SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

The Sermons of Saint Peter Chrysologus

Sermones

VOLUME I · III

SABBATISMUS

Saint Peter Chrysologus (c. 380–c. 450)
Sermones · The Sermons of Saint Peter Chrysologus

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Contents

Sermon I. 7
Sermon II. 13
Sermon III. 19
Sermon IV. 25
Sermon V. 31
Sermon VI. 39
Sermon VII. 45
Sermon VIII. 51
Sermon IX. 57
Sermon X. 63
Sermon XI. 69
Sermon XII. 75
Sermon XIII. 81
Sermon XIV. 89
Sermon XV. 95
Sermon XVI. 103
Sermon XVII. 109
Sermon XVIII. 115
Sermon XIX. 121
Sermon XX. 127
Sermon XXI. 133
Sermon XXII. 139
Sermon XXIII. 145
Sermon XXIV. 151
Sermon XXV. 157
Sermon XXVI. 163
Sermon XXVII. 171
Sermon XXVIII. 177
Sermon XXIX. 183
Sermon XXX. 189
Sermon XXXI. 195
Sermon XXXII. 201
Sermon XXXIII. 207
Sermon XXXIV. 213
Sermon XXXV. 219
Sermon XXXVI. 223
Sermon XXXVII. 229
Sermon XXXVIII. 235
Sermon XXXIX. 241
Sermon XL. 247
Sermon XLI. 253
Sermon XLII. 259
Sermon XLIII. 265
Sermon XLIV. 271

Sermon XLV. 277
Sermon XLVI. 283
Sermon XLVII. 289
Sermon XLVIII. 295
Sermon XLIX. 301
Sermon L. 307
Sermon LI. 313
Sermon LII. 319
Sermon LIV. 323
Sermon LV. 331

Sermo Primus.

De duobus filiis, prodigo et frugi, et primo de abscessu prodigi a patre

Hodie nobis Dominus patrem cum filiis duobus vocavit et produxit in medium: ut immensum suae pietatis indicium, saevam Judaicae gentis invidiam, reditum supplicem populi Christiani, pulchram panderet per figuram. Homo quidam habuit duos filios, et dicit adolescentior ex illis patri: Pater, da mihi portionem substantiae quae me contingit. Et divisit, inquit, illis substantiam. Quantum pius pater, tantum haeres impatiens; qui patris fatigatur ad vitam; qui patris, quia tempus adimere non potest, nititur auferre substantiam. Hic ipsam praerogativam filii meruit non habere, qui ea quae patris erant noluit possidere cum patre. Sed quaeramus quae res filium rapuit hos ad ausus, ad petitionem tantam fiducia quae levarit. Quae res? illa scilicet qua coelestem Patrem sciebat nullo claudendum fine, concludendum tempore nullo, nulla mortis potestate solvendum. Et ideo cupit vivendi libertate gaudere, qui ditari noluerat facultatibus decedentis. Denique illam fuisse hujus petitionis offensam, genitoris largitas comprobavit. Et divisit, inquit, illis substantiam Petente uno, ambobus totam substantiam mox divisit; ut scirent filii, quod ante tenebat pater, non fuisse avaritiae, sed amoris; providentia, non invidentia, non dedisse. Tenebat pater servare substantiam filiis, non negare; et manere ea pignoribus cupiens, non perire. Beati filii quorum tota est in patris charitate substantia! Beati quibus manet tota in obsequio patris, in patris cultura possessio! Caeterum facultates unitatem scindunt, fraternitatem separant, cognationem spargunt, parentum perdunt et violant charitatem, sicut ex sequentibus elucescit: Pater, da mihi portionem substantiae quae me contingit. Et divisit, inquit, illis substantiam.

Sermon I.

On the two sons, the prodigal and the thrifty, and first on the prodigal's going away from his father

Today the Lord has called before us a father with his two sons and brought them out into our midst, to set forth in a beautiful figure the immense proof of his loving-kindness, the savage envy of the Jewish nation, the suppliant return of the Christian people. A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them says to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falls to me. And he divided, he says, the substance between them (Luke 15:11–12). As loving as the father, so impatient the heir: he wearies of his father's living; since he cannot take away his father's time, he strives to carry off his father's substance. He deserved not to have the very prerogative of a son, who would not possess with his father what was his father's. But let us ask what thing swept the son into such ventures, what confidence lifted him to so great a request. What thing? That, of course, by which he knew that the heavenly Father was to be closed by no end, confined by no time, dissolved by no power of death. And so he longs to enjoy the freedom of living, he who had not wished to be enriched by the means of one who dies. Indeed, the begetter's generosity proved that this had been the affront in the request. And he divided, he says, the substance between them. At the request of one, he at once divided the whole substance to both, so that the sons might know that what the father had held before had been held not out of avarice but out of love; that he had not given it out of foresight, not out of grudging. The father held the substance in order to keep it for his sons, not to deny it them; wishing it to remain for his pledges, not to be lost. Blessed the sons whose whole substance is in their father's charity! Blessed those whose possession remains whole in homage to their father, in honouring their father! For the rest, means split unity, part brotherhood, scatter kinship, destroy and violate the charity of parents, as is plain from what follows: Father, give me the portion of substance that falls to me. And he divided, he says, the substance between them.

Et non post multos hos dies, congregatis omnibus, adolescentior filius peregre profectus est in regionem longinquam, et ibi dissipavit substantiam suam, vivendo luxuriose. Et posteaquam consumpsisset omnia, facta est fames valida in regione illa, et ipse coepit egere, et abiit, et adhaesit uni civium regionis illius, et misit illum in villam suam, ut pasceret porcos. Et cupiebat implere ventrem suum de siliquis quas porci manducabant, et nemo illi dabat. Ecce quid facit cupiditas ad censum praeceps. Ecce quemadmodum sine patre census nudavit filium, non ditavit; census filium tulit e gremio patris, ejecit de domo, exemit patria, spoliavit fama, exuit castitate. Quod vitae, quod morum, quod pietatis, quod libertatis, quod est gloriae, nil reliquit. Civem denique in peregrinum, filium in mercenarium, in egenum locupletem, liberum mutavit in servum, junxit porcis a patre piissimo quem sejunxit, ut serviret coenoso pecori, qui pietati sanctae parere contempsit.

Congregatis, inquit, omnibus, adolescentior. Adolescentior iste plane non aetate, sed sensu; qui congregavit bona patris, et abiit longe plus mente quam loco; ut dato, non accepto pretio misere se venderet servituti. Sic mercator ad talem contractum pervenit, qui parentum debitum nescit solvere, qui vicem nescit redhibere generanti. Est penes patrem dulcis conditio, libera servitus, absoluta custodia, timor laetus, blanda ultio, paupertas dives, secura possessio. Namque ad patrem labor respicit, fructus redundat in filios.

Dissipavit, inquit, substantiam suam. Quae composita fuerant patre moderante, prodigente filio dissipantur; ut vel tarde sapiat patrem custodem, non incubatorem fuisse substantiae. Vivendo luxuriose. Mortalis est ista vita; quia moritur virtutibus: qui vitiis vivit, sepelitur famae, perit gloriae: qui manet turpitudini, crescit infamiae.

Et posteaquam consumpsisset omnia, facta est fames valida in regione illa. Luxuriae, ventri, gulae, fames tortor apponitur: ut ibi ultrix poena saeviat, ubi poenalis reatus exarserat. Facta est fames valida. Ad talem finem semper voracitas tendit, ad talem pervenit terminum fugienda voluptatis effusio. Et ipse coepit egere. Filium data facit egere substantia, quae divitem negata servasset: ut penes se deficeret habendo, qui penes patrem abundaverat non habendo.

And not many days after this, having gathered everything together, the younger son set out abroad into a far country, and there he squandered his substance by living dissolutely (Luke 15:13). And after he had consumed everything, a mighty famine came about in that region, and he began to be in want; and he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that region, and he sent him to his farm to feed swine (Luke 15:14–15). And he longed to fill his belly with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one gave to him (Luke 15:16). See what greed does, headlong after wealth. See how wealth without the father laid the son bare and did not enrich him; wealth carried the son from his father's bosom, cast him out of the house, took him from his fatherland, robbed him of his good name, stripped him of chastity. What there was of life, of conduct, of piety, of freedom, of glory, it left none of it. Indeed, it changed the citizen into a stranger, the son into a hireling, the wealthy into a pauper, the free man into a servant; it joined to swine the one it had parted from a most loving father, so that he who scorned to obey holy piety should serve a filthy herd.

Having gathered everything, he says, the younger. Younger indeed, not in age but in sense; who gathered his father's goods and went far away, far more in mind than in place, so as to sell himself wretchedly into servitude, the price paid, not received. So comes to such a contract the merchant who does not know how to pay the debt owed to his parents, who does not know how to repay in turn the one who begot him. With the father there is a sweet condition, a free servitude, an unfettered guardianship, a joyful fear, a gentle punishment, a rich poverty, a secure possession. For the toil looks to the father, the fruit overflows upon the sons.

He squandered, he says, his substance. What had been set in order while the father governed is squandered when the son plays the prodigal, so that, if only late, he may come to know that his father had been the guardian of the substance, not one who brooded over it. By living dissolutely. That life is mortal, because it dies to the virtues: whoever lives to vices is buried to good name, perishes to glory; whoever remains for shame grows for infamy.

And after he had consumed everything, a mighty famine came about in that region. Famine is set over dissoluteness, belly and gluttony as their torturer, so that avenging punishment may rage there where guilt deserving punishment had blazed. A mighty famine came about. To such an end voracity always tends, to such a term comes the outpouring of pleasure, which is to be fled. And he began to be in want. Substance given makes the son be in want, which, denied, would have kept him rich: so that he who with his father had abounded by not having fails in himself by having.

Et adhaesit uni civium regioni illius, et misit illum in villam suam, ut pasceret porcos. Sic invenit qui se negat patri, qui se committit extraneo: ut sentiat severum judicem, qui fugit indulgentissimum provisorem. Affectionis desertor, pietatis refuga, deputatur porcis, porcis addicitur, porcorum traditur servituti, porcorum pascua lutulenta percurrit, inquieti gregis teritur, et maculatur excursu, ut sentiat quam miserum sit, amarum quam sit, quietis paternae beatitudinem perdidisse.

Et cupiebat implere ventrem suum de siliquis quas porci manducabant, et nemo illi dabat. Quam crudele ministerium, quia neque convivit porcis, qui vivit porcis! Miser, qui squallentis pecoris deficit et esurit in saginam! Miser, qui squallentis cibi cupit, nec impetrat qualitatem!

His edocti, instructi talibus, maneamus in domo patris, matris in gremio perduremus, cognatorum constringamur amplexibus, viscera nos paterna constringant, ne nos ad supradicta mala pertrahat adolescentiae miseranda libertas. Sepiat nos paterna reverentia, matris componat affectio, cognatorum custodiamur affectibus. Inter propinquorum lumina non valent delicta versari. Propinquorum quot oculi, tot lucernae. Dies est aspectus matris: sol, patris rutilat in vultu. Unde viventi inter tot virtutum luces, criminum tenebrae propinquare non possunt. Sed mensa patris nos alit virtutis cibo, salutis epulo, deliciis honestatis et gloriae.

Et quia latius nos de hac parabola dicere cogit prolixa series lectionis, quis sit pater in donando facilis, facilior in recipiendo; quis sit frater fratris tristissimus in salute; quis sit adolescentior abscessu insipiens, sapientissimus in regressu, sequenti sermone votis communibus inquiremus.

And he attached himself to one of the citizens of that region, and he sent him to his farm to feed swine. This is what he finds who denies himself to his father, who commits himself to a stranger: he who flees the most indulgent provider comes to feel a severe judge. A deserter of affection, a runaway from piety, he is assigned to swine, he is made over to swine, he is handed to the servitude of swine, he runs through the muddy pastures of swine, he is trampled by the restless herd and soiled by its stampeding, so that he may feel how wretched, how bitter it is to have lost the blessedness of his father's peace.

And he longed to fill his belly with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one gave to him. How cruel a service, when he who lives for the swine does not even feed with the swine! Wretched he who faints and hungers for the fattening-feed of a filthy herd! Wretched he who craves filthy food of that kind, and does not obtain it!

Taught by these things, instructed by such, let us remain in our father's house, let us persevere in our mother's lap, let us be held fast in the embraces of our kin, let a father's heart hold us fast, so that the pitiable freedom of youth may not drag us to the evils described above. Let a father's reverence hedge us in, a mother's affection compose us, let us be guarded by the affections of our kin. Among the lights of kinsfolk offences cannot go about. As many eyes as kinsfolk have, so many lamps. A mother's look is day: the sun shines red in a father's face. Hence, for one who lives among so many lights of virtues, the darkness of crimes cannot come near. But the father's table feeds us with the food of virtue, the banquet of salvation, the delights of honour and glory.

And since the long run of the reading compels us to speak of this parable at greater length, who the father is, easy in giving, easier in receiving back; who the brother is, most sorrowful at his brother's safety; who the younger son is, foolish in leaving, most wise in returning, we shall inquire in the following sermon, with our common prayers.

Sermo II.

De eisdem, ubi de reditu filii ad patrem

Luxuriosum filium, filium patris piissimi desertorem, quae perculerint mala in tantum, ut fame tabidum porcorum se dederit servituti, superiore, quo valuimus, sermone perstrinximus. Nunc ejus reditum, nunc ejus poenitentiam, meliore jam voto, verbis laetioribus prosequamur.

In se, inquit, reversus dixit: Quanti mercenarii patris mei abundant panibus, etc. In se reversus est, in se ante redit, ut rediret ad patrem, qui a se ante recesserat, cum recessit a patre. A se migrat, et ab homine totus transit in bestiam, paternae pietatis immemor, gratiae genitoris oblitus.

Quanti mercenarii patris mei abundant panibus, ego autem hic fame pereo. Fames revocat quem saturitas exsularat; fames illi patrem dedit sapere, cui copia tulerat sentire genitorem. Et si tantum praestitit vel invita fames, probate quid voluntarium possit conferre jejunium. Oneratus venter ad vitia cor deponit, premit mentem, ne supernam valeat sentire pietatem. Corpus, inquit, quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem. Unde et Dominus: Attendite ne graventur corda vestra crapula et ebrietate. Vacuandus est ergo venter moderatione jejunii, ut exoneratus animus possit ad alta pertendere, conscendere ad virtutes, possit ad ipsum pietatis auctorem totus aliger pervolare. Hoc Elias probat, qui Dominici continuatione jejunii defaecatus a carnali pondere, mortis victor evolavit ad coelum.

Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum. Jacebat qui dixit, surgam: intellexit lapsum, sensit ruinam, jacere se turpis luxuriae respexit in lubrico, et ideo exclamat: Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum. Qua spe? qua fiducia? qua confidentia? Qua spe? Illa qua pater est. Ego perdidi quod erat filii; ille quod patris est non amisit. Apud patrem non intercedit extraneus, intus est in patris pectore ipse qui intervenit et exorat affectus. Urgentur patris viscera iterum filium genitura per veniam.

Sermon II.

On the same, where it treats of the son's return to his father

The dissolute son, the deserter of a most loving father: what evils struck him down so far that, wasted with hunger, he gave himself to the servitude of swine, we touched upon in the previous sermon, as far as we were able. Now let us follow his return, now his penance, with a better hope now, in gladder words.

Coming back to himself, he says, he said: How many hirelings of my father have loaves in abundance, etc. (Luke 15:17). He came back to himself: he returns first to himself, so that he might return to his father, he who had first withdrawn from himself when he withdrew from his father. He moves away from himself, and passes wholly from man into beast, unmindful of his father's loving-kindness, forgetful of his begetter's grace.

How many hirelings of my father have loaves in abundance, but I am perishing here of hunger. Hunger calls back the one whom fullness had exiled; hunger gave him to savour his father, he from whom plenty had taken the feeling of his begetter. And if hunger, even unwilling hunger, has bestowed so much, prove what a voluntary fast can confer. A loaded belly sets the heart down to vices, presses on the mind, so that it cannot feel the loving-kindness from above. The body, he says, that is corrupted weighs down the soul, and the earthly dwelling presses down the sense that thinks of many things (Wis 9:15). Whence the Lord too: Take heed lest your hearts be weighed down with surfeiting and drunkenness (Luke 21:34). The belly must therefore be emptied by the moderation of fasting, so that the mind, unburdened, can reach to the heights, climb to the virtues, can fly up, wholly winged, to the very author of loving-kindness. Elijah proves this, who, cleansed of the dregs of the weight of the flesh by keeping without a break a fast of the Lord's, flew up to heaven a conqueror of death (1 Kgs 19:8; 2 Kgs 2:11).

I will rise and go to my father (Luke 15:18). He who said I will rise was lying down: he understood his fall, he felt his ruin, he saw himself lying in the slippery place of shameful dissoluteness, and so he cries out: I will rise and go to my father. With what hope? With what trust? With what confidence? With what hope? With that by which he is a father. I have lost what was a son's; he has not lost what is a father's. With a father no stranger intercedes: within, in the father's breast, is the very one who intervenes and prevails by entreaty, affection. The father's heart is in labour to beget the son again through pardon.

Ibo ad patrem reus: sed pater viso filio cooperit mox reatum: dissimulat judicem, qui magis vult implere genitorem; et sententiam cito vertit in veniam, qui redire cupit filium, non perire.

Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum, et dicam illi: Pater, peccavi in coelum et coram te. Confessio patrem pandit, genitorem loquitur poenitudo. Peccavi in coelum et coram te. Cui peccatur in coelo, non terrenus pater est, sed et coelestis, ideo adjecit: Coram te. Cui in coelo, et in terra, ante oculos sunt omnia quae geruntur.

Peccavi in coelum et coram te, et jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus. Peregre profectus est iste, et in regionem longinquam fugit, sed accusatores suos, sed testes suos, divini patris oculos non refugit. Hoc David clarius aperit, sic dicendo: Quo ibo a spiritu tuo? et a facie tua quo fugiam? Si ascendero in coelum, tu illic es; si descendero infernum, ades; Si sumpsero pennas meas diluculo, et habitavero in postremo maris. Etenim illuc deducet me manus tua, et tenebit me dextera tua. Videt iste per totum mundum nuda Dei oculis delicta consistere: non coelum, non terram, non maria, non abyssum, non ipsam noctem, Deo velare posse peccata. Sentit quantum sit sceleris, mali quantum, in ipso Dei peccare conspectu, et ideo clamat: Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci. Unde et iste adolescentior similiter vociferatur, et clamat: Peccavi in coelum et coram te, et jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus. Non dicit: Non sum dignus esse filius tuus, sed non sum dignus vocari filius tuus; quia vocari ad gratiam pertinet, esse ad naturam. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Ab eo qui vos vocavit in gratiam suam. Hic ergo adolescentior, quia perdiderat quod erat naturae judicat se quod est gratiae non mereri.

Fac me sicut unum de mercenariis tuis. Ecce potestatis suae filius quo devenit? voluptas luxuriae, adolescentiae libertas, ecce filium quo promovit? Fac me sicut unum de mercenariis tuis. Ut locatione annua servitus innovetur, ut labore jugi conditio conducta deteratur, ut die toto in opere suspiret miserae verna mercedis, ut sit semper venditor sui, nec umquam negare suam valeat servitutem. Et hoc petit, quia qui penes extraneum servam senserat libertatem, penes patrem credit sibi futuram liberam servitutem.

I will go to my father as one accused: but the father, on seeing the son, at once covers the guilt; he hides the judge, for he would rather fulfil the begetter; and he quickly turns the sentence into pardon, he who desires the son to return, not to perish.

I will rise and go to my father, and I will say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. Confession lays open the father, repentance speaks of the begetter. I have sinned against heaven and before you. He who is sinned against in heaven is not an earthly father but a heavenly one too; and so he added: Before you. He before whose eyes are all things that are done, in heaven and on earth.

I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son (Luke 15:18–19). This son set out abroad and fled into a far country, but he did not flee his accusers, his witnesses, the eyes of the divine father. David opens this more clearly, saying thus: Where shall I go from your spirit? And where shall I flee from your face? If I ascend into heaven, you are there; if I descend into hell, you are present. If I take my wings at dawn, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me (Ps 139:7–10). He sees that throughout the whole world offences stand bare to the eyes of God: that not heaven, not earth, not the seas, not the abyss, not night itself can veil sins from God. He feels how great a wickedness, how great an evil it is to sin in God's very sight, and so he cries: Against you alone have I sinned, and done evil before you (Ps 51:6). Whence this younger son too likewise calls aloud and cries: I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. He does not say: "I am not worthy to be your son", but I am not worthy to be called your son; because to be called belongs to grace, to be belongs to nature. Hear the Apostle saying: From him who called you into his grace (Gal 1:6). So this younger son, because he had lost what was of nature, judges that he does not deserve what is of grace.

Make me as one of your hirelings. See, the son who was in his own power, where has he come to? The pleasure of dissoluteness, the freedom of youth: see, to what have they advanced the son? Make me as one of your hirelings. So that his servitude may be renewed by yearly hire, so that his hired condition may be worn away by unceasing labour, so that all day long at his work he may sigh, the home-born slave of a wretched wage, so that he may always be the seller of himself and never be able to deny his servitude. And he asks this because he who with a stranger had felt his freedom a slave's believes that with his father he will have a free servitude.

Jam nunc, fratres, vellem lectionis hujus aperire mysterium, si non me revocaret istius utilitatis intentio: quia vos video non quasi nostra audire debito cum dolore, sed quasi extranea intellectu transvolare festino. Nostra, nostra, et omnibus profutura nobis semper loquitur Christus; et ob corrigendos nos mystica frequentat exempla Dominus, qui pater suorum voluit esse servorum, qui magis amari voluit quam timeri, qui panem vitae se dedit ipsum, qui sanguinem suum in poculum salutis effudit. Praeteritis comparationibus praesentes corrigit et futuros, ne bonum patrem, ne genitorem pium deserentes, ad mundi longinqua et nimis peregrina tendamus, ibique vivendo luxuriose substantiam totam salutis dissipemus et vitae; omnibusque consumptis famem spei gravissimam perferamus, et sic nos primario regionis illius, hoc est, desperationis auctori diabolo jam tradamur: et ille nos mittat in villam suam, hoc est, ad hujus saeculi illecebrosas convalles; mittat ad pascendos porcos, eos videlicet qui proni semper in terram vivunt ventri, et aestus carnis in volutabro luti temperant, in coeno premunt, refrigerant in gurgite vitiorum. Quod autem mercenarios suos mittat ad porcos, facit hoc insatiata crudelitas, quae contenta non est homines criminosos fieri, nisi eos vitiorum duces, criminum faciat et magistros. Cum eos tales fecerit, non sinit eos ex ipso porcorum cibo pastuque saturari: ut esurientes vitia plus delinquant, luxuriosos satietas capere non potest, voluptas nescit expleri.

Unde nos cum bono patre simus, permaneamus apud genitorem pium, ut et diaboli laqueos possimus evitare, et bonis patris jugiter perfruamur. Profunda post scrutabimur, quia communioni et moribus plus debemus.

Now already, brothers, I should like to open the mystery of this reading, were I not called back by my concern for its usefulness: for I see you hearing these things not as our own, with the pain that is due, but flying over them with a hasty understanding, as though they belonged to others. Ours, ours, and for the good of us all is what Christ always speaks to us; and to correct us the Lord repeats mystical examples, he who willed to be the father of his servants, who willed rather to be loved than feared, who gave himself as the bread of life, who poured out his blood into the cup of salvation. By comparisons from the past he corrects those now present and those to come, lest, deserting the good father, the loving begetter, we go off to the far and very foreign places of the world, and there, living dissolutely, squander the whole substance of salvation and of life; and, everything consumed, endure a most grievous famine of hope, and so be handed over to the chief man of that region, that is, to the devil, the author of despair; and he send us into his farm, that is, to the alluring valleys of this world; send us to feed the swine, those, namely, who, ever bent towards the earth, live for the belly, and temper the heats of the flesh in a wallow of mud, press them down in the mire, cool them in the whirlpool of vices. That he sends his hirelings to the swine is the doing of an insatiable cruelty, which is not content that men should become criminals unless it makes them leaders of vices and masters of crimes as well. When he has made them such, he does not let them be filled even with the swine's food and fodder: so that, hungering for vices, they may offend the more; satiety cannot contain the dissolute, pleasure does not know how to be filled.

Wherefore let us be with the good father, let us remain with the loving begetter, so that we may both avoid the snares of the devil and enjoy the father's goods without end. The depths we shall search out afterwards, because we owe more to the communion and to conduct.

Sermo III.

De eisdem, ubi de occursu patris ad filium

Filii luxuriosi abscessum, regressum, culpam, poenitentiam percucurrimus hactenus sermone geminato: occursum modo patris, bonitatem patris, patris ineffabilem misericordiam prosequamur. Surgens, inquit, venit ad patrem suum; cum autem esset longe, vidit illum pater suus, et misericordia motus est, et accurrit, et cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est illum.

Surgens, venit ad patrem suum. Surrexit iste mentis et corporis de ruina: surrexit de profundo inferni, coeli alta contingens: apud coelestem patrem filius surgit plus de venia, quam corruit de reatu. Surgens, venit ad patrem suum. Venit non gressu pedum, sed mentis incessu: longinquus terreni itineris non indiguit, quia compendia viae salutaris invenit. Divinum patrem nescit viarum cursu quaerere, qui fide quaerens, mox sibi illum invenit esse praesentem.

Surgens, venit ad patrem: cum autem esset longe. Quomodo longe est is qui venit? quia nondum pervenit. Iste qui venit, venit ad poenitentiam, sed nondum pervenit ad gratiam; venit ad domum patris, sed nondum pervenit ad gloriam pristini, vel habitus, vel honoris.

Cum autem esset longe, vidit illum pater suus. Vidit Pater ille qui in altis habitat, et humilia respicit, et alta a longe agnoscit. Vidit illum pater suus. Pater vidit illum, ut et ille patrem posset attendere; patris visus illustravit filii venientis aspectum, ut tota fugaretur obscuritas quae circumfusa fuerat de reatu. Non sunt tales tenebrae noctis quales illae sunt quae de confusione veniunt peccatorum. Audi prophetam dicentem: Comprehenderunt me iniquitates meae, et non potui videre. Et alibi: Iniquitates meae gravatae sunt super me. Et post: Et lumen oculorum meorum non est mecum. Nox sepelit hesternum lumen; peccata sensum; animum membra confundunt. Nisi ergo coelestis pater redeuntis filii radiasset in vultu, et totam confusionis caliginem respectus sui lumine sustulisset, numquam divini vultus vidisset iste filius claritatem.

Sermon III.

On the same, where it treats of the father's running to meet his son

The departure of the dissolute son, his return, his fault, his penance we have run through so far in two sermons: now let us follow the father's running to meet him, the father's goodness, the father's ineffable mercy. Rising, he says, he came to his father; and while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with mercy, and ran to him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him (Luke 15:20).

Rising, he came to his father. He rose from the ruin of mind and body: he rose from the depth of hell, touching the heights of heaven: with the heavenly father the son rises more by pardon than he had fallen by guilt. Rising, he came to his father. He comes not with the step of feet, but with the advance of the mind: he had no need of the long reaches of an earthly journey, because he found the short way of the road of salvation. He does not know how to seek the divine father by running along roads, he who, seeking by faith, at once finds him present to himself.

Rising, he came to his father: and while he was still far off. How is he far off who comes? Because he has not yet arrived. This one who comes, comes to penance, but has not yet arrived at grace; he comes to his father's house, but has not yet arrived at the glory of his former dress or honour.

And while he was still far off, his father saw him. He saw, that Father who dwells on high, and looks upon lowly things, and knows high things from afar (Ps 113:5–6). His father saw him. The father saw him, so that he too could look to the father; the father's sight lit up the face of the son as he came, so that all the darkness that had been poured round him from his guilt might be put to flight. The darkness of night is not like the darkness that comes from the confusion of sins. Hear the Prophet saying: My iniquities have laid hold of me, and I could not see (Ps 40:13). And elsewhere: My iniquities have weighed heavy upon me (Ps 38:5). And afterwards: And the light of my eyes is not with me (Ps 38:11). Night buries yesterday's light; sins, the sense; the members confound the mind. Unless, then, the heavenly father had shone upon the face of the returning son, and taken away the whole fog of confusion by the light of his regard, this son would never have seen the brightness of the divine face.

Vidit eum de longe, et misericordia motus est. Movetur misericordia, qui loco non potest dimoveri; accurrit, non progressu corporis, sed pietatis affectu. Cecidit super collum ejus. Non lapsu viscerum, sed compassionis. Cecidit super collum ejus, ut erigeret sic jacentem. Cecidit super collum ejus, ut amoris onere, onus tolleret peccatorum. Venite ad me, inquit, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis. Tollite onus meum super vos, quia leve est. Videtis quia filius juvatur istius patris onere, non gravatur.

Cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum. Sic pater judicat, sic emendat, sic peccanti filio dat oscula, non flagella. Delicta non videt vis amoris, et ideo pater peccata filii redemit osculo, clausit amplexu, ne nudaret pater filii crimina, pater filium ne foedaret. Pater sic curat filii vulnera, ne filio cicatricem, naevum filio ne relinquat. Beati, inquit, quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata.

Si adolescentis hujus factum displicet, horret abscessus: nos a tali patre nullatenus discedamus. Aspectus patris fugat crimina: expellit noxam: cunctam nequitiam et tentamenta propellit. Certe si abscessimus: si substantiam patris totam luxuriose dispersimus nos vivendo: si quidquid usquam commisimus facinoris et delicti, si ad impietatis praeruptum totum, totam venimus ad ruinam, surgamus aliquando, et ad talem patrem, tali invitati redeamus exemplo. Cum autem videret eum, misericordia motus est, et accurrit, et cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est illum. Rogo quis hic desperationis locus? Quae hic excusationis occasio? hic simulatio quae timoris? Nisi forte timetur occursus: terret osculum: turbat amplexus, et capere ad vindictam, non recipere ad veniam pater creditur, cum filium trahit manibus, claudit gremio, ligat lacertis. Sed hanc cogitationem debellatricem vitae, salutis inimicam expugnant nimis, nimis auferunt quae sequuntur: Dixit autem pater ad servos suos, cito proferte stolam primam, et induite illum, et date annulum aureum in manus ejus, et calceamenta in pedibus ejus, et adducite vitulum saginatum, et occidite, et manducemus, et epulemur, quia hic filius meus mortuus erat, et revixit: perierat, et inventus est. His auditis, adhuc moramur; adhuc non redimus ad patrem?

He saw him from afar, and was moved with mercy. He is moved with mercy who cannot be moved from his place; he runs, not by the advance of the body, but by the affection of loving-kindness. He fell upon his neck. Not by a sinking of his inward parts, but of compassion. He fell upon his neck, so as to raise up the one who lay so low. He fell upon his neck, so as to take away the burden of sins by the burden of love. Come to me, he says, all you who labour and are burdened. Take my burden upon you, for it is light (Matt 11:28–30). You see that the son is helped by this father's burden, not burdened.

He fell upon his neck, and kissed him. So the father judges, so he amends, so he gives a sinning son kisses, not scourges. The force of love does not see offences, and so the father redeemed the son's sins with a kiss, shut them in with an embrace, lest the father should lay bare the son's crimes, lest the father should disfigure the son. Thus the father heals the son's wounds, so as to leave the son no scar, the son no blemish. Blessed, he says, are they whose iniquities are remitted, and whose sins are covered (Ps 32:1).

If this youth's deed displeases, if his departure horrifies, let us by no means depart from such a father. The father's look puts crimes to flight, drives out harm, drives away all wickedness and temptations. Surely, if we have departed; if by living dissolutely we have scattered the whole substance of the father; if we have committed any misdeed and offence anywhere; if we have come to the very precipice of impiety, to utter ruin, let us rise at last, and, invited by such an example, return to such a father. But when he saw him, he was moved with mercy, and ran to him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. What place, I ask, is there here for despair? What occasion here for excuse? What pretence here of fear? Unless perhaps the meeting is feared, the kiss terrifies, the embrace disturbs, and the father is believed to seize him for vengeance, not to receive him back for pardon, when he draws the son with his hands, shuts him in his lap, binds him with his arms. But this thought, the destroyer of life, the enemy of salvation, is overthrown, utterly, utterly done away with by what follows: And the father said to his servants: Quickly, bring out the first robe, and put it on him, and put a gold ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come back to life; he was lost, and is found (Luke 15:22–24). Having heard this, do we still delay? Do we still not return to the father?

Cito proferte stolam primam, et induite illum. Sustinuit filii crimina, qui non sustinuit nuditatem: hinc est quod a servis ante vestiri voluit filium, quam videri: ut soli patri nota esset nuditas: quia pater solus videre filii non poterat nuditatem. Cito proferte stolam primam. Pater hic qui in secundis esse non passus est peccatorem, plus de venia quam de justitia gaudium vult habere. Cito proferte stolam primam. Non dixit, unde venis? fuisti ubi? ubi sunt quae tulisti? quare tantam gloriam tanta turpitudine commutasti? sed: Cito proferte stolam primam, et induite illum. Videtis quia delicta non videt vis amoris. Tardam misericordiam pater nescit. Delicta qui discutit, prodit.

Et date annulum in manu ejus. Paterna pietas contenta non est innocentiam reparare solam, nisi pristinum restituat et honorem. Et date calceamenta in pedibus ejus. Quam pauper rediit qui ditatus abscesserat, et de tota substantia calceamenta in pedibus non reportat. Date calceamenta in pedibus ejus. Ne vel in pede remaneret deformitas nuditatis; certe ut calceatus anterioris vitae rediret ad cursum.

Et adducite vitulum saginatum. Communis vitulus non sufficit, nisi fuerit pinguis, nisi fuerit saginatus; vitulus pinguis testatur paternae pinguedinem charitatis. Et adducite vitulum saginatum, et occidite, et manducemus, et epulemur: quia hic filius meus mortuus fuerat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est.

Historiam loquimur adhuc, et jam cogitamus arcanum nudare mysterium. Mortuus filius, vituli suscitatur ex morte, et unus vitulus totius familiae funditur in saginam. Sed differendum est, ut senioris dolorem vetustum, vetustiorem fratris invidiam prosequamur.

Quickly, bring out the first robe, and put it on him. He who could not bear the son's nakedness bore his crimes: hence it is that he wished the son to be clothed by the servants before he was seen, so that the nakedness might be known to the father alone: because the father alone could not see the son's nakedness. Quickly, bring out the first robe. This father, who did not allow the sinner to stay in the second place, wishes to have joy from pardon more than from justice. Quickly, bring out the first robe. He did not say: "Where do you come from? Where have you been? Where are the things you took? Why have you exchanged such glory for such shame?" but: Quickly, bring out the first robe, and put it on him. You see that the force of love does not see offences. A father does not know a tardy mercy. He who examines offences exposes them.

And put a ring on his hand. A father's loving-kindness is not content to restore innocence alone, unless it restores the former honour as well. And put shoes on his feet. How poor he returned who had gone away enriched, and out of the whole substance brings back not even shoes on his feet! Put shoes on his feet. So that not even on his foot should the disgrace of nakedness remain; surely, so that, shod, he might return to the course of his former life.

And bring the fatted calf. A common calf is not enough, unless it be fat, unless it be fatted; the fat calf bears witness to the fatness of a father's charity. And bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and feast: because this son of mine had been dead, and has come back to life; he was lost, and is found.

We are still speaking the history, and already we are thinking of laying bare the hidden mystery. The dead son is raised from the death of the calf, and one calf is poured out as a fattening feast for the whole household. But it must be put off, so that we may follow the old pain of the elder, the brother's still older envy.

Sermo IV.

De eisdem, ubi de livore senioris filii in prodigum redeuntem

De junioris filii reditu et salute gaudentes, senioris flebiliter pandimus, et dolemus invidiam, qui summum frugalitatis bonum extremo zeli malo perdidit et livoris. Erat, inquit, filius ejus senior in agro, et cum veniret, et appropinquaret domui, audivit symphoniam et choros, et vocavit unum de servis, et interrogavit quae haec essent. Isque respondit: Frater tuus venit, et occidit pater tuus vitulum saginatum, quia salvum illum recepit. Indignatus est autem, et nolebat introire.

Erat, inquit, filius ejus senior in agro. Erat in agro terram percolens, se desertans, duritiam solvit cespitis, cordis perdurat affectum, sentes eradicat et gramina, stimulos invidiae non evellit. Sic in segete cupiditatis fructum zeli colligit et livoris.

Et cum veniret, inquit, et appropinquaret domui, audivit symphoniam et choros. Invidum fugat symphonia pietatis, chorus charitatis excludit, et quem venire ad fratrem, et appropinquare domui, vocat ratio naturae, hunc pervenire zelus non sinit, livor non patitur introire. Invidia malum vetustum, prima labes, antiquum virus, saeculorum venenum, causa funeris. Haec in principio ipsum angelum ejecit, et dejecit de coelo. Haec de paradiso hominem principem nostrae generationis exclusit. Ipsa hunc seniorem fratrem paterna seclusit e domo. Haec Abrahae progeniem, populum sanctitatis, ad auctoris suae caedem, ad mortem sui Salvatoris armavit. Invidia intestinus hostis, non carnis quatit muros, non elidit septa membrorum, sed in ipsam cordis arietat arcem, et antequam viscera sentiant, ipsam dominam corporis animam praedo capit, et adducit inclusam. Si ergo volumus coelestem mereri gloriam, si paradisi beatitudinem possidere, si aeterni Patris inhabitare domum, si volumus rei coelestis parricidii non teneri, pervigili fide, luce spiritus tetras invidiae pellamus, et excludamus insidias, invidiam totis armorum coelestium viribus comprimamus: quia sicut nos Deo jungit charitas, a Deo invidia sic sejungit.

Sermon IV.

On the same, where it treats of the elder son's spite against the returning prodigal

Rejoicing at the return and the safety of the younger son, we set forth with tears, and are pained by, the envy of the elder, who lost the highest good of thrift by the uttermost evil of jealousy and spite. Now his elder son, he says, was in the field, and as he came and drew near the house, he heard music and choirs, and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things were. And he answered: Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him back safe. But he was indignant, and would not go in (Luke 15:25–28).

Now his elder son, he says, was in the field. He was in the field tilling the earth, laying himself waste; he loosens the hardness of the sod, he hardens the affection of the heart; he roots out thorns and grasses, he does not pluck out the goads of envy. So in the crop of greed he gathers the fruit of jealousy and spite.

And as he came, he says, and drew near the house, he heard music and choirs. The music of loving-kindness puts the envious man to flight, the choir of charity shuts him out; and him whom the order of nature calls to come to his brother and draw near the house, jealousy does not let arrive, spite does not allow to go in. Envy: an ancient evil, the first stain, an old poison, the venom of the ages, the cause of death. In the beginning it cast out the angel himself, and cast him down from heaven. It shut out of paradise man, the first of our race. It shut this elder brother out of his father's house. It armed the offspring of Abraham, the people of holiness, for the slaughter of its own author, for the death of its Saviour. Envy, an enemy within, does not shake the walls of the flesh, does not batter down the fences of the members, but rams the very citadel of the heart; and before the inward parts feel it, the robber seizes the soul itself, the mistress of the body, and leads it away shut in. If, then, we wish to deserve heavenly glory, to possess the blessedness of paradise, to dwell in the house of the eternal Father, if we wish not to be held guilty of a parricide against heaven, let us with watchful faith, with the light of the spirit, drive away the black snares of envy and shut them out, let us crush envy with all the strength of heavenly arms: because, as charity joins us to God, so envy sunders us from God.

Pater ergo illius egressus coepit rogare ipsum. Cor patris anxium variis arctatur motibus filiorum, et inter diversos pignorum casus, genitoris pietas stupefacta discurrit; quia videt fratrem fratris reditu mox fugari, et salute alterius sibi alterum mox perire; ac moerorem longum brevi gaudio pensatum invidiae livore turbari. O zeli tumor, duos non capit domus ampla germanos! Et quid mirum, fratres? Fecit invidia, fecit ut mundi tota duobus esset angusta fratribus latitudo, namque ipsa Cain junioris erexit in mortem, ut esse solum zeli livor faceret, quem primum fecerat lex naturae.

At ille respondens, dixit patri suo: Pater, ecce tot annis servio tibi. Sic sapit qui patris audet judicare pietatem. Ecce tot annis servio tibi. En patri filius nascendi beneficia, qua servitute compensat. Numquam mandatum tuum praeterivi. Hoc tibi non tua innocentia, sed patris venia dedit, quia multa charitate delicta filii maluit tegere quam nudare.

Et numquam mihi dedisti haedum, ut cum amicis meis epularer. Fratri invidus animus gratus esse non potest patri; et paternae largitatis memor non est, qui est fraternae immemor charitatis. Hoedum sibi datum negat, qui substantiae partem totam tempore divisionis accepit. Tunc enim cum frater junior dari sibi substantiae peteret portionem, pater ambobus totum fratribus mox divisit, evangelista dicente, Et divisit illis substantiam. Sed invidus simulat semper: mentitur invidus semper. Et numquam mihi dedisti haedum, ut cum amicis meis epularer. Amicos paternos suos esse non computat: hos non amicos, sed extraneos credit a quibus vidit in patris gratiam se amari.

