowledge is still altogether unknown to us: "it is become wonderful; it is strengthened, so that we cannot reach it." But truly, in what manner he is to be seen in creatures, we can understand to some extent, indeed since he is even now seen in them: whence also the philosophers, the Apostle being witness, "by those things which are made," beheld "the invisible things of God" (Rom. 1:20). But however much anyone may profit by seeing with understanding, how

powerfully, how wisely, how benignly the eternal majesty has made all things, rules all, orders the universe; he understands altogether a small bit of that which he is. But it shall come, when already, as we said in the preceding sermon, we shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and we shall follow him in all creatures, that we may rejoice in all, which is the joy of the Lord our God. Let us indeed rejoice in all, but from nowhere else than from himself, as he himself also does not enjoy other things, but himself.

5. Now truly, in what manner he is to be had in ourselves, this also we can think of even in part. For it is certain that the nature of souls is threefold. Whence also the wise of this world have handed down that the human soul is rational, irascible, and concupiscible: which threefold power of the soul indeed nature itself and daily experiments teach us. Furthermore, as concerning our rational part, both knowledge and ignorance consist, as habit and privation: so also concerning the concupiscible, desire and contempt: and concerning that which is called irascible, both joy likewise and anger are versant. God therefore will fill our rational part with the light of wisdom, so that altogether nothing may be lacking to us in any knowledge. He will fill our concupiscible part with the fountain of justice, so that we may altogether desire it, and be altogether refilled with it, as it is written: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satiated" (Matt. 5:6). For no other thing can fill the desire of the soul, no other thing

besides justice can beatify the soul. When therefore God shall have refilled our concupiscible part with justice; whatever the soul ought to reject, it will reject; whatever it ought to concupisce, it will concupisce: and from all things it will more appete that, which more ought to be appeted. Meritedly, finally, do we attribute justice to our concupiscible part, from which indeed either just or unjust we are reputed. Now truly, what is said to be the irascible in us, when God shall have refilled it, perfect will be the tranquility in us, and into the highest pleasantness and joy shall we be refilled with the divine peace. And see if not even in these three perfect beatitude, as much indeed as concerns the soul, consists: when knowledge shall no longer puff up because of justice; no longer shall it sadden because of joy, that that proverb may cease: "He that addeth knowledge, addeth also sorrow" (Eccl. 1:18): when justice shall neither be indiscreet because of knowledge, nor burdensome because of joy: when joy shall neither be inept [otherwise, suspected] because of knowledge, nor impure because of justice.

6. But in all these things our exterior man has as yet received nothing. For him, therefore, that "glory may dwell also in our land" (Psalm 84:10), and according to another prophet, "all the earth may be refilled with the majesty of the Lord" (Isaiah 6:3), four things are to be sought, whom indeed it is certain to be compacted of four elements. Nor should you wonder that he seems to need more who is more miserable, since you have also read in the psalm, the Prophet

saying: "If my soul hath thirsted for thee, how manifoldly for thee my flesh!" (Psalm 61:2.) Let our land therefore have immortality, lest it now fear to be turned again into dust. For our body rising again no longer dies; "death shall no longer have dominion over it." But what will it profit, if by chance it should happen to live forever in the miseries and hardships of this passibility, by which indeed this corruptible body is incessantly afflicted; and if it does not die once, it dies certainly always? Let it have surely also at some time all-modal impassibility. For from inordinate humors they say the causes of passions proceed. But now our body also desires levity, according to that portion which it has from the air indeed, lest it be troublesome even by its own weight. Such therefore is the levity and agility of the bodies of the blessed to be believed to be in the future, that they can, if they will, without any delay or difficulty, follow even the velocity of our thoughts to all things. What further is lacking to the perfect beatitude of the body? Only beauty, certainly. Having this most perfect, not unmeritedly can we attribute it to that part which we have from fire. For "we look for the Savior," as the Apostle says, "who will reform the body of our humility, configured to the body of his clarity" (Philippians 3:20, 21), exhibiting what he promised, since "the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). So therefore will God refill our souls, when perfect knowledge shall be in them, perfect justice, perfect joy. So will all the earth be refilled with his majesty, when the body

shall be incorruptible, impassible, agile, configured finally to the body of his clarity. And see if by chance these be not the seven loaves, with which the Savior is read to have satiated four thousand men, from which the apostles took up seven baskets full of the same number to be reserved (Matt. 15:32, 38). For now we are refreshed by these loaves, when with pleasant meditation we ruminate upon the blessed hope: until he comes, when no longer rejoicing from hope, but from the thing itself and the exhibition, we may deserve to receive as it were full baskets for each of the loaves.

SERMON V.

1. It is a festive day for us, and today's solemnity is numbered among the principal solemnities. What therefore do we say? Of which apostle, of which martyr, of which saint? Not of any one individually, but likewise of all together. For we all know it to be called the festival of All Saints, and it is that which we celebrate today. Of all, I say, whether celestial or terrestrial. For there are saints from heaven, and there are saints from earth: and likewise of those who are from earth, some are yet on earth, others already in heaven. The festival of all these is celebrated in common, but perhaps not uniformly. Nor is this a wonder, since not even the sanctity of all is uniform, but it differs between saints and saints, and that not a little. Nor do I only say, because one is more holy than another (for this is a distance of quantity rather than of quality); but that we find them

called saints, and truly called, not only more and less, but even in one way and another. And perhaps between angels and men this diversity of sanctity likewise and of celebrity can be assigned. For they do not seem able to be honored as triumphant, who are known never to have fought. Otherwise, however, they too are to be honored exceedingly, as thy friends, O God, to whose will indeed they have always adhered, with so much happiness, certainly, as with facility. Unless perhaps they are believed to have fought in this, that while others were sinning they manfully stood fast, not going into the counsel of the ungodly, but each one saying: "But it is good for me to adhere to God" (Psalm 72:28). Grace preventing in the blessing of sweetness is therefore to be celebrated in them; the benignity of God is to be honored, not leading to penance, but leading away from all things for which penance would be owed; not snatching from temptation, but preserving from temptation.

2. Another kind of sanctity indeed in these will seem to be honored in its own way, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their stoles in the blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 7:14): who after many agonies now already triumph in heaven, crowned because they have fought lawfully. Is there yet some third kind of saints? There is, but hidden. For there are saints who are yet in warfare, yet fighting; they run yet, they have not yet apprehended. Rashly perhaps I may seem to call such as these saints; but yet I know one of these not fearing to say to God: "Keep

my soul, for I am holy" (Psalm 84:2). So also the Apostle, conscious of divine secrets, says more evidently: "We know that for them that love God all things work together for good, to them who according to his purpose are called saints" (Rom. 8:28). This indeed is a diversity of appellation in the name of sanctity, so that some indeed are already called saints according to consummation, others according to predestination alone as yet. Such sanctity therefore lies hidden with God; it is closed, and in a certain manner celebrated closedly. Since indeed man knows not whether he be worthy of love or of hatred; but for the future all things are reserved uncertain (Eccl. 9:1, 2). Let the celebrity of these saints therefore be in the heart of God; since the Lord knoweth who are his, and he knows whom he has chosen from the beginning. Let it be also among those ministering spirits, who are sent into ministry for the sake of those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation: we are prohibited from praising a man in his life. For how should the praise be secure, where life itself is not secure? "He shall not be crowned except he strive lawfully," says that celestial trumpet (2 Tim. 2:5). And listen to the law of the contest from the mouth of the lawgiver himself: "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). You know not who is to persevere, you know not who is to strive lawfully, you know not who is to receive the crown.

3. Praise the virtue of those whose victory is already certain; extol them with devoted praises, in whose crowns you can securely rejoice. We

have sung to the saints this night, saying: "Fear the Lord, all ye his saints" (Psalm 33:10); but not to those. I say, we were not exhorting those to fear who have persevered unto the end, because it is written: "Now there shall be no fear in our borders." We were speaking rather to those saints to whom multiple custody is necessary because of the multitude of dangers. Since indeed for them there is not a wrestling against flesh and blood only, but against principalities also and powers, against the rulers of the world of these darknesses, against spiritual things of wickedness in the high places (Ephes. 6:12). They plainly need custody, who are attacked in so many ways, not only hand to hand, but from afar. And where there are so many fights without, fears ought not to be lacking within, so that it may meritedly be said to these: "Fear the Lord, all ye his saints." In the meantime our whole beatitude is to fear God, the Scripture saying: "Blessed is the man that is always fearful" (Prov. 28:14). And likewise the Psalmist says: "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, that walk in his ways" (Psalm 126:1). Otherwise, far differently are they blessed, in whom already perfect charity has cast out fear, nor do they now fear walking in the ways, but praise rather dwelling in the house, as the same says: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever" (Psalm 82:5). Our happiness therefore, our festival in the meantime, is in the fear of God: for theirs is more versant in exultation and praise.

4. Thence it is that men are securely praised, who no longer live their own life, but God's: for indeed the life of men is a temptation. There is however a certain twin security of this praise: except that perhaps it will be seen, if we attend diligently, that the one is comprehended within the other. Since indeed there is no reason why we should fear to praise those most truly and most certainly praiseworthy: there is no reason why we should hesitate to glorify those so absorbed in glory, that they cannot altogether be moved by our praise. For there is nowhere for vanity to enter, where truth has already occupied the whole. But what glory, you will say, for the saints? For neither do they individually glorify themselves, because it is written: "Let not thy own mouth praise thee" (Prov. 27:2). Nor does one praise another in turn, because intent and stretched out in the praise of the Creator, in whom indeed their whole beatitude is laid up, they can never be at leisure for mutual praises, the Prophet saying, as we also remembered above: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever." Nevertheless I do not acquiesce to believe the saints expert of glory, especially because of that which the Apostle says: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). And the Prophet: "Visit us in thy salvation, to see in the goodness of thy elect, to rejoice in the joy of thy nation, that thou mayest be praised with thy inheritance" (Psalm 104:4, 5). For he

did not say: That thou mayest be praised BY thy inheritance; but, WITH thy inheritance, that the future praise may be understood as common. But if the inheritance itself praises the Lord; who should praise the inheritance, let us hear from the Apostle. "Then," he says, "to every man shall be praise." From whom? "From God" (1 Cor. 4:5). A great praiser, and a praise vehemently to be desired. A happy exchange of praise, where both to praise is blessed, and to be praised.

5. To what end, then, is our praise for the saints? to what end our glorification? to what end this very solemnity of ours? Why offer them earthly honors, whom the heavenly Father honors according to the true promise of the Son? Why our praises for them? They are full. It is precisely so, most beloved: the saints do not need our honors, nor is anything provided to them by our devotion. Plainly, that we venerate their memory concerns us, not them. Do you wish to know how much it concerns us? I confess, I feel in myself from this remembrance a vehement desire to be inflamed, and a triple desire. It is commonly said: "What the eye does not see, the heart does not rue." My eye is my memory; and to think of the saints is, in a certain way, to see them. Thus indeed is our portion in the land of the living, and no small portion indeed: if only, as is fitting, affection accompanies the memory. Thus, I say, our conversation is in heaven; nevertheless, not in the same way ours as theirs. For their substance is there, but our desires; they are there through presence, we through memory. When shall we

also be added to our fathers? When shall we be essentially presented to them? For this is the first desire, which the memory of the saints either excites or incites more in us, that we may enjoy their so desirable society, and merit to be fellow-citizens and housemates (contubernales) of the blessed spirits, to be mingled with the assembly of the patriarchs, the ranks of the prophets, the senate of the apostles, the numerous armies of martyrs, the colleges of confessors, the choirs of virgins; in short, to be gathered and to rejoice together in the communion of all the saints.

6. For the remembrances of individual saints, like individual sparks, or rather like most burning torches, kindle devoted souls, so that they thirst for both their sight and their embrace: so much so that frequently they even repute themselves to be among them, vibrating their hearts with all greed and vehemence now toward all together, now toward these or those. Otherwise, what is this of negligence, what of sloth, or rather what of madness is it, that we do not study to break away from here with frequent sighs and most fervent affection, and to hurl our souls into those so happy ranks? Woe to us from the hardness of our heart! woe from the sin of the nations, whom the Apostle mentions were without affection! (Rom. 1:31.) That Church of the firstborn awaits us, and we neglect it; the saints desire us, and we value it little; the just expect us, and we dissemble. Let us be excited at last, brethren; let us rise again with Christ, let us seek the things that are above, let us savor the things that are above. Let us desire

those desiring us, let us hasten to those awaiting us, let us preoccupy the vows of our souls for those expecting us. For behold, there is nothing of security in this communion of ours, nothing of perfection, nothing of rest: and yet even here how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity? For whatever troublesome thing occurs, whether internally or externally, it is found more tolerable by that very fellowship of brotherly kin, with whom we have one heart and one soul toward God. How much sweeter it will be, how much more delightful, how much more blessed the union where no suspicion can be, no occasion of dissension; where perfect charity will gather all in an indissoluble covenant, so that as the Father and the Son are one, so we also may be one in them!

ON THE PASSING OF SAINT MALACHY THE BISHOP SERMON I

1. From heaven today, most beloved, a certain copious blessing is destined for you: and to not distribute it faithfully would indeed be harmful to you; but for me it would be dangerous, to whom indeed this dispensation seems to be committed. I fear therefore your loss, I fear my damnation, if perchance it be said: "The little ones asked for bread, and there was none to break it for them" (Lam. 4:4). For I know how necessary for you is the consolation coming from heaven, you who are known to have manfully renounced carnal allurements and worldly delights. Let no one indeed doubt it to be of celestial benefit, and defined by supernal counsel, that Bishop

Malachy should sleep among you today, and have his desired burial among you. For since not even a leaf of a tree falls to the earth without the divine nod; who is so dull as not to evidently advert in the arrival and passing of this blessed man the great counsel of supernal piety? From the ends of the earth, he arrived to place his earth here, hastening on another occasion, although he is known to have greatly desired this because of his special charity toward us. He sustained many impediments indeed on the journey itself, nor was he permitted to cross the sea, until the time of his consummation approached, and the term which could not be passed. Whom indeed arriving to us through many labors, we received as an angel of God for the reverence of his sanctity: but he himself also, because of his deeply rooted meekness (mansuetudo) and humility (humilitas), received us with devoted affection far above what we merited. He then spent a few days among us in his health, while he awaited his companions, who had been dispersed in England, when the vain suspicion of that king impeded the man of God. And now, all being gathered to him, he was preparing his journey to the Roman court (curia), for which he had come: when suddenly overtaken by infirmity, he immediately felt himself to be called rather to the celestial palace. God providing something better for us, lest departing from us he should be consummated elsewhere.

2. No sign indeed in him, I do not say of death, but even of grave sickness appeared to the physicians: yet he, exhilerated in spirit, said in

every way it was necessary that this year Malachy should depart from this life. It was worked on the contrary, both with devoted prayers to God, and in whatever ways we could: but his merits prevailed, so that the desire of his heart was given to him, and he was not defrauded of the will of his lips. For thus everything concurred for his vows, that he had chosen this place especially, divine clemency inspiring him: and he desired from long ago to have this day for his burial, on which the general memory of all the faithful is celebrated. But that also worthily heaped up these joys of ours, that for the bones of our brethren, to be brought here and recondited from the former cemetery, the same day, God being the author, had been chosen for us. Which indeed while we were carrying them, and according to custom were chanting psalms, the same holy man said he was very much delighted by that song: and not much after he himself also followed, lulled by a most sweet and happy sleep. We give thanks therefore to God for all his dispositions, that he wished to honor us unworthy with the presence of his blessed death, that he wished to enrich his poor with the most precious treasure of his body, that he wished to support us infirm with so great a column of his Church. For this sign, which was done for us for good, persuades one of two things: that either the place is pleasing to God, or he wishes to make it pleasing to himself, to which he brought a man of such great sanctity from the ends of the earth to die and to be buried.

3. But to condole more affectionately with that people, and to abhor more vehemently the cruelty of death which did not spare to inflict this dire wound on so miserable a Church, the very charity of this blessed father compels. A dire and inexorable death indeed, which punished such a multitude of men by the striking of one: blind and improvident, which bound the tongue of Malachy, impeded his steps, dissolved his hands, closed his eyes. Those, I say, devoted eyes, which were accustomed to reconcile divine grace to sinners by most pious tears: those most pure hands, which had always loved to be exercised in laborious and humble works, which so often offered the salutary host of the Lord's body for sinners; and were lifted to heaven in prayer without anger and contention; which are known to have provided many benefits to the infirm, and to have shone with various signs: those beautiful steps also of one evangelizing peace, evangelizing good things; those feet, which were so often fatigued by the study of piety; those footsteps, worthy to be always pressed by devoted kisses: those holy lips, finally, of the priest, which kept knowledge; the mouth of the just, which meditated wisdom: and his tongue, which speaking judgment, more indeed and mercy, was accustomed to heal such great wounds of souls. Nor is it a wonder, brethren, that death is iniquitous, which iniquity generated: inconsiderate, which seduction is known to have brought forth. Nothing, I say, is a wonder, if it strikes without discretion, what comes from prevarication; if it be cruel

and fatuous, what proceeded from the fallacy of the ancient serpent, and from the foolishness of the woman. Why however do we complain that it dared to attempt Malachy, a faithful member indeed of Christ, when it also pervaded the very head of Malachy and of all the elect with furor? It pervaded indeed the immune, but it did not escape immune. Death struck against life, and life enclosed death within itself, and death was swallowed up by life. Devouring the hook for itself, it began to be held from where it seemed to have held.

4. But perhaps someone may say: How does death seem to be overcome by the head, which still rages with such liberty in the members? If death is dead, how did it kill Malachy? if conquered, how does it still prevail over all; and there is no man who lives, and does not see death? Plainly death is conquered, the work of the devil, and the punishment of sin; sin is conquered, the cause of death; and the malignant one himself is conquered, the author of sin and of death. Nor only are these conquered, but they are already judged and condemned. The sentence is indeed defined, but not yet promulgated. Finally, for the devil the fire is already prepared, even if he is not yet precipitated into the fire, for a little time yet he is permitted to be malignant. He has been made as it were the hammer of the celestial artisan, the hammer of the whole earth: he grinds the elect for their utility, he crushes the reprobate for their damnation. Such as the master of the house is, such also are his domestics, namely sin and

death. For even sin, although it be not doubted to have been fixed together with Christ to his very cross, nevertheless in the meantime was permitted by the Apostle not indeed to reign, but even to dwell in himself while he lived. I lie if he himself does not say: "Now I do not work it, but the sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:17). So also death itself is by no means yet compelled to be absent, but it is compelled not to be an obstacle. But it will be when it shall be said: "Where is, O death, thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). For even she herself, the last enemy, is destroyed. But now, under the moderation of him who has the empire of life and death, and coerces the sea itself by certain limits of the shores, death itself for the beloved of the Lord is a sleep of refreshment (somnus refrigerii), the Prophet attesting, who says: "When he shall give sleep to his beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord" (Psalm 126:2, 3). Worst indeed is the death of sinners, whose birth is bad, and life worse; but precious is the death of the saints (Psalm 115:15). Precious plainly, as the end of labors, as the consummation of victory, as the gate of life, and the entrance of perfect security.