Sed posteaquam filius tuus hic, qui devoravit substantiam suam cum meretricibus, venit, occidisti vitulum saginatum. Hic rediisse fratrem dolet, non dolet periisse substantiam; nec damni causa quaeritur, sed livoris: qui fratrem redeuntem de suo decorare debuit, non debuit de perdito sic foedare. In filio est substantia patris tota; et ideo nil pater perdidit, filium cum recepit. Frater credidit damnum, qui rediisse conspicit cohaeredem. Et quando invidus non avarus, quando quidquid habet alter se computat perdidisse?

So his father came out and began to entreat him. The father's anxious heart is straitened by the divers movements of his sons, and between the different fortunes of his pledges the begetter's loving-kindness runs to and fro, astounded; because he sees the one brother put to flight at once by the other's return, and the one lost to him at once through the other's safety; and a long grief, outweighed by a brief joy, thrown into turmoil by the spite of envy. O swelling of jealousy: a spacious house cannot hold two brothers! And what wonder, brothers? Envy did it, it made the whole breadth of the world too narrow for two brothers; for it raised up Cain to the death of the younger, so that the spite of jealousy made him alone whom the law of nature had made first (Gen 4:8).

But he answered and said to his father: Father, see, so many years I serve you (Luke 15:29). So thinks one who dares to judge his father's loving-kindness. See, so many years I serve you. See with what servitude a son repays his father for the benefits of being born! I have never disobeyed your command. This was given you not by your innocence but by your father's pardon, because with great charity he chose to cover his son's offences rather than lay them bare.

And you never gave me a kid, that I might feast with my friends. A mind envious of a brother cannot be grateful to a father; and he is not mindful of a father's generosity who is unmindful of a brother's charity. He denies that a kid was given him who at the time of the division received his whole part of the substance. For then, when the younger brother asked that the portion of the substance be given him, the father at once divided the whole between the two brothers, as the Evangelist says: And he divided the substance between them. But the envious man always dissembles: the envious man always lies. And you never gave me a kid, that I might feast with my friends. He does not count his father's friends as his own: he believes those to be not friends but strangers by whom he saw himself loved for his father's sake.

But after this son of yours, who devoured his substance with harlots, came, you killed the fatted calf (Luke 15:30). He is pained that his brother has returned, he is not pained that the substance has perished; nor does he complain on account of the loss, but of spite: he who ought to have adorned his returning brother from his own goods ought not so to have disfigured him over what was lost. In the son is the father's whole substance; and so the father lost nothing when he received his son back. The brother thought it a loss, seeing that a co-heir had returned. And when is the envious man not avaricious, when does he not reckon that he has lost whatever another has?

At ipse dixit illi, Fili: tu semper mecum es, et omnia mea tua sunt; epulari autem, et gaudere oportebat quia frater tuus hic mortuus fuerat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est. O quid facit vis amoris! quamvis malo filio non esse nescit, non esse non potest pater; videt filium degenerasse animo; videt paternae pietatis, paterni generis nil habere, et tamen nuncupat filium; suadet effectum; ad gratiam vel spem revocat largitatis, dicendo: Tu semper mecum es, et omnia mea tua sunt. Hoc est dicere: Patere filium rediisse patri, permitte patri filium suscepisse; nec ille aliud quam patrem quaesivit, qui veniens non filii, sed loco mercenarii voluit collocari, dicens: Pater, peccavi in coelum et coram te; et jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus: fac me sicut unum de mercenariis tuis. Sint tibi omnia, illi sufficit pater; et ne quid tibi de praesentibus, de veteribus existimes imminutum, illi nova et futura perquiram. Certe si consilium patris sequeris et praeceptum, participa praesentia cum fratre; ut cum ipso tibi communia sint futura. Gaude ergo, et inventum gaude, ut ille te gaudeat non periisse. Sed jam sermonem historicum concludamus, ut postea quae sunt mystica, quae profunda, Christo revelante, pandamus.

But he said to him: Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours; but it was fitting to feast and rejoice, because this brother of yours had been dead, and has come back to life; he was lost, and is found (Luke 15:31–32). O what the force of love does! Even to a bad son he does not know how not to be, he cannot not be, a father; he sees that the son has degenerated in mind; he sees that he has nothing of a father's loving-kindness, nothing of his father's stock, and yet he calls him son; he urges him to the deed; he calls him back to grace, or at least to the hope of his generosity, saying: You are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. That is to say: allow the son to have returned to his father, permit the father to have received his son; nor did he seek anything other than his father, he who on coming wished to be placed not in a son's place but in a hireling's, saying: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; and I am no longer worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hirelings. Let all things be yours; for him the father is enough; and lest you think anything taken from you of the things present, of the things of old, for him I will seek out things new and things to come. Surely, if you follow your father's counsel and command, share the present things with your brother, so that the things to come may be common to you with him. Rejoice, then, and rejoice in him who was found, so that he may rejoice that you have not perished. But let us now close the sermon on the history, so that afterwards, as Christ reveals it, we may set forth what is mystical, what is deep.

Sermo V.

De eisdem, Judaeum et Gentilem figurantibus

Callidi debitoris est et inverecundi saepe pacta non solvere, et patientissimum creditorem longa et artifici cavillatione protelare. De abscessu, de reditu luxuriosi filii, quintus est hic sermo nobis, qui historicum sensum, sicut promisimus, ad mysticam et singularem deitatis intelligentiam conabimur attollere. Vos orate ut quia in tanto credito sum minus per me idoneus debitor, per Deum vobis idoneus solutor existam.

Homo quidam habuit, inquit, duos filios. Posteaquam Christus nostrae carnis suscepit onus, et Deus induit exuvias humanas, veraciter se Deus hominem vocat; Dominus patrem vere se duorum nuncupat filiorum, quia humanitati permixta deitas, deitati consociata pietas, miscuit hominem et Deum; quae Dominum univit in patrem. Hic ergo homo, pater hic, duos filios habuit conditoris beneficio, non necessitate generantis, duos filios habuit, quos non emeruit esse, sed jussit: quia Christus sic in oculis nostris fuit homo, ut Deus semper in majestatis suae maneret arcano. Duos filios habuit. Duos scilicet populos, Judaicum Gentilemque; sed Judaicum seniorem prudentia legis fecit; Gentilem paganitatis stultitia reddidit juniorem. Quia sicut sapientia dat canos, ita quidquid viri est, tollit insipientia. Hunc ergo juniorem mores praestitere, non aetas: seniorem illum non tempora fecerunt esse, sed sensus.

Et dixit, inquit, adolescentior ex illis patri: Pater, da mihi portionem substantiae quae me contingit. Cognitorem pectoris, non voce petit iste, sed voto; quia a Deo bona malave reportat propria voluntas in nobis. Denique iste cum patre possessor totius sortis, ad partem propria voluntate pervenit, dicendo: Da mihi portionem substantiae quae me contingit. Et quae est ista portio? quae est? Habitus, sermo, scientia, ratio, judicium, quae hominem prae caeteris animantibus in terrena habitatione contingunt: hoc est, juxta Apostolum, lex naturae. At ideo divisit illis substantiam, dando juniori quinque ista quae diximus, beneficia naturae; seniori quinque legis libros divinitus inscribendo: per quae substantia impar merito, numero par esset; humanum teneret ista ordinem, divino illa subsisteret instituto; utraque tamen lex filios utrosque ad notitiam patris perduceret, ad reverentiam sui servaret auctoris.

Sermon V.

On the same, as they figure the Jew and the Gentile

It is the way of a crafty and shameless debtor often not to pay what he has agreed, and to put off a most patient creditor with long and artful quibbling. This is our fifth sermon on the departure, on the return of the dissolute son, in which we shall try, as we promised, to lift the historical sense to a mystical and singular understanding of the Godhead. Pray that, since for so great a credit I am of myself a debtor not able enough, through God I may prove able to pay you.

A certain man had, he says, two sons (Luke 15:11). After Christ took up the burden of our flesh, and God put on human spoils, God truly calls himself man; the Lord truly names himself the father of two sons, because the Godhead intermingled with manhood, the loving-kindness associated with the Godhead, mingled man and God; and this united the Lord into a father. This man, then, this father, had two sons by the Maker's kindness, not by the necessity of one who begets; he had two sons, whose being he did not merit, but commanded: because Christ was man in our eyes in such a way that he always remained God in the secret of his majesty. He had two sons. Two peoples, that is, the Jewish and the Gentile; but the wisdom of the Law made the Jewish the elder; the folly of paganism rendered the Gentile the younger. Because, as wisdom gives grey hairs, so folly takes away whatever belongs to a man. This one, then, his ways made the younger, not his age; not the times made that one the elder, but his sense.

And the younger of them, he says, said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falls to me (Luke 15:12). This one asks him who knows the heart, not with his voice but with his wish; because it is our own will in us that brings back good things or evil from God. Indeed, this one, who with his father was the possessor of the whole lot, by his own will came down to a part, saying: Give me the portion of substance that falls to me. And what is that portion? What is it? Bearing, speech, knowledge, reason, judgement, which fall to man above the other living creatures in his earthly dwelling: that is, according to the Apostle, the law of nature. And so he divided the substance between them, giving the younger these five gifts of nature that we have named; inscribing for the elder, by God's hand, the five books of the Law: through which the substance would be unequal in merit, equal in number; the one would keep to the human order, the other would stand by divine institution; yet each law would lead both sons to the knowledge of the father, would keep them in reverence for their author.

Et non post multos dies, inquit, congregatis adolescentior omnibus, peregre profectus est in regionem longinquam; et ibi dissipavit substantiam suam vivendo luxuriose. Diximus juniorem non tempora fecisse, sed mores; et ideo dixit: Non post multos dies. Quia cum principio ipso mundi festinavit Gentilitas ad idolorum patriam; ad longinquam diaboli regionem animo est peregrinata, non loco; per elementa vanis est pervagata cogitationibus, non est corporeis motibus jactata per terras: namque coram patre sine patre erat; et cum in se esset, non erat secum. Hinc est quod luxuriosus per desiderium secularis eloquentiae, per scholarum lupanaria, per trivia sectarum, dissipavit Dei Patris dementi disputatione substantiam.

Et cum consumpsisset conjecturis quidquid erat sermonis, scientiae, rationis, judicii, egestatem summam, famem magnam cognoscendae veritatis miserrimus sustinebat: quia philosophia quaerendae divinitatis indixit laborem; veritatis inveniendae fructum contulit nullum. Hinc est quod adhaerebat primario regionis illius, a quo mittebatur in istud saeculum, hoc est in unam multarum superstitionum villam; ut pasceret porcos, id est daemones, qui dicunt Domino: Si ejicis nos, mitte nos in porcos. Ut pasceret daemones thure, victimis, sanguine, falsarum responsionum mercedem pro tali labore relaturus. Occidebatur pecus ut quod vivum nil scierat, divinaret occisum; et loqueretur ex fibris mortuum, quod numquam fuerat ore prolocutum.

Verum cum nil divinum, nil salutare profuturum, nil Gentilis inveniret in talibus, desperans de Deo, de providentia, de judicio, de futuris, ab schola ad ventris se deponebat ingluviem, cupiens saturari de siliquis quas porci manducabant. Hoc norunt Epicurei, qui cum Platonicas et Aristotelicas percurrerent scholas, nullamque illic aut divinitatis aut scientiae invenirent disciplinam, Epicuro se tradunt ultimo desperationis et voluptatis auctori. Et manducant siliquas, hoc est, voluptatibus corporis male dulcibus inhiant, et pascunt daemones, qui semper corporum vitiis saginantur et sordibus: quia sicut Domino qui se jungit, unus spiritus est, ita qui se jungit diabolo, est daemon unus. Sed hic junior quamvis cuperet, non tamen saturabat de siliquis istis ventrem suum. Quare? quia nemo illi dabat. Diabolus quidem volebat per famem scientiae, per voluptatum difficultatem, Gentilem reddere avidiorem ad illicita perquirenda, ad perpetranda delicta: sed Deus pater ideo permisit esurire Gentilem, ut erroris occasio salutis fieret argumentum: namque Judaeum sic reliquit, ne perderet; et gentilem sustinere passus est famem, ut rediret.

And not many days after, he says, the younger, having gathered everything together, set out abroad into a far country; and there he squandered his substance by living dissolutely (Luke 15:13). We have said that not the times made the younger, but his ways; and so he said: Not many days after. Because with the very beginning of the world the Gentile world hastened to the homeland of idols; it went abroad to the devil's far region in mind, not in place; it wandered through the elements in vain thoughts, it was not tossed about the lands by bodily movements: for in the father's presence it was without the father; and while it was in itself, it was not with itself. Hence it is that the dissolute one, through the desire of worldly eloquence, through the brothels of the schools, through the crossroads of the sects, squandered the substance of God the Father in mad disputation.

And when by conjectures he had consumed whatever there was of speech, of knowledge, of reason, of judgement, the most wretched one endured the utmost want, a great famine of knowing the truth: because philosophy imposed the labour of seeking divinity, and conferred no fruit of finding the truth. Hence it is that he attached himself to the chief man of that region, by whom he was sent into this world, that is, into the one farm of many superstitions; to feed swine, that is, the demons, who say to the Lord: If you cast us out, send us into the swine (Matt 8:31). To feed the demons with frankincense, victims, blood, and to bring back false answers as the wage of such labour. A beast was slain so that, slain, it might divine what alive it had not known; and that, dead, it might speak from its entrails what it had never uttered with its mouth.

But when the Gentile found nothing divine, nothing saving, nothing that would profit him in such things, despairing of God, of providence, of judgement, of the things to come, he sank from the school to the gluttony of the belly, longing to be filled with the pods that the swine were eating. The Epicureans know this, who, when they had run through the schools of Plato and Aristotle and found there no teaching either of divinity or of knowledge, hand themselves over to Epicurus, the last author of despair and of pleasure. And they eat the pods, that is, they gape after the pleasures of the body, wickedly sweet, and they feed the demons, which are always fattened on the vices and filth of bodies: because, as he who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor 6:17), so he who joins himself to the devil is one demon. But this younger son, although he longed to, still did not fill his belly with those pods. Why? Because no one gave to him. The devil indeed wished, through the famine of knowledge, through the difficulty of pleasures, to make the Gentile greedier for seeking out what is forbidden, for committing offences: but God the father allowed the Gentile to hunger for this purpose, that the occasion of error might become the ground of salvation: for the Jew he so left as not to lose him; and the Gentile he permitted to endure famine, so that he might return.

Redit autem ad patrem, et clamat: Pater, peccavi in coelum et coram te. Rediisse juniorem ad domum patris, et clamare Deum patrem vox Ecclesiae quotidiana testatur: quae dicit: Pater noster, qui es in coelis. Peccavi in coelum et coram te. Peccavit in coelum, dum in coelo solem, lunam, sidera, deos esse blasphemat, et haec eadem profanat adorando. Et jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus, fac me sicut unum de mercenariis tuis. Hoc est dicere quia non mereor jam filii gloriam, vel veniae, consequar pro mercenario labore mercedem. Et cui honor sobolis perit, saltem vitalis maneat in quotidiano pane substantia.

Sed pater occurrit, et occurrit longe. Cum adhuc impii essemus, Christus pro nobis mortuus est. Occurrit pater, occurrit in filio, cum per ipsum de coelo descendit, et pervenit ad terras. Pater, inquit, qui me misit, mecum est. Cecidit super collum ejus. Cecidit, cum per Christum divinitas tota nostra decumbit, et incumbit in carne. Et osculatus est eum. Quando? quando misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi: justitia et pax osculatae sunt se.

Dedit stolam primam. Illam quam Adam perdidit, immortalitatis gloriam sempiternam. Posuit annulum in manu ejus. Annulum honoris, titulum libertatis, insigne pignus spiritus, signaculum fidei, arrham coelestium nuptiarum: audi Apostolum: Desponsavi vos uni viro virginem castam exhibere Christo. Et calceamenta in pedibus ejus. Ut essent calceati pedes in praedicatione Evangelii, ut essent beati pedes evangelizantium pacem. Et occidit ei vitulum saginatum. Illud de quo David cantabat, Et placebit Deo super vitulum novellum cornua producentem et ungulas. Occiditur patre vitulus sic jubente, quia Christus Deus Dei Filius occidi sine Patris voluntate non poterat: audi Apostolum, Qui proprio Filio non pepercit, sed pro omnibus nostris tradidit illum. Hic est vitulus qui in epulum nostrum quotidie ac jugiter immolatur.

Sed frater senior, sed senior filius veniens ex agro, populus legalis, messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci: audit in domo patris symphoniam, audit choros, et introire non vult. Hoc quotidie oculis nostris intuemur. Nam venit Judaeus ad domum patris, id est, ad Ecclesiam; stat foris per invidiam, audit Davidicam citharam personare, audit ex concentu prophetico symphoniam, ex populorum vario conventu choros audit, et introire non vult, per invidiam stans foris. Dum gentilem fratrem pristinis judicat et horret ex moribus, ipse paternis bonis se eximit, ipse se paternis excludit gaudiis.

He returns to his father, then, and cries: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you (Luke 15:18). That the younger has returned to the father's house and cries to God as father, the daily voice of the Church bears witness, which says: Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). I have sinned against heaven and before you. He sinned against heaven in that he blasphemes that the sun, the moon, the stars in heaven are gods, and profanes these same things by adoring them. And I am no longer worthy to be called your son, make me as one of your hirelings (Luke 15:19). That is to say: since I no longer deserve the glory of a son, let me obtain at least the wage of pardon for a hireling's labour. And for one whose honour as offspring has perished, let at least a substance to live by remain in daily bread.

But the father runs to meet him, and runs to meet him far off. While we were still ungodly, Christ died for us (Rom 5:6, 8). The father runs to meet him, runs to meet him in the Son, when through him he came down from heaven and reached the earth. The Father, he says, who sent me is with me (John 8:29). He fell upon his neck. He fell, when through Christ the whole divinity lies down and leans upon our flesh. And he kissed him. When? When mercy and truth met each other: justice and peace kissed each other (Ps 85:11).

He gave the first robe. That which Adam lost, the everlasting glory of immortality. He put a ring on his hand. The ring of honour, the title of freedom, the distinguished pledge of the Spirit, the seal of faith, the earnest of the heavenly marriage: hear the Apostle: I have betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor 11:2). And shoes on his feet. So that the feet might be shod in the preaching of the Gospel, so that the feet of those who bring the good news of peace might be blessed (Rom 10:15). And he killed the fatted calf for him. That of which David sang: And it will please God more than a young calf that puts forth horns and hoofs (Ps 69:32). The calf is slain at the father's bidding, because Christ, God, the Son of God, could not be slain without the will of the Father: hear the Apostle: He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for all of us (Rom 8:32). This is the calf that is sacrificed daily and continually for our feast.

But the elder brother, but the elder son coming from the field, the people of the Law, the harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few (Luke 10:2): he hears music in the father's house, he hears choirs, and will not go in. This we see daily before our eyes. For the Jew comes to the father's house, that is, to the Church; he stands outside through envy, he hears David's lyre sounding, he hears the music of the prophets' harmony, he hears choirs from the varied assembly of the peoples, and he will not go in, standing outside through envy. While he judges his Gentile brother by his former ways and shudders at him, he himself takes himself out of his father's goods, he himself shuts himself out of his father's joys.

Quod autem dixit: Ecce tot annis servio tibi, et numquam mandatum tuum praeterivi, et numquam dedisti mihi haedum, tacendum potius quam loquendum esse jam diximus, quia Judaeus loquitur: et non facientis verba sunt, sed tumentis.

Pater egreditur, et dicit filio, Fili, tu semper mecum es. Quomodo? per Abel, per Henoch, per Sem, per Noe, per Abraham, per Isaac, per Jacob, per Moysem, per omnes sanctos, per quos Judaica generatio in Evangelio lecta derivatur, cum dicit: Abraham genuit Isaac, Isaac genuit Jacob. Et omnia mea tua sunt. Quemadmodum? Quia tibi lex, tibi prophetia, tibi templum, tibi sacerdotium, tibi sacrificia, tibi regnum, tibi munera, tibi (quod est super omnia) natus est Christus. Sed quia tu per invidiam perdere vis fratrem, paternas epulas, patris gaudia dignus es non habere.

Angusto sermone res latissimas, non ut voluimus aperire potuimus; sed scientiae vestrae intellectui vestro lata sunt quae in sermone nostro videntur angusta. Non sit haec ingrata, simplex et occulta collatio, quae nos res mysticas et excelsas non narrare, non declamare, sed aperire compulit et explanare.

As for what he said: See, so many years I serve you, and I have never disobeyed your command, and you never gave me a kid, we have already said that it is better passed over in silence than spoken of, because it is the Jew who speaks: and they are not the words of a doer, but of one puffed up.

The father goes out, and says to the son: Son, you are always with me. How? Through Abel, through Enoch, through Shem, through Noah, through Abraham, through Isaac, through Jacob, through Moses, through all the saints, through whom the Jewish generation that is read in the Gospel is derived, when it says: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob (Matt 1:2). And all that is mine is yours. In what way? Because for you the Law, for you prophecy, for you the temple, for you the priesthood, for you the sacrifices, for you the kingdom, for you the gifts, for you (what is above all) Christ was born. But because you wish through envy to destroy your brother, you deserve not to have the father's feasts, the father's joys.

In a narrow sermon we could not open the broadest things as we wished; but to the understanding of your knowledge the things that seem narrow in our sermon are broad. Let this simple and hidden discourse not be unwelcome, which has compelled us not to narrate, not to declaim, but to open and explain things mystical and lofty.

Sermo VI.

De laetitia ob inductionem gentium ad fidem et gratiam. In psalmum XCIX

Quoniam redeunte filio juniore familia tota choros egit, coelestem cecinit symphoniam, convenit et nos hodie psalmum sumere, dare tympanum, ponere organum, citharam tangere, et ad tantum Dei Patris gaudium melodiam Davidicam personare. Jubilate Deo, inquit, omnis terra. Quid est, quod intelligentia hujus exsultationis inquirit? Quid est, quod post tanta deitatis, tam terribilia, tam mirifica praecepta terra nunc vocatur, et invitatur ad jubilum? Jubilate, inquit, Deo, omnis terra. Quid aliud est, nisi quod posteaquam terribilis Deus mitissimi pastoris elegit officium, personam pastoris induit, ut vagos populos, palantes plebes, dispersas longe lateque gentes, velut errantes oves in unum pastor misericors congregaret, immo ut nationes feras, praedam mortis, carnis cibum, potum sanguinis, bestiarum furorem sitientes, ad usum lactis, ad cibum graminis, ad ovium totam duceret et redderet lenitatem? Terrae omni pastoralem mandat, et imperat disciplinam, dicendo, Omnis terra, jubilate Deo. Sicut militem tuba terribilis producit ad bellum, sic oves ad pascua dulcedo jubilationis invitat. Bellandi ergo fremitum pastorali lenitate mitigare convenit, ut gentes tam mitis gratia salvaret, quas diu peremerat feritas naturalis.

Quod autem pastoris bonus esset reditus cum ad terras veniret Christus, clamavit ipse hodie: Ego sum pastor bonus; pastor bonus animam suam ponit pro ovibus suis. Hinc est quod adjutores, quod socios ad curam totius orbis ipse magister inquirit, dicendo, Jubilate Deo, omnis terra. Hinc est quod oves suas Petro vice sua, ut pasceret, ad coelum remeaturus, commendat. Petre, inquit, amas me? Pasce oves meas. Et ut tenuia redditus primordia non cogeret potestate, sed pietate portaret, repetit: Petre, amas me? Pasce oves meas. Commendat oves, ovium commendat germina, quia fecunditatem gregis sui pastor praescius noverat jam futuram. Petre, amas me? Pasce oves meas. Istis ovibus collega pastoris Petri Paulus pio pastu plena lactis ubera porrigebat, dicendo: Lac vobis potum dedi, non escam. Sensit hoc Rex beatus; et ideo pro balatu clamat, Dominus pascit me, et nihil mihi deerit: in loco viridi ibi me collocavit: super aquam refectionis educavit me.

Sermon VI.

On the joy at the bringing of the Gentiles to faith and grace. On Psalm 99 (100)

Since at the younger son's return the whole household formed choirs and sang a heavenly music, it is fitting that we too today take up a psalm, sound the timbrel, set up the instrument, touch the lyre, and make David's melody resound for so great a joy of God the Father. Shout with joy to God, he says, all the earth (Ps 100:1). What is it that the understanding of this exultation seeks? What is it that, after such great, such terrible, such wonderful commands of the Godhead, the earth is now called and invited to a shout of joy? Shout with joy, he says, to God, all the earth. What else is it, but that after the terrible God chose the office of a most gentle shepherd, he put on the person of a shepherd, so that, a merciful shepherd, he might gather into one, like straying sheep, the wandering peoples, the roaming multitudes, the nations scattered far and wide; or rather, so that he might lead and bring back to the use of milk, to the food of grass, to the whole gentleness of sheep, fierce nations, thirsting for the prey of death, the food of flesh, the drink of blood, the fury of beasts? To all the earth he commands and enjoins a shepherd's discipline, saying: All the earth, shout with joy to God. As the terrible trumpet leads the soldier out to war, so the sweetness of jubilation invites the sheep to pasture. It was fitting, then, to soften the din of warfare with a shepherd's gentleness, so that so gentle a grace might save the nations which their natural fierceness had long destroyed.

That the shepherd's returns would be good when Christ came to the earth, he himself cried out today: I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). Hence it is that the master himself seeks helpers, seeks companions for the care of the whole world, saying: Shout with joy to God, all the earth. Hence it is that, when he is about to return to heaven, he commends his sheep to Peter in his stead, to feed them. Peter, he says, do you love me? Feed my sheep (John 21:16–17). And so that he might not compel the slender first returns by power, but carry them by loving-kindness, he repeats: Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep. He commends the sheep, he commends the offspring of the sheep, because the foreknowing shepherd knew already the fruitfulness of his flock that was to come. Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep. To these sheep Paul, the colleague of Peter the shepherd, with loving feeding held out breasts full of milk, saying: I gave you milk to drink, not solid food (1 Cor 3:2). The blessed King felt this; and so, instead of bleating, he cries: The Lord feeds me, and I shall lack nothing: in a green place, there he has set me: by the water of refreshment he has brought me up (Ps 23:1–2).

Post juges ergo bellorum gemitus, post tristem sanguinis vitam, evangelicae pacis ad pascua jam redeunti versiculus, sequens laetitiam annuntiat servituti. Erat homo peccati servus, erat captivus mortis, erat mancipium daemonum, erat idolorum vernula, erat vitiorum verbero, erat criminum compeditus. Sic malis dominis talibus tantisque exhibebat homo malam et miseram servitutem. Quando homo non sub peccato tristis? Quando non sub morte lugens? Quando non sub daemonibus pallens? Quando non sub idolis tremens? Quando non sub vitiis suspectus? Quando non sub criminibus desperatus? Et ideo homo dabat extrema suspiria, quando tales, tam crudeles dominos jugiter sustinebat.

Propheta ergo videns nos a talibus liberatos, et revocatos ad obsequium Creatoris, ad Patris gratiam, ad unius boni Domini liberam servitutem, merito exclamat: Servite Domino in laetitia: intrate, inquit, in conspectu ejus in exsultatione. Intrate non loco, sed corde. Intrate in conspectu ejus in exsultatione. Quia quos ejecerat reatus, quos expulerat conscientia, gratia reducit, intromittit innocentia: Intrate in conspectu ejus in exsultatione. Qui ingreditur in conspectu ejus in exsultatione, est a reatu liber, est de praemio persecurus.

Tamen quid est quod hortatur? quod suadere nititur hic propheta? Intrate in conspectu ejus in exsultatione. Quis in conspectu Dei liber? divinis in oculis quis mentitur? Quis exsultans ante terrorem majestatis supernae? Archangeli tremunt, pavent angeli, potestates metuunt, in faciem coeli proruunt seniores; elementa fugiunt, solvuntur saxa, montes defluunt, terra tremit, et homo terrae quam intrepidus intrabit? et adhuc consistit exsultans? unde est quod propheta hoc nos debere facere sic praesumit? unde est? Ex eo quod sequitur: Scitote, inquit, quod Dominus ipse est Deus. Quia Dominus ille Deus est, qui fuit in carne nostra pusillus; hinc est quod ille Dominus Deus est, qui fuit in cunabulis nostris capax; dulcis in gremio, mitis in habitu, in nostro contubernio blandus. Et ideo, Intrate in conspectu ejus in exsultatione. Quia totum pavorem divinitatis, totum metum judicis in habitum nostrum abdidit, providenti locavit aspectu: ut ingressus non poenas judicis metuat, sed parentis praesumat amplexum. Et quomodo non exultet qui genitorem reperit, quem timuerat cognitorem?

After the unceasing groans of wars, then, after a sad life of blood, the next little verse announces gladness to a servitude now returning to the pastures of the Gospel's peace. Man was the servant of sin, he was the captive of death, he was the chattel of demons, he was the home-born slave of idols, he was the flogged slave of vices, he was the one fettered by crimes. So to such evil masters, and so many, man rendered an evil and wretched servitude. When was man not sad under sin? When not mourning under death? When not pale under demons? When not trembling under idols? When not suspect under vices? When not despairing under crimes? And so man heaved his deepest sighs, when he endured continually such masters, and so cruel.

The Prophet, then, seeing us freed from such masters, and called back to the homage of the Creator, to the grace of the Father, to the free servitude of the one good Lord, rightly cries out: Serve the Lord with gladness: enter, he says, into his presence with exultation (Ps 100:2). Enter not in place, but in heart. Enter into his presence with exultation. Because those whom guilt had cast out, whom conscience had expelled, grace leads back, innocence lets in: Enter into his presence with exultation. He who goes into his presence with exultation is free from guilt, is wholly secure of the reward.

Yet what is it that he exhorts? What is this Prophet striving to persuade? Enter into his presence with exultation. Who is free in the presence of God? Who lies before the divine eyes? Who is exultant before the terror of the majesty on high? Archangels tremble, angels are in fright, the powers fear, the elders fall prostrate before the face of heaven; the elements flee, rocks are dissolved, mountains flow down, the earth trembles, and man of earth, how will he go in undaunted? And does he still stand exultant? Whence is it that the Prophet so takes it for granted that we ought to do this? Whence is it? From what follows: Know, he says, that the Lord himself is God (Ps 100:3). Because that Lord is God who was little in our flesh; hence it is that that Lord is God who was capacious in our cradle; sweet in the lap, gentle in his condition, winning in our company. And so: Enter into his presence with exultation. Because he hid all the fright of the divinity, all the dread of the judge, in our condition, placed it under a provident aspect: so that he who enters may not fear the judge's punishments, but may presume upon a parent's embrace. And how should he not exult who finds a begetter in the one he had feared as examining judge?

Intrate in conspectu ejus in exsultatione: scitote quod Dominus ipse est Deus, ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos. Inanis est patris matrisque labor, nisi in germine affuerit opus et auctoritas Conditoris. Manus tuae, inquit, fecerunt me, et plasmaverunt me. Et alibi, Tu formasti me, et posuisti super me manum tuam. Ergo quod nascimur, quod sumus, non debemus ipsi nobis, quia totum debemus Auctori. Nos autem populi ejus, et oves pascuae ejus. Probatum est in proverbiis saepissime quia coelitus venerit pastor, qui errantes oves, et lethali gramine sauciatas superno jubilo vitalia revocaret ad pascua.

Intrate, inquit, portas ejus in confessione. Sola est confessio, quae nos fidei facit introire per januam. Atria ejus in hymnis: confitemini illi, laudate nomen ejus. Diximus, quod nobis esset jam positis intra domum patris assumenda coelestium canticorum spiritualis symphonia, ut sit nobis in ingressu confessio, sint in atriis hymni, sit laus in penetralibus, ubi tota Deitatis inhabitat plenitudo. Confitemini illi, laudate nomen ejus. Confitemini illi, quia Deus est, laudate nomen ejus. Per quod salvati sumus: in quo coelestis, terrestris, infernaque genuflectit, et diligit Dominum Deum creatura.

Quia suavis est Dominus. Unde? quia in aeternum misericordia ejus. Vere suavis est per misericordiam, per quam solam totius mundi amarissimam dignatus est auferre sententiam. Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Et usque in saeculum saeculi veritas ejus. Deus enim salva veritate miseretur, qui sic dat peccatis veniam, ut justitiam in ipsa miseratione rationeque custodiat, qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Enter into his presence with exultation: know that the Lord himself is God; he himself made us, and not we ourselves. The labour of father and mother is empty, unless the work and authority of the Maker be present in the offspring. Your hands, he says, have made me and fashioned me (Ps 119:73). And elsewhere: You formed me, and laid your hand upon me (Ps 139:5). Therefore that we are born, that we are, we do not owe to ourselves, because we owe the whole to the Author. But we are his peoples, and the sheep of his pasture. It is proved very often in proverbs that a shepherd came from heaven, to call back with a heavenly shout of joy to the life-giving pastures the sheep that strayed and were wounded by deadly grass.

Enter, he says, his gates with confession (Ps 100:4). Confession alone is what makes us enter by the door of faith. His courts with hymns: confess to him, praise his name. We said that we, now placed within the father's house, must take for ourselves the spiritual harmony of heavenly songs, so that for us there may be confession at the entrance, hymns in the courts, praise in the inner chambers, where the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells (Col 2:9). Confess to him, praise his name. Confess to him, because he is God, praise his name. Through which we have been saved: in which the creature of heaven, of earth and of the underworld bends the knee (Phil 2:10), and loves the Lord God.

For the Lord is sweet (Ps 100:5). Whence? Because his mercy is for ever. Truly he is sweet through mercy, through which alone he deigned to take away the most bitter sentence of the whole world. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). And his truth even to the age of the age. For God has mercy with his truth kept whole, he who so gives pardon to sins as to keep justice in his very tender mercy and in its reckoning, who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo VII.

De hypocrisi et eleemosyna. In illud Matthaei VI: Cum jejunatis, nolite fieri sicut hypocrytae tristes

Ubi Deus Dominum mutavit in patrem, voluit charitate magis quam potestate regnare, et amari maluit quam timeri: unde paterno monuit affectu, ne quid nobis de labore justissimo deperiret. Evangelista sic ait: Cum jejunatis, nolite fieri sicut hypocritae tristes; exterminant enim facies suas, ut videantur ab hominibus jejunantes. Amen dico vobis, perceperunt mercedem suam. Hypocrisis subtile malum, secretum virus, venenum latens, virtutum fucus, tinea sanctitatis. Adversa omnia nituntur viribus suis, armis suis pugnant, impugnant palam: unde et caventur tam facile quam videntur. Hypocrisis secura simulat, fallit prospera, curiosa mentitur, et crudeli arte virtutes truncat mucrone virtutum: jejunium jejunio perimit, oratione orationem evacuat, misericordiam miseratione prosternit. Hypocrisis cognata febri frigido poculo propinat ardorem. Quod corporibus est hydrops, hypocrisis animabus, hoc est: hydrops bibendo sitit, hypocrisis inebriata sitit.

Exterminant enim facies suas, ut videantur hominibus jejunantes. Hypocrisis dum cupit captivare oculos, oculis fit ipsa captiva. Exterminant enim facies suas. Et si facies exterminant, ornamentum corporis quod manebit? Vere sicut Dominus dixit: Si lumen quod in te est, tenebrae sunt, ipsae tenebrae quantae erunt? Hypocrita, sit licet tibi facies inculta, neglecta cutis, tristis vultus, exterminatus aspectus, nec ab hominibus invenisti laudem et apud Deum fructum jejunii perdidisti. Hypocrita, elaborasti jejuniis ut labor tibi jejunii non prodesset. Hypocrita, abstinentiae fluctus intrasti, continentiae conscendisti undas, enatasti jejunii pelagus; et in ipso portu jejunii naufragasti: quia non comparasti lucrum, sed mercatus es vanitatem, qui de Dei credito humanum negotium perfecisti. Hinc est quod Deo redditurus es rationem, qui ab hominibus percepisti miserae laudis usuram.

Sermon VII.

On hypocrisy and almsgiving. On the passage of Matthew 6: "When you fast, do not become gloomy like the hypocrites"

When God changed the Lord into a father, he willed to reign by charity rather than by power, and chose to be loved rather than feared: whence with a father's affection he warned us, that nothing of our most just labour should be lost to us. The Evangelist speaks thus: When you fast, do not become gloomy like the hypocrites; for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward (Matt 6:16). Hypocrisy: a subtle evil, a secret poison, a hidden venom, the paint of virtues, the moth of holiness. All adversaries strive with their own strength, fight with their own arms, attack openly: so they are guarded against as easily as they are seen. Hypocrisy feigns at its ease, deceives while it prospers, lies with care, and with cruel art it cuts down the virtues with the sword of the virtues: it destroys fasting with fasting, it empties prayer with prayer, it lays mercy low with tender mercy. Hypocrisy, akin to fever, pledges burning heat in a cold cup. What dropsy is to bodies, hypocrisy is to souls; that is, dropsy thirsts by drinking, hypocrisy thirsts when drunk.

For they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Hypocrisy, in longing to capture eyes, itself becomes the captive of eyes. For they disfigure their faces. And if they disfigure their faces, what adornment of the body will remain? Truly, as the Lord said: If the light that is in you is darkness, how great will the darkness itself be? (Matt 6:23) Hypocrite, though your face be unkempt, your skin neglected, your look sad, your aspect disfigured, you have not found praise from men, and with God you have lost the fruit of the fast. Hypocrite, you have toiled at fasts so that the toil of the fast should not profit you. Hypocrite, you entered the billows of abstinence, you climbed the waves of continence, you swam across the sea of fasting; and in the very harbour of fasting you were shipwrecked: because you did not gain profit, but bought vanity, you who out of God's credit have done a human business. Hence it is that you will render account to God, you who received from men the interest of wretched praise.

Fratres, fugiendum est virus, pestilentia cavenda, quae de remediis creat morbos, conficit de medicina languorem, sanctitatem vertit in crimen, placationem facit reatum, generat de propitiatione discrimen. Hypocrisim qui fugerit, vincit; qui incurrerit, cadit. Fugiamus hypocrisim, fugiamus, fratres: sit nostrum de simplicitate jejunium, de innocentia sit sanctum, de puritate purum, de sinceritate sincerum, sit hominibus occultum, ignotum diabolo, Deo notum. Thesaurum qui non abscondit, prodit; virtutes proditae non manebunt. Virtutes sicut proditores suos deserunt: sic suos instant custodire custodes. Ergo jejunium quod contra vitia prima virtus est nobis, in arce pectoris collocetur: quia illo in interioribus praesidente, vitia nos quatere in exterioribus non valebunt.

Hoc Christus, ut Christianus habere possit, hortatur cum dicit: Tu autem cum jejunas, unge caput tuum, et faciem tuam lava, ne videaris hominibus jejunans, sed Patri tuo qui est in abscondito, et Pater tuus qui videt in abscondito, reddet tibi. Cum dicit, Unge caput tuum, et faciem tuam lava: non ut coma capitis illecebroso redundet unguento, serius magister injungit, neque faciem nitescere solito vult lavacro; sed habitu prandentis vult celari jejunium Christiano, quia Christianum vindicare non vult artifici moerore jejunium.

Sed ad coepta redeamus. Unge caput tuum, et faciem tuam lava, ne videaris ab hominibus jejunans, sed Patri tuo, qui est in abscondito. Sic non voluptuosos indulget aspectus, sed vultus qui simulantur excludit: facies moerore dejecta invitat famam, non jejunium voluntarium profitetur. Si vult, quare tristis? Si non vult, jejunus quare? Merito tali poena vivit, qui sibi facit de virtute vitium, mendacium de veritate, de mercede dispendium, de remissione peccatum.

Agricola si non impresserit cultrum, si sulcum non defoderit, si non exciderit sentes, si gramina non evulserit, si in tuto semina non locarit, sibi mentitur, non terrae; nec terrae facit damnum, sed sibi non facit fructum: et ita se vacuat, ita decipit, impugnat ita, qui terrae manu fallaci mentitur. Quid faciet? quid habebit? quid inveniet? qui Deo, esuriente carne, hypocrisi luxuriante, mentitur? Quia agricolae fecimus mentionem, sciat ille sustinere se laborem incassum, se nihil habiturum, qui premens jejunii aratrum, et abscindens gulae gramina atque eradicans luxuriae sentes, misericordiae semina nulla jactaverit.

Brothers, the poison must be fled, the pestilence guarded against, which makes diseases out of remedies, produces sickness out of medicine, turns holiness into crime, makes atonement into guilt, begets peril out of propitiation. Whoever flees hypocrisy conquers; whoever runs into it falls. Let us flee hypocrisy, let us flee it, brothers: let our fast be from simplicity, holy from innocence, pure from purity, sincere from sincerity; let it be hidden from men, unknown to the devil, known to God. He who does not hide his treasure betrays it; virtues betrayed will not remain. As the virtues desert those who betray them, so they are eager to guard those who guard them. Therefore let fasting, which for us is the first virtue against vices, be placed in the citadel of the breast: because while it presides within, vices will not be able to shake us without.

This Christ urges, so that the Christian may have it, when he says: But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face, so that you may not be seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you (Matt 6:17–18). When he says, Anoint your head, and wash your face, the serious master does not enjoin that the hair of the head should overflow with alluring ointment, nor does he wish the face to shine with the usual washing; but he wants the Christian's fast to be hidden under the bearing of one who dines, because he does not want the Christian to lay claim to fasting by artful grief.

But let us return to what we began. Anoint your head, and wash your face, so that you may not be seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father, who is in secret. So he does not indulge voluptuous looks, but shuts out faces that are feigned: a face cast down in grief courts fame, it does not profess a voluntary fast. If he wills it, why sad? If he does not will it, why fasting? Rightly he lives in such punishment who makes for himself vice out of virtue, a lie out of truth, loss out of reward, sin out of remission.

If a farmer has not pressed in the coulter, has not dug the furrow, has not cut down the thorns, has not pulled up the grasses, has not laid the seeds in safety, he lies to himself, not to the earth; nor does he do the earth harm, but he makes no fruit for himself: and so he empties himself, so he deceives himself, so he attacks himself, who lies to the earth with a deceitful hand. What will he do? What will he have? What will he find, who lies to God while the flesh hungers and hypocrisy runs riot? Since we have made mention of the farmer, let him know that he endures labour in vain, that he will have nothing, who, pressing the plough of fasting and cutting down the grasses of gluttony and rooting out the thorns of dissoluteness, has cast no seeds of mercy.

Hoc Dominus aperire voluit, qui de jejunio docens, mox ista subjecit: Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi aerugo et tinea demolitur, et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur. Sed thesaurizate vobis thesauros in coelo, ubi neque aerugo, neque tinea demolitur, et ubi fures non effodiunt, nec furantur. Quid tam paternum? quid sic veniens de amore? quod tam providum de charitate consilium? nihil tibi perire vult, qui tua in thesauris coelestibus vult reponi. Quam securus dormit, qui Deum suorum meruit habere custodem! Quam nescit curas, quam deponit angores, quam non est anxius, quam servorum caret fastu, qui sua patri servanda committit! Quomodo paterna servat affectio, quod timor non potest sic servare servilis: pater cum dat sua filiis, non minuit commendata filiorum. Quid sit pater, nescit; nescit se filium, qui non credit patri.

Tineam non excludunt claustra, sed claudunt; et generant, non repellunt: rubiginem nutriunt servata, non vitant; quia quod de re nascitur, non vitatur. Ubi est necessitas, fures deesse non possunt. Qui ergo inter tineas, rubiginem, fures, sua ponit, exponit quae sua sunt, non reponit. Sicut de vestimento tinea, rubigo de metallo, de necessitate fures nascuntur: ita de divitiis avaritia, cupiditas de quaestu, de habendo habendi ardor acquiritur. Qui ergo vult avaritiam vincere, divitias proroget, non reponat.

Praemittamus, fratres, thesauros nostros in coelum; sint vectores pauperes, qui possunt sinu suo quae nostra sunt ad superna portare. Nemo de fraude dubitet bajulorum: tua est ista transvectio, per quam nostra ad Deum Deo fidejussore portantur: cui est omnis honor et gloria, virtus et imperium, et gratiarum actio in omnia saecula saeculorum, Amen.

This the Lord wished to disclose, who, teaching about fasting, at once added this: Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where rust and moth destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal (Matt 6:19–20). What is so fatherly? What comes so from love? What counsel so provident from charity? He wills nothing of yours to perish, who wills your goods to be stored in the heavenly treasuries. How securely he sleeps, who has deserved to have God as guardian of his goods! How he knows nothing of cares, how he lays aside anguish, how free he is from anxiety, how he is spared the arrogance of servants, who commits his goods to his father to keep! How a father's affection keeps what servile fear cannot so keep: a father, when he gives his own to his sons, does not diminish what the sons have entrusted to him. He does not know what a father is; he does not know himself a son, who does not trust his father.

Bolts do not shut out the moth, but shut it in; and they breed it, they do not repel it: things kept nourish rust, they do not escape it; because what is born from the thing itself is not escaped. Where there is need, thieves cannot be lacking. He then who places his goods among moths, rust, thieves, exposes what is his, he does not lay it up. As the moth is born from the garment, rust from metal, thieves from need: so avarice is acquired from riches, greed from gain, from having the burning for having. Whoever, then, wishes to conquer avarice, let him pay out his riches, not lay them up.

Let us send our treasures ahead into heaven, brothers; let the poor be the carriers, who can carry what is ours in their bosom to the heights. Let no one fear fraud from the porters: yours is this conveyance, by which our goods are carried to God, with God as surety: to whom be all honour and glory, power and dominion, and thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo VIII.

De jejunio et eleemosyna

Gubernator prudens a littore cum navim solvit, cum mare transiturus intrat fluctus, domus, patriae, conjugis, pignorum, curas deponit, et ita totus mente, corpore, sensu, nauticis laboribus occupatur, ut et fluctuum possit superare discrimina, et stationem lucrosi portus periculi victor intrare. Sic nos fratres ingressi iter abstinentiae, jejunii pelagus, quadragesimae viam, navim corporis nostri solvamus a littore mundano; saecularis patriae renuntiemus curis; in crucis arbore tota mentis vela tendamus; virtutum funibus, sapientiae remis, gubernaculis disciplinae, navigii nostri muniamus incessum. Et subducti terris speculemus coelum: ut ducatu signorum coelestium inter liquidos calles latentis viae inoffensum tramitem tenere possimus; ac si gubernante Christo, flante Spiritu sancto, evictis voluptatum spumis, superatis vitiorum fluctibus, decursis criminum procellis, transvectis scopulis peccatorum, atque omnium delictorum naufragiis evitatis, Paschae portum, lucrum vitae, gaudia resurrectionis intremus.

Verum quia per campos nudos, per falsos vortices, per incertas solitudines, acturi sumus viam, nobis tota est escae et potus portanda substantia: imponamus abundantem misericordiam nostrae sitarchiae profuturam. Fratres, esurit jejunium, jejunium sitit, quod non pietatis cibo pascitur, quod potu misericordiae non rigatur. Alget jejunium, jejunium deficit, quod non eleemosynae vellus tegit, quod non miserationis operit vestimentum.

Fratres, quod est terris ver, hoc misericordiam scimus esse jejunio. Sicut verni flatus tota facit germina florere camporum: ita misericordia tota jejunii semina producit in florem, in coelestem messem totam jejunii facit fructificare virtutem. Quod oleum lucernae est, hoc jejunio pietas, sicut lucernae lumen olei pinguedo succendit, et moderato pastu facit illud ad totius noctis solatium perlucere: sic pietas facit splendere jejunium, et ad totam radiare continentiae claritatem. Quod diei sol est, hoc eleemosyna noscitur esse jejunio. Sicut jubar solis clariorem perficit diem, et totam nubium dispergit obscuritatem: sic eleemosyna jejunii sanctificat sanctitatem, totamque cupiditatis noctem lumine pietatis excludit. Ac ne multis immorer, quod est anima corpori, jejunio largitas hoc habetur. Sicut enim mortificatur corpus, e corpore anima cum recedit: ita mors est jejunii, largitatis abscessus.

Sermon VIII.

On fasting and almsgiving

A prudent helmsman, when he casts off his ship from the shore, when, about to cross the sea, he enters the waves, lays aside his cares for home, fatherland, wife and children, and is so wholly occupied in mind, body and sense with the labours of sailing, that he can both overcome the perils of the waves and, victor over danger, enter the anchorage of a profitable harbour. So let us, brothers, who have entered the road of abstinence, the sea of fasting, the way of Lent, cast off the ship of our body from the shore of the world; let us renounce the cares of a worldly fatherland; on the tree of the cross let us spread all the sails of the mind; with the ropes of the virtues, the oars of wisdom, the rudders of discipline, let us secure the course of our vessel. And, drawn away from the lands, let us watch the sky: so that by the guidance of the heavenly signs we may keep, among the liquid paths, the unstumbling track of a hidden way; and so, with Christ at the helm, the Holy Spirit blowing, the foam of pleasures overcome, the waves of vices surmounted, the storms of crimes run through, the rocks of sins passed by, and the shipwrecks of all offences avoided, we may enter the harbour of Easter, the gain of life, the joys of the resurrection.

But since we are to make our way across bare plains, through deceptive whirlpools, through uncertain solitudes, we must carry with us the whole substance of food and drink: let us put into our provisions abundant mercy, which will profit us. Brothers, a fast hungers, a fast thirsts, that is not fed with the food of piety, that is not watered with the drink of mercy. A fast is cold, a fast faints, that the fleece of almsgiving does not cover, that the garment of tender mercy does not clothe.

Brothers, what spring is to the earth, this we know mercy to be to fasting. As the breezes of spring make all the buds of the fields flower, so mercy brings all the seeds of fasting into flower, makes the whole virtue of fasting bear fruit for the heavenly harvest. What oil is to the lamp, this piety is to fasting: as the richness of oil kindles the light of the lamp, and with moderate feeding makes it shine for the comfort of the whole night, so piety makes fasting shine, and radiate to the whole brightness of continence. What the sun is to the day, this almsgiving is known to be to fasting. As the sun's radiance makes the day brighter, and scatters all the darkness of the clouds, so almsgiving hallows the holiness of fasting, and shuts out the whole night of greed with the light of piety. And not to dwell on many things: what the soul is to the body, generosity is held to be to fasting. For as the body is put to death when the soul departs from the body, so the departure of generosity is the death of fasting.

Est quidem jejunium vitiorum mors, vita virtutum. Est jejunium pax corpori, membrorum decus, ornamentum vitae. Est jejunium robur mentium, vigor animarum. Est jejunium castitatis murus, pudicitiae propugnaculum, civitas sanctitatis. Est jejunium schola meritorum, magisterii magisterium, disciplinarum disciplina. Est jejunium ecclesiasticae viae viaticum salutare. Est jejunium invictus Christianae militiae principatus. Sed in his virtutibus jejunium tunc viget, tunc vincit, tunc triumphat, cum duce misericordia pugnat. Misericordia et pietas jejunii sunt alae, per quas tollitur, et portatur ad coelum, sine quibus jacet, et volutatur in terra. Jejunium sine misericordia simulacrum famis est, imago nulla est sanctitatis; sine pietate jejunium occasio est avaritiae, non est propositum parcitatis: quia parcitas ista, quantum siccatur in corpore, tantum tumescit in sacculo. Jejunium sine misericordia non est veritas, sed figura: ubi autem misericordia, ibi et veritas: probante propheta, cum dicit: Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi.Jejunium sine misericordia non est virtus, sed hypocrisis, dicente Domino: Vos autem cum jejunatis, nolite fieri sicut hypocritae tristes; exterminant enim facies suas, ut videantur ab hominibus jejunantes. Qui non jejunat pauperi, Deo fingit; qui jejunans prandium suum non erogat, sed reponit, cupiditati probatur jejunare, non Christo.

Jejunantes ergo fratres prandium nostrum reponamus in manu pauperis, ut servet nobis manus pauperis, quod venter nobis fuerat perditurus. Manus pauperis Abrahae sinus est; ubi quidquid pauper acceperit, mox reponit. Thesaurus coeli est manus pauperis, quod suscipit ne in terra pereat, reponit in coelum. Thesaurizate, inquit, vobis thesauros in coelo. Manus pauperis est gazophylacium Christi, quia quidquid pauper accipit, Christus acceptat. Da ergo, homo, pauperi terram, ut accipias coelum. Da nummum, ut accipias regnum. Da micam, ut accipias totum. Da pauperi, ut des tibi: quia quidquid pauperi dederis, tu habebis; quod pauperi non dederis, habebit alter.

Clamat Deus misericordiam volo. Qui, quod vult Deus, Deo negat, a Deo sibi quod desiderat, vult negari. Misericordiam volo. Homo, petit Deus; sed tibi, non sibi. Misericordiam volo. Humanam misericordiam petit, ut largiatur divinam. Est in coelis misericordia, ad quam per terrenas misericordias pervenitur. Domine, inquit, in coelo misericordia tua.

Fasting indeed is the death of vices, the life of virtues. Fasting is peace for the body, the grace of the members, the adornment of life. Fasting is the strength of minds, the vigour of souls. Fasting is the wall of chastity, the bulwark of modesty, the city of holiness. Fasting is the school of merits, the mastery of mastery, the discipline of disciplines. Fasting is the saving provision for the journey of the Church's way. Fasting is the unconquered command of the Christian service. But among these virtues fasting then flourishes, then conquers, then triumphs, when it fights with mercy as its leader. Mercy and piety are the wings of fasting, by which it is lifted and carried to heaven; without them it lies and rolls on the earth. Fasting without mercy is a semblance of famine, it is no image of holiness; fasting without piety is an occasion of avarice, not a purpose of frugality: because that frugality swells as much in the purse as it dries up in the body. Fasting without mercy is not truth, but figure; but where mercy is, there truth is too, as the Prophet proves when he says: Mercy and truth met each other (Ps 85:11). Fasting without mercy is not virtue but hypocrisy, as the Lord says: But you, when you fast, do not become gloomy like the hypocrites; for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by men to be fasting (Matt 6:16). He who does not fast for the poor man feigns before God; he who, fasting, does not pay out his dinner but lays it by, is proved to fast for greed, not for Christ.

Fasting, then, brothers, let us lay up our dinner in the hand of the poor man, so that the hand of the poor may keep for us what the belly would have lost for us. The hand of the poor man is Abraham's bosom; where whatever the poor man receives, he at once lays up. The hand of the poor man is the treasury of heaven: what it receives, lest it perish on earth, it lays up in heaven. Lay up, he says, for yourselves treasures in heaven (Matt 6:20). The hand of the poor man is the treasury of Christ, because whatever the poor man receives, Christ accepts. Give, then, man, earth to the poor man, that you may receive heaven. Give a coin, that you may receive a kingdom. Give a crumb, that you may receive the whole. Give to the poor man, that you may give to yourself: because whatever you give to the poor man, you will have; what you do not give to the poor man, another will have.

God cries: I desire mercy (Hos 6:6). He who denies God what God wills, wills that what he himself desires be denied him by God. I desire mercy. Man, God asks; but for you, not for himself. I desire mercy. He asks for human mercy, so as to bestow divine mercy. There is mercy in heaven, which is reached through earthly mercies. Lord, he says, your mercy is in heaven (Ps 36:6).

Dicturus causam in judicio Dei, patronam tibi misericordiam, per quam liberari possis, assume. Qui de patrocinio misericordiae certus est, de venia sit securus, de absolutione non dubitet. Misericordia non solum causam praevenit, anticipat cognitorem, sed etiam sententiam revocat, absolvit addictos. Quod Ninivitae probant, quos jam sententiae subjectos, poenae traditos, ad victimam stantes, morti deditos, misericordia sic rapuit, sic tenuit, sic praevenit, ut maluerit Deus deduci sententiam, ne misericordiae quid negaret. Stabat quidem et tunc pro causa jejunium, aspergebat cineres, sternebat cilicium, dabat gemitus, fundebat lacrymas: et quod non poterat excusare verbis, luctibus temperabat, sed non valuit mutare sententiam, nisi perorans misericordia subvenisset. Misericordia et peccatores liberat, et restituit sanctos: quia nisi affuisset misericordia, etiam David cum adulterat, amiserat prophetiam; et Petrus cum negat, apostolici ordinis perdiderat principatum; et Paulus cum blasphemat, remanserat persecutor. Fatetur hoc Paulus cum dicit: Qui primus blasphemus fui, et persecutor, et injuriosus: sed misericordiam consecutus sum.

Fratres, per misericordias pauperum misericordiam comparemus, ut possimus esse a poena liberi, de salute securi. Beati, inquit, misericordes: quia ipsi misericordiam consequentur. Gratis misericordiam sperat ibi, qui hic non fecerit misericordiam. Qui facit misericordiam, currit ad praemium; qui non facit misericordiam, decurrit ad poenam.

When you are to plead your cause at God's judgement, take mercy as your patroness, through whom you can be set free. He who is certain of the patronage of mercy, let him be secure of pardon, let him not doubt of acquittal. Mercy not only comes before the case and anticipates the examining judge, but even revokes the sentence, acquits the condemned. The Ninevites prove it: when they were already subject to the sentence, handed over to punishment, standing for the slaughter, given over to death, mercy so snatched them away, so held them, so forestalled, that God preferred to have the sentence withdrawn rather than deny anything to mercy (Jonah 3). Fasting, indeed, stood there then too to plead the cause, sprinkled ashes, spread sackcloth, uttered groans, poured out tears: and what it could not excuse by words, it softened by mourning; but it could not change the sentence, had not mercy come to its aid with the closing plea. Mercy both frees sinners and restores saints: because, had mercy not been present, David too, when he commits adultery, would have lost prophecy (2 Sam 11); and Peter, when he denies, would have lost the principate of the apostolic order (Matt 26); and Paul, when he blasphemes, would have remained a persecutor. Paul acknowledges this when he says: I who was first a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and insolent: but I obtained mercy (1 Tim 1:13).

Brothers, let us acquire mercy through mercies to the poor, so that we may be free from punishment, secure of salvation. Blessed, he says, are the merciful: for they will obtain mercy (Matt 5:7). In vain does he hope for mercy there who has not done mercy here. He who does mercy runs to the reward; he who does not do mercy runs down to punishment.

Sermo IX.

De eisdem. In illud Matthaei: Attendite, ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus

Agit nobiscum Deus, agit in hoc saeculo, ne quid nobis pereat in futuro: sicut ex ipso lucet principio lectionis. Attendite, inquit, ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus, ut videamini ab eis: alioquin mercedem non habetis apud Patrem vestrum, qui in coelis est.

Et quomodo quod fit ab hominibus coram hominibus non fit? patentis justitiae latet sensus, publici operis quod secretum? Qui potest celare radios solis justitiae poterit occultare fulgorem. Justitia lux rerum consiliis non velatur obscuris. Justitia cum sibi facto claret, omnes illustrat exemplo. Et quid est quod eam Dominus coram hominibus fieri non vult, per quam statum capiunt res humanae? Et ubi est illud: Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est? Quomodo justitiam vult celare, cujus opera vult sic elucere? Fratres, hic praeceptio coelestis vult jactantiam tollere, auferre pompam, vanitatem demere, submovere inanem gloriam: sic justitiam vult celare. Justitia, quae per se sibi abundat ad gloriam, spectaculum populi, vulgi laudes, favores hominum, mundi gloriam non requirit: a Deo genita, coelum spectat; in oculis agit divinis; supernis virtutibus mixta semper a Deo solo, ut glorificetur, exspectat. Sed haec est justitia, quae ex Deo est; illa vero justitia quae est hypocrisis, justitia non est: mentitur oculis, fallit aspectum, videntibus illudit, decipit audientes, seducit turbas, trahit populos, famam vendit, emit clamorem, fit saeculo, Deo non fit, mercedem rapit praesentem, praemium non quaerit in futuro, caecat oculos, caeca ipsa non videns vult videri: propter quam caecitatem Christus praesenti sic inchoat in praecepto.

Attendite. Hoc est, ne gestiatis attendi. Ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus. Quare? Ne videamini ab eis. Et si visi fueritis, quid? Mercedem non habetis apud patrem vestrum, qui in coelis est. Fratres, hic Dominus non judicat, sed exponit, pandit cogitationum dolos, secreta mentium nudat, injuste justitiam tractantibus, modum justae retributionis indicit. Justitia, quae se humanis oculis locat, divini patris non potest exspectare mercedem: voluit videri, et visa est; voluit hominibus placere, et placuit; habet mercedem quam voluit; praemium quod habere noluit, non habebit.

Sermon IX.

On the same. On the passage of Matthew: "Take heed that you do not do your justice before men"

God deals with us, he deals with us in this world, that nothing may perish for us in the world to come: as shines out from the very beginning of the reading. Take heed, he says, that you do not do your justice before men, so as to be seen by them: otherwise you have no reward with your Father, who is in heaven (Matt 6:1).

And how is what is done by men not done before men? Is the sense of an open justice hidden? What is secret about a public work? He who can hide the rays of the sun will be able to conceal the brightness of justice. Justice, the light of things, is not veiled by dark counsels. Justice, when it shines by its own deed, enlightens all by its example. And why is it that the Lord does not want it done before men, the justice by which human affairs take their stand? And where is that saying: So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16)? How does he want to hide the justice whose works he wants to shine out so? Brothers, here the heavenly precept wants to take away boasting, remove display, strip off vanity, put aside empty glory: in this way it wants to hide justice. Justice, which of itself abounds for its own glory, does not seek the spectacle of the people, the praises of the crowd, the favours of men, the glory of the world: born of God, it looks to heaven; it acts in the divine eyes; mingled with the powers above, it waits always to be glorified by God alone. But this is the justice which is from God; that justice, however, which is hypocrisy is not justice: it lies to the eyes, deceives the sight, mocks those who see, deceives those who hear, leads crowds astray, draws peoples, sells fame, buys applause, is done for the world, is not done for God, seizes a present wage, does not seek a reward in the future, blinds eyes, and, blind itself and not seeing, wishes to be seen: because of this blindness Christ begins thus in the present precept.

Take heed. That is, do not long to be heeded. That you do not do your justice before men. Why? Lest you be seen by them. And if you have been seen, what then? You have no reward with your Father, who is in heaven. Brothers, here the Lord does not judge, but explains: he lays open the tricks of thoughts, he lays bare the secrets of minds, he proclaims to those who handle justice unjustly the measure of a just retribution. Justice which places itself before human eyes cannot expect the wage of the divine father: it wished to be seen, and was seen; it wished to please men, and pleased them; it has the wage it wished; the reward it did not wish to have, it will not have.

Qua vero de causa sint haec praemissa, ex sequentibus audiamus. Cum facis eleemosynam, noli tuba canere ante te, sicut hypocritae faciunt. Bene tuba, quia talis eleemosyna hostilis est, non civilis, non misericordiae dedita, sed clamori: seditionis vernula, non alumna pietatis; ostentationis nundinatio, non commercium charitatis. Eleemosynam quisquis ostendat, insultat. Tu, inquit, cum facis eleemosynam, noli tuba canere ante te, sicut hypocritae faciunt in Synagogis, et in vicis, ut glorificentur ab hominibus. Amen dico vobis receperunt mercedem suam. Audistis quemadmodum notat eleemosynam in conventu, in plateis, in triviis, non impensam ad levamen pauperum, sed hominum propositam ad favorem, ut probentur misericordiam vendere, non donare. Fugienda est hypocrisis, fugienda, fratres, quae captiva gloriae, verecundiam pauperum non relevat, sed fatigat; quae de gemitu inopis pompam suae gloriationis inquirit, quae suam laudem dilatat pauperis ex dolore; quae de miseria petentis famam suae ostentationis expandit.

Sed dicit aliquis: Ergo in conventu, in plateis, in triviis neganda est misericordia? non praebendus est victus? Plane, et in omni loco, et in omni tempore facienda est misericordia, praebendus est victus, nuditas est tegenda; sed sic quomodo docuit misericordiae auctor, ut misericordia non terrae sit nota, sed coelo; non hominibus insinuata, sed Deo. In plateis, in triviis suum pietas habet secretum: e contra platea est, trivium est, cum in secreto facit hypocrita nil secretum.

Fratres, Deus monendo sic vota culpat, non loca; sensum, non opera; studium, non datorem: arguit largientem ad suam famam, non ad pauperis famem; judicat non ubi facias, quando facias, sed qualiter facias: quia Deus de cordibus, non de manibus facta metitur; et de sensu, non de locis operum colligit qualitatem. Misericordiam coram se solum vult fieri, qui solus est misericordiae et remunerator et testis; et qui dicit: Esurivi, et dedistis mihi manducare. Vult in paupere sibi dari: et qui vult sibi dari, vult quod datum est se debere; et qui vult se debere quod datum est, vult largientibus nil perire. Deus parva poscit, maxima redditurus. Unde homo si in paupere Deo feneras, testes homines non requiras: fides arbitros non requirit. De accipientis fide disputat, qui sine mediatoribus nil dat; qui credita diffamat, urit verecundia debitorem. Ergo, homo, daturus Deo, da secreto; ut quod dederis, non sit oneris, sed honoris. Ob hoc ad te venit tuus ditator in paupere, ut eum non dubites accepta reddere, qui tibi gratis dedit habere quod dares.

For what reason these things were said first, let us hear from what follows. When you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do (Matt 6:2). Rightly he says "trumpet", because such almsgiving is hostile, not civil; not given over to mercy, but to clamour: the home-born slave of sedition, not the nursling of piety; a trafficking of ostentation, not a commerce of charity. Whoever displays his alms insults. You, he says, when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be glorified by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. You have heard how he brands almsgiving in the assembly, in the squares, at the crossroads, spent not for the relief of the poor but set out for the favour of men, so that they are proved to sell mercy, not to give it. Hypocrisy must be fled, it must be fled, brothers, which, captive to glory, does not relieve the shame of the poor but wearies it; which seeks out of the groan of the needy the display of its own boasting; which spreads its own praise out of the poor man's pain; which out of the misery of the one who asks spreads abroad the fame of its own ostentation.

But someone says: "Then in the assembly, in the squares, at the crossroads, is mercy to be denied? Is food not to be supplied?" Certainly, in every place and at every time mercy is to be done, food is to be supplied, nakedness is to be covered; but in the way the author of mercy taught, so that mercy may be known not to earth but to heaven; not made known to men, but to God. In the squares, at the crossroads, piety has its secret: conversely, it is a square, it is a crossroads, when the hypocrite does nothing secret in secret.

Brothers, God in warning thus blames intentions, not places; the sense, not the works; the zeal, not the giver: he rebukes one who gives for his own fame, not for the poor man's famine; he judges not where you do it, when you do it, but how you do it: because God measures deeds by hearts, not by hands; and gathers the quality of works from the sense, not from places. He wants mercy done before himself alone, who alone is both the rewarder and the witness of mercy; and who says: I was hungry, and you gave me to eat (Matt 25:35). He wants it given to himself in the poor man: and he who wants it given to himself wants to owe what has been given; and he who wants to owe what has been given wants nothing to be lost to those who bestow. God asks small things, to repay the greatest. Hence, man, if you lend at interest to God in the poor man, do not seek men as witnesses: good faith does not seek arbiters. He calls in question the good faith of the receiver who gives nothing without go-betweens; he who publishes what he has lent burns the debtor with shame. Therefore, man, when you are about to give to God, give in secret; so that what you give may be not a burden but an honour. For this reason your enricher comes to you in the poor man, so that you may not doubt that he will return what he received, he who freely gave you to have what you might give.

Quam vero in paupere sit verecunda paupertas, qui largitatis tuae quaerat secretum, aperit ipse, cum dicit: Te autem faciente eleemosynam, nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua. Putas quam vult nescire alterum, qui teipsum qui facis vult aliqua tui parte nescire? Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua. Sicut sunt nobis in dextera parte virtutes, ita nobis pars vitiorum in sinistra. Ergo ut opus est dexterae quod facit tacitus dator; quod facit dator garrulus, hypocrisis est sinistrae. Hypocrisis, dolus, simulatio, fraus, mendacium, elatio, tumor, jactantia, insistunt nobis, et imminent a sinistris. Quoties ergo nobis cum bonitate, pietate, cum misericordia causa est, nesciat hoc sinistra. Sinistra est quae nobis animarum praelia semper indicit, et ne virtutes in effectum veniant elaborat. Ne sit pietas, impietas agit; ne eleemosyna vincat, cupiditas pugnat: furit avaritia, ne misericordia convalescat; ne innocentia, puritas, simplicitas, sanctitas regnet, hypocrisis sola confligit, quam Christus a nobis tali praedicatione secludit: Te autem faciente eleemosynam, nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua.

Fratres, in hoc saeculo fugiamus quae a sinistris sunt, si in futurum a dextris desideramus astare, et audire: Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum, quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi. Homo, da in terra pauperi, quae tibi manere vis in coelo. Homo, commilita hic pauperi, si vis ibi regnare cum ipso Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

And how modest the poverty is in the poor man who seeks the secrecy of your generosity, he himself discloses when he says: But when you give alms, let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing (Matt 6:3). How much do you think he wants another not to know it, who wants you yourself, who do it, not to know it in some part of you? Let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing. As the virtues are on our right side, so the part of the vices is on our left. So, as what the silent giver does is the work of the right hand, what the chattering giver does is the hypocrisy of the left. Hypocrisy, guile, pretence, fraud, falsehood, pride, swelling, boasting press upon us and threaten from the left. Whenever, then, we have to do with goodness, with piety, with mercy, let the left hand not know it. It is the left that always declares the battles of souls against us, and labours that the virtues may not come to effect. Impiety acts so that there may be no piety; greed fights so that almsgiving may not win; avarice rages so that mercy may not grow strong; that innocence, purity, simplicity, holiness may not reign, hypocrisy alone does battle, which Christ shuts away from us by such a preaching: But when you give alms, let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing.

Brothers, in this world let us flee the things on the left, if in the world to come we desire to stand on the right and to hear: Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the origin of the world (Matt 25:34). Man, give on earth to the poor man what you wish to remain for you in heaven. Man, be the poor man's fellow soldier here, if you wish to reign there with our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo X.

De infidelibus ad baptismum ducendis. In psalmum XXVIII

Omnes qui arduas operum sublevant, et solantur angustias, probant ad solatium laboris datam nobis naturaliter cantilenam. Hinc nautae cantu superant marina discrimina; hinc immensa pondera adducunt levamine canticorum; hinc viantes colles arduos facit transcendere vox sonora, hinc praeliatores ipsos praecedens cantus subire concitat amara bellorum. Ac ne multis, omne quod duri est operis, quod laboris, dulcis vincit et efficit cantilena. Sic nos, fratres, Quadragesimae jejunio cantica divina jungamus, ut abstinentiae pondus coelestis temperet, et sublevet symphonia provocante nos ad haec Davide beato, qui dum fistula pecus charum mulcet, et oblectat in pascuis, cantu dura didicit superare bellorum, cantu valuit vocare gentes, reducere Judaeos fugare daemonem, Dei filios ad superni patris obsequium convocare, sicut bene invitans ejus cecinit melodia.

Afferte Domino, inquit, filii Dei. Putasne coelestes taliter appellat iste virtutes? aut homines Dei aptat in filios? et terrenam carnem coelestem sublevat ad naturam? Afferte Domino, filii Dei. Homines, fratres, homines nuncupat hic propheta, quos Dei filios alibi sic decantat: Ego dixi dii estis, et filii excelsi omnes. Audivimus fratres quo nos tulit divina dignatio, quo paternitas extulit nos superna: credamus nos Dei filios, respondeamus generi; vivamus coelo; patrem similitudine referamus, ne perdamus vitiis quod sumus per gratiam consecuti. Afferte Domino, filii Dei. Videtis, quia coelestis Pater sentit amorem donis, datis affectum, probat muneribus charitatem. Et revera, fratres, filium se nescit, visceribus caret, naturam negat, ingratus est patri, qui auctorem vitae suae non obsequiis placat, non devincit cultu, muneribus non honorat.

Afferte Domino, filii Dei. Videamus quid sit illud, quod nos tanto patri hic Propheta commonet, et hortatur afferre. Afferte Domino, filii Dei, afferte Domino filios arietum. Hoc est totum quod expetit, quod requirit, ovium fetus, vile terreni pecoris germen, stratos per viam partus, semina effusa per campos, divino Patri, ut divina soboles offerat, admonetur. Aut forte Judaicas victimas, sacrificia cruenta, balantes sub cultris hostias, Creator omnium nunc requirit Deus? Et ubi est illud quod dicit?

Sermon X.

On bringing unbelievers to baptism. On Psalm 28 (29)

All who lighten the hardships of their tasks and solace their straits prove that singing was given us by nature for the comfort of labour. Hence sailors overcome the perils of the sea by song; hence they haul immense weights with the relief of songs; hence a ringing voice makes travellers climb steep hills; hence song going before stirs even warriors to undergo the bitterness of battles. And, not to say much, a sweet song overcomes and accomplishes all that there is of hard work, of toil. So, brothers, let us join divine songs to the fast of Lent, so that a heavenly harmony may temper and lighten the weight of abstinence, blessed David calling us to this, who, while he soothes and delights his dear flock in the pastures with his pipe, learned by song to overcome the hardships of wars, by song was able to call the nations, to bring back the Jews, to put the demon to flight, to call the sons of God together to the homage of the Father on high, as his melody sang, inviting well.

Bring to the Lord, he says, you sons of God (Ps 29:1). Do you think he calls the heavenly powers so? Or does he fit men to be sons of God? And lift earthly flesh to a heavenly nature? Bring to the Lord, you sons of God. Men, brothers, men this Prophet names, whom elsewhere he so hails as sons of God: I said: You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High (Ps 82:6). We have heard, brothers, where the divine condescension has carried us, where the fatherhood on high has raised us: let us believe that we are sons of God, let us answer to our lineage; let us live for heaven; let us reproduce our Father by likeness, lest we lose by vices what we have obtained through grace. Bring to the Lord, you sons of God. You see that the heavenly Father perceives love by gifts, affection by things given, proves charity by offerings. And truly, brothers, he does not know himself a son, he lacks a heart, he denies nature, he is ungrateful to his father, who does not appease the author of his life with homage, does not win him over with worship, does not honour him with gifts.

Bring to the Lord, you sons of God. Let us see what it is that this Prophet reminds and exhorts us to bring to so great a Father. Bring to the Lord, you sons of God, bring to the Lord the sons of rams. Is this the whole of what he seeks, of what he requires: that the divine offspring is admonished to offer to the divine Father the young of sheep, the cheap brood of earthly cattle, births strewn along the road, seeds scattered over the fields? Or perhaps does God, the Creator of all things, now require Jewish sacrificial victims, bloody sacrifices, victims bleating under the knives? And where is what he says?

Non accipiam de domo tua vitulos, neque de gregibus tuis hircos, quoniam meae sunt omnes ferae silvarum, jumenta in montibus, et boves. Cognovi omnia volatilia coeli, et species agri mecum est. Si esuriero, non dicam tibi: meus est enim orbis terrae, et plenitudo ejus.

Et si ista repulit, quos arietum filios sibi deposcit afferri? Ad Abraham loquitur: Accipe filium tuum dilectum, et offeres mihi in holocaustum. Aries Abraham maturus ad innocentiam, grandaevus ad fidem perfectus ad hostiam, paratus ad holocaustum, afferebat filium suum, filium arietis: immo se immolabat in filio, sanctificabat mentem suam, laetificabat fidem suam, ut esset idem victima et pontifex, sacerdos et sacrificium. Patris erat passio ibi tota, ubi filius immolabatur; ignarus filius sistebatur, nescius filius aptabatur vinculis, ut tolleret de passione martyrium, praemium de poena patris, de conflictu patris raperet coronam. Denique patris suspensa est dextera, patris gladius est remotus, quia non quaerebatur mors filii, sed patris charitas probabatur: nec expetebatur sanguis filii, ubi tota victima in patris dilectione constabat, scriptura dicente: Nunc scio quia diligis Deum, quia non pepercisti unigenito filio tuo propter me.Abraham diximus arietem, ut Isaac arietis filium probaremus: ac si luceret quos arietum filios propheta vult domino nos offerre.

Afferte Domino filios arietum. Filios patrum, patriarcharum, prophetarum, apostolorum, martyrum, confessorum, Christianus modo ut afferat admonetur: quando grex dominicus fidei laxatur in pastum, quando agnos suos coelestis pastor ad ovile dominicum vult deferri, ne dispersi per inculta gentium, luporum devorentur incursibus.

Sed quid admoneat vox divina, planius jam loquamur. Afferte Domino filios arietum. Afferte domino baptizandos, afferte quos fides concipiat, non caro; afferte quos Dei gratia generet, non mundana natura; afferte quos agnos praestet innocentia, non habeat pecoris hebetudo: afferte, afferte, quos sponte venire aut necessitas vetat, aut aetas impedit, aut ignorantia retardat, aut tenent vitia,

I will not take calves from your house, nor goats from your flocks, for mine are all the wild beasts of the forests, the cattle on the mountains, and the oxen. I know all the birds of the sky, and the beauty of the field is with me. If I am hungry, I will not tell you: for the world is mine, and its fullness (Ps 50:9–12).

And if he rejected these things, which sons of rams does he ask to be brought to him? He speaks to Abraham: Take your beloved son, and you shall offer him to me as a holocaust (Gen 22:2). Abraham the ram, ripe for innocence, full of years for faith, perfect for the victim, ready for the holocaust, was bringing his son, the son of the ram: or rather he was sacrificing himself in his son, hallowing his mind, gladdening his faith, so that the same man was victim and pontiff, priest and sacrifice. The whole passion there was the father's, where the son was being sacrificed; the son was set there unknowing, the son was fitted to the ties without knowing, so that he might take martyrdom from the passion, a reward from the father's punishment, snatch a crown from the father's struggle. Indeed, the father's right hand was held back, the father's sword was removed, because the son's death was not being sought, but the father's charity was being proved: nor was the son's blood required, where the whole victim consisted in the father's love, as Scripture says: Now I know that you love God, because you have not spared your only-begotten son for my sake (Gen 22:12). We have called Abraham a ram, so that we might prove Isaac the ram's son: and so it shines out which sons of rams the Prophet wants us to offer to the Lord.

Bring to the Lord the sons of rams. The Christian is now admonished to bring the sons of the fathers, of the patriarchs, of the prophets, of the apostles, of the martyrs, of the confessors: when the Lord's flock is let out to the pasture of faith, when the heavenly shepherd wants his lambs to be brought to the Lord's fold, lest, scattered through the wildernesses of the nations, they be devoured by the onslaughts of wolves.

But what the divine voice admonishes let us now say more plainly. Bring to the Lord the sons of rams. Bring to the Lord those to be baptised; bring those whom faith conceives, not flesh; bring those whom the grace of God begets, not worldly nature; bring those whom innocence makes lambs, not those whom the dullness of cattle holds: bring, bring those whom either necessity forbids to come of their own accord, or age hinders, or ignorance delays, or vices hold, or offences detain, or expectation deceives, or poverty misleads

aut delicta remorantur, aut exspectatio decipit, aut fallit confusione paupertas, adducite volentes, attrahite nolentes, facite vobis de aliena necessitate mercedem: servum catechumenum si habet dominus, adducat, ut habeat jam fidelem; filium pater offerat, non retardet, ut cui praesentem vitam praestitit, conferat et futuram. Vir conjugem deducat ad fidem, ne quod unum est in carne spiritu sit divisum. Amicus amicum attrahat ad salutem, ut de gratia divina humanam comprobet charitatem. Peregrinum civis, possessor hospitem Dei ducat ad mensam, ut sine suo sumptu de divinis copiis sit humanus.

Attrahite nolentes; nemo dicat, Non vult, quia et Abraham, ut offerret filium, colligavit; et Loth angeli, ut subtraherent flammis, extractum manibus sustulerunt, et Petrum Dominus ut iret ad martyrium quo nolebat, auxilii sui virtute praecinxit, dicens Praecinget te alius, et deducet, quo non vis. Et pater coelestis non solum volentes suscipit, sed attrahit et nolentes, dicente filio: Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater qui misit me, attraxerit illum. Quomodo se Christianum credit, qui non Christo annosa et vetera ducit? Aut quomodo domum suam judicat ovile Dei, ubi non pascuale germen Dei pecus dat balatum?

Obsecro et obtestor, fratres charissimi, per Dominum nostrum, ut in hoc vigiletis omnes, quatenus his diebus nullus a Dei gratia, nullus a regeneratione divina relinquatur extorris, quatenus quod aliis Deus est per suam gratiam collaturus, vestrum crescat, et redundet in gaudium. Homines sumus sub incerto viventes: et nescimus quid pariat superventura dies. Agamus ergo, dilectissimi, ne servi, ne filii, ne conjuges, ne parentes praeventi morte, et praesenti vita careant, et non perveniant ad futuram.

through shame; lead the willing, draw the unwilling, make for yourselves a wage out of another's need: if a master has a servant who is a catechumen, let him bring him, so that he may now have him as one of the faithful; let a father offer his son, not hold him back, so that to him on whom he bestowed the present life he may confer the future one too. Let a husband lead his wife to faith, lest what is one in the flesh be divided in spirit. Let a friend draw a friend to salvation, so as to prove human charity by divine grace. Let the citizen lead the stranger, the landowner his guest, to the table of God, so that at no cost of his own he may be humane out of the divine abundance.

Draw the unwilling; let no one say: "He does not want to", because Abraham too bound his son in order to offer him (Gen 22:9); and the angels, to take Lot away from the flames, drew him out and lifted him away with their hands (Gen 19:16); and the Lord, so that Peter might go to martyrdom where he did not want, girded him with the power of his help, saying: Another will gird you, and lead you where you do not wish (John 21:18). And the heavenly Father not only receives the willing, but draws the unwilling too, as the Son says: No one can come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him (John 6:44). How does he believe himself a Christian, who does not bring to Christ what is aged and old? Or how does he judge his house to be God's fold, where no young of the pasture, God's flock, gives a bleat?

I beseech and adjure you, dearest brothers, by our Lord, that you all be watchful in this, so that in these days no one be left an exile from the grace of God, no one from the divine regeneration, so that what God is to confer on others by his grace may grow and overflow into your joy. We are men living amid uncertainty, and we do not know what the coming day may bring forth (Prov 27:1). Let us act, then, dearly beloved, lest servants, children, wives, parents, overtaken by death, should both lose the present life and not reach the future one.

Sermo XI.

De jejunio et tentationibus Christi

Quod curiositas humana, quod veterum labor, quod sapientia mundana quaerens, et diu quaerens, non potuit invenire, hoc scire et nescire facile praestitit lex divina. Unde malum, culpa unde, vitiorum vis unde, unde criminum furor, unde corporum bella, unde conflictus animae, unde vitae tempestas tanta, unde mortis naufragium tam crudele nesciret homo, nisi Dei lex diabolum prodidisset? Diabolus mali auctor, nequitiae origo, rerum hostis, secundi hominis semper inimicus, ille laqueos tendit, lapsus parat, foveas fodit, aptat ruinas, stimulat corpora, pungit animas, cogitationes suggerit, immittit iras, dat virtutes odio, vitia dat amori, errores serit, discordias nutrit, pacem turbat, affectus dissipat, conscindit unitatem, sapit malum satis, bonum nil, violat divina, humana tentat.