5. Let us congratulate therefore, brethren, let us congratulate, as is worthy, our father; because it is both pious to bewail the deceased Malachy, and more pious to rejoice together with the living Malachy. Does he not live? And blessedly. Indeed he seemed to the eyes of the foolish to die, but he is in peace. Finally now a fellow-citizen of the saints and a domestic of God, he chants psalms likewise and gives thanks, saying:

"We have passed through fire and water (per ignem et aquam), and thou hast led us out into refreshment (refrigerium)" (Psalm 65:12). He passed through plainly manfully, and happily he passed through. A true Hebrew, he celebrated the Passover (Pascha) in spirit, and passing to us he said: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you." He passed through fire and water, whom neither sad things could break, nor soft things could detain. For below us is a place, which fire claims all for itself, so that not even the smallest drop of water from the finger of Lazarus could that miserable rich man have there. There is also above the city of God, which the impetus of the river makes glad, the torrent of pleasure, the inebriating cup how pre-eminent. In this middle truly the knowledge of good and evil is contained, and here it is to take the experiment of both pleasure and tribulation. Unhappy Eve led us into these vicissitudes. Here plainly day and night: for in hell only night, and in heaven only day. Blessed therefore the soul which passes through both, neither adhering to pleasure, nor failing in tribulation.

6. Briefly I think one something out of the many magnificent acts of this man ought to be related to you, in which he is known to have manfully enough passed through both the fire and the water. A tyrannical progeny was claiming for itself the metropolitan see of that great Patrick, apostle of the Irish, creating archbishops by order of succession, possessing the sanctuary of God as an inheritance. Malachy our friend therefore,

being asked by the faithful that he should oppose himself to such great evils, placing his soul in his hands, approached intrepid, received the archbishopric, handing himself over to manifest danger, that he might give an end to so great a crime. Amidst dangers he ruled the Church; after the dangers he immediately ordained another successor canonically. For he had received it on this condition, that after the rage of persecution ceased, another could be securely instituted, he should be permitted to return to his own see: where living among religious congregations which he himself had built, without ecclesiastical or secular revenues, living among them as one of them, he lived until this time without any property. Thus the fire of tribulation examined, not emptied, the man of God: since indeed he was gold; thus neither did allurement hold or resolve him; nor did he stop as a curious spectator in the way, forgetful of his own pilgrimage.

7. Who of you, brethren, does not vehemently desire to imitate his sanctity, if he should dare even to hope for it? I believe therefore you will hear more willingly, if perchance we can say what made Malachy holy. But lest perhaps our testimony seem less acceptable, hear the Scripture saying: "In his faith and lenity he made him holy" (Sirach 45:4). By faith he trod the world, John attesting, who says: "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (1 John 5:4). For in the spirit of lenity he tolerated any hard and adverse things with an equal mind. Hence indeed after Christ he trod the seas by faith, lest

he should be taken by allurements: thence in his patience he possessed his soul, lest he should be broken by molestations. For concerning these two you have in the psalm, a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand (Psalm 90:7): because many more the fallacies of prosperity cast down, than the scourges of adversity. Let no one of us, therefore, most dear, delighted by the flat surface of a softer way [alias, wave], think that marine [alias, greatest] journey more commodious for himself. This great field has mountains, invisible indeed, but by that very fact more dangerous. A more laborious way perhaps is seen among the heights of hills, and the roughness of rocks; but for the experienced it is found far more secure and more desirable. Nevertheless in both places he knew there was labor, in both places danger, who said: "By the armor of justice on the right hand, and on the left" (2 Cor. 6:7): so that worthily we congratulate those who have passed through fire and water, and have been led out into refreshment (refrigerium). Do you wish to hear of refreshment? Would that another spoke this to you! for what I have not tasted, I cannot belch forth.

8. I seem however to myself today to hear Malachy saying concerning this refreshment: "Turn, O my soul, into thy rest, for the Lord hath done well to thee; for he hath delivered my soul from death" (Psalm 114:7, 8), etc. In which words what I understand, hear in few words: since indeed the day has already declined, and the sermon has proceeded longer than I had hoped,

because I am unwillingly torn away from the sweetness of the paternal name, and fearing to silence Malachy, my tongue may dread to make an end. The death of the soul, my brethren, is sin: unless perchance it has escaped you what you read in the prophet, "The soul that shall sin, the same shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). A triple congratulation therefore is of a man liberated from all sin, and labor, and danger. From this indeed neither is sin said to dwell in him, nor is the mourning of penance enjoined, nor from any lapse thereafter is it foretold to him that he must beware. Elijah has laid down his mantle (pallium); there is no reason why he should fear, there is no reason why he should dread to be touched, much less to be held by an adulteress. He has ascended the chariot (currum); there is not now to tremble lest he fall; he climbs sweetly; not laboring by his own flight, but sitting in a swift vehicle. Toward this refreshment (refrigerium), most beloved, let us run with all the greed of the soul in the odor of the ointments of this blessed father of ours, who today has seemed to excite our torpor into a most fervent desire. Let us run, I say, after him, frequently crying out to him: "Draw us after thee": and in the affection of the heart, and the progress of conversation, rendering devoted thanks to the omnipotent mercy, that he wished for his unworthy servants, to whom their own merits are lacking, that at least the suffrages of another should not be lacking.

SERMON II

1. It is clear, most beloved, that while we are retained in the body, we are pilgrims from the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6): and by this the miserable exile and the conscience of delicts enjoins mourning rather than joy upon us. Because nevertheless by the apostolic mouth we are admonished to rejoice with the rejoicing (Rom. 12:15), the time and the cause require us to be excited into all joy. For if truly, as the Prophet felt, the just exult in the sight of God (Psalm 67:4), without doubt Malachy exults, who in his days pleased God, and was found just. In sanctity and justice he ministered before him: the ministry pleased, and the minister pleased. Why should he not have pleased? He set forth the Gospel (Evangelium) without cost, he filled the country with the Gospel, he tamed the especially feral barbarity of his Irish (Hibernorum); under the light yoke of Christ in the sword of the spirit he subdued foreign nations, restoring his inheritance to him even to the ends of the earth. O fruitful ministry! O faithful minister! Was not the paternal promise fulfilled to the Son through him? Was not the Father once looking upon him, when he spoke to the Son: "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession"? (Psalm 2:8.) How willingly the Savior received what he had bought, and had bought at the price of his blood, by the ignominy of the cross, by the horror of the passion! How willingly from the hands of Malachy, for the reason that he ministered for free! Therefore in the minister indeed the gratuitous gift was pleasing, but in the ministry the

pleasing conversion of sinners. Pleasing, I say, and acceptable in the minister was the simplicity of the eye, but in the ministry the salvation of the people.

4. But perhaps someone may say: How does death seem to be overcome by the head, which still rages with such liberty in the members? If death is dead, how did it kill Malachy? if conquered, how does it still prevail over all; and there is no man who lives, and does not see death? Plainly death is conquered, the work of the devil, and the punishment of sin; sin is conquered, the cause of death; and the malignant one himself is conquered, the author of sin and of death. Nor only are these conquered, but they are already judged and condemned. The sentence is indeed defined, but not yet promulgated. Finally, for the devil the fire is already prepared, even if he is not yet precipitated into the fire, for a little time yet he is permitted to be malignant. He has been made as it were the hammer of the celestial artisan, the hammer of the whole earth: he grinds the elect for their utility, he crushes the reprobate for their damnation. Such as the master of the house is, such also are his domestics, namely sin and death. For even sin, although it be not doubted to have been fixed together with Christ to his very cross, nevertheless in the meantime was permitted by the Apostle not indeed to reign, but even to dwell in himself while he lived. I lie if he himself does not say: "Now I do not work it, but the sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:17). So also death itself is by no means yet compelled to be absent,

but it is compelled not to be an obstacle. But it will be when it shall be said: "Where is, O death, thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). For even she herself, the last enemy, is destroyed. But now, under the moderation of him who has the empire of life and death, and coerces the sea itself by certain limits of the shores, death itself for the beloved of the Lord is a sleep of refreshment (somnus refrigerii), the Prophet attesting, who says: "When he shall give sleep to his beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord" (Psalm 126:2, 3). Worst indeed is the death of sinners, whose birth is bad, and life worse; but precious is the death of the saints (Psalm 115:15). Precious plainly, as the end of labors, as the consummation of victory, as the gate of life, and the entrance of perfect security.

5. Let us congratulate therefore, brethren, let us congratulate, as is worthy, our father; because it is both pious to bewail the deceased Malachy, and more pious to rejoice together with the living Malachy. Does he not live? And blessedly. Indeed he seemed to the eyes of the foolish to die, but he is in peace. Finally now a fellow-citizen of the saints and a domestic of God, he chants psalms likewise and gives thanks, saying: "We have passed through fire and water (per ignem et aquam), and thou hast led us out into refreshment (refrigerium)" (Psalm 65:12). He passed through plainly manfully, and happily he passed through. A true Hebrew, he celebrated the Passover (Pascha) in spirit, and passing to us he said: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you." He passed through fire and

water, whom neither sad things could break, nor soft things could detain. For below us is a place, which fire claims all for itself, so that not even the smallest drop of water from the finger of Lazarus could that miserable rich man have there. There is also above the city of God, which the impetus of the river makes glad, the torrent of pleasure, the inebriating cup how pre-eminent. In this middle truly the knowledge of good and evil is contained, and here it is to take the experiment of both pleasure and tribulation. Unhappy Eve led us into these vicissitudes. Here plainly day and night: for in hell only night, and in heaven only day. Blessed therefore the soul which passes through both, neither adhering to pleasure, nor failing in tribulation.

6. Briefly, I think one of the many magnificent acts of this man should be related to you, in which he is known to have passed quite strenuously through both fire and water. A tyrannical progeny, creating archbishops in the order of succession, claimed for itself the metropolitan see of that great Patrick, the apostle of the Irish, possessing the sanctuary of God by inheritance. Our Malachy, therefore, having been asked by the faithful to oppose himself to such great evils, placing his soul in his hands, approached intrepidly and received the archbishopric, handing himself over to manifest danger that he might put an end to so great a crime. He ruled the Church among perils; after the perils, he immediately ordained another successor canonically. For he had received it on this condition: that

after the rage of persecution ceased and another could be securely instituted, he should be permitted to return to his own see; where, living without ecclesiastical or secular revenues in the religious congregations which he himself had built, dwelling among them as one of them, he lived until this time without any property. Thus the fire of tribulation examined, but did not consume (non exinanivit), the man of God; since he was gold; so also allure did not hold or loosen him; nor as a curious spectator did he stop on the way, forgetful of his own pilgrimage.

7. Which of you, brethren, would not vehemently desire to imitate his holiness, if he dared even to hope for it? I believe, therefore, you will listen more willingly if we can perhaps say what made Malachy holy. But lest our testimony perhaps seem less acceptable, hear the Scripture saying: "In his faith and lenity he made him holy" (Ecclus. 45:4). By faith he trampled the world, John attesting, who says: "This is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith" (1 John 5:4). For in the spirit of lenity he tolerated with an even mind whatever hard and adverse things. Hence indeed, after Christ, by faith he trampled the seas, lest he be caught by allurements; thence in his patience he possessed his soul, lest he be broken by troubles. For concerning these two you have in the psalm, "a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Psalm 90:7): because many more the fallacies of prosperity cast down than the scourges of adversity. Let no one of us, therefore, dearly beloved,

delighted by the smooth surface of the softer way, think that marine journey more convenient for himself. This field has great mountains, invisible indeed, but for that very reason more dangerous. The way perhaps seems more laborious among the steeps of the hills and the rough parts of the rocks; but it is found far more secure and desirable to the experienced. Nevertheless, he who said: "Through the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left" (2 Cor. 6:7), knew that there was labor and danger on both sides: so that we may deservedly congratulate those who have passed through fire and water, and have been led out into refreshment. Do you wish to hear of refreshment? I wish another would speak of it to you! for I cannot belch forth (eructare) what I have not tasted.

8. I seem to myself today to hear Malachy saying concerning this refreshment: "Turn, O my soul, into thy rest, for the Lord hath been beneficial to thee; for he hath snatched my soul from death" (Psalm 114:7, 8), etc. Hear in a few words what I understand in these words: since the day is already declined, and the discourse has proceeded further than I had hoped, because I am unwillingly torn away from the sweetness of the fatherly name, and my tongue, fearing to keep Malachy silent, is afraid to make an end. The death of the soul, my brethren, is sin: unless perhaps it has escaped you what you have read in the prophet, "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). There is therefore a triple congratulation for a man freed from all sin, and

labor, and danger. From this indeed neither is sin said to dwell in him, nor is the mourning of penance enjoined, nor is he foretold to have to beware from any lapse henceforth. Elias has laid down his cloak; there is nothing he should fear, there is nothing he should fear to be touched, let alone to be held, by an adulteress. He has ascended the chariot; there is no longer any trembling lest he fall: he climbs sweetly; not laboring by his own flight, but sitting in a swift vehicle. To this refreshment, most beloved, let us run with all greediness of mind in the odor of the ointments of this blessed father of ours, who today has seemed to excite our torpor into a most fervent desire. Let us run, I say, after him, crying out to him more frequently: "Draw us after thee": and referring with the affection of the heart and the progress of conversation devout thanks to the omnipotent mercy, because to his unworthy servants, for whom proper merits are lacking, he willed at least that alien suffrages should not be lacking.

SERMON II

[In Transitu S. Malachiae].

1. It is clear, most beloved, that while we are retained in the body, we are on pilgrimage from the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6): and by this our pitiable exile and the conscience of our faults enjoins mourning rather than joy. Yet because by the apostolic mouth we are admonished to "rejoice with those who rejoice" (Rom. 12:15), the time

and cause require us to be aroused into all gladness. For if truly, as the Prophet felt, the "just exult in the sight of God" (Psalm 67:4), Malachy undoubtedly exults, who in his days pleased God and was found just. He ministered in holiness and justice before him: the ministry pleased, and the minister pleased. Why should he not have pleased? Without cost he placed the Gospel, he filled his country with the Gospel, he tamed the especially feral barbarity of his Irish; by the light yoke of Christ and in the sword of the spirit he subjected foreign nations, restoring his inheritance to him even to the ends of the earth. O fruitful ministry! o ministrum fidelem! Was not the fatherly promise to the Son fulfilled through him? Was not the Father once looking at him when he spoke to the Son: "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession"? (Psalm 2:8.) How willingly the Savior received what he had bought, and had bought with the price of his blood, with the ignominy of the cross, with the horror of the passion! How willingly from the hands of Malachy, for the reason that he ministered freely! Therefore in the minister indeed the gratuitous gift was grateful, but in the ministry the conversion of sinners was pleasing. Grateful, I say, and pleasing was the simplicity of eye in the minister, but in the ministry the salvation of the people.

2. Although even if a lesser efficiency of the ministry followed, nevertheless he whose friend is purity, whose familiar is simplicity, would have deservedly respected Malachy and his works: of

whose justice it is to weigh the work from the intention, and to estimate the state of the whole body from the quality of the eye. But now great are the works of the Lord, exquisite in all the wills and studies of Malachy: great and many, and very good, although better for the good origin of chaste intention. What work of piety passed Malachy by? He was poor for himself, but rich for the poor. He stood out as the father of orphans, the husband of widows, the patron of the oppressed. A cheerful giver, a rare petitioner, a modest acceptor. To him there was the greatest care and much efficacy for reforming peace among those disagreeing. Who was equally pious for compassionating, prompt for succoring, free for rebuking? For he was also zealous, nor was knowledge lacking, the moderatrix of his zeal. And indeed weak to the weak, but nevertheless powerful to the powerful, he resisted the proud, he lashed tyrants, the teacher of kings and princes. It is he himself who by praying took away the sight of the king when he was malignant, and restored it when he was humbled. It is he who frustrated in the evil they thought to do those who violated the peace he had made, they being handed over to the spirit of error: and again he compelled them to peace, they being confused indeed and stupefied in what had happened to them. For it is he for whom, against others, equally prevaricators of a pact, a stream most dutifully was present, in a wondrous way by the object of itself evacuating the attempts of the impious. There were no rains, no inundation

of waters, no concourse of clouds, no liquefaction of snows: when suddenly a great river was made of what was a little stream: and the stream went, and swelled inundating, and denying transition altogether to those wishing to be malignant.

3. How great things have we heard and known concerning the zeal of the man and the vengeance of enemies, when nevertheless he was sweet and mild, and of much mercy to all suffering necessity? Who as if the one parent of all, lived for all; as a hen her chicks, so he cherished all, and protected them in the veil of his wings. No sex, no age, no condition was discerned, or person: he was lacking to no one, with the bosom of piety expanded to all. From whatever tribulation there was a cry to him, he reputed it as his own: except that in his own he was patient, in another's he was compassionate, and often even impatient. For sometimes filled with zeal, he was moved for others against others, so that snatching the needy and repressing the strong, he might accordingly consult for the salvation of all. Therefore he was angry, but lest by not being angry he should sin, according to that of the psalm: "Be angry, and sin not" (Psalm 4:5), not anger but he himself ruled his mind. He was master of himself. Surely the victor of himself, he could not be overcome by anger. His anger was in his hand. Called, it came, going out, not breaking out; it was carried by a nod, not by an impetus. He was not burned by it, but used it. There was in him, as much in this as in all the motions of his internal and external man to be ruled or restrained, a great

diligence of censure, and much circumspection. For he was not so intent on all that he exposed himself alone, or excluded himself alone from the general care. He was also solicitous of himself. He guarded himself. So finally he was all his own, and all of all, that neither charity seemed to impede or retard him from the custody of himself, nor propriety from the common utility in anything. If you saw the man immersed in the midst of crowds and implicit in cares, you would say he was born for his country, not for himself. If you saw the man alone and dwelling with himself, you would think he lived for God alone and for himself.

4. Without disturbance he moved in crowds: without leisure he passed the time which he had given to leisure. How was he at leisure, when he was exercised in the justifications of the Lord? For even if he had time free from the necessities of the peoples, nevertheless it was not vacationing from holy meditations, not from the study of praying, nor from the very leisure of contemplating. His speech in time of leisure was either serious or none. His look was either dutiful, or demure and restrained within himself. Surely (which is considered no mediocre praise among the wise) his eye was in his head (Eccl. 2:14), flying away nowhere, except when it had obeyed virtue. His laughter was either indicating charity or provoking it: yet even it was rare. Indeed sometimes drawn out, never shaken out: which would so announce the joy of the heart that it would not diminish the grace of the mouth, but increase it.

So modest, that he could not be suspected of levity: yet so slight, that it sufficed to vindicate the cheerful countenance from every mole or cloud of sadness. O perfect gift! O fat holocaust! O service grateful in mind and hand! How good an odor to God in the prayers of the one at leisure! How good to men in the sweats of the one occupied!

5. For such things therefore beloved by God and men, not undeservedly today Malachy is received into the consortium of the angels, having attained in reality what was said by name. And indeed before he was an angel no less by purity than by name; but now more happily the interpretation of the glorious name is fulfilled in him, when he rejoices in equal glory and felicity with the angels. Let us congratulate therefore, brethren, let us congratulate, as is worthy, our father; because it is both pious to bewail the deceased Malachy, and more pious to rejoice together with the living Malachy. Does he not live? And blessedly. Indeed he seemed to the eyes of the foolish to die, but he is in peace. Finally now a fellow-citizen of the saints and a domestic of God, he chants psalms likewise and gives thanks, saying: "We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast led us out into refreshment" (Psalm 65:12). He passed through plainly manfully, and happily he passed through. A true Hebrew, he celebrated the Passover (pascha) in spirit, and passing to us he said: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you." He passed through fire and water, whom neither sad things could break, nor soft things could detain.