Hinc usque ad Christum tetendisse tentator temerarius sic refertur: Et cum jejunasset quadraginta diebus, et quadraginta noctibus, postea esuriit; et accedens tentator dixit ei: Si filius Dei es, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Audientes ista in Deum non vadant, non criminentur naturam, non contumelientur auctori, non accusent carnem, de anima non quaerantur, non impetant tempora, astris non imputent, infamare desinant innocentiam creaturae, malum sentiant accidens, non creatum, et creatorem boni Deum, diabolum inventorem mali: ac sic ascribant diabolo mala, bona Deo; declinent mala, faciant bona, habituri in bonis adjutorem Deum, qui dat posse quod jubet, et quae praecipit, facit ipse: quia sicut diabolus impellit ad mala, sic Deus deducit ad bona. Nemo ergo quasi concreatis sibi vitiis obsequatur, et quod est criminis esse putet naturae, sed sumat cum Christo arma jejunii, criminum propellat impetus, prosternat castra vitiorum, et de ipso auctore mali sumat Christo dimicante victoriam, diabolo victo vitia nil valebunt: quia exstincto tyranno solutae acies sunt tyranni. Audi Apostolum dicentem. Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem: sed adversus spiritualia nequitiae in coelestibus.

Sermon XI.

On the fast and the temptations of Christ

What human curiosity, what the toil of the ancients, what worldly wisdom, seeking and long seeking, could not find, this the divine law readily granted us both to know and not to know. Whence evil, whence fault, whence the force of vices, whence the fury of crimes, whence the wars of bodies, whence the conflicts of the soul, whence so great a storm of life, whence so cruel a shipwreck of death: man would not know, had not the law of God exposed the devil. The devil, the author of evil, the origin of wickedness, the enemy of the world, ever the foe of the second man: he it is who lays snares, prepares falls, digs pits, contrives ruins, goads bodies, pricks souls, suggests thoughts, sends in angers, gives the virtues to hatred, gives the vices to love, sows errors, nourishes discords, troubles peace, scatters affections, rends unity, savours evil to the full, good not at all, violates divine things, tempts human things.

Hence it is related that the rash tempter reached even to Christ, thus: And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry; and the tempter came and said to him: If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves (Matt 4:2–3). Let those who hear this not go against God, not accuse nature, not insult the author, not blame the flesh, not complain about the soul, not assail the seasons, not impute it to the stars; let them cease to defame the innocence of the creature, let them perceive that evil is an accident, not created, and God the Creator of good, the devil the inventor of evil: and so let them ascribe evils to the devil, good things to God; let them turn away from evil, do good, for they will have God as their helper in good things, who gives the power to do what he commands, and himself does what he enjoins: because, as the devil drives to evils, so God leads to good things. Let no one, then, obey vices as though they were created together with him, and think that what belongs to crime belongs to nature; but let him take with Christ the arms of fasting, drive back the onslaughts of crimes, lay low the camps of vices, and win the victory over the very author of evil with Christ fighting; once the devil is conquered, vices will avail nothing: because when the tyrant is slain, the tyrant's ranks are broken. Hear the Apostle saying: Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12).

Tunc, inquit, Jesus ductus est in desertum a spiritu. Non a diabolo, ut esset divinus cursus, non humanus incursus, ut esset spiritus praescientiae, inscitia non esset humana; et esset potestas Dei, potestas non esset inimici. Diabolus semper primordia boni pulsat, tentat rudimenta virtutum, sancta in ipso ortu festinat exstinguere, sciens quod ea subvertere fundata non possit. Hoc non ignorans Christus diabolo se quaerenti, patienter indulsit, ut inimicus laqueo suo ipse teneretur, et caperetur inde, unde capere se putabat; sicque a Christo victus, cederet Christianis.

Et cum jejunasset, inquit, quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus. Videtis, fratres, quia quod Quadragesimam jejunamus, non est humana inventio, auctoritas est divina, et est mysticum, non praesumptum; nec est de terreno usu, sed de coelestibus est secretis. Quadragesima quatuor decades quadratam fidei continet disciplinam, quia semper est quadrata perfectio. Quaternarius numerus et denarius quae in coelo, et in terra teneant sacramenta, quia aperire modo non vacat, explicemus Domini coepta jejunia. Et cum jejunasset quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus. Homo, Deus in te jejunat, in te esurit; immo jejunat tibi, tibi esurit, qui sibi sicut nescit manducare, sic non potest esurire. Ergo cum propter te jejunat Christus, te esurit.

Et cum jejunasset quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus, postea esuriit. Hoc non est infirmitatis signum, sed est insigne virtutis; quia cum dicit, postea esuriit, quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus probat in illo esuriem non fuisse. Esuriem sentire, et vincere, est laboris humani: divinae virtutis est esuriem non habere. Ergo Christus non jejunio lassescit, non esurit fame, sed esurivit Christus, ut tentandi materiam diabolus inveniret, quia ad jejunum non audebat accedere, quia sic jejunantem, Deum non hominem sentiebat. Tunc sensit hominem, tunc mortalem credidit, tunc eum putavit posse tentari, quando eum esurire callidus explorator inspexit.

Et accedens tentator dixit. Accessit tentantis dolo, non obsequentis affectu. Accessit pejus impudens quam recessit, sed esurienti quid obtulerit, audiamus. Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Lapides esurienti offert: humanitas talis est semper inimici; sic pascit mortis auctor; sic invidus vitae, Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Diabole, fallit te provisio tua. Potest famem vertere in saturitatem, qui potest in panem lapides immutare. Quid illi consilium tuum, cui sua sufficit virtus? Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Diabole, et prodidisti te, et tuum Dominum non pavisti.

Then, he says, Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit (Matt 4:1). Not by the devil, so that it might be a divine course, not a human assault; that it might be the Spirit of foreknowledge, not human ignorance; and that it might be the power of God, not the power of the enemy. The devil always knocks at the beginnings of good, tempts the first rudiments of the virtues, hastens to extinguish holy things at their very birth, knowing that once they are founded he cannot overturn them. Christ, not ignorant of this, patiently indulged the devil who was seeking him, so that the enemy might be held in his own snare, and be caught where he thought he was catching; and thus, conquered by Christ, he might yield to Christians.

And when he had fasted, he says, forty days and forty nights. You see, brothers, that our fasting in Lent is not a human invention; it is divine authority, and it is mystical, not presumed; nor is it from earthly custom, but from heavenly secrets. Lent, four decades, contains the four-square discipline of faith, because perfection is always four-square. What mysteries the number four and the number ten hold in heaven and on earth, since there is no leisure to open them now, let us unfold the fast the Lord began. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights. Man, God fasts in you, hungers in you; or rather, he fasts for you, hungers for you, he who for himself, as he does not know how to eat, so cannot hunger. Therefore when Christ fasts on your account, he hungers for you.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. This is not a sign of weakness, but a mark of power; because when it says, afterwards he was hungry, it proves that in the forty days and forty nights there was no hunger in him. To feel hunger and overcome it belongs to human labour: not to have hunger belongs to divine power. Therefore Christ does not grow weary with fasting, does not hunger from famine; but Christ hungered so that the devil might find matter for tempting, because he did not dare to approach him while he fasted, because, fasting so, he perceived him to be God, not man. Then he perceived a man, then he believed him mortal, then he thought he could be tempted, when the cunning spy saw that he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said. He came with the guile of one who tempts, not with the affection of one who pays homage. He came on more shamelessly than he went away; but let us hear what he offered to the hungry one. Command that these stones become loaves. To the hungry he offers stones: such ever is the humanity of the enemy; so the author of death feeds; so the envier of life: Command that these stones become loaves. Devil, your provision deceives you. He can turn hunger into fullness who can change stones into bread. What is your counsel to him, whose own power suffices him? Command that these stones become loaves. Devil, you have both betrayed yourself and not fed your Lord.

Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Miser! malus vis esse, sed non potes; cupis tentare, sed nescis; esurienti tenera offerre, non dura debuisti; famem non asperis palpare, sed blandis; inediam non horridis urgere debueras, sed gulosis. Istis non modo Dei Filium, sed hominis filium tu laqueare non posses. Ad praesentiam Christi deperire tibi artes tuas, tentator, intellige. Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Potest de lapidibus panes facere, qui aquas convertit in vinum. Sed signa fidei sunt praestanda, non dolis; credenti danda sunt, non sunt danda tentanti; et facienda sunt ad petentis salutem, non ad facientis injuriam. Diabole, tibi ut quid signa, cui nil subvenit ad salutem, cui totum restat ad poenam, cui et signa proficiunt ad ruinam?

Sed accipe responsum, ut te intelligas, et subjiciaris auctori. Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit de ore Dei. Audi Patris Verbum verba salutis nostrae esurire, non panem, et agere ut homo semper vivat coelesti verbo, terreno pane non semper: ac sic Deo vivat, ut sui nescius sit laboris; quia vere illa vita est, quae sudorem nescit, dolores non habet, non habet finem.

Command that these stones become loaves. Wretch! You want to be evil, but you cannot; you long to tempt, but you do not know how; to the hungry you ought to have offered soft things, not hard; you should have coaxed hunger not with rough things but with pleasant; you should have pressed lack of food not with bristling things but with dainty ones. With such things you could not have snared, not only the Son of God, but even a son of man. Understand, tempter, that in the presence of Christ your arts are lost to you. Command that these stones become loaves. He can make loaves out of stones who turned water into wine. But signs are to be granted to faith, not to guile; they are to be given to one who believes, not to one who tempts; and they are to be done for the salvation of the one who asks, not for the injury of the one who does them. Devil, what are signs to you, whom nothing helps to salvation, for whom everything remains for punishment, for whom even signs avail to ruin?

But take the answer, that you may understand yourself and be subject to your author. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). Hear the Word of the Father hungering for the words of our salvation, not for bread, and acting so that man may live always by the heavenly word, not always by earthly bread: and so may live to God, that he may know nothing of his labour; because that truly is life which knows no sweat, has no pains, has no end.

Sermo XII.

De eisdem

Quoniam jejunii vernum, et tempus bellorum spiritualium cernimus advenisse, sicut Christi milites, deposito corporis animaeque torpore, virtutum procedamus ad campum, ut membra quae sunt nobis hiemali otio mollita, exercitio coelestium roborentur armorum. Dedimus corpori annum, demus animae dies; impendimus nobis tempora, tempus deputemus auctori; vivamus Deo paululum, qui saeculo viximus totum; seponamus domesticas curas, Ecclesiae maneamus in castris; vigilemus in acie Christi; somnum cubilium non quaeramus, jungamur fortibus; ab amplexibus separemur mollibus; amor nos teneat triumphorum, parvulorum non avocent blandimenta; auribus nostris insonet vox divina; familiaris strepitus nostrum non confundat auditum; cibus parcus de coelesti sumatur annona; terreni luxus copiae non quaerentur; in poculis sobrietatis mensura servetur; vires ebrietas non enervet. De stipendiis quidquid exuberat, commilito pauper assumat; pestilens effusio nil perdat; in conflictu habebis in auxilium, esurientem socium quem cibabis.

Sic muniti, fratres, instructi sic, indicemus bella peccatis; statuamus criminibus pugnam, conflictum vitiis nuntiemus, securi de victoria: qui nec arma coelestia hostes poterunt superare terreni, nec divino regi adversa poterunt contraire mundana: nec in procinctu fidei constitutos, praevenire poterit inimica subversio; neque cautos, vigilantes, sobrios, diabolus perturbare suis superventionibus praevalebit; certe neque nos taliter armatos publico conflictu provocare audebit: dolis appetere non praesumet. Animus in coelesti speculo perseveret; diaboli fraudulentas et occultas deprimat et declinet insidias.

Est quidem diabolus per se nequam, fit tamen nequior provocatus. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Diabolus sicut leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret. Jejunantibus nobis, diabolus esurit, qui nostris semper saturatur ex culpis. Ille cibum nostrum deducit in crapulam: potum nostrum in ebrietatem diffundit, ut mentem faciat amentem, carnem luteam reddat, corpus animi domicilium, animae vas, murum spiritus, virtutum scholam, Dei templum, in scenam criminum, in vitiorum pompam, voluptatem redigat in theatrum.

Sermon XII.

On the same

Since we see that the springtime of fasting and the season of spiritual wars has come, let us, as soldiers of Christ, laying aside the torpor of body and soul, go out to the field of the virtues, so that the members which have been softened in us by winter idleness may be strengthened by the exercise of heavenly arms. We have given the body a year, let us give the soul days; we spend the times on ourselves, let us assign a time to the author; let us live a little while for God, we who have lived wholly for the world; let us set aside household cares, let us remain in the camp of the Church; let us keep watch in Christ's battle line; let us not seek the sleep of our beds; let us be joined to the brave; let us be parted from soft embraces; let the love of triumphs hold us, let the blandishments of little children not call us away; let the divine voice sound in our ears; let the noise of the household not confuse our hearing; let sparing food be taken from the heavenly ration; the abundance of earthly luxury will not be sought; in cups let the measure of sobriety be kept; let drunkenness not unnerve our strength. Whatever is over from our pay, let our poor fellow soldier take; let no pestilent squandering lose anything; in the conflict you will have as your help the hungry comrade whom you feed.

So fortified, brothers, so equipped, let us declare war on sins; let us set battle against crimes, announce conflict to vices, secure of victory: for neither will earthly enemies be able to overcome heavenly arms, nor will worldly adversaries be able to withstand the divine king; nor will hostile overthrow be able to surprise those set in the battle array of faith; nor will the devil prevail to disturb with his surprise attacks the cautious, the watchful, the sober; surely he will not even dare to challenge us, so armed, to open conflict: he will not presume to assail us with guile. Let the mind persevere in the heavenly watchtower; let it press down and turn aside the deceitful and hidden snares of the devil.

The devil indeed is wicked of himself, yet he becomes more wicked when provoked. Hear the apostle saying: The devil, like a roaring lion, goes round seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet 5:8). While we fast, the devil hungers, he who is always filled from our faults. He draws our food out into surfeiting; he pours our drink out into drunkenness, so as to make the mind mindless, to render the flesh muddy, to reduce the body, the abode of the heart, the vessel of the soul, the wall of the spirit, the school of the virtues, the temple of God, to a stage of crimes, to a parade of vices, pleasure to a theatre.

Capit ille satietatem, voluptatem percipit, expletur epulis, quando nos luxus solvit, libido stimulat, pompa rapit, impellit ambitio, urget ira, furor implet, succendit invidia, cupiditas inflammat, curae sollicitant, lites vexant, lucra capiunt, usurae vinciunt, chirographa ligant, premunt sacculi, elidit aurum. Quando moriuntur virtutes, vivunt vitia, voluptas effluit, honestas perit, misericordia deficit, abundat avaritia, regnat confusio, succumbit ordo, prosternitur disciplina. Ista militant adversum militem Christi; istae sunt satanae cohortes, istae diaboli legiones, ista sunt quae mundum sepulcris obsederunt, debellaverunt populos, vastarunt gentes, orbem totum duxere captivum. Ista sunt quibus nullus per se potuit obviare mortalis: et ideo ad vincenda ista Deus venit ipse, coeli rex ipse descendit, ipse victor singularis advenit, jejunium quadragesimae statuens in procinctu, ut quaterna decade jejunii quadraturam mundi totam muro inexpugnabili communiret.

Jejunium, fratres, scimus esse Dei arcem, Christi castra, murum spiritus, vexillum fidei, castitatis signum, sanctitatis tropaeum. Hoc Adam servasset in paradiso, quem inde detraxit gula. Hoc in arca custodivit Noe, mundum ebrietas cum demersit. Per hoc Loth Sodomiticum restinxit incendium, qui per ebrietatem incesti est adustus incendio. Hoc Moysem divini fervoris fecit lumine perlucere, quando comessatio et ebrietas Israeliticum populum simulacrorum tenebravit erroribus. Hoc Eliam pervexit ad coelum, quando Achab impium ebrietas ad inferna dejecit. Hoc Joannem in natis mulierum fecit esse majorem, quando temulentia Herodem principem imperio mulierum reddidit homicidam.

Quadragesimae jejunium, fratres, vetustas diaboli prodidit et patefecit insidias. Diabolus namque qui manducantem contempserat Christum, bibentem velut hominem computarat, ubi jejunantem vidit, suspicatur Deum, Dei Filium confitetur. Si Filius Dei es, inquit, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Sic dicendo, diabolus hominem vult monstrare, non Deum: non cibum parare vult, sed vult amputare jejunium. Si filius Dei es, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Post jejunium, panem non divina virtus, sed infirmitas humana disquirit, nec sic lassescit fame Deus, ut ad providendum sibi cibum, quod est suae potestatis, abdicat.

Ex sequentibus itaque diabolus aperit quid conetur, Si Filius Dei es, mitte te deorsum. Satis hominem probare vult, cui non ascensum providit, sed ruinam: humana conditio ad ascensum difficilis, facilis invenitur ad lapsum. Si filius Dei es, mitte te deorsum. Erras, diabole: nec tentare nosti: cadere non potest Deus.

He takes his fill, he gains pleasure, he is sated with feasts, when luxury dissolves us, lust goads, display carries off, ambition drives, anger presses, fury fills, envy kindles, greed inflames, cares harass, lawsuits vex, gains capture, usury binds, bonds tie, purses press down, gold crushes. When the virtues die, the vices live, pleasure streams forth, honour perishes, mercy fails, avarice abounds, confusion reigns, order succumbs, discipline is laid low. These are what fight against the soldier of Christ; these are Satan's cohorts, these the devil's legions, these are what have besieged the world with sepulchres, warred down peoples, laid waste nations, led the whole world captive. These are what no mortal by himself could withstand: and so, to conquer these, God came himself, the king of heaven himself came down, he himself arrived, the single victor, setting the fast of Lent in battle array, so that with the four decades of fasting he might fortify the whole four-square of the world with an impregnable wall.

Fasting, brothers, we know to be the citadel of God, the camp of Christ, the wall of the spirit, the banner of faith, the sign of chastity, the trophy of holiness. This Adam would have kept in paradise, he whom gluttony dragged out from there (Gen 3). This Noah kept in the ark, when drunkenness drowned the world (Gen 7). Through this Lot quenched the fire of Sodom, he who through drunkenness was scorched by the fire of incest (Gen 19). This made Moses shine with the light of divine fervour, when revelling and drunkenness darkened the people of Israel with the errors of idols (Exod 32). This carried Elijah to heaven, when drunkenness cast the wicked Ahab down to the underworld (2 Kgs 2). This made John greater among those born of women, when intoxication made Herod the prince a murderer at the bidding of women (Mark 6).

The fast of Lent, brothers, betrayed and laid open the ancient snares of the devil. For the devil, who had despised Christ as he ate, had reckoned him a man as he drank; when he saw him fasting, he suspects God, he confesses the Son of God. If you are the Son of God, he says, command that these stones become loaves (Matt 4:3). By saying this, the devil wants to show a man, not God: he does not want to prepare food, but wants to cut off the fast. If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves. After a fast, not divine power but human weakness seeks bread; nor does God so weary with hunger that he renounces providing food for himself, which is within his authority.

So from what follows the devil discloses what he is attempting: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down (Matt 4:6). He wants plainly to prove him a man, for whom he has provided not an ascent but a fall: the human condition is found hard for ascending, easy for falling. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. You are wrong, devil: you do not even know how to tempt: God cannot fall.

Tunc ostendit ei omnia regna mundi, et gloriam eorum, et dixit ei: Haec omnia tibi dabo, si procidens adoraveris me. O ausus diaboli! Deo dicit, adora me: sed sensit mox virtutibus Deum, poenis judicem, supplicem praemiis quem quaerebat: nam Christi nomine, nomine jejunantis coepit ab obsessis corporibus effugari, et dare tremens illi gloriam, cui superbus callide irrogarat injurias: jejuniis vicit, ut nobis vincendi vires, vincendi formam taliter largiretur. « Hoc, ait, genus non ejicitur, nisi in jejunio et oratione. » Jejunemus ergo, fratres, si volumus imitari Christum, si volumus fraudulentas diaboli superare versutias.

Then he showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, and said to him: All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me (Matt 4:8–9). O the daring of the devil! To God he says: "Worship me"; but he at once felt him to be God by his powers, the judge by his punishments, him whom he was seeking to make a suppliant with rewards: for in the name of Christ, the name of the one who fasted, he began to be put to flight from the bodies he had possessed, and to give glory, trembling, to him on whom, in his pride, he had cunningly heaped injuries: he conquered by fasts, so as to bestow on us in this way the strength to conquer, the pattern of conquering. This kind, he says, is not cast out except by fasting and prayer (Matt 17:21). Let us fast, then, brothers, if we wish to imitate Christ, if we wish to overcome the deceitful wiles of the devil.

Sermo XIII.

De eisdem

Ecce tempus quo miles procedit ad campum, recurrit ad Dei jejunia Christianus. Ecce tempus quo carnis otia, quo mentis ignavia, quo ventris cura, et tota est familiaris obsequii deponenda torpedo. Ecce tempus quo in armorum coelestium meditatione, animae et corporis exercendae sunt vires. Ecce tempus quo residente Christo astantibus angelis nostra luctaminis exercenda est fortitudo. Nunc est tempus quo gula cum jejunio, abstinentia cum crapula, cum luxuria castitas, cum perfidia fides, pietas cum impietate, patientia cum furore, cupiditas cum liberalitate, misericordia cum avaritia, humilitas cum superbia, sanctitas cum reatu, Christo remunerante confligit.

Si quis ergo, spectante Deo, coelesti resonante jam tuba, angelico insistente occursu, cubiculi irretitus illecebris, enervatus mollitie palmarum, resolutus in totum jugalibus blandimentis, ad exercitium virtutis venire neglexerit, perdit luctaminis praemium, virtutis gloriam, certaminis palmam, justitiae coronam, desertoris etiam crimine mulctabitur in futurum: Hodie, fratres, Christus rex noster commilitones suos de evangelico allocutus est tribunali, indixit hostibus bella, promisit praemia pugnaturis, retulit bellorum causas, inimicorum dolos prodidit et conatus; ubi, et quando, et quomodo confligendum sit nobis triumphali constitutione signavit. Et quamvis solus possit obtinere victoriam, propter nos tamen, et nostram formidinem, adesse tota jussit praesidia de supernis. Qui ergo ista noluit audire, qui statuta regis nostri talia, et tanta, scire contempsit, judicate si non ipse se exuit nostrae militiae sacramentis, et coelesti contubernio reddidit, et fecit extorrem.

At vos, fratres, qui sequi vultis in hoc Quadragesimae jejunio jejunii Dominici formam, pugnaturos vos, sicut praediximus, contra vitiorum turmas, contra acies criminum, contra informes concupiscentiarum formas, contra daemonum totas aerias, totas diffusas, et innumeras legiones, triumphaturos vos ex ipsis quae Dominicum jejunium subsequuntur tentationibus approbate. Ubi enim Dominus Quadragesimae jejunium indefesso illo virtutis suae aggressus est documento, mox diabolus occurrit pugnaturus dolis, quia jejunanti viribus obsistere non valebat.

Sermon XIII.

On the same

See, the time when the soldier goes out to the field, the Christian runs back to the fasts of God. See, the time when the idleness of the flesh, the sloth of the mind, the care of the belly, and the whole torpor of homage paid at home are to be laid aside. See, the time when the strength of soul and body must be exercised in the drill of heavenly arms. See, the time when, with Christ presiding and the angels standing by, the strength of our wrestling must be exercised. Now is the time when gluttony clashes with fasting, abstinence with surfeiting, chastity with dissoluteness, faith with unbelief, piety with impiety, patience with fury, greed with liberality, mercy with avarice, humility with pride, holiness with guilt, Christ giving the reward.

If anyone, then, while God looks on, the heavenly trumpet already sounding, the encounter with the angels pressing, entangled in the allurements of the bedchamber, unnerved by the softness of palms, wholly undone by conjugal blandishments, neglects to come to the exercise of virtue, he loses the prize of the wrestling, the glory of virtue, the palm of the contest, the crown of justice; he will even be fined in the future with the crime of a deserter. Today, brothers, Christ our king has addressed his fellow soldiers from the tribunal of the Gospel, has declared war on the enemies, has promised rewards to those who will fight, has set out the causes of the wars, has exposed the guile and the attempts of the enemies; where and when and how we must do battle he has marked out by a triumphal ordinance. And although he alone could obtain the victory, yet on account of us and of our terror he ordered all the garrisons from on high to be present. He then who would not hear these things, who scorned to know such and so great statutes of our king, judge whether he has not stripped himself of the oaths of our service, and made himself an exile from the heavenly fellowship of the tent.

But you, brothers, who wish to follow in this Lenten fast the pattern of the Lord's fast, show that you will fight, as we said before, against the troops of vices, against the battle lines of crimes, against the shapeless shapes of concupiscences, against the whole airy, the whole widespread and innumerable legions of demons, and that you will triumph, from the very temptations that follow the Lord's fast. For when the Lord had undertaken the Lenten fast with that unwearied proof of his power, the devil at once came to meet him, to fight with guile, since he could not resist by strength one who was fasting.

Quantum enim crapulationi deditis dominatur et ebriis, orantes timet tantum, tantum refugit ille jejunos, dicente Domino: Non ejicitur nisi in jejunio et oratione.

Sed qua fraude diabolus tentare ausus sit, audiamus: Si Filius Dei es, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Audistis quid de jejuniis ipse sentiat, et judicet inimicus. Si Filius Dei es. Videtis quia jam non hominem, sed Dei Filium credit, quem liberum a ventris conspexerat servitute. Sensit, sensit diabolus jejunium cunctis virtutibus anteferri. Joannem viderat urbium delicias, squalentis eremi habitatione mutasse, mollitiem carnis vestis asperitate calcasse, agresti cibo mundi totam frenasse luxuriam, et, quod solum deitatis insigne est, hominibus dimisisse peccata. Et tamen non ei dixit: Si Filius Dei es. At ubi Dominum vidit jugiter jejunantem, proclamat: Si Filius Dei es. Errat diabolus, qui contra Dominum astutiae suae nequitias et argumenta jaculatur. Si Filius Dei es, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Quid est quod jejunante Christo Deitatis signa tota in sola panis promissione perquirit? Et quem Dei Filium continua jejunii significatione praesentit, esse Dei Filium de provisione panis, de cura ventris desiderat approbare? Si Filius Dei es, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant. Quare non dixit: Si Filius Dei es, dic ut homines, aut angeli, aut aliquid aliud fiant, sed dic ut lapides isti panes fiant? Signum panis petit, qui signum jejunii pertimescit. Signum panis petit, ut jejunii tremendum sibi refugiat signum. Panem malus ingerit consultor, ut virtutem mutet, ut propositum violet jejunantis.

Sed videamus quid responderit de pane Panis qui de coelo descendit: Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit de ore Dei. Quam vere vivit in verbo Dei, Dei Verbum. Quam vere panis non indiget pane. Quam divine lapides convertit in homines, qui de lapidibus Abrahae filios ad indicium suae majestatis exsuscitat.

Et quia impudens inimicus nescit semel vinci, ad multiplicem vincentis triumphum, Statuit Dominum super pinnaculum templi, et ait: Si Filius Dei es, mitte te deorsum. O signum! Mitte te deorsum: convenientius dixerit, Si Filius Dei es, ascende ad coelum, cum sit hominis utique ad ima cadere, Dei sit ad superna conscendere. Si Filius Dei es, mitte te deorsum. Sic suis suadet, sic suis providet semper; sic suos elevat, ut de alto praecipitet validius in ruinam. Si Filius Dei es, mitte te deorsum. Consiliis suis diabolus se prodit, Mitte te deorsum.

For as much as he lords it over those given to surfeiting and over drunkards, so much he fears those who pray, so much he flees those who fast, as the Lord says: It is not cast out except by fasting and prayer (Matt 17:21).

But let us hear with what fraud the devil dared to tempt: If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves (Matt 4:3). You have heard what the enemy himself thinks and judges of fasts. If you are the Son of God. You see that he now believes him not a man, but the Son of God, whom he had seen free from the servitude of the belly. He perceived, the devil perceived, that fasting is preferred to all the virtues. He had seen John exchange the delights of cities for a dwelling in the squalid desert, trample the softness of the flesh with the roughness of his garment, rein in the whole dissoluteness of the world with wild food, and, what is the sole mark of the Godhead, forgive men their sins. And yet he did not say to him: "If you are the Son of God." But when he saw the Lord fasting continually, he cries out: If you are the Son of God. The devil errs, who hurls against the Lord the wickednesses and arguments of his cunning. If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves. Why is it that, while Christ fasts, he seeks all the signs of the Godhead in the sole promise of bread? And him whom he senses beforehand, by the continual sign of fasting, to be the Son of God, does he wish to prove to be the Son of God by the provision of bread, by the care of the belly? If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves. Why did he not say: "If you are the Son of God, command that men, or angels, or something else come to be", but command that these stones become loaves? He asks a sign of bread who greatly fears the sign of fasting. He asks a sign of bread so as to escape the sign of fasting, dreadful to him. The evil counsellor thrusts bread forward, so as to change the virtue, to violate the purpose of the one who fasts.

But let us see what the Bread that came down from heaven answered about bread: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). How truly the Word of God lives by the word of God! How truly bread has no need of bread! How divinely he turns stones into men, he who from stones raises up sons to Abraham (Matt 3:9) as a token of his majesty!

And since the shameless enemy does not know how to be conquered once, for the manifold triumph of the conqueror, he set the Lord on the pinnacle of the temple, and said: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down (Matt 4:5–6). O sign! Throw yourself down: he would have spoken more fittingly: "If you are the Son of God, go up to heaven", since it is surely man's to fall to the depths, God's to climb to the heights. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. So he persuades his own, so he always provides for his own; so he raises his own, that he may cast them down from on high more violently to ruin. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. The devil betrays himself by his counsels: Throw yourself down.

Lapsus quaerit, praecipitia imperat, et tali consilio, per Africam martyres facit, sine clamore, dicendo: Si vis martyr esse, mitte te deorsum, ut eos impellat de alto ad mortem, non de humili tollat, et elevet ad coronam.

Et sicut se diabolus consiliis suis prodit, ita responsione sua Dominus se revelat, dum ait: Non tentabis Dominum Deum tuum. Se utique Dominum, se utique Deum intelligi voluit, haec dicendo, qui non de pinna templi tantum se dedit ad terram, sed e coelis se ad inferos usque jactavit, ut non cadentium forma, sed esset resurrectio mortuorum.

Advertite, fratres, si possit saevus inimicus, quamvis saepe victus, homini cedere, qui audit et sentit Dominum Deum, et tamen adhuc tentare non desinit. Posuit eum super montem excelsum et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi, et gloriam eorum, et ait illi, Haec omnia tibi dabo si procidens adoraveris me. Haec dicit, non qui possit dare, sed fallere; nec promissa conferre, sed ipsa auferre promissionibus, quae habentur. Haec omnia tibi dabo. Offert quae Dei sunt Deo, auctori quae auctoris sunt repromittit: suadet ut adoret ab omnibus adorandus, et, caecatus ausibus suis, ante judicium judici quemadmodum simplices deciperet confitetur. Cui Dominus non tam testimonio legis, quam divinitatis suae respondet imperio: Dominum Deum tuum adorabis, tu Dominum Deum illum, cui genu flectunt omnia non solum coelestia et terrestria, sed etiam inferna. Adorabis ergo tu in inferno stridens et ejulans eum quem ad te adorandum modo temerarius desertor invitas.

Itaque diabolus toties, et taliter repercussus a Domino, circa nos servos ejus modo toto furore discurrit; et sicut Christus milites suos, ita ille suos alloquitur, et armat ministros. Dicit ergo diabolus: Tempus nos modo graviter jejunii observatione debellat: per gulam, per crapulam, per ebrietates, per luxuriam, homines attentare non possumus; armate lites, seminate discordias, excitate odia, concitate iras, inspirate mendacia, extorquete perjuria, suggerite blasphemias, vaniloquia diffundite, infundite dolos, conflate avaritiam, lucra turpia providete, ut quod venter modo ad luxuriam non dependit, vel sacculus claudat, et reponat ad poenam. Cavete ante omnia ne misericordia, ne eleemosyna, ne humanitas praeteritos labores nostros deleat, praesentes auferat, tollat futuros.

He seeks falls, he commands precipices, and by such counsel he makes martyrs throughout Africa without outcry, saying: "If you want to be a martyr, throw yourself down", so as to drive them from on high to death, not to lift them from low ground and raise them to a crown.

And as the devil betrays himself by his counsels, so the Lord reveals himself by his answer, when he says: You shall not tempt the Lord your God (Matt 4:7). By saying this he wished it to be understood that he himself was Lord, that he himself was God, he who did not merely give himself to the ground from the pinnacle of the temple, but flung himself from the heavens down to the underworld, so that there might be not the pattern of those who fall, but the resurrection of the dead.

Consider, brothers, whether the savage enemy, though often conquered, could yield to man, he who hears and perceives the Lord God, and yet does not cease to tempt still. He set him on a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, and said to him: All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me (Matt 4:8–9). He says this not as one who can give, but deceive; not to confer what is promised, but by promises to take away the very things that are had. All these I will give you. He offers to God what is God's, he promises to the author what is the author's: he urges the one who is to be worshipped by all to worship, and, blinded by his daring, he confesses before the judgement to the judge how he deceived the simple. To whom the Lord answers not so much with the testimony of the Law as with the command of his divinity: You shall worship the Lord your God (Matt 4:10): you shall worship that Lord God to whom all things bend the knee, not only things in heaven and on earth, but also those in the underworld (Phil 2:10). You will therefore worship, gnashing and wailing in hell, him whom now, a reckless deserter, you invite to worship you.

So the devil, so often and so thoroughly beaten back by the Lord, now runs about with all his fury round us, the Lord's servants; and as Christ addresses his soldiers, so he addresses his own, and arms his ministers. The devil says, then: "The time now grievously defeats us by the keeping of the fast: through gluttony, through surfeiting, through drunkenness, through dissoluteness we cannot assail men; arm lawsuits, sow discords, stir up hatreds, rouse angers, breathe in lies, extort perjuries, suggest blasphemies, spread vain talk, pour in guile, kindle avarice, provide base gains, so that what the belly does not now spend on dissoluteness the purse at least may shut up and lay by for punishment. Beware above all lest mercy, lest almsgiving, lest humanity blot out our past labours, take away our present ones, remove our future ones."

Sed nos, fratres, et nostri regis agnoscentes monita, et quae diabolus suis mandaverit audientes, jejunia nostra sine lite, sine clamore, sine ira, sine dolo, sine simulatione, cum tota misericordia, charitate, pietate peragamus: ut Dominus Christus, qui, spretis pecorum cruentis victimis, spiritus contriti et contribulati cordis sacrificium requisivit, cum silentio pacis jejunii nostri hostias placatus et propitiatus assumat.

But let us, brothers, recognising the warnings of our king and hearing what the devil has commanded his own, carry through our fasts without strife, without clamour, without anger, without guile, without pretence, with all mercy, charity, piety: so that the Lord Christ, who, spurning the bloody sacrificial victims of cattle, required the sacrifice of a contrite spirit and a broken heart (Ps 51:19), may, appeased and propitious, take in the silence of peace the victims of our fast.

Sermo XIV.

De fructibus eleemosynae, in psalmum XL

Praeliorum peritis militaris tuba personat disciplinam, imperitis tantum terrificum dat clamorem; ut magistra bellorum dat suis vires, hostibus dat pavorem. Qui sine tuba dimicat, miles non est: fertur furore, non praelio; virtute non agit, sed periculo; quaerit perire, non vincere. Hoc diximus, ut Christi miles intelligat coelestis quare provisa sit cantilena. Constituti in campo saeculi pugnam cum diabolo, cum vitiis sustinemus. Quoties ergo nobis intonat propheticus clangor, toties nos in pace cautos, et in acie fortes, et in praelio reddidit invictos.

Namque hodie beatus Psalmista ad intelligentiam nos supernam convocat per clamorem: Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem. Et quae est intelligentia, ubi est, professa paupertas? Vis est intelligentiae, si rimetur viscera, si deprehendat occulta, si tecta nudet. Verum subjecta oculis, exposita in publico, ingesta rebus, non est intelligere, sed videre. Nuditate algidus, tabidus fame, siti aridus, lassitudine tremens, defectu luridus, quod egenus sit intelligere quis labor? Et si labor intelligentiae nullus est, unde est intelligentiae fructus? Oremus, fratres, ut ipse nobis intelligere intelligenda concedat, qui se intelligi in paupere sic demonstrat. Quod ipse qui coelum tegit sit nudus in paupere, quod in esuriente esuriat saturitas rerum, quod sitiat in sitiente fons fontium, intelligere quomodo non magnum est? Quomodo non beatum intelligere, quod ei sit ampla paupertas, cui angustum est coelum; qui ditat mundum, quod egeat in egente; quod frustum panis, aquae calicem dator omnium quaerit; quod se Deus amore pauperis sic deponat, ut non adsit pauperi, sed ipse sit pauper? Hoc cui videre dederit Deus, ipse videt.

Sermon XIV.

On the fruits of almsgiving, on Psalm 40 (41)

To those skilled in battle the military trumpet sounds out discipline; to the unskilled it gives only a terrifying blare: as the mistress of wars, it gives strength to its own, and fright to the enemy. He who fights without the trumpet is no soldier: he is carried along by fury, not by battle; he acts not by valour, but by danger; he seeks to perish, not to conquer. We have said this so that the soldier of Christ may understand why the heavenly song has been provided. Set on the field of the world, we sustain battle with the devil, with the vices. As often, then, as the prophetic blast thunders to us, so often has it made us wary in peace, and brave in the battle line, and unconquered in combat.

For today the blessed Psalmist summons us by his cry to a heavenly understanding: Blessed is he who understands concerning the needy and the poor (Ps 41:2). And what understanding is there, where poverty is avowed? Understanding has its force if it probes the inner parts, if it detects what is hidden, if it lays bare what is covered. But what is set before the eyes, exposed in public, thrust upon us by the facts, is not a matter of understanding, but of seeing. Stiff with cold from nakedness, wasted with hunger, parched with thirst, trembling with weariness, sallow with want: what labour is it to understand that he is needy? And if there is no labour in understanding, whence comes the fruit of understanding? Let us pray, brothers, that he himself may grant us to understand what is to be understood, who shows that he is thus understood in the poor man. That he who covers the sky should himself be naked in the poor man, that the fullness of all things should hunger in the hungry, that the fount of fountains should thirst in the thirsty: how is it not a great thing to understand this? How is it not blessed to understand that poverty should be ample for him to whom heaven is narrow; that he who enriches the world should be in want in the one in want; that the giver of all things should ask for a scrap of bread, a cup of water; that God should so lower himself for love of the poor man as not to stand beside the poor man, but to be himself the poor man? He to whom God has given to see this, sees it.

Sed quomodo aut in se transfuderit pauperem, aut se in pauperem fuderit, dicat ipse jam nobis: Esurivi, inquit, et dedistis mihi manducare. Non dixit esurivit pauper, et dedistis illi manducare; sed esurivi ego, et dedistis manducare mihi. Sibi datum clamat quod pauper acceperit, se manducare dicit quod comederit pauper; quod bibit pauper; sibi testatur infusum. O quid agit amor pauperis! gloriatur in coelo Deus unde pauper erubescit in terra, et hoc reputat in honorem sibi, quod pauperi computatur injuria. Dixisse suffecerat; dedistis mihi manducare, dedistis mihi potum; sed praemittit, Esurivi, sitivi, quia parvus fuisset amor pauperis quod pauperem suscepisset, nisi et passiones pauperis suscepisset: et certe verus amor non nisi passionibus probatur. Verus amor est fecisse suas angustiati angustias: nimis est quod sapit Deo pauperis cibus, qui totius creaturae bona non esurit, saginatum se in esca pauperis prophetizat in regno coeli, coram omnibus angelis, in conventu resurgentium. Quod Abel passus sit, quod servavit mundum Noe, quod Abraham fidem suscepit, quod Moyses legem tulit, quod Petrus crucem resupinus ascendit, Deus tacet, et hoc clamat solum quod comedit pauper. In coelo prima est esurientis annona, prima stipendia pauperis tractantur in coelo, erogatio pauperis prima divinis scribitur in diurnis. Beatus cujus nomen toties Deo legitur, quoties ratio pauperis recitatur in coelo.

Sed istius beatitudinis audiamus et fructum, In die mala liberabit eum Dominus. Qui se novit per mala saeculi vitam ducere, eleemosynae semper secum auxilium ducat, ad praesidium sibi turmas pauperum vocet, in pastu pauperum largus prorogator exuberet, pauperum frequentet donum, non trepidet erogando; deficere nescit cui porrigit manum parcus acceptor; exhauriri thesaurus is non potest, de quo sufficit nummus: In die mala liberabit eum Dominus. In die mala illi Deus liberator assistet, qui a malis pauperem liberavit. In angustiis illum Deus clamantem audiet, qui pauperem cum clamaret audivit. Non videbit diem malum, qui dies bonos habere pauperem fecit. Videbit diem malum, qui diem judicii sine advocatione paupertatis intraverit: Sine causa accusant peccata, quem pauper excusat. Excusari non potest, quem fames pauperis accusarit.

But how he has either poured the poor man into himself, or poured himself into the poor man, let him now tell us himself: I was hungry, he says, and you gave me to eat (Matt 25:35). He did not say, "The poor man was hungry, and you gave him to eat", but, I was hungry, and you gave me to eat. What the poor man received he proclaims was given to himself; what the poor man has eaten he says he eats; what the poor man drinks he testifies was poured into himself. O, what love for the poor does! God glories in heaven in that for which the poor man blushes on earth, and counts as an honour to himself what is reckoned an insult to the poor man. It would have been enough to say, you gave me to eat, you gave me drink; but he puts first, I was hungry, I was thirsty, because small would have been his love for the poor man in taking up the poor man, had he not also taken up the poor man's sufferings: and certainly true love is proved only by sufferings. True love is to have made one's own the straits of one in straits: beyond measure is the savour of the poor man's food to God, since he who does not hunger for the goods of the whole creation foretells that he has been fed full on the poor man's fare, in the kingdom of heaven, before all the angels, in the assembly of those who rise again. That Abel suffered (Gen 4), that Noah saved the world (Gen 6), that Abraham took up the faith (Gen 15), that Moses brought the Law (Exod 20), that Peter went up the cross head downwards: of this God is silent, and cries out this alone, that the poor man has eaten. In heaven the first ration is the hungry man's; the poor man's pay is the first business dealt with in heaven; what is spent on the poor man is the first thing written in the divine day-books. Blessed is he whose name is read out before God as often as the poor man's account is recited in heaven.

But let us hear the fruit of this blessedness too: In the evil day the Lord will deliver him. Whoever knows that he leads his life through the evils of the world, let him always take with him the help of almsgiving, let him call up troops of the poor for his protection, let him abound as a generous dispenser in feeding the poor, let him be constant in giving to the poor, let him not tremble in spending; he never runs short to whom a sparing receiver holds out his hand; that treasure cannot be exhausted from which a single coin suffices: In the evil day the Lord will deliver him. In the evil day God will stand by him as deliverer who delivered the poor man from evils. In straits God will hear him crying who heard the poor man when he cried. He will not see the evil day who made the poor man have good days. He will see the evil day who enters the day of judgement without the advocacy of poverty: in vain do sins accuse the man whom the poor man excuses. He cannot be excused whom the hunger of the poor man has accused.

Dominus, ait, conservet eum et vivificet eum. Non dixit, conservat et vivificat; sed dixit, conservet et vivificet. Dixit, non ut denuntiantis vox sit ista, sed rogantis. Qui audivit rogantem egenum, ecce audivit orbe toto pro se Ecclesiam sic rogantem: Dominus conservet eum et vivificet eum. Conservet, ne rapiatur ad poenam; vivificet, ut resurgat a mortuis et recipiat vitam. Et non tradet eum in manu inimici ejus. Cujus inimici? nempe diaboli: ipse est inimicitiarum princeps; despicit inimicos, qui ipsum inimicitiarum calcarit auctorem.

Dominus autem adjuvet eum super lectum doloris ejus. Exsequitur propheta omnes aerumnas fragilitatis humanae. Dominus autem adjuvet eum super lectum doloris ejus. Quis est lectus doloris nostri, nisi corpus nostrum? in quo anima jacet, et jacet dolens, et dolet, quae coelum repetere cupiens premitur corporis terra.

Universum stratum ejus versasti in infirmitate ejus. Justum non versat in stratum, nec injustum; sed stratum Dominus versat infirmo. Caro ergo est, quae versatur et versat. Ipsa est ergo quae in adversis volvitur, in prosperis versat. Dominus ergo versat stratum nostrum, quando nobis adversa vertit in prospera: et quia in lecto doloris, hoc est in lecto corporis animus volvebatur aegrotus, ipse qui volvebatur, proclamat: Ego dixi, Domine, miserere mei, sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi. Quia per consensum carnis sentit animi se contraxisse languorem, ut anima sanetur, implorat: et misericordiam petit fidens, quia in pauperem misericordiam fecit. Beatus qui fenerando pauperi, ipsum sibi judicem praestitit debitorem.

The Lord, he says, preserve him and give him life (Ps 41:3). He did not say, "preserves and gives life", but he said, preserve and give life. He said it so that this should be the voice not of one who announces, but of one who asks. He who heard the needy man asking, behold, has heard the Church throughout the whole world thus asking for him: The Lord preserve him and give him life. Preserve him, that he may not be snatched away to punishment; give him life, that he may rise from the dead and receive life back. And he will not deliver him into the hand of his enemy. Of what enemy? The devil's, surely: he is the prince of enmities; he despises enemies who has trampled on the very author of enmities.

But the Lord help him upon the bed of his pain (Ps 41:4). The Prophet goes through all the miseries of human frailty. But the Lord help him upon the bed of his pain. What is the bed of our pain, if not our body? In it the soul lies, and lies in pain, and feels pain, the soul which, longing to return to heaven, is weighed down by the earth of the body.

You have turned all his bed in his weakness. He does not turn the just man over on his bed, nor the unjust; but the Lord turns the bed for the weak. It is the flesh, then, that is turned and that turns. It is this, then, that is tossed about in adversity and turns in prosperity. The Lord, then, turns our bed when he turns adversity into prosperity for us: and because in the bed of pain, that is, in the bed of the body, the sick mind was tossing, he who was tossing cries out: I said, Lord, have mercy on me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you (Ps 41:5). Because he feels that through the consent of the flesh he has contracted a sickness of the mind, he implores that the soul be healed; and he asks for mercy with confidence, because he has shown mercy to the poor man. Blessed is he who, by lending at interest to the poor man, has made the judge himself his debtor.

Sermo XV.

De centurione

Audituri estis hodie, fratres, quemadmodum cohortis Romanae centurio dux factus est militiae Christianae; et merito, quia ante coepit docere quam credere. Venit, inquit, Jesus Capharnaum, et accessit ad eum centurio rogans et dicens: Domine, puer meus jacet in domo paralyticus, et male torquetur. Et ait illi Jesus: Ego veniam et curabo eum. Et respondens centurio, ait: Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur puer meus: nam et ego homo sum sub potestate constitutus, habens sub me milites, et dico huic, Vade, et vadit; et alii, Veni, et venit; et servo meo, Fac hoc, et facit. Videtis centurionem, antequam discipulatus subiret officium, locum magisterii fuisse sortitum. Praebet enim petendi formam, dat normam credendi; fidei pandit causas; virtutum commendat exempla, qui nondum christianae scholae ingressus est disciplinam.

Accessit ad eum centurio rogans eum. Hoc est sapere, non rogare. Puer meus jacet in domo. Causas pueri quasi magister agit: vere centurio, qui stipendia terrena centenarium coeli mutavit in fructum, et servitutem militiae saecularis in divinam sustulit dignitatem. Domine, puer meus jacet in domo. Qui vocat Dominum, fatetur suam fideliter servitutem. Et quomodo hic centurio, qui sic agnoscit Dominum, puerum suum ausus est profiteri; quasi nesciens servi peculium ad Dominum pertinere? Aut ignorat communia qui docet tam secreta, tam profunda? puer meus. Meum dico quia jacet: si tuus esset, Domine, non jaceret. Probat hoc propheta, cum dicit: Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes servi Domini, qui statis in domo Domini. Qui statis, non jacetis, ait; stant servi tui, hominum servi jacent. Puer meus qui jacet, ut tuus sit, surgat: meus, quia paralyticus: ut tuus sit, jam sanetur. Meus, quia male torquetur; ut tuus sit, jam non sit in poena.

Sermon XV.

On the centurion

You are about to hear today, brothers, how a centurion of a Roman cohort became a leader of the Christian service; and rightly, because he began to teach before he began to believe. Jesus came, he says, to Capernaum, and a centurion came up to him, asking and saying: Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, and is grievously tormented (Matt 8:5–6). And Jesus said to him: I will come and cure him (Matt 8:7). And the centurion answered and said: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed: for I too am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it (Matt 8:8–9). You see that the centurion, before he took up the office of a disciple, had been allotted the place of a master. For he offers the form of asking, gives the rule of believing; he lays open the grounds of faith; he commends examples of the virtues, he who had not yet entered the discipline of the Christian school.

A centurion came up to him, asking him. This is to be wise, not to ask. My servant is lying at home. He pleads the servant's cause as though he were a master: a centurion indeed, who changed his earthly pay into the hundredfold fruit of heaven, and raised the servitude of worldly service to a divine dignity. Lord, my servant is lying at home. He who calls him Lord acknowledges faithfully his own servitude. And how did this centurion, who so acknowledges the Lord, dare to call the servant his own, as though he did not know that a servant's peculium belongs to the Lord? Or is he ignorant of common things, who teaches things so secret, so profound? My servant. I call him mine because he lies there: if he were yours, Lord, he would not lie there. The Prophet proves this when he says: Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord (Ps 134:1). You who stand, he says, not you who lie; your servants stand, men's servants lie. My servant who lies there, that he may be yours, let him rise: mine, because he is paralysed; that he may be yours, let him now be healed. Mine, because he is grievously tormented; that he may be yours, let him now be no longer under punishment.

Domine, tuos servos non decet malis subjacere, injuria est tua tuorum poena servorum; tuos servos possidere non debet vis malorum; servi tui etsi patiuntur mala, non patiuntur ad poenam, sed subeunt ad coronas. Adversa illis non sunt necessitatum causae, sed sunt causa victoriae. Servi hominum sunt, qui mala patiuntur inviti, quia illis in desperatione sui domini nequeunt subvenire. Tu autem, Domine, cui virtutes serviunt, curationes parent, obtemperant sanitates, quomodo computabis servum tuum, quem servum tantorum conspicis esse morborum? Nota est circa malos bonitas tua, pietatem tuam etiam impii confitentur, clamant exteri misericordiam tuam. Hunc tuum dicerem, quem jacentem tua benignitas non requirit?

Jacet in domo, et male torquetur. Hinc est quod offerre eum, et offerre tibi, poenae non sinit magnitudo, ne familiaris infirmitas publice ostensa et dolori sit, et pudori. Movit centurio judicem talia et tanta dum perorat; et sic movit, ut ad servum suum coeli Dominum ipsum ire velle perficeret. Ego, inquit Christus, veniam et curabo illum. Fratres, non centurio ad pietatem pietatis traxit auctorem; neque ad hoc ille ire compulit Christum, ad quod venerat Christus: sed centurio magis sic sentire, sapere sic docetur, quare ad servum in servo venerit Christus; quare ad hominem in homine venerit Deus; utique ut levaret jacentes, elisos erigeret, solveret compeditos, et eos quos jam nemo nec afferre, nec offerre poterat, ipse operis sui vector clementissimus bajularet.

Sed jam quid responderit centurio audiamus: Domine, inquit, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. Dedit debitum de humilitate responsum; et ipsum esse Dominum singulari pavore signavit, deducere dum veretur ad animae suae domum, ad secretum cordis sui, ad tectum suae conscientiae, ad penetrale mentis, in quo familia cogitationum incondita et confusa versatur; nec patitur aulam pectoris humani sine vitiorum strepitu in sinceritatis silentio permanere. Magistro ergo timore respondit: Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. Hinc est quod Petrus, ubi Christum rerum cognovit auctorem, exclamavit dicens: Exi a me, Domine, quia peccator sum. Sic eum Petrus exire a se rogat, quomodo centurio eum ad se supplicat non venire; agit enim uterque ne indignitas hospitii in hospitis manet injuriam.

Lord, it does not befit your servants to be subject to evils; the punishment of your servants is an injury to you; the force of evils ought not to possess your servants; your servants, even if they suffer evils, do not suffer them for punishment, but undergo them for crowns. Adversities are for them not the causes of necessities, but the cause of victory. Men's servants are those who suffer evils against their will, because their own masters, in despair, cannot help them. But you, Lord, whom powers serve, whom cures obey, to whom healings submit, how will you count as your servant one whom you see to be the servant of such great diseases? Your goodness towards the wicked is known; even the impious confess your loving-kindness; strangers proclaim your mercy. Should I call him yours, whom, as he lies there, your kindness does not seek out?

He lies at home, and is grievously tormented. This is why the greatness of his punishment does not allow him to be brought out, and brought to you, lest a household illness, shown in public, should be both a pain and a shame. The centurion moved the judge by pleading such things and so many; and so moved him that he brought the Lord of heaven himself to be willing to go to his servant. I will come, said Christ, and cure him. Brothers, it was not the centurion who drew the author of loving-kindness to loving-kindness; nor did he compel Christ to go for that for which Christ had come: rather the centurion is taught to perceive this, to understand this, why Christ came to the servant in a servant, why God came to man in man; surely to lift up those who lie, to raise those who are crushed, to loose those in fetters, and, as the most merciful carrier of his own work, to carry those whom no one could any longer either bring or present.

But let us now hear what the centurion answered: Lord, he says, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. He gave the answer due to humility; and by a singular fright he signified that this was the Lord, in that he fears to lead him into the house of his soul, into the secret place of his heart, under the roof of his conscience, into the inner chamber of his mind, where a household of thoughts moves about, disordered and confused, and does not allow the hall of the human breast to remain without the din of vices in the silence of sincerity. So, with fear for his teacher, he answered: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. This is why Peter, when he recognised Christ as the author of all things, cried out, saying: Go out from me, Lord, for I am a sinner (Luke 5:8). Peter asks him to go out from himself in the same way as the centurion begs him not to come to him; for each acts so that the unworthiness of the guest-house may not remain as an injury to the guest.

Non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. Hoc benedictum esset antequam Deus hospitium nostrae carnis intraret: at nunc quid sic centurio tectum suum Christum vetat intrare, quem totum videt intra tectum sui corporis jam manere? Fratres, centurio jam videbat in Christo corporis sui formam, sed passiones in illo sui corporis non videbat. Natus est in carne Christus, sed natus est de Spiritu sancto: accepit hospitium carnis, sed in aula virginis, ut et veritas esset corporis humani, et de pollutione humani corporis nil haberet. Bene ergo centurio tectum suum indignum judicat Christo, quia sub singulari tecto manebat nostri corporis Christus: juxta illud prophetae, Vigilavi, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto.

Sed dic tantum verbo, et sanabitur puer meus. Centurio iste cum sine lege esset, nihil sine lege egit, dicit: Dic tantum verbo. Quia dictum erat, Dixit, et facta sunt. Et si omnia perfecta sunt dictu, quomodo dictu solo unius infirmitas non curetur? Dic tantum verbo, et sine verbo quod dicitur? Sed iste postulat verbum non de loquendi usu, sed de virtute faciendi; verbum de quo dictum est: Misit verbum suum, et sanavit eos. Dic verbo tantum. Quia iste credidit in verbo omnes manere virtutes. Verbum tuum, Domine, sanitas est; verbum tuum vita est; verbum tuum ubi accesserit, inde confestim fugit dolor, infirmitas mox recedit; verbum in quo Petrus cum laxaret retia, piscium multitudinem cepit, sine quo et ignorantiae noctem pertulit, et nullum fructum pervigil piscator invenit. Domine, inquit, laborantes per totam noctem nihil cepimus, sed in verbo tuo laxabo retia.

Et quasi non sufficeret quod de verbo egerat, verbo praestari posse quod postulat, rebus astruit, commendat exemplo. Nam et ego homo sum sub potestate positus, habens sub me milites, et dico huic, Vade, et vadit; et alii, Veni, et venit; et servo meo, Fac hoc, et facit. Nam et ego homo sum. Hoc est dicere, tu Deus. Sub potestate positus. Hoc est, tu ipsa potestatum potestas. Habens sub me milites. Hoc est, tu virtutes. Et dico huic, Vade, et vadit. Hoc est: Dic infirmitati, vade, et vadit. Alii, Veni, et venit. Hoc est, Dic sanitati, veni, et venit. Et servo meo, Fac hoc, et facit. Ille puer meus erit et tuus servus, cum receperit sanitatem.

I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. This would have been well said before God entered the guest-house of our flesh: but now, why does the centurion thus forbid Christ to enter his roof, when he sees him already dwelling, whole, within the roof of his own body? Brothers, the centurion already saw in Christ the form of his own body, but he did not see in him the passions of his body. Christ was born in the flesh, but he was born of the Holy Spirit: he received the guest-house of flesh, but in the hall of a virgin, so that there should be both the truth of a human body, and that he should have nothing of the pollution of the human body. Rightly, then, does the centurion judge his roof unworthy of Christ, because Christ dwelt under the singular roof of our body: according to that word of the Prophet, I have kept watch, and have become like a solitary sparrow on the roof (Ps 102:8).

But only say the word, and my servant will be healed. This centurion, though he was without the Law, did nothing without law: he says, Only say the word. For it had been said: He spoke, and they were made (Ps 148:5). And if all things were brought to completion by a speaking, how should the illness of one man not be cured by a speaking alone? Only say the word: and what is said without a word? But he asks for a word not in the manner of speaking, but in the power of doing; the word of which it was said: He sent his word, and healed them (Ps 107:20). Say the word only. For he believed that all powers reside in the word. Your word, Lord, is health; your word is life; where your word has come, from there pain at once flees, illness soon withdraws; the word in which Peter, when he let down the nets, caught a multitude of fish, without which he both endured the night of ignorance and, a fisherman watching all night, found no fruit. Lord, he says, we have toiled all night and caught nothing, but at your word I will let down the nets (Luke 5:5).

And as though what he had pleaded about the word were not enough, that what he asks can be granted by a word, he maintains it by facts, commends it by an example. For I too am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. For I too am a man. That is to say: you are God. Set under authority. That is: you are the very authority of authorities. Having soldiers under me. That is: you are the powers. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes. That is: say to the illness, Go, and it goes. To another, Come, and he comes. That is: say to health, Come, and it comes. And to my servant, Do this, and he does it. That servant of mine will be your servant as well, when he has recovered his health.

Audiat; quid audiat? Sanus factus es, jam noli peccare; faciat justitiam, ut liberetur a paralysi omnium peccatorum, et possit psallere cum propheta: Convertere, anima mea, in requiem tuam, quia Dominus benefecit tibi; quia eripuit animam meam de morte, oculos meos a lacrymis, pedes meos a lapsu. Placebo Domino in regione vivorum. Fratres, imitetur centurionem, qui ad centesimum fructum desiderat pervenire. Ne ergo leviter centurionis hujus prudentiam transeamus, hodie de ipso dicta sufficiant: quia mysterium permagnum est, quo Gentilis geritur in figuram.

Let him hear; what is he to hear? You have been made well; sin no more now (John 5:14); let him do justice, that he may be freed from the paralysis of all his sins, and may sing with the Prophet: Return, my soul, to your rest, for the Lord has been good to you; for he has rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from falling (Ps 116:7–8). I will please the Lord in the land of the living (Ps 116:9). Brothers, let him who desires to reach the hundredfold fruit imitate the centurion. So, lest we pass over lightly the prudence of this centurion, let what has been said of him suffice for today: for it is a very great mystery, in which the Gentile is set forth in figure.

Sermo XVI.

De duobus daemoniacis

Christus quod transferat maria, quod loca circuit, non est res humani desiderii, sed causa est salutis humanae. Ambulat Christus, non ut videret loca, sed ut homines, qui variis casibus perierant, inveniret. Qui loca fecerat, quid novi videret in locis? Aut illi quid aberat, qui ubique erat? Ut homo videbatur in locis, sed ubique videbat ut Deus; videbat utique, et desperatos videbat, quibus ibat divina remedia largiturus; ibat ad eorum curam, quibus humana jam defecerat cura, sicut hodierna probatum est lectione.

Cum venisset, inquit, Jesus trans fretum in regionem Gerasenorum, occurrerunt ei duo, habentes daemonia, de monumentis exeuntes saevi nimis, ita ut nemo posset transire per viam illam. Lubet scisse et vidisse Dominum quid mali, quid periculi illis haberetur in locis; et ideo illuc isse ut sic desperatis, afflictis, sic miseris subveniret.

Occurrerunt ei duo daemonia habentes, de monumentis exeuntes. In monumentis sedem fecerant mortis auctores. Attendite quae saevitia, quis furor, quae rabies daemonum erga humanum genus: quamvis breve tempus hominum ferre non possunt, contenti non sunt mori homines, sed vivos homines gestiunt sepelire; se sepulcris mandant, ut homines reducant in sepulcra: pascuntur cadaveribus, putredine saginantur, deliciantur fetore, quibus tota voluptas est homines interire. Sed sentiamus quid machinentur fraudibus, quid moliantur malis, quorum crudelitas modum non habet in aperto. Quid faciunt isti quando divitias ostentant, nisi ut avaritiam serant? Ut inserant superbiam, pompam proponunt. Singularitatem venditant, ut quod est communionis, excludant. Ut iram nutriant, causas colorant. Ut pietatem violent, affectibus dant querelas. Philosophiam fingunt, ut faciant nihil scire homines plus quaerendo. Deos multos figurant, ut Deus, qui unus et verus est, nesciatur.

Sermon XVI.

On the two demoniacs

That Christ crosses the seas, that he goes round from place to place, is not a matter of human desire, but is the cause of human salvation. Christ walks about, not to see places, but to find men who had perished by various mischances. He who had made the places, what new thing could he see in places? Or what was absent from him who was everywhere? As man he was seen in places, but as God he saw everywhere; he saw, indeed, and he saw the desperate, to whom he was going to bestow divine remedies; he went to the cure of those for whom human cure had already failed, as today's reading has proved.

When Jesus had come, he says, across the water into the country of the Gerasenes, there met him two men possessed by demons, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass by that way (Matt 8:28). It is good to know that the Lord knew and saw what evil, what danger there was for them in those places; and that he went there for this reason, to help those so desperate, so afflicted, so wretched.

There met him two men possessed by demons, coming out of the tombs. In the tombs the authors of death had made their seat. Mark what savagery, what fury, what rage the demons have towards the human race: although they cannot bear the short span of men, they are not content that men should die, but they long to bury men alive; they consign themselves to the sepulchres, so as to lead men back into the sepulchres: they feed on corpses, they are fattened on rottenness, they take delight in stench, they whose whole pleasure is that men should perish. But let us perceive what they contrive by frauds, what they work by evils, they whose cruelty knows no measure in the open. What are they doing, when they make a display of riches, but sowing avarice? To implant pride, they set forth pomp. They peddle singularity, to shut out what belongs to communion. To feed anger, they colour its causes. To violate piety, they furnish the affections with grievances. They feign philosophy, to make men know nothing by seeking more. They fashion many gods, so that God, who is one and true, may not be known.

Occurrerunt ei duo, daemonia habentes. Quando ad duos homines daemonia multa, ad unum legionem totam significat convenisse: hoc ideo facit, ut doceat cavendos esse daemones, non timendos; simulque monstrat, quam sit potentia Christi singularis, quod nomine solo Christi fugatur omnis daemonum multitudo. Occurrerunt ei duo, daemonia habentes. Exhibiti non volentes venerunt; imperantis jussu, non suo ausu; attracti sunt inviti, non sua sponte currentes. Denique ad praesentiam Christi homines exeunt de monumentis, et versa vice captivos ferunt, a quibus fuerant captivati; sistunt poenis, quorum cruciatibus torquebantur: aptant ad sententiam, a quibus addicti fuerant jam sepulcris.

Occurrerunt ei duo daemonia habentes saevi nimis, ita ut nemo posset transire per viam illam. Videtis quia daemones venientibus ad Christum praecluserant viam, transitum denegarant. Etenim daemonum ista cura, ne ad Deum homines possint reditum invenire. Non enim aliter possunt homines possidere, nisi eos ab auctoris sui societate subducant. Ita ut nemo posset transire per viam illam. Hinc est quod Christus factus est via. Ita ut nemo posset transire per viam illam. Illam, non istam. Ego sum, inquit, via. Ut ad viam per viam, ad Deum per Deum venientibus obsistere vis daemonum non valeret: ad Deum nisi per Deum potest perveniri.

Sed jam quid daemones clamaverint, audiamus. Quid nobis et tibi, fili Dei? Hoc est dicere: Vitae auctor quid tibi cum mortuis? Habitator coeli, quid tibi cum sepulcris? Odor paradisi, quid tibi cum fetore? Quos de coelo dejecisti, quos de paradiso exclusisti, quibus nunc tollis urbes, regiones habitabiles negas, permitte inhabitare nos vel sepulcra: et si nos persecutione tanta digni sumus, tu tanta non es dignus injuria. Quid nobis et tibi? Quid? quod judici et reo, quod vindici et poenali, quod regi et desertori. Quid nobis et tibi, fili Dei? Hoc dicunt possessori fures, hoc domino praedones, tenent spolia, praedam gestant, et quid sibi cum eo sit qui sua reposcit interrogant. Quid nobis et tibi, fili Dei? Quid? Ut reddatis homines, mundum restituatis auctori; et veniente Creatore, sciatis vobis in creaturis amplius nil licere.

There met him two men possessed by demons. When he indicates that many demons had come together to two men, and a whole legion to one, he does it for this reason, to teach that the demons are to be guarded against, not feared; and at the same time he shows how singular is the might of Christ, since at the mere name of Christ the whole multitude of the demons is put to flight. There met him two men possessed by demons. Brought before him, they came unwilling; at the order of one who commands, not by their own daring; they were dragged in against their will, not running of their own accord. Indeed, in the presence of Christ men come out of the tombs, and, the tables turned, they carry off as captives those by whom they had been made captive; they bring to punishment those by whose torments they were tortured: they make ready for sentence those by whom they had already been delivered over to the sepulchres.

There met him two men possessed by demons, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass by that way. You see that the demons had barred the way to those coming to Christ, had refused them passage. For this is the demons' care, that men may not be able to find the way back to God. For they cannot possess men in any other way than by drawing them away from the society of their author. So that no one could pass by that way. This is why Christ became the way. So that no one could pass by that way. That way, not this one. I am, he says, the way (John 14:6). So that the force of the demons should have no power to stand in the way of those coming to the way through the way, to God through God: no one can reach God except through God.

But let us now hear what the demons cried out. What have we to do with you, Son of God? (Matt 8:29) That is to say: "Author of life, what have you to do with the dead? Dweller in heaven, what have you to do with sepulchres? Fragrance of paradise, what have you to do with stench? We, whom you cast down from heaven, whom you shut out of paradise, from whom you now take away cities, to whom you deny habitable regions, allow us to dwell at least in the sepulchres: and if we deserve so great a persecution, you do not deserve so great an injury." What have we to do with you? What? What the judge has to do with the accused, the avenger with the guilty, the king with the deserter. What have we to do with you, Son of God? Thieves say this to the owner, robbers to the master; they hold the spoils, they carry the plunder, and they ask what they have to do with him who demands back what is his. What have we to do with you, Son of God? What? That you give back men, restore the world to its author; and that, now that the Creator is coming, you know that nothing more is permitted you among his creatures.

Quid nobis et tibi, fili Dei? Venisti ante tempus torquere nos? Quid nobis et tibi? Et vobis cum hominibus quid? Quid nobis et tibi, fili Dei? Agnoscunt, agnoscunt Deum, judicem confitentur, clamant judicium se debere, et de tempore praescribunt. Quid nobis et tibi, fili Dei? Venisti ante tempus torquere nos? Auctori temporum tempus opponunt. Venisti ante tempus torquere nos? De tempore sic queruntur, quasi ipsum cum tempore fecerint, ut vivos condiderint in sepulcris. Venisti ante tempus torquere nos? Tempus abscindit, praevenit mortem, sepelit vivos crudelitas immatura: et de tempore queritur, quasi ante tempus habere debuerit injuste quod desiderat, et non ut exorta est ejus malitia, mox puniri: de tempore causatur nequitia saeculi indurata. Malis patientia brevis est, bonis tarda ultio; quod laesis longum est, angustum est ad laedentes.

Erat, inquit, non longe ab eis grex porcorum multorum pascens. Daemones autem rogabant eum dicentes: Si ejicis nos, mitte nos in gregem porcorum. Digna petit indigna servitus. Mitte nos in gregem porcorum. De monumentis mitti se precatur in porcos nequitia, quia fetores amittere nescit, sed mutare. Mitte nos in gregem porcorum. Coenum petunt ruentes coelo; post aethereas habitationes ambiunt volutabra porcorum. Mitte nos in gregem porcorum. Grex in gregem mittitur, ut prodatur daemonum multitudo: ut appareat hoc duos portasse homines, quod numerositas non valuit sufferre porcorum.

Ait illis, Ite. At illi exeuntes abierunt in porcos; et ecce impetu abiit totus grex perpraeceps in mare, et mortui sunt in aquis. Traditur vile pecus non pro voluntate daemonum, sed ut tali facto innotescat, quomodo in homines saeviunt, quomodo quaerunt mortes hominum, qui sic porcos ut perderent quaesierunt. Daemones omne quod est, agitur, movetur, vivit, ardent perdere, non habere. Ne quis ergo talis fieri homo praesumat, humano generi inimicitia vetus, fixa ira, malitia destinata est. Daemones nisi vincti non cedunt, laedere non valent nisi jussi. Traditur ergo vile pecus, ut luceat daemonibus in homines nil licere, quibus in porcos jussum est ut liceret. Nos ergo aut vitiis nostris facimus ut illi accipiant potestatem nocendi, aut virtutibus subjecta nobis daemonum colla Christo triumphante calcamus.

What have we to do with you, Son of God? Have you come before the time to torment us? What have we to do with you? And what have you to do with men? What have we to do with you, Son of God? They acknowledge, they acknowledge God, they confess him as judge, they cry out that they owe a judgement, and they enter a plea about the time. What have we to do with you, Son of God? Have you come before the time to torment us? To the author of times they oppose a time. Have you come before the time to torment us? They complain about the time as though they had made him together with time, just as they buried the living in sepulchres. Have you come before the time to torment us? An untimely cruelty cuts time short, forestalls death, buries the living: and it complains about the time, as though it ought unjustly to have what it desires before the time, and not be punished as soon as its malice has arisen: the hardened wickedness of the world pleads about the time. To the wicked patience is brief, to the good vengeance is slow; what is long to the injured is short to those who injure.

There was, he says, not far from them a herd of many swine feeding (Matt 8:30). And the demons begged him, saying: If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine (Matt 8:31). An unworthy servitude asks for what is worthy of it. Send us into the herd of swine. Wickedness begs to be sent from the tombs into swine, because it does not know how to give up its stenches, only how to change them. Send us into the herd of swine. Fallen from heaven, they seek the mire; after the ethereal dwellings they court the wallows of swine. Send us into the herd of swine. A herd is sent into a herd, that the multitude of the demons may be laid bare: that it may appear that two men carried what a great number of swine could not bear.

He said to them: Go. And they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed headlong into the sea, and they died in the waters (Matt 8:32). The worthless beasts are handed over, not to do the demons' will, but so that by such a deed it may be made known how they rage against men, how they seek men's deaths, they who sought swine only to destroy them. Everything that is, that is done, that moves, that lives, the demons burn to destroy, not to possess. Let no man, then, presume to become such a one: their enmity towards the human race is old, their anger fixed, their malice resolved. Demons do not give way unless they are bound; they have no power to harm unless they are commanded. The worthless beasts are handed over, then, so that it may shine out that nothing is permitted against men to the demons, for whom a command was needed that it should be permitted against swine. We, then, either by our vices bring it about that they receive the power to harm, or by our virtues, with Christ triumphing, we trample the necks of the demons made subject to us.

Sermo XVII.

De daemoniaco

Venisse Dominum trans fretum in regionem Gerasenorum, et exeunti ei de navi statim occurrisse hominem de monumentis habentem spiritum immundum, catenis et compedibus vinctum, evangelico hodie sermone cognovimus; qui domicilium haberet in monumentis, auctor mortis, mortis incubat mansiones, et humanae necis avidus, quos crudelitate sua occidere non potest, vivos gestit feraliter funerare. Saevit, furit interitus nostri avarus exactor, cui poena est quod homo nascitur; quod tardius moritur, cruciatur: hominis hanc ipsam brevissimam vitam amandare horrida nititur per sepulcra; confusus hostis, et ad utrumque perversus ingerit sepulcris vivos, mortuis apponit cibos, mera fundit, ut et vivos enecet, et mortuos inquietet.

Catenis et compedibus vinctus tenebatur homo: vinctus alieno crimine, et habitatoris scelere, habitaculum innocens torquebatur. Diaboli culpa hominis redundabat ad poenam, et praedae miseriis praedo saginabatur inclusus; nec facientem, sed patientem exsecrabilis exponit invidia. Huic morbo cupiens Dominus subvenire, transfretat mare: hoc est, ad fluctuantis mundi terminos corporis nostri navigio transmittit, ad littora pervenit salutis nostrae repleta naufragiis, et regionem caecis ignorantiae tenebris infusam, lucis suae splendore perfundit, callidi hostis deprehensurus insidias, ipsumque principem nequitiae spiritualis cum suis legionibus, regia potestate fugaturus; ut tandem reddat liberos, quos diu tenuit potestas inimica captivos.

Videns, inquit, Jesum a longe, cucurrit et adoravit eum, et clamans voce magna, dixit: Quid mihi et tibi, Jesu fili Dei summi? Adjuro te per Deum ne me torqueas. Ad nutum Christi conversus est ordo poenarum; ante latrocinante diabolo homo vexabatur innocuus; nunc homo currit, sed diabolus incurrit: inclinatur caro, sed immundus jacet, et prosternitur spiritus. Cucurrit et adoravit. Quid est, diabole, quem trina tentatione provocabas ad lapsum, quem promissione regni ut te adoraret subdolus ambiebas, nunc tremens et miserandus prolaberis et adoras?

Sermon XVII.

On the demoniac

We have learnt today from the words of the Gospel that the Lord came across the water into the country of the Gerasenes, and that as he came out of the boat there at once met him a man from the tombs who had an unclean spirit, bound with chains and fetters (Mark 5:1–4); a man who had his abode in the tombs: the author of death broods over the abodes of death, and, greedy for human slaughter, those whom he cannot kill by his cruelty he longs to bury alive with a deathly burial. He rages, he raves, the greedy exactor of our destruction, to whom it is a punishment that man is born; he is tortured that man dies too slowly: this very short life of man he strives to banish into horrid sepulchres; a confused enemy, perverse in both directions, he thrusts the living into sepulchres, sets food before the dead, pours out neat wine, so as both to kill the living and to trouble the dead.

The man was held bound with chains and fetters: bound for another's crime; and for the wickedness of its inhabitant the innocent dwelling was tortured. The devil's fault overflowed into the man's punishment, and the robber, shut up within, was fattening on the miseries of his prey; and an accursed envy exposes not the doer, but the sufferer. Desiring to come to the help of this disease, the Lord crosses the sea: that is, in the vessel of our body he passes over to the bounds of the tossing world; he reaches the shores filled with the shipwrecks of our salvation, and floods with the splendour of his light a region steeped in the blind darkness of ignorance, to expose the snares of the cunning enemy and to put to flight with royal power the very prince of spiritual wickedness with his legions; that he may at last set free those whom a hostile power had long held captive.

Seeing Jesus from afar, he says, he ran and worshipped him, and crying out with a loud voice he said: What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the most high God? (Mark 5:6–7) I adjure you by God, do not torment me. At Christ's nod the order of punishments was reversed; before, while the devil played the brigand, an innocent man was harried; now the man runs, but the devil runs upon his doom: the flesh bows, but it is the unclean spirit that lies low and is laid prostrate. He ran and worshipped. What is this, devil? Him whom you provoked to a fall with a threefold temptation, whom you craftily courted with the promise of a kingdom that he might worship you, do you now, trembling and pitiable, fall down before and worship?

Ecce qui honores omnes regni promittebat et gloriae, habitare fetidis corruptione cadaverum reperitur in tumulis. Sic, sic iste decipit cum promittit, ut ad inferna secum pertrahat, cum de supernis se consulentis consulentes fallax promissor illudit.

Quid mihi et tibi, fili Dei summi? Nam et modo ut adulator, non ut devotus et obsequens hic adorat, evadere cupiens poenam, praedam perdere pertimescens. Credit infelix ut eum quem tentatione vincere, quem muneribus nequivit inflectere, possit adulatione pulsare: sed ille consuevit vinctos absolvere, revocare captivos, nec acquisitos, sed conditos a se sibi restituere terminos: hostem libera virtute percellere, nec factione pellaci inimicum suorum requirere possessorem.

Et clamans voce magna, dixit: Quid mihi et tibi, Jesu fili Dei summi? adjuro te per Deum ne me torqueas. Quid agit? quid patitur fragilitas humana talibus et tantis subjecta miseriis? Ecce diabolus patrona voce hominis hominem petiturus inclamat: et tota membra hominis hosti suo suam militant in ruinam. Quid mihi et tibi, Jesu fili Dei summi? Quid mihi et tibi? quod puniendo et judici, quod regi et desertori, quod invasori et domino. Quid mihi et tibi, Jesu fili Dei summi? Si agnoscis filium, utique non nescis haeredem: si haeredem nosti, haereditatem rapere cur praesumis? Adjuro te per Deum, ne me torqueas. Timet tergiversator, et simulat: fatetur filium, sed ne Deus intelligatur solita arte contendit: adjurat Deum per Deum, ut alterum videri ipsum faciat, ut astantium decipiat et fallat auditum.

Interrogabat eum Jesus, quod tibi nomen est? Interrogat: non ignorat, sed implet judicem, servat ordinem cognitoris: nomen interrogat, ut de conditione discutiat, judicet de reatu, addicat de crimine, Deum se esse data sententia perdemonstret. Respondit legio, quia multi sumus. Christi interrogatio nostram ignorantiam sic depellit; nobis aperit quod latebat, ad unum legio. Evidens est desidia militis, si deserat aciem, si gressum retrahat, si confligere pertimescat; ibi unum numeroso hoste fortiorem praevidet esse captivum. Ad praesentiam regis isti quid sunt, qui ut unum, et nedum tironem caperent, toto cohortis suae agmine convenerunt? ubi essent si vexillum ibi jam crucis, si Christi signa vidissent? Age, Christiane, incede securus, manus tanta et tam multa quae sic metuit inermem, procul fugiet, si videat, si sentiat, si cognoscat armatum.

Behold, he who promised all the honours of kingdom and of glory is found dwelling in graves fetid with the corruption of corpses. Thus, thus does he deceive when he promises, so as to drag men down with him to the underworld, when, a lying promiser, he mocks those who consult him about the things above.

What have I to do with you, Son of the most high God? For now too he worships here as a flatterer, not as one devoted and obedient, desiring to escape punishment, dreading to lose his prey. The wretch believes that he whom he could not conquer by temptation, nor bend by gifts, can be swayed by flattery: but he is wont to loose those who are bound, to call back captives, to restore to himself bounds not acquired but laid down by himself; to strike down the enemy by free power, and not to court, by a beguiling intrigue, the enemy who has taken possession of his own.

And crying out with a loud voice he said: What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me. What is human frailty doing, what does it suffer, subjected to such and so great miseries? Behold, the devil, about to attack the man, cries out with the man's voice as his advocate: and all the man's members do service for his enemy, to their own ruin. What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the most high God? What have I to do with you? What the man to be punished has to do with the judge, the deserter with the king, the invader with the master. What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the most high God? If you acknowledge the Son, you certainly know the heir: if you know the heir, why do you presume to seize the inheritance? I adjure you by God, do not torment me. The shuffler is afraid, and he dissembles: he acknowledges the Son, but with his usual art he strives that he should not be understood to be God: he adjures God by God, to make him himself seem to be another, to deceive and mislead the hearing of the bystanders.

Jesus asked him: What is your name? (Mark 5:9) He asks: he is not ignorant, but he fills the part of a judge, he keeps the procedure of an examining judge: he asks the name, in order to inquire into his condition, to judge of his guilt, to sentence him for his crime, and, the sentence given, to prove to the full that he is God. Legion answered, for we are many. Christ's question thus drives away our ignorance; it opens to us what was hidden: a legion against one man. A soldier's cowardice is evident if he deserts the line, if he draws back his step, if he dreads to engage; there he foresees that one man, though a captive, is stronger than a numerous enemy. In the presence of the king, what are these, who, to take one man, and he not even a recruit, came together with the whole column of their cohort? Where would they be, if they had already seen there the standard of the cross, the ensigns of Christ? Come, Christian, advance without fear: a band so great and so numerous, which so fears an unarmed man, will flee far off if it sees, if it feels, if it learns that he is armed.

Deprecabantur eum spiritus dicentes, mitte nos in porcos. Vide ubi Satanas sedem desiderat collocare. De sepulcris in porcos. Semel infectus putredine, habitacula fetida et immunda perquirit; sordibus delectatur et coeno, qui utique semper fetore criminum et squalore pascitur vitiorum. Sed sic est odor ejus tartareus et crudelis, ut eum nec porcorum natura sufficeret sustinere: denique demergi in mari, et fluctibus maluit deperire, quam ejus immunditiam pati et putredinem tolerare. At quid possunt praesumere daemones, qui nec porcos quidem contingere praevalent, nisi eos potestas divina permiserit? Miser est qui, relicto judice, frustra carnificis requirit favorem; qui nec vexare, nec parcere, nec minuere potest tormenta, nec addere, sed facit totum addictus ipse verbero ad jus et arbitrium judicantis.