Let us rejoice that our angel has ascended to his citizens, performing a legation for the sons of captivity, concilliating to us the hearts of the blessed, intimating to them the vows of the miserable. Let us rejoice, I say, and exult, because that celestial court has one from us who has care for us, who protects us by his merits, whom he informed by examples, and confirmed by miracles.

6. The holy pontiff, who in the spirit of humility had frequently carried peaceful hosts to the heavens, today entered through himself to the altar of God, himself the host and the priest. The priest migrating, the rite of sacrifice has been changed into better; the fountain of tears has been dried, the whole holocaust is seasoned in joy and exultation. Blessed be the Lord God of Malachy, who by the ministry of so great a pontiff visited his people, and now he being assumed into the holy city, by the recollection of such great sweetness he does not cease to console our captivity. Let the spirit of Malachy exult in the Lord, because being relieved of the weight of the corporeal mass, it is no longer weighed down by any dreggy or earthly matter, so that passing with all alacrity and vivacity every corporeal and incorporeal creature, it may go whole into God, and adhering to him, be one spirit with him for eternity.

7. Holiness becomes this house, in which the memory of such great holiness is frequented. Holy Malachy, keep it in holiness and justice, having pitied us, who among so many and such great miseries belch forth (eructamus) the mem-

ory of the abundance of thy sweetness. Great is the dispensation of divine piety over thee: who made thee small in thy own eyes, great in his; who did great things through thee, saving thy country, and did great things for thee, introducing thee into his glory. May thy festivity, which is deservedly spent as a votive to thy virtues, be made salutary for us by thy merits and prayers. The glory of thy holiness, which is frequented by us and continued by the angels, will thus be worthily joyful to us if it shall also be fruitful. May it be allowed us, at thy migration, to retain some relics from the fruits of the spirit with which thou ascendest loaded, who are gathered today in thy so delicious banquet.

8. Be to us, we besuch thee, holy Malachy, another Moses, or another Elias, imparting also to us from thy spirit: for indeed thou hast come in their spirit and virtue. Thy life, a law of life and discipline; thy death, a port of death and a gate of life; thy memory, the sweetness of suavitatis and grace; thy presence, a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord thy God. O fruitful olive in the house of God! O oil of gladness anointing and shining, cherishing with benefits, coruscating with miracles! make us partakers of that light and sweetness which thou enjoyest. O odoriferous lily, germinating and flowering forever before the Lord, and scattering everywhere the vivifying odor of sweetness, whose memory among us is in benediction, whose presence among those above is in honor! grant to those singing of thee not to be defrauded of the participation of such great

plenitude. O great luminary, and light shining in the darkness, illuminating the prison with the rays of signs and merits, making glad the city! put to flight from our hearts the darkness of vices by the splendors of virtues. O morning star, so much clearer than the others as it is nearer to the Day, more similar to the sun! deign to go before us, that we also may walk in the light, as sons of light and not sons of darkness. O aurora dawning over the earth, but the noonday light traversing the higher regions of heaven! receive us into the consortium of light, by which thou, being illuminated, both shinest far abroad and burnest sweetly within, our Lord Jesus Christ granting, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns God forever and ever. Amen.

ON THE FEAST OF ST. MARTIN THE BISHOP. SERMON. On the examples of obedience.

1. I think this your assembly, as also the arrival of these honorable persons, whose presence from afar we congratulate, expects a sermon from us. Indeed, I would hear them more willingly myself; but since they choose, or rather demand more, that I speak, if it is not allowed me to hear them, it is necessary for me to obey them. And indeed their so great meekness is a living sermon to us, by which clearly those more holy in merits, superior in dignity, richer in wisdom, have deigned to decline not only to visit but even to hear us. Efficacious erudition, and doctrine worthy of all acceptance! Since they admonish us not by word and tongue, but in deed and truth, to be their imitators, as they themselves are of Christ; and

to learn what they surely learned from him, to be meek and humble of heart. Thus Mary sought Elizabeth (Luke 1:39, 40), the virgin the married woman, the mistress the handmaid; the mother of the judge the mother of the precursor; the Mother of God the mother of the little servant. Thus afterwards Jesus also himself went to John, and went to be baptized, as it became him to fulfill all justice (Matt. 3:13, 15). You also, reverend Fathers, do not make your part worse for yourselves: being more swift to hear than to speak, even among those who rather lacked your teaching. For we indeed, because we cannot fulfill all justice, take care at least to exhibit some to you, not being ignorant that it is just for an inferior to obey superiors.

2. But whence shall we speak? "He who is of the earth, of the earth he speaks," says that voice of the crier (John 3:31). Of the earth therefore let us speak, because we subsist of the earth, and in the earth. Hear, whoever you are, earth-born and sons of men: to you we speak, and of you. In the earth we are born, in the earth we delay, in the earth we die, returning into it whence we were assumed. Here for us is a narrow entrance, a short delay, death alone certain. All Adam is compelled to carry the judgment which he deserved. He has been vehemently dilated, he has been multiplied, and has filled the earth. Nevertheless, whether he will or nill, however much he may kick back, all still carry the sentence which they received: "Earth," he said, "thou art, and into earth thou shalt go" (Gen. 3:19). A heavy sentence indeed,

but not without the temperament of great mercy. Harsh enough, but if you weigh the merits, full of indulgence. Since it would be said no less justly to the sinner: Earth thou art, but from this under the earth thou shalt go. Just would the Lord be even then, and exceedingly laudable. Worthy plainly who should be praised, but I not fit who should praise. Otherwise then also I would nevertheless truly say, if yet I could say: "Just art thou, O Lord, and thy judgment is right" (Psalm 118:137). But hell will not confess to thee, neither will death praise thee; but we who live, bless the Lord. Thou hast spared therefore thy creature, thou hast spared the glory of thy name, so that descending from Jerusalem, thou didst by no means suffer him to be led away even unto Jericho. Left still half-alive in the way, I can half-praise (Luke 10:30): where I shall live whole, there I shall break out whole into praise, and "all my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to thee?" (Psalm 34:10). For because of this indeed when thou hadst been angry, thou wast mindful of mercy, not condemning man in the place of perdition, but humbling him in the place of affliction. Why do you plead, O man? why do you complain of the harder sentence? To the earth you are addicted, made from the earth, that she herself may be your country, who was your matter.

3. But I would hear, you will say: Because thou art spirit, and to spirit thou shalt go. Since I am also spirit, as pertains to the soul; nor would I have doubted this portion of me to be more potent. I have heard indeed from the Apostle,

because "the Lord is spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17), and from the Lord himself, because "God is spirit" (John 4:24). Nor only spirit, but also the Father of spirits. Why therefore does the mother of the flesh hold me, because I am flesh in part; the Father of spirits does not receive me, when I am spirit in part? I know, I know, not so much the substance itself does this, as the fault. For just as the sinful spirits between heaven and earth hold this windy middle, whence also they are named the powers of this air (Eph. 2:2); so our sins separate between us and God, between the Creator and Father of spirits, and the spiritual creature indeed. The body has drawn the soul into its region, and behold, prevailing, it oppresses the pilgrim. For it has been made a talent of lead, not from elsewhere however, except because iniquity sits upon it. For the body weighs down the soul, but surely that which is corrupted (Wisd. 9:15); but it is corrupted, rather even, the Apostle being witness, "it is dead because of sin" (Rom. 8:10). Therefore although in a certain way man is heaven, similar to the celestial spirits without doubt, simultaneously also in form; indeed in substance because he is spiritual, but in form because he is rational: nevertheless these two already by no means suffice to lift him, that he may deserve to hear: Because thou art heaven, and into heaven thou shalt go. In vain let him glory concerning the liberty of choice, which is in the mind: he is led captive into the law of sin, which is in the flesh. For even if perhaps it seemed that a double cord could prevail against another

equally double, so that clearly what the earth vindicates for itself by a certain twofold right as country equally and matter, because of the twofold similarity nevertheless, which has been predicted, namely of substance and form, heaven also should receive as celestial: but already that tripled one inferior and drawing downwards, namely with sin indeed acceding, the cord will not be broken, unless from there also grace shall occur. Surely where she shall be present, there is no doubt but that that heavy cord of iniquity by which we are drawn, rather which we draw, is easily loosed. For she intervenes between us and God not separating, but repairing and joining.

4. Therefore I will go for myself to the mountain of grace, and the hills of mercies, whose treasures I hear are all laid up with Christ. I will go to him who is full of grace and truth, if perchance I may receive something from that fullness, rather if perchance I may be received into that fullness: so that with the rest of the members I may some time meet in the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ. For no one has ascended into heaven, except him who descended from heaven (John 3:13). Plainly a most faithful and most kind mediator, who indeed did not divide, but made both one, breaking down the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2:14), forgiving us all our sins, blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, fastening it to the cross; spoiling principalities and powers, he led them confidently, openly triumphing over them (Col.

2:13-15), and making peace through his blood both the things that are in heaven, and those that are upon the earth (Col. 1:20). On account of this salvation indeed, which he was to work in the midst of the earth, he did not immediately place man under the earth, as he had deserved by sinning; but on the earth. Since we must take breath, and by no means despair, while yet established meanwhile upon the earth, we can both look up to heaven, and receive the best gifts and perfect boons from above from the Father of lights, from the Father of spirits, from the Father of mercies. For even for this reason he made man upright, even in his very body, and gave a sublime countenance to man, while other animals indeed look prone upon the earth: so that lifting up his face to the stars he may sigh thither, where he beholds so blessed and perennial a mansion.

5. For is not the vision itself of so most lucid a region a most vehement incentive of love and a provocation of most flagrant desire to us when we piously and faithfully gaze? The stars of heaven are not like the clods of the earth. Between the splendor of the sun, and the darkness of this soil, there is no small distance. Yet perhaps here also some things, but beautiful in their own kind, are seen: and these very things mixed on all sides with what is not beautiful, like gold in mud, a gem in a dunghill, a lily among thorns. Thou art all beautiful, my country, and there is no spot in thee: thou art all beautiful, apart from that which lies hidden within. What is that? Surely those blessed angelic spirits, and the souls them-

selves of the saints, who have already deserved to enter into the place of the admirable tabernacle even unto the house of God. For as there are terrestrial bodies, there are also celestial bodies; but far other is the glory of the celestial, than of the terrestrial: so there are celestial spirits and terrestrial, nor is there indeed a smaller distance between them: Angels, archangels, virtues, principalities, powers, dominations, thrones, cherubim and seraphim. Well do I know the names. Perhaps this is all. For what more may I, an earth-born (terrigena), take of celestial things, a carnal man of spiritual and divine things? Nevertheless, although I am ignorant of what lies hidden in these so great appellations, that indeed I know most certainly, that something great and wonderful is closed and sealed under this so great majesty of words. Not without cause is this called heaven: plainly I know not what extraordinary thing is concealed in it. It is concealed, I say, but yet it is not denied to faith altogether. For it is given to us to see on earth the very exterior beauty of heaven, not to approach it; the internal glory also of its secrets, even if I shall not have comprehended it, it is granted at least to hear. We see our country, but we salute it from afar; we smell those delights, we do not taste them.

6. Indeed not without cause the Only-begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, himself tells us in this region of the shadow of death, which we inhabit, the glory of the celestial spirits indeed through faith, but manifests that of the bodies through appearance (specie). "Hear," he

says, "daughter, and see." And it was done. To what purpose are these things? "Incline," he says, "thine ear, and forget thy people, and thy father's house" (Ps. 44:11). He wants us to lay aside contumacy, to learn obedience, to apprehend discipline. He wants us also to forget the things that are behind, to despise the inferior things, to desert earthly manners and native vices [alias, vitiated seeds], to savor celestial things, to seek supernal things, to gape for the things before. He wants also the noble creature to covet only that beauty of his house, by which clearly she may be transformed into the same image from clarity to clarity, as by the Spirit of the Lord; and accordingly let the king also covet her beauty, spiritual indeed. But in what, you will say, does that sight or hearing warn me to incline my ear, and to obey? For that it brings forth desire, is manifest.

7. Surely therefore consider all this glory of the celestial bodies incessantly obeying divine laws, nor ever exceeding the goals of times placed for themselves in such continuous motions, or transgressing the established boundaries of places. But hear also that those spirits so sublime are all ministering (administratorios), and are sent into a most worthy ministry, that I may not say unworthy: nevertheless, I think, you will never find in the Scriptures any one of them either to have contradicted the sender, or toward those so inferior to themselves, on account of whom they were sent into ministry, to have been moved even slightly. They are examples of obedience, if you attend diligently, surely the more acceptable, the

more they are in a worthier matter. But I know what the sense of man murmurs to these things, and the thought always prone to evil. Why do you propose to me, it says, the obedience of the supernal elements? As if indeed either any sense were in them, or any deliberation of reason flourished, and they were not rather seen to be acted upon, than to act. But why do you so commend the obedience of the angels themselves? The angels indeed feel, but only delectable things; obedient indeed to the Creator, but with a will as happy as it is easy. Why should they not obey? For they always see the face of the Father, to see whom is perfect beatitude, eternal glory, supreme pleasure.

8. Produce for us, O Lord, patriarchs and prophets, men obedient to thy precepts, obedient from the will, obedient against their own will. It was done. There is exhibited to us, that I may pass over the rest for the sake of brevity, there is exhibited to us, I say, Abraham at the command of the Lord going out from his land, casting out the handmaid and her son, prepared also to immolate his most dear son Isaac. What can human astuteness cavil here? Perhaps it may answer, since in many ways and in many modes God appearing to him, was received by hospitality, participated in the banquet, animated by discourse, instructed by counsel, gave him children, illustrated him with victories, heaped him with riches. What will you say, when Christ shall have come, made obedient to the Father even unto death, and the death of the cross? Much, it

says, in every mode. For when would I presume to emulate the Only-begotten of God the Father, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, Christ? He was offered because he himself willed, when and how much he willed he suffered, as being indeed a true man, but nevertheless true God. Rather indeed I would not have you bring forward even the apostolic obedience; whom indeed according to the prophetic promise it is certain to have seen with their eyes their teacher, and to have heard with their ears the voice of him warning (Isa. 30:20, 21). Whence also one of them, writing more expressly, says: "What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). Why should they not leave all things? why should they not follow in all things the presence of so great majesty? What would I not do, if the same abundance were afforded to me? But he has not done in like manner to every nation, not to the one preceding indeed, nor following. Since as many kings desired to see, and saw not; so nevertheless the days have already come, when we desire to see one day of the Son of man, and yet do not deserve it.

9. Opportunely therefore now let Martin come into the midst, that from the midst may be made an occasion of sins. For today he is like us in all things, plainly both sensible and passible; but also long after those times of patriarchal and prophetic visions, and a pure man, having nothing of the nature of divinity, but believing in him whom he has not seen; full of the fruit of obedi-

ence, and rich in virtues, he deserted the soil, he entered the pole, commending to the earth what he had from the earth; directing his spirit to the Father of spirits, whom he faithfully served in the spirit of adoption. He was not a celestial body, but neither a celestial spirit indeed: a rational animal, also and mortal, an earth-born (terrigena), a son of man. He was born on the earth, educated on the earth, exercised and proved on the earth, also consummated on the earth. Nor indeed was he a patriarch, or one of the prophets, concerning whom indeed the Truth says in the Gospel: "Because the Law and the Prophets were until John" (Matt. 11:13). By much he was not Christ himself; but yet Christ was in him, surely not otherwise than through faith.

10. For according to this mode also now "the word is near in thy heart and in thy mouth" (Deut. 30:14), only if you shall have sought with a right heart. Indeed the Apostle interpreting, this is "the word of faith" (Rom. 10:8), concerning which Moses speaks. Whence also elsewhere the same Apostle: "Jesus Christ," he says, "yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Yesterday indeed from the beginning of the world even unto the Ascension of the Lord; today indeed this day from then even unto the consummation of the world; furthermore in eternity understand after the common resurrection of all. Christ is not lacking to any of these, Jesus is not lacking; unction is not lacking to any, salvation is not lacking. To the patriarchs and prophets he was exhibited in vision, to the apostles in humanity, to Martin

in faith, to the angels already in appearance (specie). Which appearance indeed he promised that he would show himself to all the elect, not indeed today, but in eternity. Finally already yesterday had passed, already this our today had dawned when the Apostles spoke: "Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now already we know him not" (2 Cor. 5:16). It seems however even in this morning something of the flesh of the Lamb has been preserved: but what is residue, indeed is already given to the fire; because clearly even unto today the same flesh is exhibited to us, but spiritually indeed, not carnally.

11. Neither is there what we may plead has been denied to this our time, whether that apparition which was made to the fathers of the Old Testament or that presence of his flesh which was exhibited to the apostles. Since to those faithfully considering it will be clear that neither is lacking. For the true substance of his flesh is present to us even now, surely without doubt in the sacrament. Revelations are present, but in spirit and power so that to the time of grace, which is now, nothing in any grace may be proved to be lacking. Finally "neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him," yet he has revealed to us through his Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9, 10). Nor should you wonder that he exhibited carnal manifestations to those who were waiting for his carnal advent. For a grace so much more efficacious and a worthier revelation is necessary

to us, as it is certain that the things which we expect are more excellent.

12. Therefore, as we said above, this Martin was not Christ, but yet he had Christ: not as the angels in the presence of majesty; not as the apostles in the vision of humanity; not as he formerly spoke in vision to his saints: but as the Church even now has him, in faith and sacraments. "He was not the light" (John 1:8), but plainly a "burning and shining lamp" (lucerna ardens et lucens) (John 5:35), it was said of John. But if I should produce him, I think you say: He is the greatest of men, he is more than a prophet, he is even an angel of God the Father, as he himself testifies: "Behold I send my angel" (Luke 7:27), etc. And Martin was a burning and shining lamp: let it not irk you at least to imitate him; but to imitate in him that which is imitable, and not that which is exhibited as wonderful. "Thou sittest today at the table of a rich man; diligently consider what are set before thee." Discern between the foods, and the vessels of the foods. For you are commanded to take those, but not these. Rich is this Martin; rich in merits, rich in miracles, rich in virtues, rich in signs. Diligently therefore consider what things are set before thee; namely which are for admiration, and which for imitation. Or certainly because it follows in that Scripture, "for such things it behooves thee to prepare" (Prov. 23:1, 2, according to LXX); diligently consider what is set before thee, and in what. Martin raised three dead, as many indeed as he had read the Savior to have raised. He restored sight to the blind,

hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute, gait to the lame, health to the withered. He escaped dangers by divine power, by the barrier of his own body he repelled flames, the huge mass of a sacrilegious machine he prostrated by a paril column descending from heaven, he cleansed a leper with a kiss, he cured a paralytic with oil, he conquered demons, he saw angels, he foresaw future things.