The spirits besought him, saying: Send us into the swine (Mark 5:12). See where Satan desires to set his seat. From the sepulchres into swine. Once infected with rottenness, he seeks out fetid and unclean dwellings; he delights in filth and mire, he who indeed is always fed on the stench of crimes and the squalor of vices. But so foul is his odour, of Tartarus and cruel, that not even the nature of swine could bear it: indeed, it preferred to be plunged into the sea and perish in the waves rather than suffer his uncleanness and endure his rottenness. But what can the demons presume, who cannot even touch swine unless the divine power has permitted them? Wretched is he who, leaving the judge, seeks in vain the favour of the executioner, who can neither harass nor spare, can neither diminish the torments nor add to them, but, himself a scoundrel bound over to the lash, does everything at the right and choice of the one who judges.

Sermo XVIII.

De socru Petri infirma et sanata

Hodierna lectione didicit attentus auditor quare coeli Dominus, restaurator universorum, terrenas et serviles intraverit mansiones. Sed nihil mirum si ad omnia dignanter accessit, qui clementer venerat omnibus subvenire.

Cum venisset, inquit, Jesus in domum Petri, vidit socrum ejus jacentem et febrientem. Videtis quae res ad domum Petri invitaverit Christum: utique non discumbendi voluptas, sed jacentis infirmitas; non prandendi necessitas, sed salutis occasio; divinae virtutis opus, non humani pompa convivii. In domo Petri non vina, sed lacrymae fundebantur: turbabat ibi familiam non cura convivii, sed cura languentis: febris ibi, non edacitas aestuabat. Unde illuc Christus non epulas percepturus, sed vitam redditurus intravit. Deus quaerit homines, non humana; coelestia dare cupit, non concupiscit invenire terrena: Christus ergo recepturus nos, non nostra quaesiturus advenit. Cum venisset, inquit, in domum Petri, vidit socrum ejus jacentem et febrientem. Ingressus in domum Petri Christus ad quod venerat, vidit: non aspexit qualitatem domus, non occurrentium turbas, non salutantium pompam, non familiae concursum; certe non ipsum praeparationis ornatum, sed inspexit gemitum languentis, febrientis attendit incendium. Vidit periculum desperatae, et statim manus ad opus suae deitatis extendit: nec ante ad humana discubuit Christus, quam mulier quae jacebat consurgeret ad divina.

Tenuit, inquit, manum ejus, et dimisit eam febris. Videtis quomodo dimittit febris, quem tenuerit Christus: ibi non stat infirmitas, ubi auctor salutis assistit; accessus illuc mortis nullus est, ubi vivificatoris ingressus est. Tenuit, inquit, manum ejus. Quae necessitas tangendi erat, ubi inerat jus jubendi? Sed Christus tenuit manum mulieris ad vitam, quia Adam de manu mulieris acceperat mortem. Tenuit manum ejus. Ut quod manu praesumentis amiserat, manus repararet auctoris. Tenuit manum ejus. Ut acciperet indulgentiam manus, quae carpserat de morte sententiam.

Sermon XVIII.

On Peter's mother-in-law, sick and healed

In today's reading the attentive hearer has learnt why the Lord of heaven, the restorer of all things, entered earthly and servile dwellings. But it is no wonder if he graciously came near to all things, who had come in his clemency to help all.

When Jesus had come, he says, into Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with fever (Matt 8:14). You see what invited Christ to Peter's house: certainly not the pleasure of reclining at table, but the illness of the woman lying there; not the need to dine, but the occasion of salvation; the work of divine power, not the pomp of a human banquet. In Peter's house it was not wine but tears that were poured out: what troubled the household there was not the care of a banquet, but care for the sick woman: there fever was burning, not greed for food. So Christ entered there not to partake of a feast, but to give back life. God seeks men, not human things; he desires to give heavenly things, he does not covet to find earthly ones: Christ came, then, to receive us, not to seek what is ours. When he had come, he says, into Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with fever. Entering Peter's house, Christ saw that for which he had come: he did not look at the quality of the house, nor the crowds coming to meet him, nor the pomp of those who greeted him, nor the household thronging; certainly not the very adornment of the preparations; but he looked into the groaning of the sick woman, he gave heed to the burning of the fevered one. He saw the danger of one given up for lost, and at once stretched out his hands to the work of his Godhead: nor did Christ recline for human things before the woman who was lying there rose up for divine things.

He took, he says, her hand, and the fever left her (Matt 8:15). You see how the fever leaves the one whom Christ has held: illness does not stand where the author of salvation stands by; death has no access there, where the giver of life has entered. He took, he says, her hand. What necessity was there to touch, where there was the right to command? But Christ took the woman's hand for life, because Adam had received death from the hand of a woman. He took her hand. So that what had been lost by the hand of the presumptuous woman, the hand of the author might restore. He took her hand. So that the hand which had plucked the sentence of death might receive indulgence.

Et surrexit, inquit, et ministrabat ei. Et Christus mulieris indigebat obsequio, et mulieris provectae aetatis, senectutis summae, filiis aggravatae? sic in domo Petri non erat vernula, non minister, non familiaris, non propinquus, certe non uxor, quae matris obsequium praeveniret? et ad summam, Petrus ipse causas suae verecundiae non videbat, ut hoc anus, hoc socrus faceret magistro discipulus quod debebat? fratres, Christus ab illa humanum non exigebat obsequium, cui ministerium divinitatis impenderat: sed ministrare illam ad indicium redditae sanitatis admisit. Christus sic fugat morbos, ut vires pristinas mox reducat: ubi curat ars, ibi infirmitatis residet lassitudo; ubi sanat virtus, ibi languor vestigium non relinquit.

Sed in hac lectione quid spiritualis intelligentiae lateat si scire volumus, verborum flosculos non quaeramus: qui saturitatis fructum quaerit, despicit amoena camporum: violae, rosae, lilia, narcissus, grati flores, sed gratior panis. Quod est odor naribus, hoc est auribus sermonis ornatus; quod dat panis vitae, hoc scientia dat saluti. Seponenda est ergo eloquentiae voluptas, quando scientiae deposcitur fortitudo.

Cum venisset, inquit, Jesus in domum Petri. Ad domum Petri venit Christus, ut domus Petri veniret ad Christum. Tunc ad domum Petri venit Christus, quando habitacula nostrae carnis intravit. Cum venisset Jesus in domum Petri. Quae est domus Petri? illa, de qua dicit Dominus: Et tu, Bethleem, domus Juda, non es minima in principibus Juda; ex te enim exiet dux, qui reget populum meum Israel. Unde et Apostolus: Ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula.

Cum venisset in domum Petri, vidit socrum ejus jacentem et febricitantem. Vidit synagogam jacentem in perfidiae suae tenebris, decumbentem sub suorum sarcina peccatorum, vitiis ad phrenesim usque febrientem: et ideo tenuit manum ejus, quia non tantum verbo, sed et manibus Judaicae gentis operatur salutem. Audi prophetam, Deus autem Rex noster ante saecula operatus est salutem in medio terrae. Tenuit manum ejus. Ut ante prophetarum sanguine manus ejus mundaretur, quam ministrationis ecclesiasticae sumeret sacramentum. Et surrexit et ministravit. Hinc est quod erecta est quae jacebat, et ministrat Christo, dum sanctificat manus suas modo in operibus bonis, quas ante malis operibus polluebat.

And she rose, he says, and served him. And did Christ need the service of a woman, and a woman of advanced age, in extreme old age, weighed down with children? Was there then in Peter's house no home-born slave, no servant, no member of the household, no kinsman, certainly no wife, to forestall the service of the mother? And finally, did Peter himself not see the grounds for his own shame, that an old woman, a mother-in-law, should do for the master what the disciple owed? Brothers, Christ did not exact human service from her on whom he had spent the ministry of his divinity: but he allowed her to serve as a sign of the health restored to her. Christ so drives away diseases that he at once brings back the former strength: where art cures, there the weariness of illness remains; where power heals, there sickness leaves no trace.

But if we wish to know what spiritual understanding lies hidden in this reading, let us not seek the little flowers of words: he who seeks the fruit that satisfies despises the pleasant places of the fields: violets, roses, lilies, narcissus are welcome flowers, but bread is more welcome. What scent is to the nostrils, ornament of speech is to the ears; what bread gives to life, knowledge gives to salvation. The pleasure of eloquence, then, must be put aside when the strength of knowledge is required.

When Jesus had come, he says, into Peter's house. Christ came to Peter's house, so that Peter's house might come to Christ. Christ came to Peter's house then, when he entered the dwellings of our flesh. When Jesus had come into Peter's house. What is Peter's house? That of which the Lord says: And you, Bethlehem, house of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah; for from you shall come forth a leader, who will rule my people Israel (Matt 2:6). Whence the Apostle too says: Of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is God blessed for ever (Rom 9:5).

When he had come into Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying and in a fever. He saw the Synagogue lying in the darkness of her unbelief, lying prostrate under the burden of her sins, fevered with vices even to frenzy: and therefore he took her hand, because he works the salvation of the Jewish nation not only by word but with his hands too. Hear the Prophet: But God our King before the ages has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth (Ps 74:12). He took her hand. So that her hand might be cleansed of the blood of the prophets before it should take on the mystery of the Church's ministry. And she rose and served. This is why she who lay there has been raised up, and serves Christ, in that she now sanctifies in good works her hands, which before she defiled with evil works.

Vespere, inquit, facto obtulerunt ei multos, daemonia habentes, et ejiciebat spiritus verbo. Hoc humanitus quomodo intelligi potest, ut contempto die, vespere multos, et male saucios salutis avidi ad salutis remedia bajularent? Sed vespere est, cum finitur dies saeculi, mundus a luce temporum cum declinat. Sero lucis redditor venit, ut nobis gentibus, qui in nocte venimus saeculorum, diem redderet sempiternam. Vespere autem facto, obtulerunt ei multos daemonia habentes. Vespere, hoc est, novissimo tempore nos gentes offert Deo apostolorum pia et solemnis devotio: et pelluntur a nobis daemones, qui nobis idolorum cultus imperabant. Audi prophetam: Omnes dii gentium daemonia. Ignorantes enim unum Deum innumeris diis serviebamus sacrilega et sordidissima servitute.

Et ejiciebat spiritus verbo. Quia ad nos Christus carne non venit, venit verbo: ubi ergo venit fides ex auditu, auditus per verbum, nos fecit liberos daemoniaca servitute, daemones reddidit ex impia dominatione captivos. Hinc est quod daemones sub manibus nostris torquentur imperantibus nobis, qui nos subjiciebant lignis, lapidibus adjiciebant, et vacuas quotidie per figuras inani timore vexabant.

Modo est, fratres, ne nos infidelitas ad eorum revocet servitutem: non laqueemur auguriis, non divinatione fallamur, non capiamur sortibus, non a Manibus inducamur, non seducamur mortibus, non pestibus anhelantibus captivemur; sed nos nostrosque actus commendemus Domino, committamus Patri, credamus Deo; quia tempus hominum sicut Deus agit, et ideo sicut pater actus dirigit filiorum, et ut Dominus curam familiae non relinquit.

When evening had come, he says, they brought to him many who had demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word (Matt 8:16). How can this be understood in a human way, that, letting the day go by, men eager for health should carry many, and those badly wounded, to the remedies of health in the evening? But it is evening when the day of the world is ending, when the world declines from the light of the ages. Late came the restorer of light, to give back to us Gentiles, who came in the night of the ages, an everlasting day. And when evening had come, they brought to him many who had demons. In the evening, that is, in the last time, the loving and solemn devotion of the apostles offers us Gentiles to God: and the demons are driven out from us, who used to command us the worship of idols. Hear the Prophet: All the gods of the nations are demons (Ps 96:5). For, not knowing the one God, we served innumerable gods with a sacrilegious and most filthy servitude.

And he cast out the spirits with a word. Because Christ did not come to us in the flesh, he came by the word: where, then, there came faith from hearing, hearing through the word (Rom 10:17), he made us free from the demons' servitude, and made the demons captives after their impious lordship. This is why the demons are tortured under our hands at our command, they who used to subject us to wood, bind us to stones, and every day harried us with an empty fear through hollow images.

Now is the time, brothers, that faithlessness may not call us back to their servitude: let us not be snared by auguries, nor deceived by divination, nor caught by lots, nor led on by the Manes, nor seduced by deaths, nor made captive by panting plagues; but let us commend ourselves and our actions to the Lord, entrust them to the Father, believe God; for he manages the time of men as God, and therefore as a father directs the actions of his sons, and as Lord does not abandon the care of his household.

Sermo XIX.

De Scriba, cui Christus sequi se non permisit

Hodie evangelista sic coepit: Videns, inquit, Jesus turbas multas circa se jussit ire trans fretum. Quoties circa Dominum se indocilis turba diffundit, et jactatur in conscientiae procella, quietem deserit, petit fluctus, portum deserit, naufragia intrat, ad excelsa contendens mergitur in profundum; tunc Christus hoc mare talibus turbatum turbis transfretari jubet. Videns, inquit, Jesus turbas multas circa se, jussit ire trans fretum. Non ut fugeret homines, qui hominum venerat ad salutem; sed insipientibus inducias dat credendi, errantes ut revertantur exspectat; patientiam praebet et veniam, qui non vult proferre sententiam; sustinet contumaces, qui vult non perdere, sed salvare quod fecit.

Accedens, inquit, unus ex Scribis, ait illi, Magister, sequar te quocumque ieris. Discedit non accedit, qui promittit Dominum incaute sequi. Sed ad omnia posse quis promittit? Dixisset cautius, Sequar te quocumque jusseris: humanius certe, Quocumque volueris. Sequar te quocumque ieris. Sic dicit qui inter se et Dominum quid intersit, ignorat; sic dicit qui Christum Deum non intelligit, sed magistrum. Sequar te quocumque ieris. Petrus per mare sequitur, sed submergitur; ad passionem sequitur, sed negat. Et si Petrus sic deficit, succumbit ad pauca: iste quis est, qui se ad omnia sequi Dominum sic promittit? Sequar te quocumque ieris. Sic dicit iste, quasi posset cum Christo subire conflictum, per ignominiam crucis adire gloriam, intrare mortis arcem, mortem mortificare per mortem, penetrare ignotos tartari sinus, dirumpere inferni vincula, saeculis jam duratas animas, oblitas luce, propria revocare ad corpora, concutere terram, saxa scindere, sepulcra reserare, educere sepultos ab inferis, testes suae resurrectionis afferre. Adhuc adjiciat iste ire quocumque vadit Christus, supersedeat humeris angelorum, conscendat coelos, consideat Patri, apicem teneat omnium coelestium dignitatum, ad ista Christum, ad haec Dominum, scriba stultus, superbus vernula sequi se Dominum cur promittit?

Sermon XIX.

On the scribe whom Christ did not allow to follow him

Today the Evangelist began thus: Jesus, seeing, he says, great crowds around him, ordered them to go across the water (Matt 8:18). Whenever the unteachable crowd spreads itself around the Lord, and is tossed in the storm of conscience, it leaves calm, seeks the waves, leaves the harbour, enters shipwrecks, and, straining for the heights, is plunged into the deep; then Christ orders this sea, troubled by such throngs, to be crossed. Jesus, seeing, he says, great crowds around him, ordered them to go across the water. Not that he might flee from men, he who had come for men's salvation; but he gives the foolish a truce in which to believe, he waits for the wanderers to return; he offers patience and pardon, he who does not wish to pronounce sentence; he bears with the stubborn, he who wishes not to destroy, but to save what he has made.

One of the scribes came up, he says, and said to him: Master, I will follow you wherever you go (Matt 8:19). He goes away, he does not come near, who rashly promises to follow the Lord. But who can promise to be equal to all things? He would have spoken more cautiously: "I will follow you wherever you command"; more humanly, certainly: "Wherever you wish." I will follow you wherever you go. So speaks one who does not know what difference there is between himself and the Lord; so speaks one who understands Christ to be not God, but a master. I will follow you wherever you go. Peter follows over the sea, but sinks; he follows to the Passion, but denies. And if Peter thus fails, and gives way at a few things, who is this man who thus promises to follow the Lord to all things? I will follow you wherever you go. So this man speaks, as though he could undergo the conflict with Christ, pass through the ignominy of the cross to glory, enter the citadel of death, put death to death by death, penetrate the unknown recesses of Tartarus, burst the chains of hell, call back to their own bodies souls held fast now for ages, forgetful of the light, shake the earth, split the rocks, unbar the sepulchres, lead the buried out of the underworld, bring forward the witnesses of his resurrection. Let him add further that he goes wherever Christ goes, sits upon the shoulders of the angels, ascends the heavens, sits beside the Father, holds the summit of all the heavenly dignities: to these things Christ, to these the Lord: why does a foolish scribe, a proud home-born slave, promise to follow his Lord?

Sed accipit a Christo tam dignum pro tanta praesumptione responsum: Vulpes foveas habent, et aves coeli nidos; Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet. Quid est hoc? Vulpes viribus infirma, calliditate potens, inventrix doli, fraudis artifex, simulationis magistra, simplicitatis vacua, plena strophis, avium domesticarum praedo, tectis familiaribus inimica, merito hanc Christus in typum format Herodis, principis Judaeorum, qui pristinae libertatis oblitus, sub Romana potestate consistens, dominabatur arte, calliditate regnabat, imperabat fraude, praesidebat dolis, simulatione pollebat; et quia ab exteris gentibus non valebat referre praedam, familiarem plebem, vernaculos populos, velut aves domesticas devorabat. Probat hoc Christus quando Herodi mandat: Ite, dicite vulpi illi. Vere vulpis, qui regnum dolis rapit, quod nec nascendo meruit, nec vivendo. Hic ergo Herodes in cordibus Scribarum usque ad necem Christi foveas sibi suorum scelerum collocavit: nec reliquit locum ubi Christus caput suum, quod Deus est, reclinaret.

Vulpes foveas habent et aves coeli nidos. Aves hic quoque appellat daemones in aere volitantes, qui et ipsi in pectoribus Scribarum malitiae suae nidos fecerunt, ubi tota nequitiae suae germina procrearent. Hinc est quod ubi se diabolus Judae animo immiscuit, mox et concepit doli fructum, et crimen peperit proditoris. Videtis quia Scribam Christus non repulit volentem, sed fingentem prodidit, et horruit praesumentem. Aut quare Christus, aut quare pietatis auctor, largitor salutis, istum venire volentem prohiberet, qui mox alium discipulum ire cupientem retinuit, ne abiret?

Alius, inquit, discipulus ait, Domine, permitte mihi primum ire et sepelire patrem meum. Jesus autem ait illi, Sequere me, et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos. Numquid sic Christus negat ultimum pietatis obsequium? vetat extremum munus parentibus, quod debetur? Non pietatis obsequium negat, sed divinam praeponit humanis affectibus servitutem. Audite quid discipulus dixerit. Permitte mihi primum ire, et sepelire patrem meum. Hoc ei non primum esse debuit, sed secundum; terrenus pater coelesti postponendus est patri.

Sequere me, et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos. Hoc est dicere, me sequere ad contumeliam passionis, ut mecum possis ad resurrectionis gloriam pervenire. Dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos. Fidei filius ad domum perfidiae cur rediret? Salutis proles perditum cum perditis cur defleret? Resurrectionis pignus ad sepulcra genitoris quid curaret? Sequere me, et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos. Quomodo mortui sepeliunt mortuos suos? Fratres, ipse dixit: Ego sum vita.

But he receives from Christ the answer such presumption deserves: Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head (Matt 8:20). What does this mean? The fox, weak in strength, mighty in cunning, inventor of guile, artificer of fraud, mistress of pretence, empty of simplicity, full of tricks, robber of the farmyard birds, enemy of the homes of the household: rightly does Christ make her the type of Herod, prince of the Jews, who, forgetful of their former liberty, standing under Roman power, ruled by art, reigned by cunning, commanded by fraud, presided by guile, prevailed by pretence; and because he could not carry off prey from foreign nations, he devoured his own people, the home-born peoples, like farmyard birds. Christ proves this when he sends word to Herod: Go, tell that fox (Luke 13:32). Truly a fox, he who seizes by guile a kingdom which he merited neither by birth nor by life. This Herod, then, set up for himself holes for his wickednesses in the hearts of the scribes, even to the killing of Christ: and he left no place where Christ might lay his head, which is God (1 Cor 11:3).

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests. Here too he calls birds the demons flying in the air, who themselves too made the nests of their malice in the breasts of the scribes, there to breed all the seeds of their wickedness. This is why, as soon as the devil mingled himself with the mind of Judas, he both conceived the fruit of guile and gave birth to the crime of the betrayer. You see that Christ did not repulse the scribe because he was willing, but exposed him because he was feigning, and shrank from him because he was presumptuous. Or why should Christ, why should the author of loving-kindness, the bestower of salvation, forbid this man who wished to come, he who soon after held back another disciple who wished to go, that he might not depart?

Another disciple, he says, said: Lord, let me first go and bury my father (Matt 8:21). But Jesus said to him: Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead (Matt 8:22). Can it be that Christ thus refuses the last homage of piety? That he forbids the last office to parents, which is owed them? He does not refuse the homage of piety, but he sets the divine servitude before human affections. Hear what the disciple said. Let me first go and bury my father. This ought to have been not first for him, but second; the earthly father must be placed after the heavenly Father.

Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead. That is to say: follow me to the insult of the Passion, so that with me you may come to the glory of the resurrection. Leave the dead to bury their own dead. Why should the son of faith go back to the house of unbelief? Why should the offspring of salvation weep for the lost one with the lost? What should the pledge of the resurrection care for the sepulchre of his begetter? Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead. How do the dead bury their own dead? Brothers, he himself said: I am the life (John 14:6).

Quod est anima corpori, hoc est animae Christus; sine anima corpus non vivit, non vivit anima sine Christo: recedente anima, mox corpori fetor, corruptio, putredo, vermis, cinis, horror et omnia visu detestanda succedunt: discedente Deo, confestim venit in animam peccatorum fetor, corruptio criminum, vitiorum putredo, conscientiae vermis, vanitatum cinis, infidelitatis horror, et fit in corporis sepulcro vivo funus animae jam sepultae.

Accedebat ad causam quod cadaver perfidiae perfidis agebatur obsequiis et impietatis ministerio pietas curabatur. Ingressus, inquit, Jesus domum principis, vidit symphoniam. Numquid tales piaculum de pietate non faciunt, qui ad luctum musicam, ad funera suorum extranea lamenta conducunt? ubi vero planctus non est, ibi est empta et mercenaria cantilena. Mortuum non artifex fistula, sed simplex plangit affectio. Christus ergo discipulum suum non deesse voluit exsequiis paternis, sed profanis luctibus noluit interesse.

What the soul is to the body, Christ is to the soul; without the soul the body does not live, the soul does not live without Christ: when the soul withdraws, at once stench, corruption, rottenness, the worm, ashes, horror and all things hateful to the sight succeed in the body: when God departs, at once there comes into the soul the stench of sins, the corruption of crimes, the rottenness of vices, the worm of conscience, the ashes of vanities, the horror of faithlessness, and in the living sepulchre of the body there is held the funeral of a soul already buried.

There was added to the case that the corpse of unbelief was being honoured with unbelieving obsequies, and piety was tended by the ministry of impiety. Jesus entered, he says, the house of the ruler, and saw the music-makers (Matt 9:23). Do not such people make a sacrilege out of piety, who hire music for mourning, strangers' laments for the funerals of their own? But where there is no lamentation, there is a bought and hired chant. It is not the artful pipe, but simple affection that mourns the dead. Christ, then, did not wish his disciple to be absent from his father's funeral rites, but he did not wish him to take part in profane mourning.

Sermo XX.

De sedata maris tempestate

Ecclesiasticae lectiones sic divino dispensantur arcano, ut et peritis scientiam conferant altiorem, et simplicibus salutaria intelligentiae gratiam largiantur. Ascendente, inquit, in naviculam Christo, fecisse motum magnum refertur ausa tempestas. Ascendente, inquit, eo in naviculam, secuti sunt eum discipuli ejus, et ecce motus magnus factus est in mari, ita ut navicula operiretur fluctibus, ipse autem dormiebat.

Mare quod pedibus Christi tumentia terga submisit, stravit in plano vertices suos, motu frenavit, astrinxit fluctus, et per liquentem viam saxea soliditate servivit modo; quid est quod usque ad periculum sui saevit, furit, contendit auctoris? Quid ipse Christus futurorum praescius, praesentium sic videbatur ignarus, ut instantem procellam, tempestatis horam, tempus periculi non caveret: sed inter vigilantes omnes tunc solus teneretur in somno, quando imminebat sibi suisque tam grande discrimen? Fratres, gubernatoris peritiam non probat temperies serena, sed procellosa tempestas: blandiente aura, navim regit ultimus nauta; in confusione ventorum, primi quaeritur ars magistri. Hinc est quod discipuli posteaquam viderunt sibi industriam nauticorum deperiisse, in se maria saevire, se fluctus petere, adversum se ventorum turbines convenisse, ad ipsum gubernatorem rerum, rectorem mundi, elementorum magistrum trepidi confugerunt, petentes ut sedaret fluctus, periculum submoveret, salutem redderet desperatis. Denique ubi jussio sola addixit mare, recussit ventos, tulit turbines, dedit quietem, navigantes ipsum esse omnium sentiunt, credunt, fatentur auctorem.

Sed jam quod intus est proferamus. Ubi Christus Ecclesiae suae navim mare saeculi transfretaturus ascendit, gentium flabra, Judaeorum turbines, persecutorum procellae, vulgi nubes, daemonum nebulae, sic ruerunt, ut totius mundi fieret una tempestas. Regum spumabant undae, fervebant potestatum fluctus, sonabat rabies subditorum, populorum gurgites rotabantur, perfidiae notabantur scopuli, mugiebant littora Christiana, lapsorum naufragia versabantur, et erat totius mundi unum discrimen, unumque naufragium.

Sermon XX.

On the stilling of the storm at sea

The readings of the Church are so dispensed by a divine secret counsel that they confer a higher knowledge on the learned, and lavish on the simple saving things, the grace of understanding. As Christ went up, he says, into the boat, a daring storm is related to have made a great commotion. As he went up, he says, into the boat, his disciples followed him; and behold, a great commotion arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered by the waves; but he was asleep (Matt 8:23–24).

The sea which bowed its swelling back beneath Christ's feet, laid its crests flat, reined in its motion, bound fast its waves, and along a liquid road served him once with the solidity of stone: why is it that it rages, raves, strives even to the peril of its author? Why did Christ himself, who foreknew the future, seem so ignorant of the present as to take no precaution against the coming squall, the hour of the storm, the time of danger, but, among all who were awake, he alone was then held in sleep, when so great a peril hung over himself and his own? Brothers, it is not calm weather that proves a helmsman's skill, but a stormy tempest: when the breeze is gentle, the lowest sailor steers the ship; in the confusion of the winds, the art of the chief master is sought. This is why the disciples, after they saw that the skill of the seamen had come to nothing, that the seas raged against them, the waves made for them, the whirlwinds of the winds had gathered against them, fled in alarm to the very helmsman of things, the ruler of the world, the master of the elements, asking him to calm the waves, remove the danger, give back safety to the desperate. Indeed, when his command alone had bound the sea, beaten back the winds, taken away the whirlwinds, given calm, the voyagers perceive, believe, acknowledge that he is the author of all things.

But let us now bring out what is within. When Christ, about to cross the sea of the world, went up into the ship of his Church, the blasts of the Gentiles, the whirlwinds of the Jews, the squalls of the persecutors, the clouds of the mob, the mists of the demons so rushed upon it that there was one storm of the whole world. The waves of kings foamed, the billows of the powers boiled, the rage of subjects roared, the whirlpools of peoples spun round, the rocks of unbelief stood out, the Christian shores bellowed, the shipwrecks of the lapsed were tossed about, and there was for the whole world one peril and one shipwreck.

Tunc discipuli accedunt ad Dominum, et suscitaverunt eum, dicentes: Domine, salva nos, perimus; et dicit eis Jesus, Quid timidi estis, modicae fidei? Suscitatus ergo a discipulis Christus, mare, hoc est, mundum, corripit, tranquillat orbem, reges mitigat, potestates placat, sedat fluctus, componit populos, Romanos efficit Christianos. Ex ipsis quoque, exsecutores verbi Christianae fidei reddidit, qui fuerant persecutores nominis Christiani. Hanc tranquillitatem servant principes Christiani, Ecclesia tenet, habet Christianitas, gentilitas admiratur.

Tunc, inquit, surgens imperavit ventis et mari, et facta est tranquillitas magna. Porro homines illi mirati sunt dicentes, Qualis est hic, quia et venti et mare obediunt ei? Discipuli sunt hi qui accedunt ad Dominum, qui suscitant eum, qui salvare se humili supplicatione deposcunt: homines vero dicuntur qui elementa Christo taliter obedisse mirantur. Vere homines sunt, et saeculi homines, qui mirantur ad obedientiam Christi mundum sic esse conversum, qui templorum vertice velut undarum tumores stupent sic esse dejectos, qui idolorum spumas, daemonum vident turbines sic fugisse, quos attonitos reddit Christiani nominis toto orbe profunda et diffusa tranquillitas. Et vere fratres, dormiente in morte Christo, in Ecclesia magna est exorta tempestas; resurgente a mortuis Christo, Ecclesiae reddita est, sicut scriptum est, tranquillitas magna. Modo nos dormientem in nobis Christum toto praecordium gemitu, fidei voce, Christianis lacrymis, ploratu alto, apostolicis clamoribus excitemus, et dicamus: Domine, salva nos, perimus.

Et quia lectio apte tempori convenit, et sicut scriptum est: Aquilo durus ventus, nomine autem Dexter vocatur qui nobis gentes sic feras, sic amaras advectat; hic ergo Aquilo ventus durus per Dextrum, per Africum, per Austrum, per Eurum diffundit se tristi turbine, maria confundit, delet aera, montes dejicit, sorbet urbes, provincias mergit, totius orbis cogit unum esse naufragium. Hinc est quod navicula Christi nunc tollitur ad coelum, nunc in trepidationum ima descendit, nunc Christi regitur viribus, nunc formidine jactatur, nunc operitur fluctibus passionum, nunc confessionum remigiis enatat. Sed nos fratres iterum atque iterum clamemus: Domine, salva nos, perimus. Et revera, fratres, si essemus unum, et humanum corpus, si eos qui pereunt nostra esse viscera crederemus, afflictione jejunii, precum gemitu, effusione fletuum, jugiter clamaremus: Domine, salva nos, perimus.

Then the disciples came to the Lord and roused him, saying: Lord, save us, we are perishing; and Jesus says to them: Why are you fearful, you of little faith? (Matt 8:25–26) Roused, then, by the disciples, Christ rebukes the sea, that is, the world; he calms the globe, softens kings, appeases powers, stills the waves, settles peoples, makes the Romans Christians. From among them too he made executors of the word of the Christian faith those who had been persecutors of the Christian name. This calm the Christian princes keep, the Church holds, Christendom possesses, the Gentile world admires.

Then, he says, rising, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm (Matt 8:26). But the men marvelled, saying: What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? (Matt 8:27) Those who come to the Lord, who rouse him, who beg with humble supplication to be saved, are disciples: but those who marvel that the elements so obeyed Christ are called men. They are truly men, and men of the world, who marvel that the world has been so turned to obedience to Christ, who are astonished that the summits of the temples have been so cast down like the swellings of the waves, who see the foam of the idols and the whirlwinds of the demons so put to flight; whom the deep and wide-spread calm of the Christian name throughout the whole world leaves thunderstruck. And truly, brothers, when Christ slept in death, a great storm arose in the Church; when Christ rose from the dead, there was given back to the Church, as it is written, a great calm. Now let us rouse Christ, who sleeps in us, with the whole groaning of our hearts, with the voice of faith, with Christian tears, with deep weeping, with apostolic cries, and let us say: Lord, save us, we are perishing.

And since the reading fits the time aptly, and as it is written: The north wind is a harsh wind, but by name it is called the Right-hand wind, the wind that brings upon us nations so fierce, so bitter; this north wind, then, a harsh wind, spreads itself in a grim whirlwind through the Right-hand wind, through the African wind, through the south wind, through the east wind; it confounds the seas, blots out the air, casts down mountains, swallows cities, sinks provinces, forces the whole world to be one shipwreck. This is why the little boat of Christ is now lifted to the sky, now goes down into the depths of alarms, now is steered by the strength of Christ, now is tossed by terror, now is covered by the waves of sufferings, now swims clear by the oars of confessions. But let us, brothers, cry out again and again: Lord, save us, we are perishing. And in truth, brothers, if we were one, and one human body, if we believed that those who are perishing are our own vitals, we would cry out unceasingly, with the affliction of fasting, with the groaning of prayers, with the outpouring of tears: Lord, save us, we are perishing.

Et studeremus nobis in nostris fratribus subvenire: nec furente gladio sanguinis nostri mare videremus in terris, nec tanta corporum, sed nec animarum jam naufragia sentiremus, atque humili voce precaremur: Domine, salva nos, perimus.

Nec tamen ulla compassio, pietas ulla, ullus pavor, quicumque pudor nos, vel compunctio exsuscitat ad dolorem. Dei, Dei est quod urgemur malis, quod verberamur semper, quod gentes valent, quod ruit grando, quod rubigo inficit, quod impietas potest, quod dominantur morbi, quod saevit mors, quod tremit terra: nos tamen nec tremimus, nec timemus, nec declinamus a malis, nec appetimus bona. Avaritia furit, anhelat pompa, iniquitas placet, aliena delectant, sed nostra pereunt; Dei flagella veniunt, sed nostrae provocant culpae. Si Deus justus, utique nostri misericors.

Fratres, revertamur ad Dominum, ut revertatur ad nos Deus; renuntiemus malis, ut respondeant bona: serviamus Deo bono, ut non malis gentibus et potestatibus iniquis serviamus, Christo Domino ac gubernatore nos auxiliante, honor cujus et majestas sine fine permanet in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

And we would be eager to help ourselves in our brothers: nor would we see, with the sword raging, a sea of our own blood on the land, nor would we now feel so many shipwrecks of bodies, nor indeed of souls; and we would pray with humble voice: Lord, save us, we are perishing.

And yet no compassion, no piety, no fright, no shame of any kind, or compunction rouses us to pain. It is God's doing, God's, that we are pressed by evils, that we are always scourged, that the nations prevail, that hail falls, that blight infects, that impiety has power, that diseases hold sway, that death rages, that the earth trembles: yet we neither tremble nor fear, nor turn aside from evils, nor seek good things. Avarice rages, pomp pants, iniquity pleases, other men's goods delight us, but our own perish; God's scourges come, but our faults provoke them. If God is just, he is surely merciful towards us.

Brothers, let us return to the Lord, that God may return to us; let us renounce evil things, that good things may answer us: let us serve the good God, that we may not serve evil nations and unjust powers, with Christ, our Lord and helmsman, helping us, whose honour and majesty remains without end for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo XXI.

De eadem

Quoties Christus nostra dormit in navi, et ignaviae nostrae somno soporatur in corpore, irruit procella tota confusione ventorum, saeviunt minaces undae, et dum spumosis fluctibus saepius elevantur et decidunt, amara navigantibus gignunt exspectatione naufragia, sicut praesens evangelistae lectio declaravit, dicens: Et ait illis Jesus illa die cum sero esset factum, transeamus contra; et dimittentes turbam, assumunt eum ita ut erat in navi. Et ait illis Jesus illa die. Qua die? illa nempe qua, juxta Isaiam, consurgit confringere terram; illa die, qua tota mundanae lucis claritas vesperascit; illa, qua imminente tentationum nocte crebrescunt imagines fugiendae vanitatum. Cum sero esset factum. Sero tunc est, cum tempus extremum et hora novissima sensibus humanis confusiones rerum nuntiant, quae procedunt. Transeamus contra. De terrenis ad coelestia, de praesentibus ad futura. Et bene contra, quia divina semper contraria sunt humanis: dum ista subjectos attrahunt ad fragilitatem, ad virtutem illa qui sequuntur, attollunt.

Et dimittentes turbam. Dimittunt turbam, qui popularem auram et vulgum deserunt incerto semper judicio pervagantem: neque addicti rumoribus humanis a virtutis itinere retardantur, sed de bono conscientiae stabiles et securi laudum et derogationum mendaces fluctus, Christo comitante, pertranseunt.

Et assumunt eum, inquit, ita ut erat in navi. Quid hoc? aliter est Christus in coelo, aliter habetur Christus in navi, aliter in majestate Patris, aliter in hominis humilitate sentitur, aliter coaeternus Patri, aliter aetatum nostrarum gradibus cernitur temporalis, aliter nostro dormit in corpore, aliter in sui vigilat Spiritus sanctitate. Assumunt eum ita ut erat, inquit, in navi.

Sermon XXI.

On the same

Whenever Christ sleeps in our ship and is lulled to sleep in our body by the sleep of our sloth, the squall bursts upon us with all the confusion of the winds, the threatening waves rage, and while again and again they are lifted up and fall back with foaming billows, they beget for the voyagers bitter shipwrecks in expectation, as the present reading of the Evangelist has declared, saying: And Jesus said to them on that day, when evening had come: Let us cross over to the opposite side; and leaving the crowd, they take him just as he was in the boat (Mark 4:35–36). And Jesus said to them on that day. What day? That day, surely, on which, according to Isaiah, he rises to shatter the earth (Isa 2:19); that day on which the whole brightness of the world's light turns to evening; that day on which, as the night of temptations draws on, the images of the vanities, which are to be fled, grow thick. When evening had come. It is evening then, when the last time and the final hour announce to human senses the confusions of things that are coming forth. Let us cross over to the opposite side. From earthly things to heavenly, from present things to future. And rightly opposite, because divine things are always opposite to human: while these draw down to frailty those who are subject to them, those lift up to virtue the ones who follow them.

And leaving the crowd. They leave the crowd who forsake popular favour and the mob that wanders about with an ever uncertain judgement: nor, bound over to human rumours, are they held back from the road of virtue, but, steady and secure in the good of their conscience, with Christ as their companion, they cross over the lying waves of praise and disparagement.

And they take him, he says, just as he was in the boat. What is this? Christ is one way in heaven, in another way he is held in the boat; one way in the majesty of the Father, in another way he is perceived in the lowliness of man; one way co-eternal with the Father, in another way he is seen, temporal, through the stages of our ages; one way he sleeps in our body, in another way he keeps watch in the holiness of his Spirit. They take him just as he was, he says, in the boat.

Laus fidei est, ita Christum recipere ut est et habetur in navi, hoc est in Ecclesia: ubi natus, ubi adolevit, ubi passus, ubi crucifixus, ubi sepultus, ubi ascendisse in coelum, Patris ad dexteram consedisse, unde vivorum et mortuorum judicem esse venturum singularis salutis est confiteri; qui taliter in navi nostra Christum confessus assumpserit, et si tunditur fluctuum scandalis, non tamen periculis mergitur, et operitur undarum.

Et facta est, inquit, procella magna venti et fluctus mittebat in navim, ita ut adimpleretur navis. Et facta est procella magna: non ausa est explorare Domini dormientis virtutem, sed discipulorum pulsare fidem, timorem prodere, ut auctori suo quantum servitutis deberet, ostenderet.

Et erat, inquit, in puppi dormiens. Ad dormientem confugiunt vigilantes; et credunt obsistere saevientibus elementis eum cui somnum dominari summa compressione conspiciunt: contemplantur irruisse taliter humanae necessitatis soporem; ut nec fragore maris, nec clamore fluctuum, nec extremo imminente naufragio potuerit suscitari. Et ubi est illud: Ecce non dormitabit, neque obdormiet, qui custodit Israel? Per se non dormit, neque sibi dormitat majestas expers lassitudinis, quietis ignara; sed totum per me mihi agit, qui quoties speciem sui actus, sui vultus immutat, toties nostrarum varietates arguit, et culpas animarum. Audi prophetam dicentem: Palpebrae ejus interrogant filios hominum. Videte quemadmodum Dei oculi clauduntur, ne videant eos, ut vindicent, qui delinquunt. Averte, inquit, faciem tuam a peccatis meis. Et iterum patent, ut currentes incitent, lassescentes erigant, respiciant supplicantes. Hic ergo Domini somnus explorat discipulorum fidem, dubitationem prodit, et modicae eos credulitatis aperit esse, qui non modo in se tantum, sed in ipsum auctorem credunt posse elementa consurgere.

Fluctus, inquit, mittebat in navim. Quia Dominicam navem, quantum extrinsecus quatiunt et infundunt undae gentium moles, tantum intrinsecus tumidi haereticorum irruunt et desaeviunt fluctus. Hanc tempestatem beatus Paulus se pertulisse declarat, cum dicit: Foris pugnae, intus timores. Ita, ut adimpleretur navis. Merito spumosis fluctibus evangelista refert fuisse navem repletam, cum tot pene haereses Ecclesia patiatur quot divinae legis legimus esse quaestiones.

It is the praise of faith to receive Christ as he is and is held in the boat, that is, in the Church: where he was born, where he grew up, where he suffered, where he was crucified, where he was buried, where it is of singular salvation to confess that he ascended into heaven, sat down at the right hand of the Father, and will come thence as judge of the living and the dead; he who, having so confessed Christ, has taken him into our boat, even if he is battered by the offences of the waves, is yet not sunk by the dangers, nor covered by the waters.

And there arose, he says, a great squall of wind, and it was sending the waves into the boat, so that the boat was filled (Mark 4:37). And there arose a great squall: it did not dare to test the power of the sleeping Lord, but to strike at the disciples' faith, to expose their fear, so as to show how much servitude it owed to its author.

And he was, he says, asleep in the stern (Mark 4:38). To one asleep those who are awake flee for refuge; and they believe that he can withstand the raging elements whom they see held in the deepest grip of sleep: they observe that the slumber of human necessity had come upon him in such a way that he could be roused neither by the crash of the sea, nor by the roar of the waves, nor by the final shipwreck that threatened. And where is that word: Behold, he will not slumber nor sleep, he who keeps Israel? (Ps 121:4) The majesty that knows no weariness, that is ignorant of rest, does not sleep on its own account, nor slumber for itself; but he does all things through me, for me: he who, as often as he changes the appearance of his action, of his countenance, so often reproves our changes and the faults of our souls. Hear the Prophet saying: His eyelids question the sons of men (Ps 11:4). See how the eyes of God are closed, lest they should look, to punish them, on those who sin. Turn away, he says, your face from my sins (Ps 51:11). And again they open, to spur on those who run, to raise up those who grow weary, to look upon those who pray. This sleep of the Lord, then, tests the disciples' faith, exposes their doubt, and reveals them to be of little belief, since they believe that the elements can rise up not only against themselves but against their very author.

It was sending, he says, the waves into the boat. For as much as the masses of the Gentiles, like waves, shake the Lord's ship from outside and pour into it, so much do the swollen billows of the heretics burst in and rage within. This storm blessed Paul declares that he endured, when he says: Fightings without, fears within (2 Cor 7:5). So that the boat was filled. Rightly does the Evangelist relate that the boat was filled with foaming waves, since the Church suffers almost as many heresies as we read there are questions of the divine law.

Et erat, ait, ipse in puppi dormiens super cervicale; et excitant eum, et dicunt ei, Magister, non ad te pertinet quia perimus? et exsurgens, comminatus est vento, et dixit mari: tace et obmutesce; et cessavit ventus, et facta est tranquillitas magna. Et ait illis, quid timidi estis, necdum habetis fidem? Dum factum pandit lectio, tempus commendat exemplo. Siquidem magna et satis gravis imminet procellosa tempestas, dum se undique furens ac perniciosus ingerit turbo ventorum: maria mugiunt: ipsae quoque insulae funditus subruuntur, et tristi sonitu littora universa feriuntur.

Sed quia, ut diximus, Christus nostra dormit in navi, accedamus ad eum magis fide quam corpore, et pulsemus eum plus opere misericordiae quam desperantium tactu. Suscitemus non insolenti strepitu, sed clamore spiritualium canticorum; non murmuratione improba, sed supplicatione pervigili. Demus Deo aliquid temporis vitae nostrae, ne totam diem infelix ista vanitas et sollicitudo miseranda consumet; ne noctem totam perniciosus somnus et inanis sopor expendat, sed itidem pars diei et noctis ipsi temporum deputetur auctori. Vigila, homo, vigila; habes exemplum, ut quod tibi gallus impendit hospiti, tu tuo exhibeas creatori; praesertim cum tibi ille insonat profuturus, cum te ad opus suscitat, cum diem nuntiat jam vicinum: quanto magis hymnis coelestibus te Deum de superna sede tuam suscitare convenit in salutem. Audi prophetam dicentem: De nocte spiritus meus vigilat ad te Deus. Et Psalmista: Manibus meis nocte coram eo, et non sum deceptus. Diei vero tria tempora idem Psalmista Deo admonet deputanda, dicens, Vespere et mane, et meridie narrabo, et annuntiabo, et exaudiet vocem meam. Per quae tria tempora dum Daniel Deo sedulus supplicaret: impetravit non solum praescientiam futurorum, sed et captivae diu gentis suae meruit libertatem.

Dicamus ergo quod propheta: Exsurge, quare obdormis, Domine? Exsurge, et ne repellas usque in finem. Dicamus cum apostolis: Magister, non ad te pertinet quia perimus? Et vero magister, quia non solum factor est omnium elementorum, sed etiam moderator et rector est, qui cum nos audierit, cum fuerit evigilare dignatus, planabuntur undae, et tumidi fluctus sternentur, et colles; venti diffugient, peribit procella, et tempestas ista quae imminet, et magna tempestas in tranquillitatem maximam commutabitur.

And he himself, he says, was in the stern, asleep on a cushion; and they wake him and say to him: Master, does it not concern you that we are perishing? And rising, he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: Be silent and be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm (Mark 4:38–39). And he said to them: Why are you fearful? Have you not yet faith? (Mark 4:40) While the reading lays open the event, it commends the present time by its example. For a great and very heavy, stormy tempest is hanging over us, while the raging and destructive whirlwind of the winds thrusts itself in from every side: the seas bellow: the very islands are overturned from their foundations, and all the shores are struck with a mournful sound.

But since, as we have said, Christ sleeps in our ship, let us approach him more by faith than by body, and let us knock at his door more with the work of mercy than with the touch of the desperate. Let us rouse him, not with insolent din, but with the cry of spiritual songs; not with wicked murmuring, but with watchful supplication. Let us give God some of the time of our life, lest this unhappy vanity and pitiable solicitude consume the whole day, lest destructive sleep and empty slumber spend the whole night; but likewise let a part of the day and of the night be assigned to the very author of times. Watch, man, watch; you have an example: what the cock bestows on you, his host, you should show to your Creator; especially since he sounds out to you for your profit, when he rouses you to work, when he announces the day already near: how much more fitting is it that with heavenly hymns you rouse your God from his seat on high to your salvation. Hear the prophet saying: In the night my spirit keeps watch for you, O God (Isa 26:9). And the Psalmist: With my hands by night before him, and I have not been deceived (Ps 77:3). But the same Psalmist admonishes that three times of the day are to be assigned to God, saying: Evening and morning and noon I will tell and proclaim, and he will hear my voice (Ps 55:18). While Daniel diligently prayed to God at these three times (Dan 6:11), he obtained not only foreknowledge of the future, but also merited the freedom of his people, long held captive.

Let us say, then, what the Prophet said: Arise, why do you sleep, O Lord? (Ps 44:24) Arise, and do not cast us off for ever. Let us say with the apostles: Master, does it not concern you that we are perishing? And a master indeed, since he is not only the Maker of all the elements, but also their moderator and ruler: when he has heard us, when he has deigned to awake, the waves will be levelled, and the swollen billows laid low, and the hills; the winds will scatter, the squall will perish, and this storm which is hanging over us, this great storm, will be changed into the greatest calm.

Sermo XXII.

De terrenorum cura despicienda, deque servo vigili

Praemia statuuntur his semper quibus certamina dura proponuntur, ac pro magnitudine certaminis praemii proponitur magnitudo. Hinc est quod discipulis suis Christus regnum ponit in gremio, ut in certamine non cedant periculis, non timori; pericula despicit, qui tendit ad regnum; victoriae cupidus nescit timere.

Nolite timere, inquit, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. Grex pusillus mundo, magnus Deo; pusillus, quia gloriosos vocat eos, quos instituit ad ovium innocentiam et mansuetudinem Christianam: pusillus grex est, qui non de magno minuitur, sed crescit de pusillo; pusillus grex nascentis Ecclesiae sic designat infantiam, quam venire ad regni sui infulas incrementis coelestibus mox promittit. Nolite timere, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum.

Adjecit quid faciendum sit regnaturus: Vendite quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam; facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt, thesaurum non deficientem in coelo. Vendite quae possidetis: non potest dominari omnibus, nisi is qui propriis non tenetur; dejectae mentis est, qui familiaris rei meminit cum vocatur ad regnum; jacens animus plebeius nummulum thesauris regalibus anteponit; pauper sensus, parvis incubans, perdit magna; et inhians temporalibus, deserit sempiterna. Vendite, inquit, quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam; facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt, thesaurum non deficientem in coelo. Homo, tali monitu Christus te ditare voluit, non nudare; manere tibi tua voluit, non perire; perpetuari, non vacuari sacculos imperavit; jussit te transferre, non perdere.

Thesaurum non deficientem in coelo, quo fur non appropiat, neque tinea corrumpit. Plus consilio patris agit, quam jure dominantis: inter insidias latronum et tinearum morsus quare tua recondas objurgat; pervigiles noctes, dies anxios, sollicita tempora, ne tibi ipse facias, commoneris. Auri custos, servator argenti, securitatem non habet, nescit quietem, et cui deest securitas, quies perit; poena dives est ille, non censu. Thesaurum non deficientem in coelo. Hoc est dicere, ubi ego sum, ibi ponite; data mihi ego servo.

Sermon XXII.

On despising the care of earthly things, and on the watchful servant

Rewards are always appointed for those before whom hard contests are set, and the greatness of the reward is set according to the greatness of the contest. This is why Christ places the kingdom in the lap of his disciples, so that in the contest they may not yield to dangers, nor to fear; he who strives towards a kingdom despises dangers; he who is eager for victory does not know how to fear.

Do not be afraid, he says, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32). A flock little to the world, great to God; little, because he calls glorious those whom he has formed to the innocence of sheep and to Christian gentleness: a little flock is one that is not diminished from great, but grows from little; the little flock thus marks out the infancy of the newborn Church, which he promises will soon come, by heavenly increase, to the insignia of his kingdom. Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.

He added what one who is to reign must do: Sell what you possess, and give alms; make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, a treasure that does not fail, in heaven (Luke 12:33). Sell what you possess: no one can be master of all things unless he is not held by his own; it is the mark of an abject mind to remember his household affairs when he is called to a kingdom; the low, plebeian heart sets a little coin before royal treasures; a poor understanding, brooding over little things, loses great ones; and, gaping after temporal things, forsakes everlasting ones. Sell, he says, what you possess, and give alms; make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, a treasure that does not fail, in heaven. Man, by such a warning Christ wished to enrich you, not to strip you; he wished your goods to remain yours, not to perish; he commanded the purses to be made everlasting, not to be emptied; he bade you transfer, not lose.

A treasure that does not fail, in heaven, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys. He acts more by a father's counsel than by a master's right: he rebukes you for hiding your goods amid the snares of robbers and the bites of moths; you are warned not to make for yourself sleepless nights, anxious days, troubled times. The guardian of gold, the keeper of silver, has no security, knows no rest; and he who lacks security loses rest; that man is rich in punishment, not in wealth. A treasure that does not fail, in heaven. That is to say: where I am, there put it; what is given to me, I keep.

Homo, da Patri, crede Deo, quia et haeredi Pater, et Deus homini creditum non negabit; tenere tua non potest, quia sua dedit. An humanis indiget, qui divina largitur? an est nostrorum cupidus, qui nos suorum fecit haeredes? certe quibus regnum contulit, quid negabit? O homo, si sic permansurus es, quae tua sunt hic repone: si illuc iturus es, hic quae tua sunt cur derelinquis? Qui relinquenda servat, alienorum custos est, non suorum.

Si in hac vita, qua peregrini sumus, vivimus, et modicum temporalem esse pauperem dolet, tristem, inhonorum esse: quale erit in perpetua patria inter aeternos cives, de contemptu dolorem, de ignobilitate poenam, de nuditate opprobrium sustinere; et nunc addici poenis, quando alii promoventur ad regnum? quando pauper ducitur ad consessum Dei, et dives trahitur ad consortium punitorum? Heu quam lamentandae vices, quando desperati penes homines possidebunt spem divinam, et humanis bonis praediti bonis coelestibus fraudabuntur! Et hoc facit thesaurus, qui cor hominis, aut per eleemosynam levat ad coelum, aut per avaritiam demergit in terram. Et ideo dixit: Ubi enim thesaurus vester est, ibi et cor vestrum erit. Homo, mitte et praemitte thesaurum tuum in coelos, ne coelestem animam demergas in terram. Aurum de profundo terrae, anima ab excelsis coeli. Melius proinde est ad sedem animae deferri aurum, quam in sepulcro auri anima demergatur.

Exutos ergo totis divitiarum curis, et jam per omnia expeditos militare sibi in saeculo jubet, quos regnare donavit in coelo. Sint lumbi vestri praecincti, et lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris et vos similes hominibus exspectantibus dominum suum, quando veniat a nuptiis. Sint lumbi vestri praecincti: ibi praecingenda est virtus, ubi voluptas est comprimenda. Nescit vincere vitia corporis, virtutis cingulum qui deponit. Cincti ergo castitatis baltheo, quod est insigne militiae Christianae, fluxam carnis detruncemus ignaviam, et regis nostri exspectatione pervigiles insomnem somnum saeculi nesciamus. Non dormiunt, inquit, nisi cum male fecerint .

Et lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris. Beati, in quorum manibus bonorum operum lucent lucernae. Sic enim: Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant bona vestra opera, et magnificent Patrem vestrum qui est in coelis. Et ut lucerna ante oculos, opus bonum in mentibus sic refulget. Non portanti tantum lucerna lucet, sed multis, et opus bonum dum facto in uno lucet, multos illustrat exemplo. Lucerna repellit noctium obscura, opus bonum malitiae fugat tenebras. Accendamus lucernam bonis operibus in manibus nostris, si volumus coram Domino et hominibus nos lucere.

Man, give to the Father, lend to God: for neither will the Father deny the heir, nor God deny man, what has been lent; he cannot keep what is yours, he who gave what is his. Does he who lavishes divine things need human things? Is he greedy for what is ours, who made us heirs of what is his? Surely, what will he deny to those on whom he has conferred a kingdom? O man, if you are to remain here as you are, store up here what is yours: if you are going there, why do you leave here what is yours? He who keeps what must be left behind is the guardian of what belongs to others, not of his own.

If in this life, in which we are pilgrims, we live, and it pains us to be poor for a little while, sad, without honour: what will it be in the everlasting homeland, among eternal citizens, to endure pain from contempt, punishment from ignominy, reproach from nakedness; and then to be bound over to punishments, when others are promoted to the kingdom? when the poor man is led to sit with God, and the rich man is dragged into the fellowship of the punished? Alas, how lamentable the reversal, when those despaired of among men will possess the divine hope, and those endowed with human goods will be cheated of heavenly goods! And this the treasure does, which either lifts man's heart to heaven through almsgiving, or sinks it into the earth through avarice. And therefore he said: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke 12:34). Man, send, send ahead your treasure into the heavens, lest you sink your heavenly soul into the earth. Gold is from the depth of the earth, the soul from the heights of heaven. It is better, therefore, that gold be carried to the seat of the soul than that the soul be sunk in the sepulchre of gold.

Those, then, whom he has granted to reign in heaven, stripped of all the cares of riches and now unencumbered in every way, he bids serve as his soldiers in the world. Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands; and you be like men waiting for their master, when he comes back from the wedding (Luke 12:35–36). Let your loins be girded: virtue must be girded there where pleasure must be restrained. He does not know how to conquer the vices of the body who lays aside the belt of virtue. Girded, then, with the baldric of chastity, which is the badge of the Christian service, let us cut away the loose sloth of the flesh, and, keeping watch in expectation of our king, let us not know the sleepless sleep of the world. They do not sleep, he says, unless they have done evil (Prov 4:16).

And lamps burning in your hands. Blessed are those in whose hands the lamps of good works shine. For so it is: Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16). And as a lamp before the eyes, so a good work shines out in minds. A lamp shines not only for the one who carries it, but for many; and a good work, while it shines in the deed of one, enlightens many by its example. A lamp drives back the obscurity of the nights, a good work puts to flight the darkness of malice. Let us kindle the lamp by good works in our hands, if we wish to shine before the Lord and before men.

Et vos similes hominibus exspectantibus dominum suum, quando veniat a nuptiis. Quia semper nuptiis amicae sunt faces, luminum testimonio celebratur castitas nuptiarum. Sicut enim fugit lucem illicita qui praesumit, sic multiplici coruscat in lumine licita qui requirit. Et vos similes hominibus exspectantibus dominum suum, quando veniat a nuptiis. Homines sunt qui more debitae servitutis indefessis excubiis adventum sui domini praestolantur; qui vero sic ventri serviunt, ut divinam nesciant servitutem, et de carnis voluptate solliciti, sollicitudinem occursus Dominici perdiderunt, homines non vocandi sunt, sed jumenta. Et vos similes hominibus exspectantibus dominum suum, quando veniat a nuptiis. Ex quo ad desponsandum suam Ecclesiam Christus advenit, thalamus ornatur sponsae: et ornatur auro fidei, argento sapientiae, virtutum gemmis, sanctitatis velis, verecundiae rosis, liliis castitatis, pudoris violis. Et ad alta coeli pudicitiae templum, fastigium virginitatis attollitur: nec desunt psalmorum citharae, prophetica organa, apostolorum voces, totaeque symphoniae coelestium nuptiarum. Satis servus somni est, qui tali et tanto clamore non ad coelestis regis nuptias suscitatur.

Et vos similes hominibus exspectantibus dominum suum, quando veniat a nuptiis, ut cum venerit et pulsaverit, confestim aperiant ei. Veniens pulsat, cor bene conscius aperit, male conscius claudit; justa mens patescit ad praemium, injusta, quia non meruit, se praecludit.

Vigilemus ergo, dilectissimi, ut beatitudinem quae sequitur consequamur. Beati servi illi quos cum venerit dominus invenerit vigilantes. Sufficiant beatitudinis haec promissa, sed quia Christus ipsius beatitudinis eloquitur charitatem, differamus hodie, ut plenius audiamus quid suis filiis promiserit talis Pater.

And you be like men waiting for their master, when he comes back from the wedding. Because torches are always friends to weddings, the chastity of a wedding is celebrated with the testimony of lights. For as he who presumes upon unlawful things flees the light, so he who seeks lawful things shines out in manifold light. And you be like men waiting for their master, when he comes back from the wedding. Men are those who, in the manner of the servitude they owe, await the coming of their master with unwearied watches; but those who so serve the belly that they do not know the divine servitude, and, solicitous for the pleasure of the flesh, have lost their solicitude for going out to meet the Lord, are not to be called men, but beasts. And you be like men waiting for their master, when he comes back from the wedding. Since Christ came to betroth his Church, the bride's chamber is adorned: and it is adorned with the gold of faith, the silver of wisdom, the gems of the virtues, the veils of holiness, the roses of bashfulness, the lilies of chastity, the violets of modesty. And the temple of purity, the pinnacle of virginity, is raised to the heights of heaven: nor are the harps of the psalms lacking, the instruments of the prophets, the voices of the apostles, and all the harmonies of the heavenly wedding. He is indeed a slave of sleep who is not roused to the wedding of the heavenly king by such and so great a clamour.

And you be like men waiting for their master, when he comes back from the wedding, so that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him at once. Coming, he knocks; the heart that has a good conscience opens, the heart that has a bad conscience shuts; the just mind opens to the reward, the unjust shuts itself off, because it has not deserved it.

Let us watch, then, dearly beloved, that we may attain the blessedness that follows. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, finds watching (Luke 12:37). Let these promises of blessedness suffice; but since Christ speaks of the charity of that blessedness itself, let us put it off today, that we may hear more fully what such a Father has promised his sons.

Sermo XXIII.

De terrenorum cura despicienda et promissione regni

Audistis hodie quemadmodum Dominus pastorali jubilo clangorem tubae coelestis adjunxit, ut diu inclinatas ovium mentes ad divina tolleret, coeleste protinus promoveret ad regnum. Nolite, inquit, timere, pusillus grex, quoniam complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. Acquisivit humilitas superbia quod amisit, et grex pusillus ac mitis totas et varias edomuit propria mansuetudine feritates. Pusillus grex vicit ac fregit tot genera bestiarum quot diversitates subdidit jugo Christi nationum. Grex pusillus ac mitis diu contentus occidi, diu devorari passus est, donec gentilis saevitia sanguine satiata, vel carnibus, evangelici pabuli suavitatem, et divini fontis fluenta degustans, totum contagium saeculi evitaret, et pastum; atque in hominem rediret ex bestia, qui ex homine fuerat dilapsus in bestiam. Hoc sensisse ante prophetas, hoc apostolos implesse, hoc pertulisse martyres constat, attestante illo qui dicit, Propter te mortificamur tota die, aestimati sumus ut oves occisionis.

Ut vero iste grex novi ordinis aggrederetur praelium, ubi vivit ille qui fuerit occisus, qui occubuerit, vincit; invenit animam qui amittit; imitatus est suum regem, illam ovem, illum secutus est Agnum, qui sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est, et sicut agnus coram tondente se, non aperuit os suum. Tacet, qui volens patitur, clamat qui laniatur invitus. Nec potest de morte conqueri, qui mortem dignatus, non coactus, assumit. Potestatis insigne est, cum pro multis volens quis moritur; nolens cum moritur, est necessitatis extremae, quia venit de contemptu mortis alterum, alterum de conditione naturae. Christus ergo sicut ovis, et volens, et tacens tondetur ut tegat illam quam Adam primus intulit nuditatem; velut agnus occiditur, ut peccatum totius mundi immolatus absolvat; ponit pro ovibus animam suam, ut impleat et pietatem pastoris et curam. Tibi ergo rex, tibi sacerdos, tibi pastor, tibi sacrificium, tibi ovis, tibi Agnus, tibi totum factus est, qui fecerat totum. Et qui sibi numquam, tibi toties immutatur, propter te varias monstratur in formas, qui manet unica suae majestatis in forma. Et quid plura? dat se tibi Deus homo ut ferre potes, quia ut est tu non potes sustinere.

Sermon XXIII.

On despising the care of earthly things and on the promise of the kingdom

You have heard today how the Lord joined the blast of the heavenly trumpet to the shepherd's song of joy, so as to lift to divine things the minds of the sheep, long bowed down, and to promote them forthwith to the heavenly kingdom. Do not be afraid, he says, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32). Humility has acquired what pride lost, and the little and gentle flock has tamed by its own meekness every ferocity in all its variety. The little flock conquered and broke as many kinds of beasts as it subjected diversities of nations to the yoke of Christ. The little and gentle flock was long content to be slain, long suffered itself to be devoured, until the savagery of the Gentiles, sated with blood or with flesh, tasting the sweetness of the Gospel pasture and the streams of the divine fount, should shun the whole contagion and the fodder of the world, and should return from beast to man, he who had slipped from man into a beast. That the prophets foresaw this, that the apostles fulfilled it, that the martyrs endured it, is certain, as he bears witness who says: For your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter (Ps 44:23).

But as this flock of a new order went into battle, where he lives who has been slain, he who has fallen conquers, he finds his soul who loses it, it imitated its king; it followed that sheep, that Lamb, who like a sheep was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer, he did not open his mouth (Isa 53:7). He is silent who suffers willingly; he cries out who is torn against his will. Nor can he complain of death who assumes death because he has deigned to, not because he is compelled. It is a mark of power when someone dies willingly for many; when one dies unwillingly, it is a matter of extreme necessity: for the one comes from contempt of death, the other from the condition of nature. Christ, then, like a sheep, both willing and silent, is shorn, to cover that nakedness which Adam first brought in; like a lamb he is slain, that, sacrificed, he may absolve the sin of the whole world; he lays down his life for the sheep, to fulfil both the loving-kindness and the care of a shepherd. For you, then, king, for you priest, for you shepherd, for you sacrifice, for you sheep, for you Lamb, for you all things he became, who had made all things. And he who never changes for himself is changed so often for you; for your sake he is shown in various forms, he who remains in the one only form of his majesty. And what more? God man gives himself to you as you are able to bear him, because as he is you cannot endure him.

Sed audiamus jam quid pusillo gregi talis promiserit pastor. Nolite, inquit, timere, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. O bonitas effusa! O inaudita pietas! O ineffabilis affectio! In societate census pastor oves assumit, atque ad consortium dominationis servos dominus asciscit; ad participatum regni rex gregem populi totius admittit: sic, sic dat, cui deficere census, cui regnum minui, vacuari potestas non potest largiendo.

Providenter autem coepit Dominus, dicendo: Nolite timere, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. Promissionem regni sine timore servilis status audire non sufficit, quia qui libertate vix dignus est, capere non valet infulas principatus. Dominus ergo servorum mentes tali voce confirmat, ne eos repentinus promissi regni prosternat auditus. Regnum velle servum, crimen est adire periculum; temeritas non timere. Sed hoc ad Christum quantum est? aut quam mirum, quod dat servis regnum, quod sibi servos facit in dominatione consortes, qui servorum pedes lavat, ut extrema servis serviat servitute? Veniant huc, veniant, qui discutiunt potestatem ejus, et tunc de ejus aequitate contendant, cum potuerint tantam capere, loqui, aestimare pietatem; nec jam calumnientur, si se in nostro corpore patre minorem dicat, qui non dicto, sed et facto, cum pedes lavat servorum, se subdidit et subjecit pedibus servulorum. Homo, jam tibi parce, quia ut tibi parceres, tuos Deus lavit, tuos tenuit, tuos amplexatus est pedes.

Sed ad coepta redeamus: Nolite timere, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. Ecce qui dat, dare loquitur Patrem. Numquid largitatem suam denegat, sic dicendo? Absit, non potestatem minuit, sed pandit affectum: sic dicendo non distantiam facit, sed patris, suamque voluntatem monstrat, firmat unitatem. Quod autem dixit, complacuit, et non dixit, placuit; munus edocet Trinitatis, quia quod erga nos Filio placuit, hoc complacuit Trinitati.

Nolite timere, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum: post tantam ergo Dominus largitatem, post suam gratiam tibi copiosius collatam, abjecta et vilia peculia servitutis jubet abjicere regnaturum. Vendite quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam. Plebeium cultum regia non admittit potestas, augustus honor non nisi diademate confertur et purpura. Abjicere ergo debet habitum servitutis, qui se regem credit divinitus consecratum.

But let us now hear what such a shepherd has promised to the little flock. Do not be afraid, he says, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. O goodness poured out! O loving-kindness unheard of! O affection beyond words! Into the society of his wealth the shepherd takes his sheep, and into the fellowship of his lordship the master admits his servants; into a share of the kingdom the king admits the flock of the whole people: thus, thus does he give, whose wealth cannot fail, whose kingdom cannot be diminished, whose power cannot be emptied by his giving.

But the Lord began providently, saying: Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. The servile state is not equal to hearing the promise of a kingdom without fear, because he who is scarcely worthy of freedom is unable to take in the insignia of a princedom. So the Lord strengthens the minds of his servants with such a word, lest the sudden hearing of the promised kingdom lay them prostrate. For a servant to want a kingdom is a crime; to approach it, a danger; not to fear, rashness. But how much is this to Christ? Or what wonder is it that he gives his servants a kingdom, that he makes servants sharers with himself in lordship, he who washes the servants' feet, so as to serve his servants with the utmost servitude? Let them come here, let them come, who dispute his power, and then let them contend about his equality, when they have been able to grasp, to speak, to measure such loving-kindness; and let them no longer slander him if he says that in our body he is less than the Father, he who not by word only but by deed as well, when he washes the feet of servants, has subjected and submitted himself to the feet of little servants. Man, spare yourself now, because, that you might spare yourself, God washed your feet, held your feet, embraced your feet.

But let us return to what we began: Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased (complacuit) your Father to give you the kingdom. Behold, he who gives says that the Father gives. Can it be that by speaking so he disowns his own generosity? Far from it: he does not diminish his power, but lays open his affection: speaking so, he does not make a distance, but shows the will of the Father and his own, he confirms the unity. That he said "complacuit", and did not say "placuit", teaches the gift of the Trinity: because what pleased the Son towards us, this pleased the Trinity together.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom: after so great a generosity, then, after his grace so abundantly bestowed on you, the Lord bids you, who are to reign, cast away the abject and vile peculium of servitude. Sell what you possess, and give alms. Royal power does not admit plebeian dress; august honour is conferred only with the diadem and the purple. He, then, who believes himself divinely consecrated king must cast off the garb of servitude.

Hinc est quod rex supernus illum, qui cum indigna veste majestatis ejus ausus est intrare convivium, ligari, praecipitari, detrudi in tenebras jussit exteriores, quia deformitas invitati ad invitantis redundat injuriam. Peculia quoque pristinae libertatis, jam divitiis, jam regiis ditatus opibus qui reservat, captivus miseria se nescit esse felicem. Est consuetudinis, est animi felicis, ut adscitus ad regnum, quod fuit proprium, quod privatum, mox parentibus, mox propinquis, civibus indigentibus liberaliter prorogare, ne sit mendicus animo, qui censu functus est et honore. Tali ergo providentia Dominus, consilio tali, vilia et caduca jubet ut vendamus, ut largiamur, ut donemus, qui in coelesti regno omnia quae in coelo, et quae in terra sunt, volumus possidere.

Sed si vis servare tuorum pretia praediorum, et sacculorum forte condita te delectant, fac tibi sacculos quales ille praecepit, qui jam cupiditatis tuae custos est et provisor. Denique, ut vidit, quod duriter dixit: Vendite quae possidetis, mox adjecit: Facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt, thesaurum non deficientem in coelis. Iterum contristatus es, quia quod habes, in coelis cogeris collocare? Rogo, crede Deo tuo, qui servo credis, et magis Deo quam homini commenda. Sed si times ne quid inde praesumat, ne quid dispergat pietas largitoris, signa fidei annulo sacculos tuos, ut tali custode dormias tu securus, quia ubi ille est, ibi locus nullus est furi. Non poterit tibi tuam pecuniam denegare, qui tibi omnia sua contulit, qui te regni sui et honore ditavit et gloria.

This is why the king on high ordered that man who dared to enter the banquet of his majesty in an unworthy garment to be bound, cast out, thrust into the outer darkness (Matt 22:13), because the unseemliness of the one invited redounds to the insult of the one who invites. He also who, now enriched with riches, with royal wealth, keeps back the peculium of his former liberty, a captive to wretchedness, does not know that he is happy. It is the custom, it is the mark of a happy mind, that one who has been raised to a kingdom should at once liberally dispense what was his own, what was private, to parents, to kinsmen, to needy citizens, lest he who has attained wealth and honour be a beggar in mind. With such providence, then, with such counsel, the Lord bids us sell, bestow, give away what is vile and perishable, we who wish to possess in the heavenly kingdom all things that are in heaven and on earth.

But if you wish to keep the prices of your estates, and if perhaps the hoards in purses delight you, make yourself purses such as he commanded, who is now the guardian and provider of your desire. Indeed, when he saw that he had spoken harshly, Sell what you possess, he at once added: Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, a treasure that does not fail, in the heavens. Are you saddened again, because you are compelled to place what you have in the heavens? I beg you, entrust it to your God, you who entrust it to a servant, and commend it to God rather than to man. But if you fear that the loving-kindness of the bestower may take something from it, may scatter something, seal your purses with the ring of faith, so that with such a guardian you may sleep secure, because where he is, there is no place for a thief. He will not be able to deny you your money, who has bestowed on you all that is his, who has enriched you with the honour and glory of his kingdom.

Sermo XXIV.

De servo vigili et felicitate regni Dei

Semper, et ad omnia vigilias esse salutares nullus ignorat, quia re vera plus vigilare, plus vivere est. Nam quid tam mortis simile, quam dormientis aspectus? quid tam vita plenum quam forma vigilantis? Indulgendum somno est, ut corpus reparet, non resolvat; et vires revocet, non enervet. Semper ergo ad omnia vigilias esse salutares nullus ignorat. Quae ars, quod opus, quod tempus, quae potestas, quod officium, non vitae lucra lucubratione perquirit? Hinc est quod rex in procinctu pervigil callidi hostis praecavet, et evitat insidias; tunc in castris miles supervenientes nocturnos impetus cauta pernoctatione propellit. Sic nauta vigilando diffusi itineris incertas vias intrat, et calles transit invios, et vestigio furtivo ad lucrosi portus votivam pervenit mansionem. Hinc pastor adjungit noctes diebus, et totum sibi tempus denegat dormiendi, ne qua lupis, suffragante somno, grassandi in gregem praebeatur occasio. Sic viator solers per auras noctis, aestus solis praevenit, aptumque diem providentius deputat mansioni.

Hoc propheta sciens non die solo, sed de nocte tota clamabat ad Dominum: Domine Deus salutis meae, in die clamavi, et nocte coram te. Quid plura? Ipse Dominus pernoctat in oratione Dei, ut ante nos oratione liberet quam redimat passione. Et si pro servis dominus vigilat, merito pro seipsis servos vigilare sic jubet.

Praecincti, inquit, sint lumbi vestri, et lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris, et vos similes hominibus exspectantibus dominum suum, quando veniat a nuptiis. Sint lumbi vestri praecincti. Novus ordo vigiliarum, novus habitus imperatur. Sint lumbi vestri praecincti, et lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris. Nil de vestitu, nil de calceamentis, nil de ipsius occursus apparatu servi vigiles admonentur; sed tota in praecingendis lumbis mandatur cura, tota in constringendis lumbis statuitur vis praecepti, addito lucernarum solatio tantum, sine quo nec noctis aperitur obscuritas, nec venientis diei clarescit aspectus. Sint lumbi vestri praecincti, et lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris. Cingulum quidem est proprie indicium servitutis: quod et in cursu expeditos reddat, et faciat obsequentes.

Sermon XXIV.

On the watchful servant and the happiness of the kingdom of God

No one is unaware that vigils are always and for all things salutary, because in truth to watch more is to live more. For what is so like death as the look of a sleeper? What so full of life as the form of one awake? Sleep must be indulged so that it may restore the body, not dissolve it; and recall its strength, not enervate it. No one, then, is unaware that vigils are always and for all things salutary. What art, what work, what season, what power, what office does not seek out the gains of life by working by lamplight? This is why a king, wakeful in battle array, foresees and avoids the snares of a cunning enemy; then the soldier in camp repels the night attacks that come upon him by cautious watching through the night. So the sailor, by watching, enters the uncertain ways of a far-spread voyage, and crosses trackless paths, and by a stealthy track reaches the longed-for berth of a gainful harbour. Hence the shepherd joins nights to days, and denies himself all time for sleeping, lest, with sleep in their favour, any occasion be given to wolves to make raids on the flock. So the skilful traveller, through the night air, forestalls the heats of the sun, and with more foresight assigns the suitable daytime to resting.

Knowing this, the Prophet cried to the Lord not by day only but all night long: Lord, God of my salvation, by day I have cried out, and by night before you (Ps 88:2). What more? The Lord himself spends the night in the prayer of God (Luke 6:12), that he might free us by prayer before he redeems us by his Passion. And if the master watches for his servants, rightly does he thus bid the servants watch for themselves.

Let your loins, he says, be girded, and lamps burning in your hands; and you be like men waiting for their master, when he comes back from the wedding (Luke 12:35–36). Let your loins be girded. A new order of vigils, a new dress is commanded. Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands. The watchful servants are admonished of nothing about clothing, nothing about shoes, nothing about the equipment for going out to meet him; but the whole care is enjoined on girding the loins, the whole force of the precept is laid on binding the loins, with only the help of lamps added, without which neither is the darkness of the night opened, nor does the face of the coming day grow bright. Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands. The belt, indeed, is properly the token of servitude, since it both makes men unencumbered in running and makes them obedient.

Sed dixisse suffecerat, estote praecincti; cur lumbos potissimum nominat? cur tanta jubentis reverentia lumborum facit magnopere mentionem. Quaeris quare? quia in lumbis est tota corporis causa, ex lumbis tota carnis negotia suscitantur, in lumbis tota est humani lapsus, humanae fragilitatis occasio. Inde venit quod virtutis ignaros reddit, efficit segniores. Hinc est ergo quod principaliter Dominus lumbos nostros astringi jubet balteo castitatis, et totum carnis nostrae pendulum, fluidum, resolutum, constringi mandat continua zona virtutis, ut carne succincta ad Domini occursum liber, velox, expeditus nostrae mentis reddatur incessus. Haec tamen audiens, homo, scire debes, quia non retardat ab occursu Dei caro, quia ipsius occursus officii ipsius est inseparabilis comes, si tu ejus componas sarcinas, si reveles onera ejus, si pendula et sinuosa involucra ejus tu providus viator astringas. Quid plura? Erit tibi salubre contubernium, si tu ejus deses et resolutus non fueris institutor; quemadmodum autem debeas aequare sarcinas ejus, ejus pondera injusta moderari, Apostolus edocet, sic dicendo: Mortificate membra vestra, quae sunt super terram: fornicationem, immunditiam, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam, et avaritiam, quae est idolorum servitus. Constringenda est ergo caro continentiae cingulo, ne effusa vitiis, ac toto peccatorum gravata pondere, supernis et coelestibus insistere non possit incessibus.

Bene ergo Dominus adjecit: Et lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris. Quia semper ad innocentiae testimonium lucernae nocturno portantur in tempore: et sicut vitiis amicae semper sunt tenebrae, ita lucernae semper inimicae criminibus, sociae semper boni operis sunt lucernae. Sed in manibus sanctorum, ipsa bona opera sunt lucernae, dicente Domino. Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant vestra bona opera: et magnificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est. Et vere portant lucernas suas, vere fomentis operum, vere misericordiae unguento inflammant lampades suas, quae cum loco, proposito studio, latitant, opere, virtute coruscant, ac splendent toto orbe terrarum.

Et quia exspectationis suae Dominus satis tristes, satis anxios noverat mores, ne quis superaretur taedio, ne quis lassesceret tarditate, ne quis longae exspectationis fatigatione succumberet, perseverantibus in beatitudinem coelestem, coeleste promittit obsequium. Beati, inquit, servi illi quos cum venerit Dominus, invenerit vigilantes. Et ne ipsius beatitudinis qualitas haberetur incerta, mox adjecit: Amen dico vobis, quia praecinget se, et faciet illos discumbere, et transiens ministrabit eis. Praecinget se Deus, et faciet servos discumbere, et ministrabit eis.

But it would have been enough to say, "Be girded"; why does he name the loins above all? Why does he who commands make mention of the loins so emphatically, with such respect? Do you ask why? Because in the loins lies the whole cause of the body, from the loins all the business of the flesh is stirred up, in the loins is the whole occasion of human lapse, of human frailty. From there comes what makes men ignorant of virtue, what makes them slothful. This is why the Lord bids, above all, that our loins be bound with the baldric of chastity, and commands that all that is hanging, flowing, loose in our flesh be bound tight with the unbroken girdle of virtue, so that, the flesh being girded up, the gait of our mind may be rendered free, swift, unencumbered for going out to meet the Lord. Yet, hearing this, man, you must know that the flesh does not hold you back from going out to meet God, because it is the inseparable companion of the very office of that meeting, if you put its baggage in order, if you lighten its burdens, if you, a provident traveller, bind tight its hanging and loose wrappings. What more? It will be a wholesome comradeship for you, if you are not its idle and slack director; but how you must balance its baggage, how moderate its unjust weights, the Apostle teaches, saying thus: Put to death your members which are on earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and avarice, which is the servitude of idols (Col 3:5). The flesh, then, must be bound tight with the belt of continence, lest, poured out in vices and weighed down by the whole weight of sins, it be unable to keep to the steps of things above and of heaven.

Well, then, did the Lord add: And lamps burning in your hands. Because lamps are always carried in the night-time as a testimony of innocence: and as darkness is always the friend of vices, so lamps are always the enemies of crimes; lamps are always the companions of good work. But in the hands of the saints good works themselves are lamps, as the Lord says. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16). And truly they carry their lamps, truly they kindle their lamps with the fuel of works, truly with the ointment of mercy, those lamps which, though hidden in place, in purpose, in zeal, flash forth in work, in virtue, and shine throughout the whole world.

And because the Lord knew that the dispositions of those who wait for him are very sad, very anxious, lest anyone be overcome by weariness, lest anyone flag through delay, lest anyone succumb to the fatigue of long waiting, he promises to those who persevere, for heavenly blessedness, a heavenly homage. Blessed, he says, are those servants whom the Lord, when he comes, finds watching (Luke 12:37). And lest the quality of that blessedness should be held uncertain, he at once added: Amen I say to you, that he will gird himself, and make them recline at table, and passing by he will serve them. God will gird himself, and will make the servants recline, and will serve them.

En mutatio inaudita rerum, en terribilis correptio dominationis, en pavenda conversio servitutis: quia parumper servus assistit in domini sui exspectatione succinctus, et sustinendi fidem brevi fatigatione portavit, cui ut talionem redderet, dissimulat se in ipsa divinitate divinitas. Praecinget se et faciet illos discumbere, et transiens ministrabit eis. Discumbenti homini Deus astat, et astat in coelestibus; epulanti servo servit Dominus, et servit accinctus pueris suis, ministris suis, ministerium facit Christus, et facit in Patris jam gloria constitutus.

Homo, calumniaris Christum adhuc, quod detulerit Patri? Qui tibi in terra lavando pedes, extremum repraesentavit obsequium, et repromittit in coelestibus novissimam servitutem? Crede, haeretice, et tu illi stude reddere talionem. Ille tibi in coelestibus parat convivium se ministro, et tu illi in terra non desinis continuas ingerere et generare blasphemias; faciet et ille transitus suos, quia transiens ministrabit illis; de dominatione ad fidelium suorum pia transiet et migrabit obsequia; ad te de misericordiae patre severissimum transibit in judicem. Et transiens ministrabit illis. Confitentibus, exspectantibus ministrabit epulas, ministrabit et tibi, sed dignam de tua negatione sententiam.

Et si venerit in secunda vigilia, et si in tertia vigilia venerit, et ita invenerit, beati sunt servi illi. Si in secunda et tertia vigilia venerit: vigilias mundus plures, tres tantum vigilias novit exspectatio Trinitatis; quare tamen a secunda coepit, et tacuit primam? Quia prima jam vigilia in ortu Dominicae nativitatis excesserat. Probant hoc pastores, qui dum supra gregem suum vigilant, gregis ipsum pastorem in praesepio invenire, videre, tenere merentur et auctorem; sed quae sit secunda et tertia vigilia requiramus. Sicut utique prima vigilia est sui ortus in carne, ita secunda est vigilia, qua nostra redit et resuscitatur in carne. Denique ut ad resurgentem veniat, annus excitatur, et evigilat mundus. Tertia vigilia est illa qua exspectatio tota novissimo venientis finitur adventu; ut sicut ille resurrexit nobis, ita nos illi jam perpetuam resurgamus ad vitam.