13. But these indeed, and others of his kind, the highest wonders (magnalia) which he did, why should I not call them certain wonderful vessels of this rich man, heavy with gold, glittering with gems, and equally precious in matter and in work? Do not seek savor in these, but admire the splendor. Let our lamp shine in this kind, so that in its light we may see the light, which indeed pure, as it is in itself, you do not yet prevail to behold. For he is not the light, but that he may bear witness concerning the light; and let God appear glorious to you meanwhile in his saint, while you cannot reach his glory, as he is in himself. Otherwise do not think that the lamps of Martin were indeed adorned, but found empty: she is not a foolish virgin, she has oil in the vessels. He has wine in the vials, he has within these dishes an abundance of foods, spiritual delights indeed: so that not only may the poor see and wonder, but they may eat and be satisfied; and in those things indeed they may praise the Lord, furthermore in these their hearts may live. Otherwise how shall the dead praise thee, O Lord? That therefore the praise in admiration may be pleasant and becoming, let them also live from imitation; and,

that they may more greedily take the delights, let them also more curiously contemplate the riches themselves. So indeed between the splendor and the fervor of this lamp it must be run about with certain vicarious affections, so that one may be commended to us from the other, and from mutual collation each may become more well-pleasing. Since indeed this Martin was humble and poor in spirit, as the effect itself of divine grace most evidently proves, which surely he would not have given so much of unless to one greatly humble.

14. That however I may produce a few indications of his virtues, blessed Hilary knew him poor in spirit, when attempting to impose upon him the office of the deaconship, and not prevailing, because he vociferated that he was unworthy, he commanded him to be an exorcist: in which a certain place of injury seemed to be, knowing surely that he would by no means repudiate the humbler ordination. Poor he was, sordid in garment, unkempt in hair, despicable in face: which indeed although they had been objected to in his election by certain malevolent ones, yet in the episcopate itself, as it is written, he did not change at all (Sulpit. De vita Mart., cap. 7). Finally because Martin was truly poor in spirit, he deserved to be named poor and moderate. But hear his meekness (mansuetudo), with his Sulpitius thus writing: "He had assumed such patience against all injuries that when he was the supreme priest, he was hurt with impunity even by the lowest clerics: nor on account of them did he ever either

move from his place, or repel from his charity, as much as was in himself" (Id. Dial. III, cap. 20): which indeed was manifestly proved in Briccius, I think you all remember. For him he chose out of all for his successor, and forewarned him of so much future adversity: finally in his faith and levity he made him holy, at whose mouth his ears were, when he replied to the man who was inquiring concerning him: If you seek that delirious one, look out from afar; behold he looks back at heaven usually like a madman. For frequently the man of God, as one indeed despising the earth, was looking up to heaven. Surely he knew that he had received for this (as we remembered above) an upright stature even in his body itself. He knew that his treasure was there, he knew that his Christ sat there at the right hand of the Father, he knew that he would never attain what he desired until he should arrive there. Whence even this very thing, that he was called delirious on earth, he deservedly did not attend to, whose conversation indeed was in the heavens, whose eyes were in his head. Surely thither also his tears were accustomed to ascend from his jaw, with which he so abounded, that he was wont to weep even for the sins of those who seemed to be his detractors.

15. Surely how much he hungered for justice, was proved both in his other acts, and especially in the persecution of idolatry, in the destruction of temples, in the casting down of statues, in the cutting down of groves. Where he also sometimes did not fear to give himself to danger, that

the occasion of so great a crime might be taken away from the midst. For the Savior himself boasted of him among the angels as merciful in the poor man, displaying the half of the garment given to himself. Would that he might deign to exhibit that mercy to us also miserable ones, before the supreme judge, into whose admirable tabernacle he has entered; by which he snatched even those formerly destined for death, and deputed to various torments, for whom it is written that he lay before the gate of the earthly judge at midnight. For how shall he not hear him now, who then also made him to be heard? Furthermore the cleanness of his heart that thing indicates especially, that he was not confounded speaking to the enemy in the gate: "Nothing in me, fatal one, shalt thou find; the bosom of Abraham shall receive me." For in the work of peacemakers happily indeed consummating his labors, although he was not ignorant of the end of his days, yet he went to the dissenting clerics, among whom having reformed peace, he himself rested in peace.

16. Furthermore—the persecutions which he sustained on account of justice, it is long to number, how before Julian Augustus in the city of the Vangiones intrepid, rather even more constant with terror brought in, he was delivered to custody, so that unarmed on the following day he might be opposed to the barbarians; how about the Alps under the ax, which a robber was brandishing at his head, he was most secure; how at Milan Auxentius the Arian gravely pursued him,

and having been attacked by many injuries, at length drove him out of the city; how also elsewhere earlier fighting most sharply against the perfidy of the priests, he was affected by punishments, publicly beaten with rods, and thence also was compelled to go out; how likewise in the overturning of a certain fane, when a gentile sought him with a drawn sword, he offered his naked neck to the one about to strike, until that one lifting his right hand for the blow, fell backward; how another willed to strike him with a knife, but the iron having slipped from his hands, suddenly disappeared. For all which things there is no doubt that he is manifoldly crowned, who indeed although not once by the effect of a consummated passion, but so many times was a martyr by the affection (affectu) of a most devoted will. Eat now, friends, and drink; and be inebriated, most dear ones (Cant. 5:1). For thus it is lived, and in such things is the life of your spirit. Unless perchance the divine word calls blessed those who raise the dead, illuminate the blind, heal the sickly, cleanse the lepers, cure the paralytics, command demons, foretell future things, and glitter with miracles; and not rather the poor in spirit, the meek, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers, those sustaining persecution on account of justice.

17. Forgive me, brethren: I almost passed over the example of obedience, which indeed even alone according to the proposed order in Martin also is fitting to be exhibited to us. Surely we

make delay, but, as I think, it is good for us to be here: for more slowly today we have come to Martin. "Lord," he says, "if I am still necessary to thy people, I do not refuse labor, thy will be done." O truly most holy soul! o inestimable charity! o singular obedience! Thou hast fought a good fight, thou hast finished the course, thou hast kept the faith; for the rest there remains for thee a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to thee today; and yet thou sayest: I do not refuse labor, thy will be done! Thou hast plainly offered Isaac; that only one whom thou lovest, as much as is in thee, thou hast jugulated; thou hast immolated thy singular joy with pious devotion, prepared to return again into dangers, to innovate contests, to undergo labor anew, to sustain tribulation, to prolong temptation, then to be deferred still from that so great felicity, and the long-desired society of the blessed spirits, and to be recalled into the miseries of this mortality from the very entry of glory; finally, what is greatest, to be a pilgrim from thy Christ longer, if only he himself had willed. Nor indeed is it doubtful that he deserves a fuller grace, who exhibits himself prepared even before a command than he who is busy to obey after a command. Great indeed is your obedience, holy angels; but, that I may dare to say by your peace, I know not whether there may be found among you any one prepared at some time to be sent into such a ministry, in which he must of necessity not see the face of the Father. It is a great thing, Peter, that about to follow the Lord, thou hast left all

things; but I heard thee saying on the mountain, where he was transfigured before you: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make here three tabernacles" (Matt. 17:4). This is not, "If I am still necessary to thy people, I do not refuse labor." Prepared is thy heart, O Martin, prepared is thy heart, whether to remain in the body, or to be dissolved and be with Christ.

18. And indeed great security in a horrendous death; great perfection is found in the desirable vision of Christ, and so fervently and singularly desirable: but that indeed far more by every mode, that thou who dost not fear to die, rather who with so great desire dost covet the presence of the Lord, also dost not refuse to live, and to be fatigued by a most troublesome expectation. In what other thing indeed could he not have obeyed, who in this so great article so devotedly was crying out: "Thy will be done?" Let this therefore be our part, brethren, in today's banquet, let us diligently consider this obedience set before us at the table of this poor man, rather now rich man, knowing since it is itself which is required of us, itself which it behooves us to prepare, so that each and every one may say: Because "I am prepared, and I am not troubled, that I may keep thy commandments" (Ps. 118:60). Nor only once, or in part; but "prepared is my heart, O God, prepared is my heart" (Ps. 56:8); prepared for both, and in nothing prescribing to thy disposition. Perhaps I desire this, and specially and vehemently: but neither do I refuse that; as the will shall have been in heaven, so let it be done.

I desire rest, but I do not refuse labor, thy will be done.

ON ST. CLEMENT POPE AND MARTYR SERMON On the three waters.

1. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 115:15). Let the sinner hear, and be angry; let him gnash with his teeth, and pine away. He is caught in his own astuteness, he has fallen into the pit which he made, he has fallen into the snare which he stretched. Since by the envy of the devil death entered into the world; but behold the death of the saints has been made precious. Hear therefore, enemy of life; author of death, attend. What does thy fraud avail now? what does thy craftiness hurt? Rather indeed, that thou mayest grieve more, even all things work together for good to them that according to purpose are called saints (Rom. 8:28). For not otherwise than by her (which is of thy work) today the blessed martyr, whose solemnities we celebrate, triumphed by the death of the body. He made indeed a virtue of necessity, he commuted the punishment of sin into the merit of glory; he proved himself faithful in a little, that he might be found worthy to be set over many things. For a little it was, and altogether a little, whatever that blessed soul had formerly received, as much as to that glory, which he merited by his present passion. For all the delight of this world, all its glory, whatever finally is coveted in it, is altogether a little in comparison of that felicity, of that beatitude: if yet even a little it ought to be called, and not rather nothing, a vapor appearing

for a little. Blessed Clement had received noble lineage, ample possessions, much heritage, also very much science (knowledge), so that he was held as a certain best philosopher of that time. He had received all these from the Lord: for these also are the gifts of God. He proved himself faithful therefore to him who had given, when for his love he contemned all things, making all things loss, and accounting them as manure (stercora), that he might gain Christ.

2. But perhaps even now the enemy murmurs: "Skin," he says, "for skin, and all that a man hath, he will give for his soul" (Job 2:4). What then? dost thou think that in the very life of his body, which he received from the Lord, he is found unfaithful, so that he prefers even it to Him? Behold, thou hast power: rush upon him through thy satellites, so that he may be straitened from two things, either having necessity from the Lord, or to be separated from the body. Seek out varied and immense kinds of torments; but know that thou art fashioning crowns for our martyr. For as he contemned the very ornaments and helps of this life, so he contemns also it itself. He exposes his whole body to death for thee, and curses thee to thy face, and blasphemes thy idols with his sacred mouth, he freely preaches the Lord his God even among thy torments, he ingenuously [otherwise, in the fire] confesses. He shall be crowned therefore, because he has striven lawfully, because he has conquered faithfully, because neither by the blandishments of this life, nor by the horror of death, did he wish to be sep-

arated from the charity of Christ. Say, I beseech thee, to us, holy soul, who so didst expose thy body to torments: I beseech, didst thou love it, or not? Certainly I loved it, he says. "For no man ever hated his own flesh" (Ephes. 5:29). I loved it therefore: but I loved it little, as a handmaid; and much more did I love the Lord God. And that there might be a proof of love, an exhibition of work; I willingly embraced also the death of the body itself for his glory.

3. What do we say to these things, brethren? We congratulate the martyr, but now his glory is not without our confusion. For behold blessed Clement was a man similar to us, passible, surrounded by the same infirmity, and adhering to his own flesh by the same bond of natural affection. If therefore he so glorified Christ in his body, and received the cup of salvation; what do we render to the Lord for all that he hath rendered to us? He marked us certainly with the same image, he redeemed us by the same blood, and called us into the same inheritance, incorruptible and uncontaminated, eternal, preserved in the heavens. Why therefore can we not also freely receive the cup of Christ with blessed Clement? but perhaps some respond: We could, if opportunity were not lacking; but the time of persecution has ceased. But I, I confess, would not sufficiently believe those saying these things. For what? Daily you yield to the pricking of one needle, and do you think you can resist a sword-point? Prove in the smallest conflicts, how manfully you can stand in a greater contest. For behold it is not said to

you: Sacrifice to idols, and live; or if you do not wish this, it behooves you to perish by diverse torments. The Lord knows our frame, nor does he give to us so strong a contest. To blessed Clement he gave a strong contest that he might conquer, and might learn since wisdom is more powerful than all things.

4. But what is your contest, my brethren? Daily it is suggested in your hearts: Break thy order, murmur, detract, act more remissly, simulate infirmity, respond to him who perhaps has spoken more harshly to thee, so that thou mayest satisfy thy desire; nor is it said to anyone: Unless thou shalt have done these things, thou shalt die; but at most, with difficulty and labor thou resistest thy mind. And who could sustain such great things? For these things we are accustomed to hear within, these to respond to those exhorting us, either to a man without, or to the Holy Spirit within. If therefore in a contest of this kind we are in danger, if we scarcely resist, if sometimes we even succumb, what would we do in that so grave a contest? If to fragile reeds our infirmity yields, how would it resist weapons? You see how we are reduced to nothing, and as women or little ones are wont, praising others who fight, we ourselves cannot fight. Yet what do we do? Certainly we all are called to the marriage of the Lamb, and in his sight it is not allowed to appear empty. Let us therefore diligently consider what things are set before us, since it behooves us to prepare such things. Blessed Clement considered that wine was set before him by the Lord, and he also, since

he was rich, brought to those nuptials no less the wine of the effusion of his own blood. But we are poor, and we have no wine, O Lord. But he: "Fill," he says, "the water-pots with water" (John 2:7). Will then the water itself be received, if we shall have brought it? Certainly it will be received. For he who shall have diligently considered what things are set before him (Prov. 23:1), according to the warnings of the Wise man, will find it set before us with the wine, by him forsooth who came not in water only, but in water and blood. For he who saw gave testimony, that from the opened side of the Lord sleeping on the cross there went out blood and water (John 19:34, 35).

5. And let us therefore, brethren, so that at least we may prove ourselves faithful to our God, if we have not the martyrdom of blood (for martyrdom is testimony), let us seek at least the testimony of water, and not even it will God despise. For there are three who give testimony on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood (1 John 5:8). Blessed are they to whom a triple testimony is at hand, since a threefold cord is not easily broken (Eccles. 4:12). If we have not the testimony of blood, let us have the spirit and the water; since without the spirit neither blood nor water will suffice: rather indeed if the spirit itself is found without water or blood, its testimony suffices; since it is the spirit of truth, nor will blood nor water profit anything of themselves, but it is the spirit which testifieth in them. Yet surely either scarcely or never do I think the spirit is found without water or blood. Therefore, most dearly

beloved, let us seek at least the water, who have not the blood. And since we have made mention of water-pots above, let us seek two or three measures, which the water-pots held. For Christ also sets before us a triple water, and every one is perfect who shall have been in us as he was, who forsooth could have three measures (metretas). On account of this it is said under distinction, "two or three," so that it may be certain that two at least are necessary; the third is not to be required from all.

6. Receive therefore the triple water, which the Savior sets before thee. He weeps over Lazarus (John 11:35) and over the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41); and this is the first water. He sweats, the hour of his passion now being imminent; and this is the second water, flowing not from the eyes only, but from the whole body. But this is red, and of a sanguine color, as it is written: "And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). Now indeed the third is the water, which also we said before to have emanated from his side together with the blood. And thou therefore hast the first indeed, if thou waterest the bed of thy conscience with thy tears, and with the sorrow of compunction thou washest away the stains of past sins. Thou hast the second water, if in the sweat of thy face thou eatest thy bread, and by the labor of penance thou chastisest thy body, and restrainest the flame of concupiscence. But it is of a sanguine color, either on account of the labor, or even on account of the fire of concupiscence itself which it extinguishes.

Now indeed if thou canst profit even unto the grace of devotion, thou shalt be given to drink the water of salutary wisdom; and the spirit of Christ, which is sweet above honey, shall become in thee a fountain of water springing up into eternal life. And remember this to be the water, which proceeds from the side of him sleeping, and flows without any molestation. For it behooves him to be already dead to the world, who shall wish to be delighted in this grace. Therefore, that I may repeat briefly, the first indeed cleanses the conscience from past offenses; the second, so that thou mayest beware of future ones, extinguishes concupiscence; the third, if thou shalt have merited to arrive at it, gives drink to the thirsty soul.

ON THE VIGIL OF ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE SERMON. How we ought by fasts to prevent the solemnities of the saints.

1. The authority of the holy Fathers has decreed that the principal feasts of the saints are to be prevented by votive fasts: clearly usefully, and not unto foolishness to us, if there be one who observes. For many sins we contract daily, and in many things we all offend: nor is it altogether safe to take up sacred festivities to be celebrated, and especially those which are greatest, unless first the purification of abstinence has been sent before, by which both more worthy, and more capable we may be found of spiritual joys. For so the just man in the beginning of his speech is an accuser of himself, nor does he begin the praises of another except from his own reprehension. But if even the just man trembles, solicitous to

prevent Him, who is prepared to judge even justices themselves; what do we do, whose sins in the meantime have not been judged and covered? It is greatly to be feared, lest perhaps manifest they be found preceding to judgment. If neither the just man without a certain modesty and shame presumes to approach to the praises of the saints; how much more the sinner, in whose mouth praise is not comely, must always of necessity fear that voice: "Why dost thou declare my justices" (Ps. 49:16)? or that: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment" (Matt. 22:12)? Blessed therefore, who their stole, I say however the glory of their conscience, are solicitous to preserve immaculate at all times, to exhibit always splendid. But because they are few, who so with all custody keep their heart, fewer however, if yet even fewer, who in all sanctity preserve it: it is necessary by frequent abstinence to wash away the stains creeping in, especially when any principal solemnity shall have come to be celebrated.

2. Nor however is the premitted observation of a fast only a preparation for the next celebration; it is also a certain admonition, and no small instruction. We learn from this itself, what truly is the way of the eternal festivity. For what is it that we prevent the solemnities with fasts, except that through many tribulations it behooves us to enter into the kingdom of God? For unworthy of solemn joy is he, who does not observe the things appointed for the abstinence of the vigil. Clearly, I say, if thou refusest to afflict thy soul in

the vigil, thou art deservedly judged unworthy of festive rest and exultation. Moreover, the whole time of present penance is a certain vigil of a great solemnity, and of the eternal sabbatism which we await. Nor shalt thou complain of a longer vigil, if thou attendest to the eternity of the festivity. For although diurnal solemnities are wont to have a diurnal preparation: that one since it is eternal, does not however require an eternal one. But whither does the more pleasant memory of that felicity snatch us? For by this name both more often, and perhaps more worthily is that festivity named. We must return to that which is before our hands.

3. The cause therefore of today's fast, and of that solemnity and joy which we await, is the blessed passion of Andrew the apostle. For it is worthy that, if we cannot hang with him, at least we should fast with him. For also who would doubt that he himself, when for two days he was hanging on the cross, also fasted? Let us be found therefore communicating in his passion even in a small thing, and if not together fixed to the patibulum (gibbet), together afflicted by the fast: that God being merciful we also may be participants of the crown; and in the present also companions of spiritual joys. For how should we not exult in the memory of his triumph, whom in the very presence of his punishment we know to have exulted so vehemently? Or will it not be a joyful festivity, where also the cross itself is full of joy? Since we are wont to name festive that which is joyful; and cross (crux) is certainly said

from torture (cruciatus), or surely torture from the cross. With how great exultation therefore of the whole earth is to be celebrated the miracle of so great novelty, so magnificent a work of divine virtue? Andrew was a man similar to us, passible, and with so vehement an ardor of spirit he was thirsting for the cross, he was dancing with a joy unheard of for ages, when he had beheld the patibulum prepared for him from afar. "O cross," he said, "long desired and now prepared for a coveting soul! secure and rejoicing I come to thee, so that thou also exulting mayest receive me." You see because he does not contain himself for the magnitude of joy. "So," he says, "that thou also exulting." Is then so great the exultation, that the cross itself also exults, nor has anything of joy [lacking], but is all of joy? Or who would say it is less against custom, above reason, beyond nature, that the cross exults, than that the crucified exults? To that one (the cross) nature denied the sense of joy: to this one (the crucified) if anything prevails, it exterminates all joy, and brings in sorrow. "Thy lover," he said, "I have always been, and I have desired to embrace thee." Brethren, it is a vibrating fire, not a speaking tongue: and if a tongue, certainly it is a fiery one. They are coals of that fire, which from on high Christ had sent into his bones. And would that they were desolatory to us, consuming and burning out whatever is in us of carnal affection! For what kind of sparks are these, or from how great an interior fire do they flash?

4. Clearly, blessed Andrew, thy faith is a grain of mustard seed, which so unhoped for, when it began to be bruised, began to bring forth fervor from itself. What if it were bruised a little more? What mind could sustain that fervor, what hearing those words? For while Aegeas was threatening less, as yet the grain of mustard seed seemed contemptible. It was whole, we did not know what was lurking within. "The Lord," he says, "sent me to this province, in which I have acquired for him no small people." Let the pestle of commination approach; far more sharply now it will savor, and more constantly it will speak. Aegeas thinks he is to be terrified, threatening the punishment of the cross: but it is not so. He is more kindled in this word, and freely cries out: "If I feared the patibulum of the cross, I would not preach the glory of the cross." But when he beheld the wood prepared for him, from this now clearly all becoming ignited he was applauding, and was flattering that his beloved: most officiously he was saluting, most devotedly he was receiving [otherwise, looking up at]; magnificently he was extolling her, and was glorying in her praise, crying out more by affection than by voice: "Hail, precious cross, which hast received decor and beauty from the Lord's members! Hail, cross which art dedicated in the body of Christ, and from his members as if from pearls art adorned!" Deservedly therefore the lovers of the cross venerate whoever are the servants of the cross: but from these it justly exacts a fuller devotion, who have more specially proposed to

take up their cross. To you this and of you I say, my brethren, who with no deaf ear have heard that evangelical trumpet: "He that doth not carry his cross, and follow me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). Be ye prepared to apply the whole diligence of the mind to this solemnity, and with a great heart to celebrate it; because an altogether great treasure equally of consolation and of exhortation is laid up for you in it, if there shall be one who digs and searches.

ON THE FEAST OF ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE SERMON I. On the three kinds of fish, which are in the sea, in the river, and the pond [otherwise, on clean fish].

1. Celebrating today the glorious triumph of blessed Andrew, in the words of grace, which were proceeding from his mouth, we have exulted and have been delighted. For nor could there be a place for sadness, where so vehemently he himself also was rejoicing. No one of us has been so compassionate to him suffering; no one has dared to wail for him exulting. Otherwise also to us he himself not incongruously could have said, what the Savior carrying the cross said to those following him and mourning: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep over yourselves" (Luke 23:28). Finally when blessed Andrew himself was led to the cross, the people who were grieving that the holy and just man was unjustly condemned, wished to prohibit lest he should be punished: but more he himself by most instant prayer prohibited them, lest he should not be crowned, rather lest he should not

suffer. For he was desiring to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, but on the cross, which he had always loved; he was desiring to enter the kingdom, but through the patibulum. For what does he say to that his beloved? "Through thee," he says, "may he receive me, who through thee redeemed me." Therefore if we love him, we con-rejoice with him, not only because he is crowned, but also because he is crucified: because the Lord gave to him the desire of his soul, and set on his head a crown of precious stone. Nevertheless while we congratulate him, that he merits to enjoy the embrace of the long desired cross, it is very wondrous, if we do not wonder at his joy itself, whom we congratulate.

2. For while celebrating the vigils of this night, we were delighted in singing the words of so great exultation, dost thou think, there was not one in us, who would think with himself and say: What does this wish for itself? or whence is so new a joy? Certainly also the cross is precious, and the cross can be loved, and the cross has exultation? So it is, my brethren. If there shall be one who collects, always the wood of the cross germinates life, fructifies pleasantness, drops the oil of joy, sweats the balsam of spiritual charisms. It is not a sylvan tree; it is the tree of life to them that apprehend it. A fruitful tree, a salutiferous tree it is: otherwise how should it occupy the Lord's land? I say that most precious glebe (soil), to which it is fixed by the roots of the nails. If this were not more precious than all, more fruitful than the universe; never would it be planted in

that garden, nor would it be permitted to occupy that vineyard. Finally what wonder if he gave sweetness to the cross, who gave it also to the fire? or how is the cross judged insipid, where even the flame savors sweet? For what did that fire savor to Lawrence, when he was laughing at the executioners, was mocking the judge? What do we say to these things, brethren? Why does not even to us savor sweet, what is tribulation for Christ, nor do we also taste this hidden manna? For so the devil would be altogether conquered, nor would he have at all what he might bring [otherwise, take away]. This one thing would suffice us against the double malice of the enemy.

3. For that most wicked one has snares, he has also darts, as being a most crafty hunter of men, thirsting only for the blood of souls. Some he aims at with the darts of any malicious suggestion; and in them he wounds many, whose patience is thin. Others he labors to entangle with pleasures; and in these certainly he includes a copious multitude of those who creep on the earth, or fly near it. Let there be therefore joy in tribulation; and now the malignant one has not whence he may entice, has not whence he may cast down: we are liberated from the snare of hunters, equally as from the sharp word. For the enemy will profit nothing in him, whom the cross of Christ delights, if he shall have suggested carnal delectation: and the son of iniquity shall not apply to hurt him, if he shall have tried to send in any bitterness to exasperate his mind. He does not care for delicacies, who is fed by fasting:

much less can he murmur for it, in which also he is delighted. Clearly he has set his refuge most high, where neither the mousetrap of the enemy is to be feared, nor the arrow; rather indeed he is a clean fish, having scales equally and fins. Furthermore as in vain is a net cast before the eyes of the feathered (winged), so in vain is a weapon cast into the scales of those clad in mail (armored). For the legal sanction was judging fish of this kind to be clean, which both are lifted by fins, and are protected by scales: whether they be in the sea, or in the river, or in the pond (Lev. 11:9; Deut. 14:2). For even this great and spacious sea has clean fish, and worthy of the Lord's table; because from these who are conversant in the latitude of the world, in habit, and in act, he has left to himself many thousands, whom the apostolic seine (net) draws, so that when it shall have been led out, they may be segregated from the evil. Where surely also this our fisher of men will sit, who now draws all Achaia after him. The river also has clean fish, whoever are found among faithful stewards. For the river forsooth is the order of preachers, not remaining in the same place, but extending itself and running, so that it may irrigate diverse lands. There are also in the ponds clean fish, who in cloisters serve God in spirit and truth. For deservedly monasteries are compared to ponds, where in a certain mode incarcerated fish do not have the liberty of wandering about, by which forsooth they may be always prepared for spiritual banquets, each one saying within himself: When will he come who shall carry me

away? All the days, in which I now am in warfare, I expect until my change come.

4. Furthermore, as we remembered above regarding the law, whether in the sea, or in the river, or in the pond, those fish are clean which have scales and fins. Now the scales are many, but from them a certain coat of mail is woven together, so to speak; because the virtue of patience is one, although we seem to exhibit individual ones for individual tribulations. Now indeed, just as I think scales can be not incongruously referred to patience, so also fins to cheerfulness. For cheerfulness lifts up and raises, so that whoever is cheered seems to give certain leaps into the height. Truly, that we may have two fins, a twofold cheerfulness must be sought by us. And perhaps for this reason the Apostle teaches (for he truly had wings, by which he was caught up even into the third heaven, and flew also into paradise) not only to glory in hope, but also to glory in tribulations (Rom. 5:2, 3). Whoever he is, he flies altogether sublimely whom not only the expectation of future goods, but also the very exhibition of present evils delights, so that he even glories in it. Such we find this blessed Apostle, such we admire, such we deservedly preach.

5. Whence also one may consider here a triple degree: of beginners, of those progressing, and of the perfect. For the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Sir. 1:16); the middle, hope; the fullness, charity. Finally, hear the Apostle, because charity is the fullness of the law (Rom. 13:10). He who is initiated by fear sustains the

cross of Christ patiently; he who progresses in hope carries it willingly; but he who is perfected in charity embraces it now ardently. For he alone is the one who can say, "I have always been your lover, and I have desired to embrace you." Far is that voice from him who indeed sustains, but would entirely prefer, if he could, not to have come to this hour. Finally, if I do not seem rash, far is it from that voice: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me (Matt. 26:39). For what? Surely he had ascended upon a little ass, so that not even here might he be left to his enemies. I plainly recognize in the leader of the war the trepidation of the faint-hearted, I recognize the voice of the sick man in the physician, I recognize the weakening hen with her chicks; I consider the charity, I am amazed at the mercy, I am awestruck by the condescension. The merciful Lord did not take up for himself the robust affection of blessed Andrew; because the healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are ill (Matt. 9:12). If by chance condescension scandalizes someone, he plainly deserves to hear: Is your eye evil because I am good? (Matt. 20:15.) For to this one the odor of life is unto death.

6. What great thing had it been, Lord Jesus, if as the hour approached for which you had come, you stood intrepid, as one who had power to lay down your life, and no one took it from you? Or was it not far more glorious, since it was all done for us, that not only the passion of the body, but also the affection of the heart should act for us: and that those whom your death quickened, your

trepidation should nonetheless make robust, and your sadness make joyful, and your weariness make eager, and your trouble make quiet, and your desolation make comforted? I read indeed in the resurrection of Lazarus, that he groaned in spirit, and troubled himself (John 11:33, 38). But let it be for a while, because he troubled himself; not by the necessity of condition, but by the pleasure of his own will. But now I hear something even more. For so much did that love which is strong as death prevail, that an angel of God comforted Christ. Who, whom? Hear the Evangelist: An angel appeared, he says, comforting him (Luke 22:43). Whom him? Plainly him, to whom when he was to be born the closed womb of the Virgin lay open; at whose nod water was changed into wine; at whose touch leprosy was put to flight; under whose feet the solid sea stood; at whose voice the dead rose up: finally him, who carries all things by the word of his power; through whom all things were made; through whom all things subsist, even the angel himself. And what shall I say? Whom him? For I would tarry less, if he were not utterly unspeakable. Comforting him, therefore, whose majesty not even his own comforter himself could comprehend.

7. I ask you, angel, whom do you comfort? Or were you ignorant who he was, to whom you were coming to comfort? Surely he is a comforter, surely he is the Paraclete: otherwise he would not say that another Paraclete was to be sent by the Father to the apostles (John 14:16), if he himself

were not also a Paraclete. Finally I recognize also in this very one the greatest Paraclete, I recognize the most benign Paraclete, who is near to those who are troubled in heart. I do not despair now, Lord, even if the tribulation which I suffer seems troublesome to me, even if I am faint-hearted, even if I desire that the cup be transferred from me. I do not despair, I say, provided that I myself also add: Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you (Matt. 26:39). I have learned also from this very thing, not to recur to carnal or transitory consolation, but to angelic, but to celestial. Thus plainly, provided that I do not murmur (for that would utterly separate from you, if I did not more quickly come to my senses); I do not refuse, even if I have need to be comforted. For what? I recognize my voice in the Savior, and should I despair of salvation? Plainly in my patience I shall possess my soul.

8. Nevertheless I wish to progress, if I can, and not to be content with having immediately obtained salvation. He who fears God, says the Wise Man, will do good (Sir. 15:1). But it is little; for it is written: Decline from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it (Ps. 36:27). Be not content with salvation: seek peace, lest salvation itself be in danger to you. Hear therefore the angel, at the birth of him who was made our peace, exulting and singing: Peace on earth to men of good will (Luke 2:14). But what is good, unless an ordered will? Which one is that, you ask? Surely that which is consonant with reason, saying: Because the passions of this time are not worthy to the

future glory, which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18). If you have already begun to feel this, no doubt but that you willingly bear the cross of the Lord, and say: I am ready, and I am not troubled, that I may keep your commandments (Ps. 118:60).

9. Yet if you wish to be perfect, one thing is still necessary for you. What is that, you ask? Surely joy in the Holy Spirit. Forasmuch as both he who is coerced by fear, and is patient; and he who is led by the reason of hope, and is benevolent; unless he shall also be fervent in spirit, can easily fall. Furthermore that charity which is diffused through the Spirit is both patient and benign; and, what is more, never fails. Finally in the first commandment which was given to our parents, if you consider diligently, both Eve seems to have been patient, and Adam benevolent. Because however both fell, it is clear that neither he nor she was in a stable degree. The woman saw the tree, says the Scripture, that it was beautiful to the sight, and sweet for eating. Does she not seem to you scarcely to contain her hand? So also where she was questioned by the serpent, see if her words do not manifestly sound that the commandment was troublesome to her. From every tree, she says, of paradise we eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he said to us: Let us not eat (Gen. 3:2, 3). She does not say: Such is the will of the Creator: why so, he himself knows; it is enough for us to obey, because our life is in his will. Therefore easily was the woman seduced both to believe the promise, and to acquiesce to

the persuasion. But the man was not seduced (1 Tim. 2:14), but subverted by the love of the woman. For he would have wished always to keep the commandment, which he knew to be useful to himself, if the woman did not persuade him otherwise. Nor did he seem to suffer any difficulty in keeping the commandment; but that which was a good will, did not have fortitude, because it did not have fervor.

10. For charity is strong as death, not patience or hope (Cant. 8:6); not fear or reason, but the spirit of fortitude. Patience says: So it must be done, because it is urged by fear. Good will says: So it is expedient, and so it is to be acted; because it is attracted by the reason of hope. But charity which is inflamed by the spirit, says neither: So it must, nor: So it is expedient; but: So I will, she says, so I cupidity, so I desire vehemently. You see how great a sublimity, you see how great a security, and how great a sweetness of charity. Happy the soul, which shall have arrived at this state of charity! Nor surely is it to be despaired of by us, forasmuch as the memory of him who arrived at this degree is for this reason especially celebrated, that we may both invoke his help, and be provoked by his example. I say more, and I seem to myself to see some of us in this degree. If you say that blessed Andrew the apostle is such, and that you, who are little, cannot follow his footsteps; surely let it shame even those who are with you, not to imitate. No one suddenly becomes highest; by ascending, not by flying, the summit of the ladder is apprehended. Let us ascend there-

fore, as if with two feet, meditation and prayer. Inasmuch as meditation teaches what is lacking; prayer obtains that it be not lacking. The former shows the way, the latter leads along. Finally by meditation we recognize the dangers imminent to us; by prayer we escape, by the bestowing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON II.

On the four horns of the cross.

1. The solemnity of blessed Andrew the apostle is celebrated today: which if we search into with pious solicitude, we find many things in it which may build up our souls. Inasmuch as in the very beginning of his conversion he presents to us a great example of perfect obedience. Which is indeed necessary for all Christians, yet is to be embraced more dearly by us, who forsooth are specially held debtors of obedience from our very profession. He is a wise money-changer [otherwise, merchant], yea Wisdom itself, to whom we have need to return this coin of obedience; nor will he receive it, unless it be found both whole, and without any falsity. For if we discuss, if we judge, and indeed we obey in this precept, but not in that; the coin is broken; Christ will not receive it, by whom forsooth we are held debtors of a coin, not broken, but whole. For we all promised obedience simply, and without any exception. But if anyone should indeed obey, but

simulatedly and for the eye, but should murmur in secret: his coin is false; it has lead, not silver, and iniquity sits upon the talent of lead. He acts deceitfully, but in the sight of God, since God is not mocked.

2. Do you wish to hear the form of perfect obedience? The Lord saw, says the evangelist, Peter and Andrew casting a net into the sea; and he said to them: Come after me, I will make you to be made fishers of men. I will make, he says, from fishers fishers, yea preachers. But they immediately, judging or hesitating nothing, not solicitous whence they should live, not considering in what mode raw men and without letters could be made preachers; finally asking nothing, without all delay having left the nets and the ship followed him (Matt. 4:18-20). Recognize, brethren, that because of you every year in the Church they are recited; so that learning the form of true obedience, you may chastise your hearts in the obedience of charity. This forsooth is what alone commends the coin of obedience, this is its silver proved and purged. For it is charity alone, which makes obedience grateful and acceptable to God. For God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). And likewise: If I should deliver, he says, my body so that I burn, but should not have charity, it profits me nothing (1 Cor. 13:3).

3. Do you wish that we should also speak something of the passion itself of this blessed apostle, which forsooth we celebrate today, to the praise of Christ and to your edification? You have surely heard, when blessed Andrew had arrived

at the place where the cross was prepared, how he was comforted in the Lord; and through the Spirit, whom he had received together with the other apostles in fiery tongues, he spoke words truly fiery. For seeing the cross prepared at a distance, by no means, as mortal infirmity seems to require, did his face grow pale, by no means was his blood frozen; his hair did not stand up, or his voice stick in his throat; his body did not tremble, his mind was not troubled; his intellect did not recede, as is customary. From the abundance of the heart the mouth spoke, and charity which was fervent in the heart, sent out certain most ardent sparks, so to speak, in the voice. For what was blessed Andrew speaking, when he saw the cross prepared for himself at a distance, as I said? "O cross," he said, "long desired, and now prepared for a concupiscent soul! secure and rejoicing I come to you; so that you also exulting may receive me, the disciple of him who hung upon you; because I have always been your lover, and I have desired to embrace you." I beseech you, brethren, is it a man who speaks these things? or is it not a man, but an angel, or some new creature? Plainly a man like us, passible. For the passion itself testifies that he was passible, by the approach of which he exults so joyfully. Whence therefore in a man this new exultation, and gladness hitherto unheard of? Whence in so great fragility so great constancy? Whence in a man so spiritual a mind, so fervent a charity, a soul so robust? Far be it that we should believe such great virtue to be in him from himself! It is a perfect gift,

descending from the Father of lights, from him forsooth who alone does great wonders.

4. Plainly it was the Spirit, dearly beloved, who helped his infirmity, through whom charity strong as death was diffused in his heart, yea and stronger than death. Of which, O if we also should be found participants! For behold the labor of penance is troublesome to us, the affliction of the body heavy, abstinence onerous. In vigils our soul slumbers for weariness, surely not for anything else than because of the lack of the Spirit. For if he himself were present, he would without doubt help our infirmity: and as for blessed Andrew the cross and death itself, so for us also he would make our labor and penance not only not modest, but also desirable, and altogether delectable. For my spirit, says the Lord, is sweet above honey (Sir. 24:27); so that not even the bitterness of death, though most bitter, can prevail against its sweetness. What will that sweetness not temper, which makes death also to be most sweet? what asperity could resist that unction, which makes death also most pleasant? When he shall have given, he says, sleep to his beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord (Ps. 126:2, 3). What trouble will that joy not expel, which makes death also itself most joyful? Let us seek this Spirit, brethren: with all solicitude let us give effort, that we may deserve to have this Spirit, yea that we may have more abundantly him whom we already have. For whoever has not the Spirit of Christ, this one is not his (Rom. 8:9). But we have not received the spirit of this world,

but the Spirit who is from God, that we may know the things which are given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:12). The works themselves of salvation and life provide testimony of his presence, which we could in no way do, unless the Spirit of the Savior were present who quickens our souls. Let us seek therefore that God may multiply his gifts in us, and increase his Spirit, who has already given the first-fruits. For there is altogether no more certain testimony of his presence, than the desire for ampler grace, since he himself says: Those who eat me, shall yet hunger; and those who drink me, shall yet thirst (Sir. 24:56).

5. But perhaps the consciences of many already answer us: We indeed desire this Spirit, who may thus help our infirmity; but we are not able to find him. And I say: For this reason you do not find him, because you do not seek him; for this reason you do not receive him, because you do not ask. You ask, and you do not receive, because you ask negligently. For God expects nothing else, seeks nothing else, but that he be required sedulously and with desire. Finally when will he deny to those asking, who also provokes those not asking, and exhorts that they should ask? If you, he says, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to those asking him? (Luke 11:13). Ask therefore, dearly beloved, ask without intermission, ask without hesitation; and in all your works always invoke the presence and help of this most sweet and most pleasant Spirit. And we forsooth,

brethren, have need with blessed Andrew to take up our cross, yea with him, whom he himself also followed, the Lord Savior. For thence he so rejoiced, thence he so exulted, because he seemed to die not only for him, but also with him, and to be planted together in the likeness of his death, so that suffering together he might also reign together. With whom that we also may be crucified together, let us hear with attentive ears of the heart the voice of him saying: He who wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Luke 9:23). As if he should say: He who desires me, let him despise himself: he who wishes to do my will, let him learn to break his own.

6. But immediately wars arise, enemies are at once armed against them. And let us be armed against them; let us imitate the arms of our king, that we also may take up our cross, in which we may triumph over all enemies. For hear what the Psalmist promised, yea the Holy Spirit through his mouth: With a shield, he says, his truth shall compass you, without doubt of the Most High; for he was speaking of him, as the preceding words of the psalm itself manifestly indicate. For what, brethren, are we compassed with a shield, unless because wars compass us on every side? Finally consider what the cause is that he compasses you with a shield. With a shield, he says, his truth shall compass you. For what? You shall not fear, he says, for the nocturnal fear; for the arrow flying in the day, for the business walking in the dark, for the incursion and the noonday devil (Ps.

90:5, 6). Do you see how necessary it is, that truth should compass you with a shield, whom the weapons of enemies thus compass? for from the lower part nocturnal fear arises, from the left an arrow flies in the day, from the right a dark business walks: and that nothing may be empty, from the upper part the noonday devil arises [otherwise, occurs]. But we miserable and pitiable, with so many serpents nearby, and fiery weapons flying on every side, with enemies arising on every side, nonetheless by a pernicious security and negligence we slumber, we grow numb with idleness, we indulge in vanities and scurrilities, as lazy for spiritual exercises as if there were already peace and security, and the life of man upon earth were not a warfare. This is, I say to you, dearly beloved, what terrifies me more vehemently, what altogether pierces through my soul with the sword of most bitter fear; that among so many dangers we seem less fearful, less exercised [otherwise, excited], less solicitous than is necessary. Forasmuch as this very negligence of ours proves one of two things: either that we are altogether delivered to our enemies, and do not know it; or surely, if we are preserved among these things, that we are found too ungrateful to him who protects us. Of which both what danger they have, is sufficiently manifest. Therefore, I beseech you, dearly beloved, let the very ever-watchful malice of our enemies excite us, and their malignant instance, by which they are so sedulous, so solicitous for our perdition [otherwise, persecution], let it also make us solicitous and circumspect,

that in fear and trembling we may work out our own salvation.

7. For behold in the cross is our salvation: provided that we virilely adhere to it. The word of the cross, says the Apostle, to those indeed who perish is foolishness; but to those who are made safe, that is to us, it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18). It is the shield itself with which we are compassed, so that its four horns may repel the fourfold weapons of enemies. Let therefore the lower horn be against nocturnal fear, that is against faintheartedness, which proceeds from the affliction of the flesh, that we may virilely study to chastise that which is under us, the body, and to subject it to servitude. But if anyone speaks evil to our face, if anyone openly tries to persuade evil; in the day the arrow flies, and it is on the left, to be received by the left horn of the cross. But if he flatters, if as if with a consulting mind he proffers the poison of fraternal detraction, and tries to sow hatred, if finally he tries to persuade something iniquitous as if just, this one is on my right; but he is a Judas, he betrays me with a kiss, and by the right horn of the cross the business walking in the dark must be repelled. But behold the noonday devil, namely the spirit of pride, which forsooth is accustomed to arise more sharply in the greater splendor of virtues. But how pernicious this is, we take care more often to intimate to you. For the beginning of all sin, and the cause of all perdition, is pride. Therefore whoever you are who study to work your salvation, remember to have against this over your head the horn of

the cross, that you be not elevated into pride, your heart be not exalted, you walk not in great things, nor in wonders above you; but those weapons which come from on high, let the horn of the cross supereminent to your head receive. Surely this is the only one, to which equally the title of salvation and of the kingdom is inscribed; because only he who humbles himself, deserves to be saved and exalted.

8. Now to repeat briefly, these four horns are continence, patience, prudence and humility. Happy the soul, which glories in this cross, triumphs in this cross! provided that it persevere in it, and can be cast down by no temptations. Let him therefore pray whoever is in this cross, let him pray with blessed Andrew to his Lord and master, lest he suffer him to be taken down from the cross. For what may that malignant one not dare, what may the impious not presume to attempt? What he had thought to do to the disciple by the hands of Aegeas, this he had thought to do also of the master by the tongues of the Jews. In both however, led by late penance, he withdrew conquered and confounded. Would that he might likewise depart from us, by the victory of him who triumphed both in himself and in his disciple! May he himself make, that we may deserve also to be happily consummated in this our whatever cross of penance, which we have borne for his name, who is God blessed over all forever. Amen.

SERMON ON THE DEATH OF LORD HUMBERT, MONK OF CLAIRVAUX.

1. Humbert the servant of the Lord is dead, a devoted servant, a faithful slave. You yourselves saw how in the past night he expired between our hands, as one of the little worms of the earth. Through this three-day period death has fatigued him, and has demolished him within its jaws, that it might be satiated with the blood for which it thirsted. Well, it did what it could; it killed the flesh, and behold it is hidden in the heart of the earth. It separated from us a sweet friend, a prudent counselor, a strong helper. Insatiable homicide spared neither me nor you, but me less. Do you thus separate, bitter death? O cruel beast! O most bitter bitterness! O terror [otherwise, stench] and horror of the sons of Adam! what have you done? You have killed. But what? Surely the flesh alone: for you have nothing that you can do to the soul. It flies to its Creator, whom it had so ardently lusted for, so strongly followed all the days of its life. But also the very body which you seem to have, shall be taken away from you, when you the last enemy shall be destroyed, and swallowed up in victory. You shall render, yea you shall render sometime this body, which at the sign of your advent you had filled yesterday with so many spittings and execrations, and a manifold squalor of filth, rejoicing and praising, because you had entangled even this one in your snares. The Only-begotten of the Father shall come with great power and majesty to seek Humbert, and to configure that same cadaverous body

to the body of his glory. But what of you? Surely, as it is written in Jeremiah, in the last of days you shall remain foolish (Jer. 17:11), and with Humbert living forever, you shall die in perpetuity. The marine beast vomited up the prophet, whom it had swallowed (Jonah 2:11): and you shall render Humbert, whom you seem to have concluded in your most vast belly.

2. For the rest, brethren, this servant of God has presented to you a factitious sermon in every form of holiness, which he made both long and great. Long, as to the length of the way [otherwise, life]; great, as to the sublimity of life. It does not behoove me to open my mouth further, if you have well retained his sermon, if you have impressed it upon your hearts. Fifty years, and more than that, he lived in the service of him whom to serve is to reign, because in his childish years he was placed in the sanctuary of God. With us for thirty years almost from the very beginning of this monastery he lived, not only without complaint, but even with grace: whose memory from this shall be in blessing to us, and to the generation which is to come. As a stranger and a pilgrim he passed through this way and life, taking as little as he could from the things of the world, as knowing that he was not of this world. He did not have here a lasting city, as neither did his fathers; but extended to the things before, he followed to the palm of the supernal vocation. The world has nothing, which it may justly cry out in him, or of him; because neither did the world please him, nor he the world. As sparingly as he could, he

took from its substance; and he would have taken less, if obedience had not compelled him. Having food and clothing, he was content with these, not to superfluity, but to necessity: except that he more often alleged that necessity itself to be superfluity. Before these few days, if I remember well, while we were talking to each other, he said that he was a prebendary of this monastery, and was fed in the house of God as a man of no utility. For he was truly meek, and humble in heart: and though he flourished in other virtues, he nevertheless obtained specially the grace of meekness. Therefore he presented himself lovable and affable to all, as he was very lovable.

3. Nevertheless in all these things how circumcised his mouth and tongue were, all of you have known most fully, who so long have seen his conversation, and heard his sermon. Who ever heard from his mouth the sound of detraction, a word of scurrility, a speech of glory, the voice of envy? Who ever apprehended him either judging others, or consenting to one judging? Who was able to hear him speaking vanities? yea who did not fear to be heard by him, if by chance he should speak such things? Forsooth he solicitously guarded his ways, that he might not offend in his tongue; knowing that he who offends not in word, this is a perfect man (Jas. 3:2). Far from you, Humbert, that evangelical woe: Woe to you who now laugh, because you shall weep (Luke 6:25). Did any of you find him laughing, even among many laughing? He indeed cleared his countenance for the sake of those sitting with

him, lest he should become onerous; but he did not admit an entire laugh, if you well recollect. Furthermore of how great fervor he was in the work of God by days and nights, you have not only seen, but also admired even to the day of his death. For when he had already arrived almost at a decrepit age, besides the inconveniences of old age, also weary and shaken by so many and such great infirmities, which many of you are not ignorant of; yet his mind was, as it is said, the victor of years, and unknowing to yield to infirmity. Finally in colds and heats ascending and descending through mountains and valleys, he prosecuted the labor of young men, so that he was for an admiration and stupor to all. If I had sometimes for the sake of counsel detained him because of the multitude of businesses, he remained sad and cloudy, until he was restored to your company. Most rarely ever was he found to have been absent from the solemn vigils, which however he not rarely anticipated, most rarely from the other hours of the choir of those psalling: nor unless by that necessity, that having from the instant the response of death, infirmity followed.

4. Furthermore in the refectory scarcely using common foods, if by chance anything else were served, either he did not receive it, or he received it so troublesomely, that over this he more often troubled our community. He had decreed always to drink water, if I had not resisted with all my forces. If sometimes he were compelled to drink wine, it was wine in color rather than in flavor,

so much did he overwhelm it with excessive water. Scarcely ever did he enter the infirmary, with obedience compelling; scarcely, when he had entered, could he be held. I confess, he was less obedient in this part, because he pressed me with the mass of his authority. I praise him, in this I do not praise him; because, as you know, he persisted not a little obstinate in this kind. I believe that if he felt anything sad, he felt it for this reason, because he consented less to us concerning the necessity of his body. But what was he in counsels? Pure surely and discreet: which I knew so much better, as I more often touched his breast. Nor however did I alone know this; your community also knew it. Finally who, struck by the multitude or magnitude of temptations, did not hear from his mouth both the root of the temptation, and the remedy of the cure? For thus he ran through all the corners of the conscience of the sick one, that he who confessed could believe that he had seen all things, had been present at all things.

5. Of how great charity moreover was he? He had so put on the bowels of piety, that he excused all, interceded for all, they not knowing for whom he was speaking; not an acceptor of persons, but of necessities. He was therefore humble in heart, sweet in speech, strenuous in work, fervent in charity, faithful in what was committed, circumspect and prudent in counsel. He was composed above all men, whom I may have seen in these days; one and the same persevering at every time, and every hour. Plainly in the paths of the Lord

Jesus he placed his footsteps, nor did he draw back his foot, until he should consummate the course of his journey. He was poor, and this one was poor. He lived in labors, and this one in many labors. He was crucified, and this one affixed to many and great crosses, bore the stigmata of the Lord Jesus in his body, fulfilling those things which were lacking of the passions of Christ even in his own flesh. He rose again, and this one shall rise again. He ascended into heaven, and this one is believed to be about to ascend. About to ascend plainly, when the king of glory shall descend for our sake, as before he had ascended, that he may make known his power: since it is of no less excellence to descend through the air, than to have ascended through the air. For thus of old the angels foretold; because this Jesus who was taken up from us into heaven, shall so come, in which manner you saw him going into heaven (Acts 1:11). Do not praise a man in his life, says the Scripture (Sir. 11:30), for the reason that there is no secure praise unless after death. This also I studiously observed in him, who while he lived, did not open my mouth in this kind; lest by chance we might incur either I the mark of adulation, or he the fault of vanity. From this surely neither is now feared; neither do I see him, and he perhaps does not hear me. But even if he should hear, he is not moved by the words of men, more strongly and more happily adhering to the Word of God. The enemy will profit nothing in him, and the suggester of vanity will not add to hurt him.

8. For the rest, brethren, I say to you, if you would follow his footsteps, you would not so easily fall into vain thoughts and idle speeches, into jokes and scurrilities; because in these you lose much both of your life, and of your time. Irrevocable time flies; and while you believe yourselves to beware of that least punishment, you incur a greater. For know this, that after this life in purgatorial places a hundredfold, those things which were neglected here, shall be rendered even unto the last farthing. I know that it is hard for a dissolute man to take up discipline, for a wordy man to suffer silence, for one accustomed to wander to remain stable; but harder, and much harder will it be, to tolerate those future troubles. And this man who is buried here, sustained many such temptations in the beginning, as I myself knew, but he fought with much wrestling and conquered: and as it was then hard for him to sustain the fight in temptations, so it would now be harder for him to fly back to those follies, because good custom had turned into nature. Exercise yourselves in this doctrine, and attend to that form which you saw in him and heard: that you may arrive at him, to whom he himself arrived, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

ON THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

SERMON I. On the five sacraments of dedication.

1. Today's festivity, brethren, ought to be so much more devoted to us, as it is more familiar. For indeed we have other solemnities of the

saints in common with other churches; but this one is so our own, that it is necessary that it be celebrated either by us, or by no one. It is ours, because it is about our church; but more ours, because it is about ourselves. You marvel perhaps and blush that feasts are celebrated concerning you: but do not become like the horse and the mule, who have no understanding. For what could these stones have of holiness that we should celebrate their solemnities? They have holiness indeed, but on account of your bodies. Or would anyone doubt that your bodies are holy, which are the temple of the Holy Spirit, that each one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification? Therefore the souls are holy on account of the indwelling Spirit of God in you; the bodies are holy on account of the souls; the house is holy also on account of the bodies. Yet certainly he was held in corruptible flesh and in the body of sin, in which also the soul of him who said: "Keep my soul, for I am holy" (Ps. 85:2), admitted the grave crime of adultery. God is plainly wonderful in his saints, not only in the heavenly ones, but also in the earthly ones. In both places he has saints, and in both he is wonderful, beatifying those indeed, sanctifying these.

2. Do you seek an experiment of that holiness of which we speak, and do you desire the miracles of these your saints to be shown? Many certainly of you have gone out manfully from the sins and vices in which they rotted like beasts of burden in their own dung; and daily they powerfully resist them when they attack, according to the

Apostle, who speaking of the saints indeed says: "They grew strong from infirmity, they became valiant in war" (Heb. 11:34). What is more wonderful, when he who before could scarcely for two days contain himself from luxury, surfeit, and revellings, and drunkenness, and chamberings, and impurities, and other similar and dissimilar vices, now contains himself from them for many years, even for his whole life? What greater miracle, when so many youths, so many adolescents, so many nobles, all finally whom I see here, are held as if in an open prison without chains, fixed by the fear of God alone; that they persevere in such affliction of penance, beyond human virtue, above nature, against custom? You yourselves, I believe, see how many miracles we could now find, if it were allowed to search individually the exit of each one from Egypt, and the way of the desert, that is, the renunciation of the world, the entrance of the monastery, and the conversation in the monastery. What indeed are these, but manifest arguments of the Holy Spirit indwelling in you? For the vital movements of the body prove that the soul inhabits the body: spiritual life proves that the Spirit inhabits the soul. The former is discerned from sight and hearing: the latter from charity and humility, and other virtues.

3. Today's festivity is yours therefore, most dearly beloved brethren, it is yours. You have been dedicated to the Lord, he has chosen you and taken you as his own. "To thee," says the Prophet, "is the poor man left, thou wilt be

a helper to the orphan" (Ps. 9:14). How well have you exchanged, most beloved, whatever you could have in the world, when now by relinquishing them, you have deserved to be the own of the author of the world, and to have him as your own possession, who without doubt is the portion and inheritance of his own. Neither indeed, as the sons of iniquity said: "Blessed is the people to whom these things are," namely the temporal things which he had premised, "storehouses belching out from this into that, sheep fruitful," and the like: no, I say, not blessed is the people to whom these things are; but "blessed is the people whose Lord is their God" (Ps. 143:13, 15). See therefore if it be not worthy that we should keep a festal day on which he took us as his own, and invested himself through his ministers and vicars, that it may be as he himself had long ago promised: "I," saying, "will be in the midst of them their God" (Zech. 2:11): we however his people and the sheep of his pasture. For when this house was dedicated to the Lord through the hands of the pontiffs, it was done on account of us without doubt; not only who were then present, but also whoever until the end of the world are to serve the Lord in this place.

4. In us therefore it is necessary that those things be spiritually fulfilled, which in the walls visibly preceded. And if you wish to know, these are: sprinkling, inscription, anointing, illumination, blessing. These things indeed the pontiffs did in this visible house; these Christ the presiding pontiff of future good things invisibly

operates daily in us. For first he sprinkles us with hyssop, that we may be cleansed, washed, made white, and it may be said of us: "Who is she that cometh up made white?" (Cant. 8:5). He washes us, I say, in confession, he washes us with the rain of tears, he washes with the sweat of penance; but more he washes us with that most precious water, which from the fountain of piety, that is from his side, emanated. He sprinkles us with hyssop, which is a humble herb, and purgative of the breast; with the water of salutary wisdom, which is the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom and the fountain of life; also mixing the seasoning of salt, lest the fear be insipid without hope, without devotion. Not only however, but he inscribes with the finger of God, in which he cast out demons, without doubt in the Holy Spirit. He inscribes, I say, his law, no longer on stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart, fulfilling the prophetic promise, by which he promised himself to take away the stony heart, and to give a heart of flesh (Ezek. 11:19), that is not hard, not obstinate, not Judaic, but pious, but meek, but tractable, but devoted. "Blessed is he whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of thy law" (Ps. 93:12). Blessed, I say, are they who are taught and mindful of his commandments, but "to do them" (Ps. 102:18). Otherwise "to him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, it is sin to him" (Jas. 4:17); and "the servant knowing the will of his Lord and not doing it, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 12:47).

5. Wherefore it is necessary that the anointing of spiritual grace should help our infirmity, anointing with the grace of its devotion the crosses of these observances and of manifold penance; because neither is it possible without the cross to follow Christ; and without anointing who could bear the asperity of the cross? Hence it is that many abominate and flee penance, seeing the cross indeed, but not also the anointing. You who have experienced, behold yourselves know that truly our cross is anointed, and through the grace of the helping Spirit, our penance is sweet and delectable, and, so to speak, our bitterness most sweet. But after the anointing of this grace shall have preceded, now Christ does not place his lamp under a bushel, but upon a candlestick; because it is time that our light should shine before men, and they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

6. Now indeed we expect the blessing in the end, when he shall open his hand, and fill every animal with blessing. For in the four things premised merits consist, in the blessing are the rewards. In the blessing the whole grace of sanctification will be completed, when now we shall pass into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This is it which is constructed from living stones, namely from angels and men. For at once the building and the dedication itself will be completed. Doubtless disjointed wood and stones do not make a house, nor can anyone inhabit in them; but conjunction alone makes a house. So the perfect unity of the heavenly spirits,

connected without any division to itself, renders a whole and congruent habitation to God, which the indwelling glory of majesty ineffably beatifies. For who would so know all the counsels of kings, or who would so know all their words or deeds, in what manner the wood and stones of the palace, if the sense of intelligence were not lacking to them? Therefore the living and rational stones of that heavenly court are present at the divine counsels, and know the mysteries of the Trinity, and hear ineffable words, which it is not lawful for man to speak. "Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever!" (Ps. 83:5). For by how much more they see, more they understand, more they acknowledge; by so much more they love, so much more they praise, so much more they admire.

7. Truly because we have already said that that house coheres to itself and is perfectly connected, it remains that we express in some way the juncture and connection itself. We read in Isaiah: "Glue is good" (Isa. 41:7). Therefore those stones cohere to themselves by a twofold glue: of full knowledge and of perfect love. For by so much greater mutual love are they coupled, by how much closer they assist to charity itself, which is God. But neither can any suspicion separate them from one another, where the penetrating ray of truth allows nothing at all that may be in one to be hidden from the other. Since yet "he who adheres to God, is one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6:17); there is no doubt but that the blessed spirits

perfectly adhering to him, together with him and in him penetrate all things. If you desire to arrive at this house, so let your soul long and faint for the courts of the Lord, as the Prophet cries: "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 26:4). Likewise imitate the Prophet, who "as he swore to the Lord, vowed a vow to the God of Jacob. If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house," etc. (Ps. 131:2, 3). But concerning this we must treat in another sermon which the Lord himself shall have given.

SERMON II.

How we ought to cohere both to ourselves and to others.

1. Long ago the glorious king and prophet of the Lord, holy David, began to be moved by a certain religious thought, judging it unworthy that the Lord of hosts should as yet have no house on earth; while he himself inhabited a house of royal dignity (2 Sam. 7:2; 1 Chron. 17:1). This very thing, brethren, it becomes us also faithfully to think, and manfully to commit to effect. For as to the fact that, although that thought of the Prophet pleased God, yet the work was reserved for Solomon, there is another reason, perhaps needing a more prolix disputation. Now truly, O soul, you indeed dwell in a sublime house, which was fabricated for you by God. I speak of this body: which he so put together, which he so fitted, which he so adorned and ordained, that you might dwell gloriously and delectably in it. But

also for the body itself he made an exalted house, most fit and decorous. I mean this sensible and inhabitable world. Do you not therefore repute it unworthy, that he himself made a house for you, but you truly neglect to build a temple for him? As yet indeed you have a house, but be certain that in a short time your house is about to fall: and unless you have first provided another, you will be exposed to rain, wind and cold. Alas! who shall sustain before the face of his cold? Happy therefore, and much happy the soul which can say: "We know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). Therefore now do not give, O soul, sleep to your eyes, and slumber to your eyelids, until you find a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob (Ps. 131:4, 5).

2. But what do we think, brethren? Where is found the place of this building, or who can be the architect? For this visible temple was certainly made for us for our habitation: for neither does the Most High dwell in things made by hands. What temple therefore shall we build for him who says, and truly says: "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23:24). I should be greatly troubled, and my spirit would be anxious over me, except that I hear him saying of someone: Because "I and the Father will come to him, and make our mansion with him" (John 14:23). Therefore now I know where the house is to be prepared for him, since nothing contains him except his own image. The soul is capable of him, which without

doubt was created to his image. On account of which now hasten, adorn your bride-chamber, Sion; because it has well pleased the Lord in you, and your land shall be inhabited. Exult enough, daughter of Sion; your God shall dwell in you. Say with Mary: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." Say according to the words of blessed Elizabeth: "And whence is this to me, that the majesty of the Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:38, 43). For how great is the benignity of God, how great the condescension, how great the dignity, how great the glory of souls, that the Lord of all, and who has no indigence, commands a temple to be made for himself in them?

Therefore, brethren, with all desire and worthy action of thanks let us study to build a temple for him in us: first indeed solicitous that he may inhabit in each one, then that he may inhabit in all at once; because neither does he disdain individuals, nor the whole body. In the first place therefore let each one study that he may not disagree from himself; since every kingdom divided against itself shall be desolated, and house shall fall upon house (Matt. 12:25); nor will Christ enter, where the walls are leaning and the partitions are pushed down. For does not the soul wish to have the house of its body whole, and is it not necessary for it to go out, if the members are dispersed from one another? Let it see therefore also itself, if it desires Christ to inhabit through faith in its heart, that is in itself: let it solicitously beware lest its members disagree

from one another, that is, reason, will, and memory. Let reason therefore be without error, that it may well congratulate the will: for the will loves such a one. Let also the will be without iniquity, since reason approves such a one. Otherwise if the soul judges itself on account of the depravity of the will in that which it approves through reason, there is an intestinal war, and a perilous discord; since reason always disparages such a will, and accuses, and judges, and condemns it. On account of which the Lord says in the Gospel: "Be at agreement with thy adversary, while thou art in the way with him, lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the torturers, and thou be cast into prison" (Matt. 5:25). Let memory also be without filth, so that no sin may remain in it, which is not deleted by pure confession and worthy fruits of penance. Otherwise the will hates, and reason execrates the conscience in which sin lies hidden. He therefore prepares a good habitation for God, whose reason has not been deceived, nor his will perverted, nor his memory defiled.

4. Now truly when individuals are so disposed, it is necessary that all of us also be connected and glued together, by mutual charity indeed, which is the bond of perfection. For perfect knowledge cannot be had in this life, and perhaps it is not fitting. For in the heavenly house knowledge is the nourishment of love. For who shall boast that he has a clean heart? Therefore it was easy both for the one known to be confounded, and for the one knowing to be offended.

There knowledge will be pleasant, where there will be no spot. That house therefore is connected more firmly, as if about to remain forever: this one, as if the tabernacle of warriors, coheres to itself less perfectly. That house indeed is of joy, this one of warfare; that house is of praise, this one of prayer. This, I say, is the city of our strength, that is the city of our rest. Wherefore if we shall be victorious here, there we shall be glorious, having a diadem instead of a helmet, a scepter and a palm for a sword, for a shield a gilded mantle, for a breastplate the stole of pleasantness. Meanwhile surely it seems more useful to be pressed than to be destroyed; and to sustain the weight of the shield and of the breastplate than to be wounded by the fiery darts of the malignant: from which may he guard us by his supernal protection, who is blessed forever. Amen.

SERMON III.

On the triple equipment which we have for the custody of God.

This house, brethren, is the town of the eternal King, but besieged by enemies. Therefore, as many of us as have sworn to his arms, and given our names to his warfare, we should know that we need a triple equipment for the custody of this castle: namely, fortification, and arms, and nourishment. What then is the fortification? Sion, the city of our strength, says the prophet, the Savior shall be placed in it as a wall and a bulwark (Isa. 26:1). The wall is continence, the bulwark is pa-

tience. The wall of continence is good, which so surrounds and encircles on every side, that entry is not given to death neither through the windows of the eyes, nor through the other senses. The bulwark of patience is good, which sustains the first attacks of the enemies, so that among many temptations we may stand manfully, and persevere continually unshaken. For there is a unique remedy, while continence is shaken and in a certain way wavers, to oppose patience, and, however much the sense of sin may burn, to deny consent in every way. In your patience, he says, you shall possess your souls (Luke 21:19). Therefore the Savior himself is placed in his city as a wall and a bulwark, made for us by God the Father justice, and the patience of the prophet, as he himself says: Since you are my patience, O Lord (Psalm 70:5). A wall, I say, is placed in conversation, a bulwark in passion, abstaining from all the allurements of the flesh and of the present world, and bravely sustaining all adversities.

But it is also necessary to prepare arms, but spiritual arms, powerful to God, not only for resisting, but also for attacking and manfully defeating the enemy. Put on the armor of God, says the Apostle (Eph. 6:11), etc. For what do we think, brethren? The temptation of the enemy is indeed heavy to us; but our prayer is far heavier to him. His iniquity and craftiness hurt us; but much more does our simplicity and mercy torture him. He does not sustain our humility; he is burned by our charity, he is tormented by our meekness and obedience. Now indeed we cannot even be urged

by hunger, so that we are compelled to hand over the castle to the enemies; since, thanks be to God, that terrible threat of the prophet, or rather of the Lord through the prophet, does not come upon us, namely of hunger and thirst; not of bread and water, but of the word [otherwise, of hearing the word] of God (Amos 8:11). For thus we have: Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4). Therefore nourishment is not lacking to us, who frequently hear both sermons, and more frequently sacred readings, and sometimes also taste the delights of spiritual devotion, as if the puppies eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their lords? I mean those heavenly guests, who are filled from the abundance of the house of God. We also have the bread of tears, which, although less sweet, nevertheless excellently confirms the heart of man. We also have the bread of obedience, of which the Lord speaks to the disciples: My food, he says, is that I may do the will of my Father (John 4:34). We have above all the living bread from heaven, the body of the Lord Savior, in the strength of which food certainly the strength of every adverse party is cast down.

Thus therefore the strength of the Lord's castle is fortified, so that there is no longer need to fear anything, if only we shall have willed to act faithfully and manfully; so that namely we are found neither traitors, nor fearful, nor idle. For indeed those become traitors, whoever strive to introduce his enemies into this castle of the Lord,

such as are indeed detractors, hateful to God, who sow discords, and nourish scandals among the brethren. For just as the place of the Lord is made in peace; so it is manifest that a place is made for the devil in discord. Do not wonder, brethren, if I seem to speak more harshly; because the truth strokes no one. Let him know himself to be entirely a traitor, if anyone by chance, which far be it! attempts to introduce any vices into this house, and to make the temple of God a den of demons. Thanks be to God, we do not find many of this kind here. But yet we sometimes discover by chance some, who talk with the enemies, and strike a covenant with death, that is, they strive, as much as is in them, to diminish the discipline of the order, to let the fervor grow lukewarm, to disturb the peace, to hurt charity. But let us indeed beware of them, as much as we can; as it is written of certain ones: But Jesus did not trust himself to them (John 2:24). But I say to you because, although they are borne now, yet they shall soon bear a heavy judgment, unless they shall have corrected themselves more quickly, just as they strive to bring in a heavy loss. For what, brother? do you keep faith by works to vanity, or lukewarmness, or any other vice, and lie to God through the tonsure? You have certainly taken the best castle for Christ, if you shall have handed over Clairvaux to his enemies. From there he receives every year best and precious returns in his eyes: and he is accustomed to bring into this place of his fortification much prey, which he snatches from the enemies, and he has much con-

fidence in its strength. For behold those whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them from the regions, from the rising of the sun and the setting, from the north and the sea. For those therefore, with what punishments do you think the traitor of this castle must be exposed, after he shall have been discovered and apprehended (for he can neither hide nor flee)? He shall certainly not be condemned by the common death of the others, but it is necessary that he perish by exquisite torments. But I do not dwell more around these things now: I believe we shall hereafter better beware of this so execrable treason, striving for the rest with greater solicitude not to attract, but to repel vices, whatever they may be, whether carnal, or even secular, lest we deserve to incur the mark or punishment of traitors.

In the second place also that must be avoided, lest anyone by chance, cast down by faintheartedness, should flee from the fortification, trembling there with fear where there is no fear; but where there is the highest danger, secure by insane temerity. For he exposes himself to hostile hands, to hostile swords, whoever he is that flees, as if he is ignorant that those enemies entirely lack mercy, cruel indeed to strangers, but much more cruel to their own, and indeed most cruel to themselves.

Now indeed I say also the third danger briefly, because now the hour has passed, while I, most desirous of your salvation, as is worthy, seek different remedies for the different infirmities of

morals. What does it profit, if you should wish neither to betray the castle, nor to leave it, but should remain in it sluggish and lazy? Accordingly with all the mind, with all the strength, most beloved, let us labor to hold in hand the castle of the Lord and of our King committed to us, solicitous against all the craftiness of the enemy, and prepared against all his machines, as it is written: Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7). But since we know by whom it was said: Unless the Lord shall keep the city, he watches in vain who keeps it (Psalm 126:1); let us be humbled under the powerful hand of the Most High, committing both ourselves and this house with all devotion to his mercy, so that he himself may guard us from all the snares of all enemies, to the praise and glory of his name, which is blessed forever. Amen. SERMON IV. On the triple mansion.

We celebrate this day with votive praises, and we honor it with festive joys. But if it is not fitting for the religious, nor does it become the wise to be ignorant of what they venerate, or to celebrate what they do not know; we must inquire, in whose commemoration of saints this is done, or in whose. Nor indeed do I think that this should be presumed by me of myself: let another speak first, whose testimony may be greater, and may seem more credible. You wonder perhaps why we say these things first, since the present church more clearly thrusts itself upon your gazes, whose anniversary dedication is celebrated. For why should we fear to call its walls holy, which

the consecrated hands of the pontiffs have sanctified with such great mysteries? From then also and thereafter the frequency of holy readings is known to resound there, the devoted whispers of holy prayers to murmur, the blessed presence of holy relics to be honored, the untiring custody of holy spirits to watch vigilantly. You might say perhaps: The other things indeed are evident; but who boasts that he has seen the angelic watches? Although you perhaps do not see, there is yet one who sees, he himself who sends. Who is that? Surely he who speaks through the prophet: Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen (Isa. 62:6). Jerusalem is indeed above, which is free, our mother: but I would by no means believe that watchmen have been appointed upon her walls, in whose praises the Prophet sings: Who has placed peace in your borders (Psalm 147:14). But if you judge that little, go on to hear what follows in the preceding testimony: All day, he says, and all night forever they shall not be silent (Isa. 62:6). For it is to be noticed even this, that this is not that Jerusalem of which you have read: Her gates shall not be closed by day; for night shall not be in it (Apoc. 21:25). That Jerusalem therefore neither suffers vicissitudes, nor needs watchmen: it is necessary that watchmen be assigned rather to ours both by days and by nights. Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen.

You are kind, O Lord, nor can you be content with this fragile protection of our walls, but upon those very men set over men you superim-

pose also angelic custody, so that they may both defend the walls, and those who are contained within the circuit of the walls. So, Father, since thus it is pleasing before you, thus it is necessary for us. For our administration is insufficient, unless you send those ministering spirits into ministry both with us and for us, that we may receive the inheritance of salvation. For what if we do not see the service, when we experience the help? what if we do not deserve the sight, when we feel the effect? We learn certainly even from this very thing that invisible things are to be preferred to visible things. For the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). Finally the cause of visible things consists in invisible things, so that, according to the Apostle, the invisible things of God may be seen by a visible creature, understood through those things which have been made (Rom. 1:20). Thus surely he formerly confounded the Jews, blaspheming the saint of God concerning the invisible forgiveness of sins, by the visible sign of bodily health: That you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then he said to the paralytic): Arise, take up your bed, and go into your house (Mark 2:10).

Thus also he refuted that Pharisee murmuring against the physician who was working salvation, and being angry at the weak woman who was being saved, by manifest tokens, enumerating the services of the woman. For he was erring who shuddered at her as still a sinner,

who clinging to the divine footsteps, watered them with tears, wiped them with her hair, pressed them with a kiss, anointed them with ointment. For who should recount crimes already deleted, who should be angry at her touching, who should judge her a sinner, who, while she deplores things committed, hates iniquity; while she kisses the feet of the Lord, loves justice; and again while she wipes them with her hair, exhibits humility; while she anoints with ointment, offers meekness? Is it not possible for sin to reign in a contrite soul and a groaning spirit, or does not much charity cover a multitude of sins? Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much (Luke 7:38-47). Wherefore justly she shall now be called not a sinner according to your judgment, O Pharisee, but a holy disciple of Christ, from whom also she learned in so short a time to be meek and humble in heart. Surely this is what you have read in the prophet, but perhaps you have neglected: Turn the wicked, and they shall not be (Prov. 12:7). Thus, most dearly beloved, thus also if that ancient accuser of the brethren should reproach you with your past sins, in which you also blush, hear the Apostle magnificently consoling you, and saying: Such indeed you were, but you are washed, but you are sanctified (1 Cor. 6:11); and that: You have now indeed your fruit unto sanctification, but the end life everlasting (Rom. 6:22); and expressing more clearly: The temple of God, he says, is holy, which you are (1 Cor. 3:17).

Surely it is he, for whose reverence we reserved the first word in the beginning of this sermon,

while we were seeking the saints, in whose sanctity we congratulate with solemn devotion. For although the consecration of bishops, the frequency of the Scriptures, the persistence of prayers, the relics of the saints, the visitation of angels, make these walls both to be called holy and to be so; yet by no means is their holiness to be believed to be honored for its own sake, who certainly are not sanctified for their own sake. On the contrary, the houses are holy because of the bodies, the bodies because of the souls, the souls because of the indwelling Spirit. Nor let anyone doubt from here, since a visible sign of his invisible grace is made for us for good. But I say in that you yourselves arise like that paralytic of the Gospel; that you take up so easily this bodily bed, in which you lay weak; that finally you walk into your house, surely that house concerning which you rejoice, saying with the Prophet: We shall go into the house of the Lord (Psalm 121:1). O admirable house, to be preferred both to beloved tabernacles, and to concupiscible courts! How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. But much more: Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord; for ever and ever they shall praise you (Psalm 83:2, 5). Indeed glorious things are said of you, city of God. For in the tabernacles is the groan of penance, in the courts the taste of joy, in you the satiety of glory. This indeed is the lowest house of prayer, the middle of expectation, you of thanksgiving and praise. Happy therefore is he who here shall have declined from

evil, which is guilt, and shall have done good: that there he may be delivered from evil, which is punishment, and in you may receive good. Here indeed are the first-fruits of the spirit, there the riches, in you the fullness: where that good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, is given into our bosoms. Finally here they become saints, there secure, in you blessed. For these are the first-fruits of the spirit, which meanwhile are bestowed upon those who are in warfare: sanctity in conversation, piety in intention, virtue in wrestling. In sanctity of conversation, understand the fruits of penance, and whatever bodily exercises of the divine commandments. And since these, unless the eye be simple, cannot be simple, necessarily piety of intention and purity of heart is required, lest either the ambition of honor, or the appetite for praise should creep in: but let him alone be desired who alone fills desire, and let all the grace which we have received return to the origin of its own fountain. Remember however that perseverance alone out of all is crowned, nor can it easily be maintained among so many dangers, unless you obtain manifold virtue in so manifold a wrestling. These things are in the tabernacles.

Furthermore in the courts, which after troublesome conflicts receive those going out to be cherished with pleasant delight, now the riches of the spirit are bestowed, rest from labors, security from solicitudes, peace from enemies. For now the Spirit himself says that they should rest from their labors, who hitherto was accustomed

to forbid leisure and to enjoin labors with such great fervor. He himself will make them apart from cares, and will sequester them from all solicitude, who now places counsels in his soul, and makes it to be troubled solicitous about many things. He himself now the victory having been gained in peace will grant to sleep sweetly in the self-same, who, while as yet the roaring lion growls, both excites to watches, and girds for battle. But in these, as we touched upon above, there is rather deliverance from evil, than the rewarding of good: except that the hard experience of our necessity forces us to estimate the absence of evil as heaps of good; just as the conscience considers the immunity from heavier crimes as the fullness of sanctity. Hence it is to be noticed how far we act from the highest good, who judge to lack guilt as justice, to lack misery as beatitude.

But far be it that anyone should think such to be the abundance of that house, and the torrent of pleasure, and if there are any other things which neither eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor has it ascended into the heart of man, which God has prepared for those who love him! Therefore do not wish to hear, O man, what the ear of man has not heard; nor seek from man what neither the human eye sees, nor the mind catches. Yet lest we be entirely silent from here, saluting this our fatherland from afar, we seem to scent a certain triple promise, namely of power, and of magnificence, and of glory. For indeed he was a man, and a son of this captivity, who was saying: I will enter into the powers of the Lord (Psalm 70:16). For the

rest we can know what it is to lack weakness, as if surrounded by weakness: but what it is to be clothed with virtue, and to enter power, and not only power, but also much power, perhaps even omnipotence, we cannot know meanwhile. Also the faithful witness cries out, because whom he justified, those he also magnified (Rom. 8:30). But magnificence, especially that which it may become to proceed from magnitude, of which there is neither end nor number, would that it be allowed meanwhile to our smallness to expect; for it is not allowed to estimate. Now indeed it is not necessary to fear, or to have suspected the promise of glory: happily then and confidently you shall draw glory, from the appetite for which meanwhile you are deterred by such great threats. For there shall be then to each one praise from God, secure certainly and everlasting, equally void of end and of distinction; and, as it is written: Praise is pleasant and comely (Psalm 146:1). Come then, brethren, let us meanwhile fight manfully in the tabernacles, that we may then rest sweetly in the courts, that finally we may glory sublimely in the house, when this momentary and light thing of our tribulation shall work in us an eternal weight of glory beyond measure in the sublime, when we shall be praised in the Lord all day, in truth surely, not in vanity.

SERMON V.

On the double consideration of oneself.

Even today, brethren, we keep a solemnity, and an illustrious one. And that indeed I could easily say: but if you go on to seek of which saint, that perhaps now not so much. For as often as the memory of an apostle, or of a martyr, or of some confessor is celebrated, it is by no means difficult to say of whom, for instance of saint Peter, and of glorious Stephen, or of our holy Father Benedict, or of any other of the great princes of the great court of heaven. But now the solemnity of none of them is kept: yet a certain solemnity is kept. And not only a certain one, but not a small one. And if you already wish to hear, it is the festivity of the house of the Lord, of the temple of God, of the city of the eternal king, of the bride of Christ. Surely no one doubts that the bride of the Saint of saints is holy, and most worthy of every honor of celebration. Or indeed should anyone doubt that the house of God is holy, of which it is read: Holiness becomes your house (Psalm 92:5). So also his temple is holy, wonderful in equity (Psalm 64:5, 6): but also John testifies that he saw the holy city: I saw, he says, the holy city Jerusalem new descending from heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Apoc. 21:2). In which words surely I have already begun to open what as yet, I confess, I was wishing to dissimulate. But I say that the same bride, who is a city, is also a temple, and no less a house. Nor is that a wonder, especially since in like manner he is one, who deigns to exhibit himself to her both as bridegroom, and king, and God, and father of the family.

Yet I do not think you are satisfied as yet, until you learn [otherwise hear] more clearly who the house of this father of the family is, what this temple of God is, what the city of this king is, and finally who has deserved to be called and to be the bride of this so glorious bridegroom. But I for my part fear not a little to speak what I feel about this, lest it should happen that any of you, which far be it! hear either less faithfully, or less humbly: lest anyone perhaps should go out from this auditorium either elated by the magnitude of glory, or incredulous from the faint-heartedness of his spirit. For I wish you always to be found both faithful and humble, both of which are supremely necessary for salvation. For to the humble alone he himself gives grace, whom also without faith it is impossible to please. I wish therefore and desire in all ways that you should take care to exhibit yourselves to him as both little and great, or rather, that you may wonder more, both as nothing and as something, even something great [otherwise, nothing other than something great]. For neither without a great soul will you be able to grasp those so great goods, or to do violence to the kingdom of heaven: no more than to enter the same kingdom of heaven, unless you shall have been converted and become as little children (Matt. 18:3). I am not a man of profound sense, nor can I belch forth to you what I have not tasted. I will say however what I feel to be done in me sometimes, so that if anyone by chance shall have judged it useful for himself, he may imitate it. For because it was formerly persuaded to me that I

should have pity on my soul, from then on about to please my God (Ecclus. 30:24), I frequently think about it: would that it were allowed once and always [otherwise, always more]! There was a time when it was by no means pleasant to do that, surely because I loved it less (if yet less, and not rather least of all). For how does one love, whose death he loves? But if, as is true and indubitable, the death of the soul is iniquity, it is therefore clear that the sentence is absolute, that he who loves iniquity, hates his own soul (Psalm 10:6). I hated it therefore, and I would have hated it still, unless he who first had loved it had conferred on me this whatever beginning of its love.

Therefore by his benefit sometimes thinking about it, I seem to myself to find in it, I confess, as it were two certain contrary things. If I look at it, as it is in itself and from itself, according to the truth of the thing, I can feel nothing more truly about it, than that it has been reduced to nothing. Why is it now necessary to count its individual miseries, how much it is burdened with sins, overspread with darkness, entangled with allurements, itching with concupiscences, obnoxious to passions, filled with illusions, always prone to evil, inclined to every vice, finally full of all confusion and ignominy? Surely if our very justices also, inspected by the light of truth, are found all as a menstruous rag (Isa. 64:6); what then will injustices be reputed? If the light which is in us is darkness, how great will the darkness itself be? It is easy for each of us, if he should track his whole things more fully [otherwise, better] and without

dissimulation, and judge without respect of persons, to testify in all things to the apostolic truth, and freely to proclaim: He who thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he seduces himself (Gal. 6:3). What is man, that you magnify him? says the faithful and devoted confession; or what do you set your heart against him (Job 7:17)? What? Without doubt man is made like unto vanity, man is reduced to nothing, man is nothing. Yet how is he entirely nothing, whom God magnifies? How is he nothing, against whom the divine heart is set?

Let us breathe again, brethren, and if we are nothing in our hearts, perhaps in the heart of God something else can lie hidden about us. O Father of mercies! O Father of the miserable! why do you set your heart against them? I know, I know: where your treasure is, there is your heart: How therefore are we nothing, if we are your treasure? All nations are before you as if they are not, and they shall be reputed as nothing and empty. Indeed before you, but not so within you. So in the judgment of your truth, but not so in the affect of your piety. Surely you call those things which are not, as those things which are. And therefore they are not, because you call those things which are not: and they are, because you call them. For although they are not as far as regards themselves, yet with you they are, surely, according to the Apostle, not of works of justice, but of him that calls (Rom. 9:12). Thus surely, thus you console in your piety him whom you have humbled in your truth, so that he may be magnificently dilated in

yours, who is deservedly straitened in his own bowels. Indeed all your ways are mercy and truth, to those who seek your testament and your testimonies (Psalm 24:10); the testament surely of piety, and the testimonies of truth.

Read, O man, in your heart; read within yourself about yourself the testimonies of truth: even of this common light you will judge yourself unworthy. Read in the heart of God the testament, which was confirmed in the blood of the Mediator: and you will find how far otherwise you seem to possess by hope, than to hold in reality. What is man, it says, that you magnify him? Great surely, but in him: since he was magnified by him. Or how is he not great with him, to whom there is so great a care for him? For he has care for us, says the apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:7). And the Prophet: But I am a beggar and poor, the Lord is solicitous for me (Psalm 39:18). Clearly an artificial connection of each consideration, by which as if in one moment descending equally and ascending, he saw both himself poor and a beggar, and God solicitous for him. This is angelic, to ascend and descend at the same time. You shall see, he says, angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man (John 1:51). For neither is there any such vicissitude in their ascensions and descensions. At the same time they are both sent into ministry for those who receive the inheritance of salvation, and they stand before the face of majesty: God mercifully providing so that there may both be consolation for us, and no tribulation for them. Otherwise when would they equanimously suf-

fer to be separated even for a little from that face of glory, into which they always desire to look, for our sake? Finally hear the Truth itself in the Gospel. Their angels, it says, no doubt those of the little ones, always see the face of the Father in heaven (Matt. 18:10); thus namely assigned to the custody of the little ones, that they are not deprived in any way of their beatitude. Hence it is that holy John saw the city Jerusalem descending, he could not gaze upon it standing. And notice that he said descending, not falling. For once not the smallest part of that city fell, but that part indeed least holy, surely because it was a most heavy fall for it, that it was made an enemy of all holiness.

But John indeed could not see this ruin and terrible fall, because he was not yet; but the Word which was in the beginning saw it, the beginning which was speaking to the apostles saw it: I saw Satan falling as lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). Therefore that part which fell is to be repaired by God, when he shall fill up the ruins, and shall rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, yet not from those who fell. But this part which appeared descending, was already prepared, as he followed and added: Prepared by God (Apoc. 21:2). For that the holy angels descend, and do not fall, divine preparation brings about: by whom surely this very will was prepared for them, and the faculty. Whence the Apostle also testifies that they are not only ministering, but also sent into ministry (Heb. 1:14). Why should he not send angels, for whom he himself willed to be sent by the Father?

Why should he not bow the heavens for them, for whom also the king of heavens himself bowed himself, so that he wrote with his finger on the ground? (John 8:6.) O Lord, bow your heavens (it is little), and descend (Psalm 143:5). What further? That to whom he condescends, he may also make to ascend together with himself. For the rest, as we have already said, the angelic ascent and descent lacks vicissitude; but it is necessary for us to be turned now this way, now that way, because it is neither allowed to stand longer above, nor is it expedient to delay longer below. They ascend, it says, even to the heavens, and they descend even to the abysses: their soul was pining away in evils (Psalm 106:26). Why this? For this reason surely their soul meanwhile pines away more in evils, than it is delighted in goods, because these are seen to be had in reality, but those only in hope. Who shall be able to be saved? say the disciples to the Savior. And he: With men this is impossible, but not with God (Matt. 19:25, 26). This is all our confidence, this our unique consolation, this the whole reason of our hope.

But now certain of the possibility, what do we do about the will? Who knows if he is worthy of love or hatred? Who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counselor? (Rom. 11:34). Here now clearly it is necessary that faith come to our aid, here it is necessary that truth [otherwise piety] succor us: so that what about us lies hidden in the heart of the Father, may be revealed to us through his Spirit, and his Spirit testifying may persuade our spirit that we are the

sons of God. But let him persuade by calling and justifying freely through faith, in which surely as it were a certain middle passage is from eternal predestination to future magnification. For this reason surely we believe that double consideration, one indeed of judgment and truth, the other truly not incongruously to be called of faith and piety. Nor will you wonder that such dissimilar things are found in human qualities, if you skillfully notice how great a diversity of natures is seen to have met even in his very substance. For what is more sublime than the spirit of life? but what more humble than the slime of the earth? Which coherence of things so discordant in man I think did not escape even the wise ones of this world, when they defined man as a mortal rational animal. For wonderful is the coupling of reason and death, wonderful the society of discretion and corruption. Thus surely, thus in morals, thus in affects, thus in the studies of men no less, perhaps even greater contrariety is found: so that if you look at the whole depravity separately as it is, and again consider individually whatever good is seen to be in him, you would judge it to be full of miracle, that such adverse things have met together. Thence man deserves to hear now indeed Bar-Jona, but now Satan. Do not wonder at this. Recall from the Gospel, to whom it was said (and each in truth, for each was said by Truth itself) first indeed: Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona; and not much after: Go behind me, Satan. One therefore both, although not both from one. For that from the Father, this from man,

yet he himself was both. Whence Bar-Jona? Because not flesh and blood, but the Father revealed to him what he spoke. Whence Satan? Because he savored the things which were of men, not the things of God (Matt. 16:17, 23). Now if by each consideration we shall have diligently inspected what we are, or rather in one, how nothing, in the other how magnified: surely for whom even such great majesty bears solicitude, and has set his heart against us: I think our glorying seems tempered, but perhaps more increased, yet solidified, so that we glory not in ourselves, but in the Lord, for whom surely to breathe is in this alone, that we say, If he shall have decreed to save us, we shall be delivered immediately.

8. From this now, lingering a little while on that higher watchtower, let us seek the house of God, let us seek the temple, let us seek the city, let us seek also the bride. For I have not forgotten, but with fear and reverence I say: We are. We, I say, are, but in the heart of God; we are, but by his condescension, not by our dignity. Let man not usurp what is God's, so that he does not set himself to magnify himself: otherwise God, doing what was his, will humble him who exalts himself. Which even if we, with childish animosity, wish to be saved for nothing, we are deservedly not saved. The dissimulation of misery excludes mercy, nor does condescension find a place where there has been a presumption of dignity: but a humble confession of passion provokes compassion. Surely this alone causes him to feed us in famine like a wealthy father of a family, and

that under him we be found abounding in loaves. Therefore his house, for which the nourishment of life is never lacking. And remember that he defines his house as a house of prayer (Matt. 21:13); because this also seems to agree sufficiently with the prophetic testimony, which asserts that we are to be fed by him, in prayers indeed, with the bread of tears, and that we shall receive drink in tears (Ps. 79:6). Furthermore, according to the same Prophet, as we also remembered above, holiness becomes this house (Ps. 92:5): so that namely, the purity of continence may accompany the tears of penance, and that which is already a house, may subequently also become a temple of God. Be holy, he says, because I the Lord your God am holy (Lev. 11:44). And of the apostles: Do you not know that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you? If anyone violates the temple of God, God will destroy him (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

9. Yet is even that holiness now sufficient? Peace also is necessary, by the testimony of the Apostle, who says: Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no one will see God (Heb. 12:14). This is what causes brothers of one character to dwell in unity, building for our king, the truly peaceful one, a new city indeed, which is itself called Jerusalem, which is the vision of peace. For where an headless multitude has been gathered without a treaty of peace, without observance of the law, without discipline and government, it is called not a people, but a crowd: it is not a city, but confusion; it displays Babylon,

it has nothing of Jerusalem. But how will it seem possible that so great a king should pass over into a bridegroom, and a city be promoted into a bride? This alone can do it, which can do anything, charity strong as death. How does it not easily raise her, who has already inclined him? But hence that first consideration of yourself, which we mentioned, is by no means to be consulted: here the magnanimity of faith is exercised most greatly. Finally, he himself also says: I have betrothed you to me in faith, I have betrothed you in judgment and justice (understand his, not yours), I have betrothed you in mercy and compassions (Hosea 2:20, 19). If he has not done what a bridegroom does, if he has not loved as a bridegroom, if he has not been jealous as a bridegroom, do not acquiesce in thinking yourself a bride.

10. Therefore, my brothers, if through the abundant reflection of the great father of a family we are proved to be a house, if a temple of God through sanctification, if a city of the supreme king through the communion of social life, if a bride of the immortal bridegroom through love, I think, there is now nothing that I should fear to say is our solemnity. Nor wonder that this celebration is performed on earth, since it is performed also in heaven. For if (as Truth says, and it cannot but be true) there is joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance, even for the angels of God (Luke 15:10), there is no doubt but that there is for them today manifold joy over so many a sinner doing penance. Do you wish to hear still more? Also the joy of the Lord is our strength (2 Esdr.

8:10). Let us therefore rejoice with the angels of God, let us share the joy of God, and let the present solemnity be performed in thanksgiving, because as much as it is domestic to us, so much more ought it to be devoted.

SERMON VI.

On the reverence due to sacred places.

1. The dedication of our house is a domestic celebration for us; but the dedication of ourselves is more domestic. For that sprinkling was ours, that blessing was ours, that consecration was ours, which, celebrated by the hands of holy pontiffs, is even today recalled to memory by the anniversary return with votive praises. Does God have care for stones? It is not the walls that say this, but men: For he has care for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Jacob was one man, and while sleeping he saw angels descending and ascending. This is a small thing; he also testified that the Lord of angels was present, saying: Truly the Lord is in this place, and I did not know (Gen. 28:12, 16). For he wonders at the grace, and trembles at the magnitude of the condescension. How much more terrible is this place, how much more evidently and certainly is the Lord in this place, where surely not only two or three, but so many gathered in his name persevere! Let no one now be ignorant, let none of you be unaware. Since we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may know the things that have been given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:12). Plainly

a terrible place, and worthy of all reverence, which faithful men inhabit; which holy angels frequent; which the Lord himself deigns by his own presence.

2. For how could such a great patriarch have been ignorant that there was no place where God was not? But perhaps he wondered at something else, where he says: Truly the Lord is in this place. There he truly is, and truly is Lord, where angels and men are gathered together in his name. For although he is in every place, who is enclosed by no place, yet we say significantly: Our Father, who art in heaven (Matt. 6:9); because he exhibits himself present there in another and a certain proper way, not indeed he himself different, but distinguishing different things. He is therefore in every place, containing all things universally, and disposing all things; but yet far otherwise and otherwise. Among bad men he is providing and dissimulating; among elect men working and preserving; among those above feeding and resting; among those below rebuking and condemning. He makes his sun to rise even upon the bad: but where in the meantime there is dissimulation of the bad, in a certain way truth is not. Therefore, if it is permitted to say, among the impious he is in dissimulation; among the just in truth; among the angels in happiness; among those below in his ferocity. Does it sound harsh to you what I said about ferocity? I indeed fear both anger and fury. Lord, do not rebuke me in your fury (Ps. 6:2), etc. Truly, he says, the Lord is in this place. For where it rains upon the just and the

unjust, he is a father, and the Father of mercies, waiting for men to penance. Where he condemns the obstinate, he is a judge, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31); where he rests, he is a bridegroom: and blessed is the soul whom he shall have introduced into his bedchamber.

3. Furthermore, in this place the Lord is truly present, provided that we serve him in spirit and in truth. For the Lord was not truly present among those to whom he said: Why do you call me, Lord, Lord; and you do not do what I say? (Luke 6:46.) Sacred scripture testifies that the first Adam was once placed in paradise that he might work it and keep it (Gen. 2:15). So the second Adam is in the church of the saints, in the congregation of his own, in the garden of delights: since his delights are to be with the sons of men; so, I say, the Lord himself is also in this place, that he may work and keep it. Otherwise as: Unless the Lord has built the house, they have labored in vain who build it; so nevertheless: Unless he himself has guarded the city, he watches in vain who guards it (Ps. 126:1). Moreover, that the angels are ascending and descending in this place, the patriarchal vision itself manifests: ascending, that they may see the face of the Father; descending, that they may provide for us. What then? How ought we to be here, in how much reverence to stand in this place, where God is working and preserving, the angels ascending and descending? Surely it becomes us to be penitent and expectant. For this is to forget the things

that are behind, to be ignorant of, to reprove, to rethink those years in the bitterness of our soul, and thereafter to extend ourselves towards the things that are before, with both thought and eagerness. To this we have come, in this we have been placed. These are the things that are required of us: the penitence for past sins, and the expectation of future rewards.