Behold an unheard-of change of things, behold a fearful rebuke to lordship, behold a dreadful reversal of servitude: because the servant stood by for a little while, girded, in expectation of his master, and bore the faithfulness of waiting with a brief fatigue, to repay him in kind the divinity veils itself within its very divinity. He will gird himself and make them recline at table, and passing by he will serve them. God stands by man as he reclines, and stands by him in heaven; the Lord serves the servant as he feasts, and serves girded his boys, his attendants; Christ does the ministry, and does it already established in the glory of the Father.

Man, do you still slander Christ, on the ground that he deferred to the Father? He who, washing your feet on earth, displayed to you the last service, and promises you again in heaven the lowest servitude? Believe, heretic, and do you too strive to repay him in kind. He prepares for you in heaven a banquet with himself as servant, and you on earth do not cease to heap up and beget continual blasphemies against him; he too will make his passings, because passing he will serve them; from lordship he will pass and move over to the loving service of his faithful; to you he will pass from father of mercy to a most severe judge. And passing by he will serve them. To those who confess, who wait, he will serve a banquet; he will serve you too, but the sentence your denial deserves.

And if he comes in the second watch, and if he comes in the third watch, and finds them so, blessed are those servants (Luke 12:38). If he comes in the second and third watch: the world knows several watches, the expectation of the Trinity knows only three; why, then, did he begin from the second, and keep silent about the first? Because the first watch had already gone by at the dawn of the Lord's nativity. The shepherds prove this, who, while they keep watch over their flock, merit to find, to see, to hold in the manger the very shepherd and author of the flock; but let us seek what the second and third watch are. As the first watch is that of his birth in the flesh, so the second watch is that in which he returns and is raised again in our flesh. Indeed, that it may come to him as he rises, the year is roused and the world awakes. The third watch is that in which the whole expectation is ended by the last coming of the one who comes; so that as he rose again for us, so we may now rise again for him to perpetual life.

Sermo XXV.

De terrenorum cura despicienda, et promissione regni

Hodie Dominus evangelici gregis pusilla et terrena primordia, quam blanda exhortatione sit consolatus, audistis. Nolite timere, inquit, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. Aufert spes anxias, dubios tollit eventus, omnemque propellit, et excludit timorem, quando in exordio ipso regnum nascentibus pollicetur. Quoniam complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum. Quis de victu, quis de vestitu, quis de plebeio censu, et vernalis cespitis vilitate suspirat, de regno certus, de dominatione securus? Satis sibi invidet qui elevatus ad summa, ipse se ad humilia dejicit, ad egena deponit.

Sed scire convenit, pater iste qui est, vel qualis est, vel quod regnum suis filiis repromittit. Quis sit iste pater, quotidie te confitente cognoscis, cum clamas: Pater noster qui es in coelis. Qualis autem sit, ipsa operum magnitudine pervidisti: ex nihilo fecit coelum, et terram solidavit ex liquido, montes statuit ad stateram, maria intra legitimos terminos sola praecepti auctoritate conclusit. Verum si regni, quod promittit pusillis, desideras nosse qualitatem, ipse aperit, sic dicendo: Sinite parvulos venire ad me; talium est enim regnum coelorum. Esse in coelo mirum est; in coelo vivere, est majestatis. Jam regnare in coelo quanti sit, sensus desinit aestimare mortalis; et tamen, homo, quod aestimare non potes, percepisti. Apostolo sic dicente: Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se. Et quod te mereri dubitas, habere te, et possidere, jam cogeris confiteri. Quid ergo cum terra illi qui possidet coelum? Quid illi cum humanis, qui adeptus est jam divina? nisi forte placent gemitus, eliguntur labores, amantur pericula, pessima mors delectat, et illata mala bonis sunt gratiora collatis.

Sermon XXV.

On despising the care of earthly things, and on the promise of the kingdom

You have heard today with what gentle exhortation the Lord consoled the small and earthly beginnings of the Gospel flock. Do not be afraid, he says, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32). He takes away anxious hopes, removes doubtful outcomes, drives off and shuts out all fear, when at the very outset he promises a kingdom to those who are being born. For it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. Who sighs about food, about clothing, about a plebeian fortune and the meanness of a springtime turf, when he is certain of a kingdom, secure of lordship? He begrudges himself greatly who, raised to the highest things, casts himself down to lowly things, lays himself down among needy things.

But it is fitting to know who this Father is, or what he is like, or what kingdom he promises to his sons. Who this Father is you learn every day by your own confession, when you cry: Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). And what he is like you have seen clearly in the very greatness of his works: out of nothing he made heaven, and made the earth solid out of the liquid, set the mountains on the balance, shut the seas within lawful bounds by the sole authority of his command. But if you desire to know the quality of the kingdom he promises to the little ones, he himself discloses it, saying thus: Let the little ones come to me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matt 19:14). To be in heaven is a wonder; to live in heaven is a thing of majesty. How great a thing it is, further, to reign in heaven, mortal sense gives up estimating; and yet, man, what you cannot estimate, you have received. For so the Apostle says: What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it gone up into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor 2:9). And what you doubt that you deserve, you are now compelled to confess that you have and possess. What, then, has he to do with earth, who possesses heaven? What has he to do with human things, who has already obtained divine things? Unless perhaps groans please, labours are chosen, dangers are loved, the worst of deaths delights, and evils inflicted are more welcome than goods bestowed.

Sed videamus quod dat Pater tantus consilium regnaturis. Vendite quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam. Si victuros vos, si regnaturos, si vos jam divites esse creditis in supernis, ubi futuri, quo migraturi, ubi regnaturi estis, vos illa quae vestra sunt jam praecedant; opes miseras misericordia computate; quae humana sunt in divina convertite. Et ne cui forsitan deesset evectio ad portanda illa quae dimittitis, angariatus est pauper: ferunt pauperes onera nostra, et volentes ferunt, quia tali non deprimuntur pondere, sed levantur.

Vendite quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam; facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt, thesaurum non deficientem in coelis, ubi fur non appropiat, neque tinea corrumpit. Facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt. Videtis quia pater iste ditare vult filios, non nudare. Facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt. Novo modo, immo, coelesti modo, qui hunc audit, vendendo comparat, recondit erogando, dum amittit acquirit. Quam cupit pecuniam perdurare, perpetuare sacculos divitiarum, condita permanere, qui dicit: facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt! Ecce docet avaritiam, qui coeperat suadere contemptum: facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt. Et qui thesaurizantes temporaliter arguebat, ad totum cupiditatis fomitem jubet sacculos sine fine perquiri. Christe, quo te pertrahit amor tuorum? ut avarum lucrifacias, facis eum quod desiderat, non quod oportet, audire: sacculos imperas, aeternos thesauros, qui non deficiant, vis parari; ut avarus dum consueta percurrit ad lucra, aut virtutem capiat, aut a virtute capiatur. Vere Pater es, qui cum tuis quibuscumque parvulis sic agis. Namque et nos interdum nostris parvulis petentibus noxia ingerimus salutaria sub specie noxiorum, fallentes insipientiam, non desipientes affectum.

Dixisti: Facite vobis sacculos, qui non veterascunt, thesauros non deficientes in coelo. Sacculus cur paratur? Quid ibi claustra, ubi ipsa custos est innocentia? ibi quid signaculum, ubi fraudis suspicio non habetur? Si et in coelo sacculis opus est, cura non amittitur, sed mutatur. Domine, tu vidisti, quia in thesauris tota fides, tota spes in sacculis sit avaris: et ideo imputribiles in coelo sacculos vis parari, ut qui te non sequitur ad coelum, sequatur saltem sacculos suos. Avare, fac tibi sacculos, et fac jubente Deo, quia votis tuis annuit divina majestas. Sed fac tibi sacculos erogando, quia quidquid pauper acceperit, Pater coelestis suscipit. Et ubi recondit? in coelo.

But let us see what counsel so great a Father gives to those who are to reign. Sell what you possess, and give alms (Luke 12:33). If you believe that you will live, that you will reign, that you are already rich on high, then where you are to be, where you are to move, where you are to reign, let those things that are yours go before you now; reckon up your miserable riches by mercy; turn what is human into what is divine. And lest perhaps anyone should lack transport to carry the things you send away, the poor man has been pressed into service: the poor carry our burdens, and carry them willingly, because by such a weight they are not weighed down, but lifted up.

Sell what you possess, and give alms; make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, a treasure that does not fail, in the heavens, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys. Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old. You see that this Father wishes to enrich his sons, not to strip them. Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old. In a new way, or rather in a heavenly way, he who hears him buys by selling, stores up by spending, acquires while he loses. How he desires money to endure, purses of riches to be made perpetual, hoards to remain, he who says: make for yourselves purses that do not grow old! Behold, he who had begun by urging contempt teaches avarice: make for yourselves purses that do not grow old. And he who rebuked those who lay up treasure for time bids purses without end be sought, to feed the whole tinder of craving. Christ, where does the love of your own draw you? To win the avaricious man, you make him hear what he desires, not what he ought: you command purses, you wish eternal treasures to be prepared, which may not fail; so that the avaricious man, while he runs his usual course to gains, may either take hold of virtue, or be taken hold of by virtue. Truly you are a Father, you who deal thus with your little ones, whatever they are. For we too sometimes, when our little ones ask for harmful things, thrust upon them wholesome things under the appearance of harmful ones, beguiling their folly, not befooling our affection.

You said: Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, treasures that do not fail, in heaven. Why is a purse prepared? What need of bars there, where innocence itself is the guardian? What need of a seal there, where there is no suspicion of fraud? If even in heaven there is need of purses, care is not lost, but changed. Lord, you saw that for the avaricious the whole of their faith is in treasures, the whole of their hope in purses: and therefore you wish incorruptible purses to be prepared in heaven, so that he who does not follow you to heaven may at least follow his purses. Avaricious man, make yourself purses, and make them at God's command, because the divine majesty assents to your wishes. But make yourself purses by spending, because whatever the poor man has received, the heavenly Father receives. And where does he store it? In heaven.

Et ne forte perdidisse te doleas vel usuram, centuplam in coelesti fenore recipies, quidquid in coelo, paupere transmiseris perferente. Usura mundi centum ad unum, Deus unum accipit ad centum; et tamen homines cum Deo nolunt habere contractum. Sunt forsitan de cautione solliciti? Quare? Nonne homo homini exiguae chartulae obligatione constringitur? Deus tot et tantis voluminibus cavet, et debitor non tenetur? Sed dicis, esto quod debeat, quo exigente restituet? seipso; quia non potest ulli mentiri: idem ipse est et exsecutor et debitor. Non erit in reddendo durus. qui profusus est in largiendo. Crede, homo, Deo, quod tibi Deus dedit; majora reddere vult, cum vult debere largitor.

And lest perhaps you grieve that you have lost even the interest, you will receive a hundredfold, in the heavenly loan, whatever you have sent over to heaven with the poor man to carry it. The world's interest is a hundred to one; God takes one for a hundred; and yet men do not wish to have a contract with God. Are they perhaps solicitous about the security? Why? Is not man bound to man by the obligation of a tiny sheet of paper? God gives security in so many and such great volumes, and is the debtor not held? But you say: "Suppose that he owes it; at whose demand will he repay?" At his own; because he cannot lie to anyone: he himself is both the enforcer and the debtor. He will not be hard in repaying, who is lavish in giving. Lend, man, to God what God has given you; the bestower wishes to give back greater things, when he wishes to be a debtor.

Sermo XXVI.

De fideli dispensatore

Quod hodie Dominus interroganti Petro respondisse legitur per figuram ad apostolos ipsos, ad doctores tantum et ad eos qui Ecclesiis praesident, dictum, multorum persensit auditus. Interrogat Petrus, Domine, ad nos dicis hanc parabolam, an et ad omnes? Cui respondit Dominus: Quis putas est fidelis dispensator et prudens, quem constituit dominus super familiam suam, ut det illis in tempore tritici mensuram? Beatus servus ille, quem cum venerit dominus, ita invenerit facientem: vere dico vobis quod super omnia quae possidet constituet eum. Quod si dicat servus ille in corde suo: moram facit dominus meus venire, et coeperit percutere pueros, et ancillas, et edere, et bibere, et inebriari, veniet dominus servi illius in die qua non sperat, et hora qua nescit, et dividet eum, partemque ejus cum infidelibus ponet.

Ecclesiae quidem praesules ista quam primum similitudo constringit, sed hominem nullum, mortalem nullum prorsus eximit haec figura, quae dum loquitur ad dispensatorem, omnibus, uno interrogante, respondit: Si est quisquam qui a Deo nil acceperit, discussionem dispensationis, dispensatoris officium non timebit. Homo, si hoc ipsum quod das, accepisti, accepisse te quod habes quomodo tu negabis? De coelestibus conditis, de horreis divinis rationem reddet, praestabit causas Ecclesiae prorogator. Et quanto majus suscipit creditum, tanto majus se debitum non dubitat redditurum, dicente Domino: Cui plus est creditum, plus exigetur ab eo. Et alibi: Potentes potenter tormenta patientur. Quanto altius ascenderit homo, lapsus, tanto altius cadet. Quid altius coelo? De coelo cadit in coelestibus, qui delinquit; desperatus incurrit, qui in ipsis dominantis oculis offendit; et excusatione caret, qui facinus ipso judice teste committit. Aut quam defensionem sperat, quem testimonium cognitoris accusat?

Sic diabolus cum esset angelus, et in coelo, et coram Deo semper clarissimus versaretur, et fulgens, dum Dei tentat aures, dum in Dei superbit aspectu, lapsus ad terram, ad tartara dejectus, in diabolum mutatur ex angelo; et qui erat minister veniae factus est dux poenarum. Hinc est quod Apostolus nostri ordinis hominem commonet, ne incidat in superbiam et laqueum diaboli.

Sermon XXVI.

On the faithful steward

What the Lord is read today to have answered Peter when he asked, the hearing of many has taken to have been said in figure to the apostles themselves, only to the teachers and to those who preside over the churches. Peter asks: Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to all as well? (Luke 12:41) The Lord answered him: Who, do you think, is the faithful and prudent steward, whom the master has set over his household, to give them their measure of wheat in due season? (Luke 12:42) Blessed is that servant whom the master, when he comes, finds so doing: truly I say to you that he will set him over all that he possesses (Luke 12:43–44). But if that servant says in his heart: My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him asunder, and put his portion with the faithless (Luke 12:45–46).

This similitude binds the bishops of the Church first of all, but this figure exempts no man, no mortal whatever; for in speaking to the steward, it has answered all, though one alone asked: if there is anyone who has received nothing from God, he will not fear the examination of his stewardship, the office of a steward. Man, if you have received this very thing which you give, how will you deny that you have received what you have? The dispenser of the Church will give an account of the heavenly stores, of the divine granaries; he will render his reasons. And the greater the trust he takes on, the greater the debt he does not doubt he will repay, as the Lord says: To whom more has been entrusted, more will be required of him (Luke 12:48). And elsewhere: The mighty will mightily suffer torments (Wis 6:6). The higher a man has climbed, the higher he will fall if he slips. What is higher than heaven? He who sins in heavenly things falls from heaven; he runs headlong to despair who offends in the very eyes of the one who rules; and he lacks excuse who commits the misdeed with the judge himself as witness. Or what defence does he hope for, whom the testimony of the examining judge accuses?

So the devil, when he was an angel, and dwelt in heaven, and moved always before God most bright and shining, in trying the ears of God, in growing proud in the sight of God, fell to the earth, was cast down to Tartarus, and was changed from an angel into a devil; and he who was the minister of pardon became the leader of punishments. This is why the Apostle warns the man of our order, lest he fall into pride and the snare of the devil (1 Tim 3:6–7).

Dispensator ergo divini verbi et coelestis doctrinae prorogator, qui ante Dominum stat jugiter, versatur inter altaria semper, neque a Dei oculis recedit umquam, qui peccatorum causas, dolores populi suscipit, offert, ingerit preces, accipit, refert, restituit impetrata, ex homine totus in angelum substitutus, non potest nisi in ipsa Dei facie inter sanctorum sancta peccare, ut inde sibi sumat crimen, unde aliis veniam consueverat reportare.

Denique Nadab et Abiud sacerdotes filii Aaron sacerdotis, dum contaminare externo igne altaria praesumunt, ipsius altaris consumuntur incendio, ut sumerent de sacrificio poenam, qui fecerant de propitiatione peccatum: quod peccatum illis suscitaret ebrietas; nam vini odor odorem fugarat incensi, et ebrietatis ignis flammam provocarat altaris. Unde quia alienati vino alienum portaverant ignem, mox divino igne referuntur exstincti. Ebrietas in alio crimen est, in sacerdote sacrilegium, quia alter animam suam necat vino, sacerdos spiritum sanctitatis exstinguit, dicente Apostolo: Spiritum nolite exstinguere.

Merito inter caetera quae in dispensatore malo arguit hodiernus sermo, vini condemnat insaniam, dicendo: Quod si dicat servus ille, moram facit dominus meus venire, et coeperit percutere pueros et ancillas, et edere et bibere, et inebriari. Proprie dixit, edere et bibere, et inebriari, et percutere. Ebrietas caedis mater, parens litium, furoris genitrix, petulantiae deformiter est magistra: hanc qui habet, se non habet; hanc qui habet, homo non est; hanc qui habet, non peccatum facit, sed est ipse peccatum. Ebrietas est daemon blandus, venenum dulce, rabies voluntaria, invitatus hostis, illecebra honestatis, et pudoris injuria: hanc nullus noverit Christianus, ne auditu quidem sacerdos attingat; ne qui est forma virtutum, vitiorum inde fiat, et inveniatur exemplum.

Verum quia ad nos et ad ecclesiasticos viros satis dictum est, quemadmodum cunctos teneat responsio Salvatoris, quod non sit qui a Dei dispensatione inveniatur extraneus, perquiramus Apostoli dictum. Non est potestas nisi a Deo. Si a Deo potestas omnis, a Deo rex etiam dispensationis regiae adeptus est dignitatem. Sic dux, sic miles, sic provinciarum rectores, sic urbium rationem reddituri sunt omnes isti, si in ullo creditae potestatis excessere mensuram, si rex justitiam custodivit, si aequitatem tenuit, si potestatem moderatus est, si misericordiam non omisit,

The steward, then, of the divine word and the dispenser of heavenly teaching, who stands continually before the Lord, moves always among the altars, never withdraws from the eyes of God, who undertakes the causes of sinners, the pains of the people, offers, presses prayers, receives, brings back, restores what has been obtained, wholly turned from a man into an angel, cannot sin except in the very face of God among the holy of holies, so that he takes a crime upon himself from the place whence he was wont to bring back pardon for others.

Indeed, Nadab and Abihu, priests, sons of Aaron the priest, in presuming to defile the altars with strange fire, are consumed by the fire of the altar itself (Lev 10:1–2), so that those who had made sin out of propitiation took punishment from the sacrifice: a sin which drunkenness had roused in them; for the smell of wine had driven away the smell of incense, and the fire of drunkenness had provoked the flame of the altar. Hence, because, estranged by wine, they had carried a strange fire, they are at once carried out, extinguished by the divine fire. Drunkenness in another man is a crime, in a priest a sacrilege, because the other kills his soul with wine, the priest extinguishes the spirit of holiness, as the Apostle says: Do not extinguish the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19).

Rightly, among the other things which today's discourse reproves in the bad steward, it condemns the madness of wine, saying: But if that servant says, My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk. Fitly he said: to eat and drink, and get drunk, and beat. Drunkenness is the mother of slaughter, the parent of quarrels, the bearer of fury, the shameful mistress of wantonness: he who has her does not have himself; he who has her is not a man; he who has her does not commit sin, but is himself sin. Drunkenness is a flattering demon, a sweet poison, a voluntary madness, an invited enemy, a snare to decency and an injury to modesty: let no Christian know her, let a priest not touch her even by hearing; lest he who is the pattern of the virtues should thereby become the pattern of the vices, and be found an example of them.

But since enough has been said to us and to the men of the Church, let us now examine the saying of the Apostle, to show how the Saviour's answer binds all, namely that there is no one who is found a stranger to God's stewardship. There is no power except from God (Rom 13:1). If all power is from God, then from God too the king has obtained the dignity of the royal stewardship. So the general, so the soldier, so the governors of provinces, so of cities: all these will have to give an account, if in anything they have exceeded the measure of the power entrusted to them; whether the king kept justice, whether he held to equity, whether he moderated his power, whether he did not neglect

si tenuit sic ponderis sui libram, ut in neutram partem potestatis suae trutina propensa declinaret, si omnium curam gessit, si civium procuravit quietem, si sic temperavit censum, ut neque militi sufficientia deesset, neque tributarius lassaretur. Et dux praestabit Deo causas, si sequentibus se praebuit virtutis exemplum, si in excubiis pervigil, si in discursibus indefessus, si pacem omnium proprio labore perquisivit. Rationem reddet et miles, si paruit imperatis, si concussit neminem, si accepta stipendia justissimo labore pensavit. Judex quoque judicii sui supernum judicem sustinebit.

Et tu qui dominus es domus tuae, dispensatorem positum plusquam dominum volo credas, ut exhibeas conjugi simplicem charitatem, doctrinamque ei quam didiceris in Ecclesia prudenter infundas: cui Apostolus in Ecclesia tacere praecepit, et domi discere te docente, dicens, Mulieres in Ecclesiis taceant; si quid autem volunt discere, domi viros suos interrogent, Filiis impendas affectum sobrium, sollicitam curam, eosque fideliter in Domini enutrias disciplina. Servis victum et vestitum debitum reddas, remittas culpas, minas temperes, imperes disciplinam, et habeas eos fratres progenie coelesti, quos subditos mundana possides servitute. Vos quoque servi debetis domino fidem in ipsa quam geritis servitute, quia qui pio et puro corde carnali domino debitum non reddet obsequium, Deo ante qui corda videt, quam homini tenetur obnoxius, qui te parem fecit per gratiam quem conditio fecerat disparem vilitate servili. De divite quid dicam? qui quanto plus habet, tanto amplius debet.

... Denique simul reddit, simul tradit alteri: quae si noluerit reddere, singulis committat per partes. Et tu, pauper, commissam tibi dispensationem non parvam paupertatis existimes si patienter feras, si ingratus non sis, si sis vel in ipsa necessitate sobrius et frugalis; si danti agas gratias, non danti non ingeras blasphemans injurias; si tantum quaeras quantum dat misericordia, non quantum cupiditas importuna compellit. Certe et tu, pauper, qui libenter petis, da etiam tu libenter petentibus. Sed forte dicis, Non habeo: sit dandi animus, et facultas non deerit largiendi, pone advenienti sellam tuam, pone mensam tuam, candelabrum, lucernam: certe ex eo quod accepisti gratanter appone. Sic Elias, sic Elisaeus dum declinant ad viduarum vacuas et inopes mansiones, copiose quod viduis deerat, suppleverunt.

mercy, whether he so held the balance of his weight that the scale of his power leaned and inclined to neither side, whether he took care of all, whether he provided for the peace of the citizens, whether he so tempered the revenue that neither the soldier lacked enough nor the taxpayer was worn out. And the general will render his reasons to God, whether he gave an example of valour to those who followed him, whether he was wakeful on watch, untiring in his rounds, whether he sought the peace of all by his own labour. The soldier too will give an account, whether he obeyed orders, whether he extorted from no one, whether he repaid the pay he received with most just labour. The judge too will have to undergo, for his own judgement, the judge on high.

And you who are master of your house, I wish you to believe yourself a steward set over it rather than a master, so that you may show your wife a simple charity, and pour into her prudently the teaching you have learned in the Church: for the Apostle commanded her to be silent in the Church, and to learn at home with you teaching her, saying: Let women be silent in the churches; but if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home (1 Cor 14:34–35). Spend on your children a sober affection, a solicitous care, and bring them up faithfully in the discipline of the Lord. Give your servants the food and clothing due to them, remit their faults, temper your threats, impose discipline, and hold as brothers by heavenly descent those whom you possess as subjects by worldly servitude. You also, servants, owe faithfulness to your master in the very servitude you bear, because he who does not render with a loyal and pure heart the homage due to his master according to the flesh is liable to God, who sees hearts, before he is to man: to God, who made you equal by grace, you whom your condition had made unequal by servile lowliness. What shall I say of the rich man? The more he has, the more he owes.

... Indeed, he gives back and hands on to another at one and the same time: if he is unwilling to give these things back, let him entrust them to individuals in portions. And you, poor man, do not think the stewardship of poverty entrusted to you a small one, if you bear it patiently, if you are not ungrateful, if even in your very need you are sober and frugal; if you give thanks to one who gives, and do not heap blaspheming insults on one who does not; if you seek only as much as mercy gives, not as much as importunate craving drives you to. Surely you too, poor man, who ask willingly, should give willingly too to those who ask. But perhaps you say, "I have nothing": let there be the mind to give, and the means of bestowing will not be lacking; set your chair for the one who comes, set your table, lampstand, lamp: surely set before him gladly something from what you have received. So Elijah (1 Kgs 17), so Elisha (2 Kgs 4), when they turned aside to the empty and needy dwellings of widows, abundantly supplied what the widows lacked.

Adjecit autem Dominus ad confirmationem similitudinis hujus dicendo: Ille autem servus qui cognovit voluntatem domini sui, et non se praeparavit, et non fecit secundum voluntatem ejus, vapulabit multis; qui autem non cognovit et fecit digna plagis, vapulabit paucis. Ille quidem qui per conscientiam peccat, merito gravius solvit conscientiae poenas; sed et iste per ignorantiae culpas, plagas ignorantiae non vitabit: Deum sicut contemnere non licet, sic non licet ignorare.

And the Lord added, to confirm this similitude, saying: But that servant who knew his master's will, and did not make himself ready, and did not act according to his will, will be beaten with many stripes; but he who did not know, and did what deserved stripes, will be beaten with few (Luke 12:47–48). He indeed who sins knowingly rightly pays the heavier penalties of conscience; but this one too, through the faults of ignorance, will not escape the stripes of ignorance: as it is not permitted to despise God, so it is not permitted to be ignorant of him.

Sermo XXVII.

De scandalo tollendo

In procinctu belli semper vigiliae sunt militum distributae, ut insidiis nil liceat, nil pateat dolis. Perniciosissimus nimis est repentinus hostis; nam aut inscios praevenit, aut incautos praeoccupat, aut opprimit dormientes. Hinc est quod Christus rex noster ante saecula per totam saeculi noctem milites suos praemandatis vigiliarum vicibus commonuit contra diaboli, id est, veteris hostis subtilissimum dolum, contra latentes impetus vitiorum, contra criminum insidias irruentes, contra scandala quae nobis variis oriuntur ex causis, contra tentamenta praesentis vitae, contra urentes acies saecularium pressurarum, taliter admonendo: Vigilate et orate, ne intretis in tentationem. Et statuens qualiter vigilaretur, adjecit: Et si venerit in secunda vigilia, et si in tertia vigilia venerit, et ita invenerit; beati sunt servi illi, quos cum venerit, invenerit vigilantes. Et plane beati, quia qui vigilant et anticipant dolos hostium, de Domini sui gloriabuntur adventu. Hodie tamen Dominus ipsas nostrorum ducum contra scandala exsuscitavit, et armavit excubias, dicendo ad discipulos: Impossibile est ut non veniant scandala. Hoc est, impossibile est ut non veniant hostes.

Et primum fratres scire nos convenit scandala haec quid sint. Scandalorum genera sunt diversa, et prima sunt illa quae diaboli fraus parturit. Secunda sunt, quae generat calliditas humana. Tertia sunt, quae parit ipsa ex nobis suspicax et incauta natura. Et a diabolo sunt illa quae fallunt specie, quae praetendunt bona cum mala inferant: sicut illud ad Adam, cum nobis humana abstulit, dum divina promittit. Et illud, quod per Petrum: Non tibi hoc erit, Domine. Triumphum crucis vacuare contendit, cum fervere se nimio amore mentitur. Nam cum Dominus loqueretur passionis suae gloriam, respondit per Petrum: Non tibi hoc erit Domine. Venenum quam dulce serpentis: ante facit militem regis sui negare victoriam, servus ipse Dominum quam negaret. Unde Dominus servum post se mittit, scandalum remittit auctori: dicendo ad Petrum: Vade post me; et diabolo: Satanas, scandalum mihi es. Et vere post Dominum vadit Petrus, quia ut eum sequeretur ad coelum, crucem resupinus ascendit.

Sermon XXVII.

On removing offence

In the array of war the watches of the soldiers are always assigned, so that ambush may have no licence and guile no opening. Most pernicious indeed is the sudden enemy; for he either forestalls the unaware, or seizes the unwary first, or crushes the sleeping. Hence it is that Christ, our King before the ages, through the whole night of this age, appointing beforehand the turns of the watches, has warned his soldiers against the most subtle guile of the devil, that is, of the old enemy, against the hidden onsets of the vices, against the ambushes of crimes that rush in, against the offences that arise for us from various causes, against the trials of the present life, against the burning battle lines of the world's afflictions, admonishing thus: Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation (Matt 26:41). And, settling how the watch should be kept, he added: And if he comes in the second watch, and if he comes in the third watch, and finds them so, blessed are those servants, whom, when he comes, he finds watching (Luke 12:38, 37). And blessed indeed, because those who watch and forestall the guile of the enemy will glory in the coming of their Lord. Today, however, the Lord has roused against offences the very sentries of our captains, and has armed them, saying to the disciples: It is impossible that offences should not come (Luke 17:1). That is, it is impossible that enemies should not come.

And first, brothers, it behoves us to know what these offences are. The kinds of offences are diverse, and the first are those which the fraud of the devil brings to birth. The second are those which human cunning begets. The third are those which nature itself, suspicious and unwary, brings forth from within us. And from the devil are those which deceive by appearance, which hold out good things while they bring in evil ones: like that word to Adam, when he took from us what was human by promising what was divine (Gen 3). And that which he said through Peter: This shall not happen to you, Lord (Matt 16:22). He strives to make void the triumph of the cross, while he falsely pretends to burn with an excess of love. For when the Lord was speaking of the glory of his Passion, he answered through Peter: This shall not happen to you, Lord. How sweet the serpent's poison: he first makes the soldier deny the victory of his king, before the servant himself should deny his Lord. Hence the Lord sends the servant behind him and sends the offence back to its author, saying to Peter: Get behind me; and to the devil: Satan, you are an offence to me (Matt 16:23). And truly Peter goes behind the Lord, for, to follow him to heaven, he mounted the cross upturned.

Sed et illud est scandalum tale, quod fecit Judaeis. Nam lapidem firmandis vestigiis latum, in totam sulcavit, et exasperavit offensam, et totius fundamenti petram vertit in scandalum, ut esset miseris ad ruinam. Ecce pono, inquit, in Sion lapidem offensionis et petram scandali. Hinc est quod Psalmista anxia supplicatione deposcit: Custodi me a laqueo quem statuerunt mihi, et a scandalis operantium iniquitatem. Et quia transilierat offensam, scandalum vicerat, taliter gloriatur: In petra exaltasti me, et deduxisti me, quia factus es spes mea.

Diximus primum genus scandali, dicamus et secundum quod de humana calliditate diximus evenire. Scandalum populo Israelitico Balaam divinator objecit, quando bellatoribus non cum ferratis viris, sed cum puellis toto lenocinio fucatis occurrit, ut arma verteret in luxum, triumphum mutaret in infamiam, et in reatum reatus evocaret ultores, et ad summam profanaret totam de turpitudine sanctitatem. Hinc est quod eum Moyses tali notavit sententia cum puniret. Et Balaam, inquit, divinum occidite, quia hic misit scandalum ante filios Israel. Scandalum molitus est Jeroboam, qui ex auro vaccas populo in deos figmento miserabili collocavit, ne Deum vivum, ne verum templum, ne divinam legem, ne legitimos reges, ne patrios ritus quaereret: sic populus mancipatus errori scandalum facit juxta Apostolum, cum quis idolis immolata quasi nihil nocitura manducat, et insensatos lapides, et ligneos deos, qui neque sanctificare, neque pollere quid possunt, tali facto aestimat debere contemni. Sed quod ille fidei arbitratur exemplum, fit ignorantibus erroris occasio, quia non ad contemptum, sed ad cultum provocat nescientes, et convivium religionis videri facit insciis, quos sciens studio derisionis absumit. Unde bene Apostolus concludit et aperit. Et peribit infirmus in tua scientia frater, propter quem Christus mortuus est.

Tertium genus est scandali, quod nobis nostris generatur ex sensibus, cum fallimur oculis, cum decipimur auditu, capimur odore, et sapore vitiamur. Unde Eva vetiti et lethalis cibi sic gustu est sauciata, sic visu. Et vidit, inquit, mulier quod bonum est lignum ad manducandum, et quod gratum oculis ad videndum, et speciosum est ad intuendum. Bene ergo Dominus adjecit scandalizare sensus ipsos, dicendo: Si scandalizaverit te oculus tuus, aut manus tua, abscinde, et projice abs te: melius est tibi sine oculo et manu venire ad vitam, quam toto corpore ingredi in gehennam.

But such too is that offence which he caused the Jews. For the stone laid broad to make footsteps firm he furrowed and roughened into a stumbling-block entire, and turned the rock of the whole foundation into an offence, that it might be ruin to the wretched. Behold, he says, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Rom 9:33). Hence it is that the Psalmist asks with anxious supplication: Keep me from the snare which they have set for me, and from the offences of those who work iniquity (Ps 141:9). And because he had leapt over the stumbling-block and overcome the offence, he glories thus: On the rock you have exalted me, and you have led me, for you have become my hope (Ps 61:3–4).

We have spoken of the first kind of offence; let us speak also of the second, which we said comes from human cunning. Balaam the diviner set an offence before the people of Israel, when he met their warriors not with men in iron but with girls painted with every art of the procurer, to turn their arms into debauchery, to change their triumph into infamy, to draw the avengers of guilt into guilt, and in sum to profane all their holiness with foulness (Num 31:16; Rev 2:14). Hence it is that Moses marked him with such a sentence when he punished him. And kill Balaam, he says, the diviner, because he set an offence before the sons of Israel. Jeroboam contrived an offence, who by a miserable fiction set up golden heifers as gods for the people (1 Kgs 12:28), that they might not seek the living God, nor the true temple, nor the divine law, nor the legitimate kings, nor the rites of their fathers: so the people was made a slave to error. One causes offence, according to the Apostle (1 Cor 8:10), when someone eats things sacrificed to idols as though they would do no harm, and reckons by such an act that senseless stones and wooden gods, which can neither sanctify nor avail in anything, ought to be despised. But what he reckons an example of faith becomes to the ignorant an occasion of error, because he provokes those who do not know, not to contempt but to worship, and makes what he, knowing better, consumes in a spirit of mockery look to the uninstructed like a banquet of religion. Hence the Apostle well concludes and makes it plain: And the weak brother will perish through your knowledge, for whom Christ died (1 Cor 8:11).

The third kind of offence is that which is begotten in us from our own senses, when we are deceived by the eyes, when we are beguiled by the hearing, captured by smell, and corrupted by taste. Hence Eve was wounded by the forbidden and deadly food, by the taste as by the sight. And the woman saw, he says, that the tree was good to eat, and pleasing to the eyes to look upon, and beautiful to behold (Gen 3:6). Rightly then did the Lord add that the senses themselves cause offence, saying: If your eye or your hand offends you, cut it off and cast it from you: it is better for you to come to life without an eye and a hand than to enter Gehenna with your whole body (Matt 5:29–30; Mark 9:43–47).

Et quamvis Dominus lapsus et vitia jusserit sic nos secare, non membra; tamen si hoc Eva mater humani generis sic fecisset, melius sine oculo et manu in vitam venisset, quam totam posteritatem suam lamentabilem misisset in mortem.

Cavere ergo oportet nos, fratres, ne scandalum faciamus aliis, ne vel ipsi alio faciente patiamur. Scandalum est quod offendit sensus, quod mentem turbat, quod confundit intelligentiae puritatem. Scandalum est, quod diabolum fecit ex angelo, quod ex apostolo reddidit proditorem, quod invexit peccatum mundo, quod hominem deduxit ad mortem. Audi Dominum dicentem: Vae mundo a scandalis. Scandalum sanctos tentat, fatigat cautos, incautos dejicit, confundit omnia, conturbat omnes: et licet in praesenti loco Dominus de scandalo suae passionis loquatur, et Judam denotet per quem venit ipsum scandalum scandalorum; tamen ne quis in hoc deveniret, admonuit, dicendo: Impossibile est ut non veniant scandala; vae tamen illi per quem veniunt. Bonum est illi si lapis molaris appendatur collo ejus, et projiciatur in mare, quam scandalizet unum de pusillis istis.

Quare non lapis, sed lapis molaris: quia lapis molaris dum triticum terit, dum farinam fundit, a polline furfurem dum secernit, panem pie laborantibus subministrat. Bene ergo illi qui eligit minister scandali magis esse quam pacis, ad collum lapis alligatur molaris, ut hoc illum ad mortem trahat, quod illum trahere debuisset ad vitam: quia sensus ad vitam datos mortis convertit in scandalum, suadendo aliud videre, aliud audire, aliud sentire, aliud sapere, quam erat in Christo, quam erat in scientia salutari. Hinc angularem lapidem, hinc adjutorii lapidem, hinc lapidem sine manibus abscissum, qui est Christus, sic pusillorum circuit et traxit ad scandalum, ut non panem vitae, sed panem lacrymarum conficeret et doloris, sicut propheta testatur, dicens: Qui manducatis panem doloris. Bene ergo illi, sicut alibi dixit, Ut mola asinaria alligetur collo ejus, et inde sumat poenam, unde sumpsit et sensum, et exaequetur jumentis insipientibus, qui noluit hominibus superna sapientibus comparari.

And although the Lord commanded us so to cut off failings and vices, not members, yet if Eve, the mother of the human race, had done this, she would better have come into life without an eye and a hand than have sent her whole lamentable posterity into death.

We must beware therefore, brothers, lest we cause offence to others, lest we ourselves suffer it when another causes it. Offence is what strikes the senses, what disturbs the mind, what confounds the purity of the understanding. Offence is what made a devil out of an angel, what rendered a traitor out of an apostle, what brought sin into the world, what led man down to death. Hear the Lord saying: Woe to the world because of offences! (Matt 18:7) Offence tempts the saints, wearies the cautious, casts down the unwary, confounds all things, throws everyone into turmoil: and although in the present place the Lord speaks of the offence of his Passion, and points to Judas, through whom comes the very offence of offences, yet, lest anyone should come to this, he gave warning, saying: It is impossible that offences should not come; but woe to him through whom they come! It is good for him if a millstone is hung about his neck and he is cast into the sea, rather than that he should offend one of these little ones (Luke 17:2).

Why not a stone, but a millstone? Because the millstone, in grinding the wheat, in pouring out the flour, in separating the bran from the fine meal, supplies bread to those who labour devoutly. Rightly, then, a millstone is bound to the neck of him who chooses to be a minister of offence rather than of peace, so that that may drag him to death which ought to have drawn him to life: because he turns the senses given for life into an offence of death, persuading men to see otherwise, to hear otherwise, to perceive otherwise, to savour otherwise than was in Christ, than was in saving knowledge. Hence the corner stone (Isa 28:16), hence the stone of help (1 Sam 7:12), hence the stone cut out without hands (Dan 2:45), which is Christ, he so turned about and dragged into an offence for the little ones, that he made of it not the bread of life but the bread of tears and of pain, as the Prophet testifies, saying: You who eat the bread of pain (Ps 127:2). Rightly, then, as he said elsewhere, let a donkey's millstone be hung about his neck (Matt 18:6), and let him take his punishment from the very source from which he took his sense, and be made equal to the senseless beasts, he who would not be compared to men who savour heavenly things.

Sermo XXVIII.

De Matthaei Publicani ac divitis vocatione, et de Christo cum Publicanis manducante et apostolos pauperes eligente

Quod sit virtutibus cognata paupertas, terrena et coelestis comprobat disciplina. Athleta ad luctamen nudus accedit, confligit cum fluctibus nauta nudus, miles in acie non nisi expeditus assistit; qui tendit ad philosophiam, totum quod in rebus est ante contemnit. Est ergo virtutibus cognata paupertas; et si paupertas virtutum parens, virtutum socia sic habetur, sapere convenit, quare Christus ad virtutis officium pauperes sic elegit.

Petrus et Andreas, Jacobus et Joannes, germanitas combinata, immo congeminata paupertas, in apostolorum principes eliguntur: pauperes censu, loco humiles, viles arte, obscuri vita, labore communes, addicti vigiliis, fluctibus mancipati, negati honoribus, injuriis dati, praesidio retis, solo piscium captu victum vestitumque conquirentes. Sed in istis quantum vilis mundanus videbatur aspectus, pretiosas tantum animas Dei intuitus tunc videbat. Erant censu pauperes, sed innocentia locupletes; loco humiles, sed sanctitate sublimes, viles arte, sed simplicitate pretiosi; obscuri vita, sed vitae merito perlucentes; labore communes, sed proposito singulares: addicti vigiliis, sed ad coelestes victorias jam vocati; fluctibus mancipati, sed fluctibus non demersi; negati honoribus, ditati magis honoribus, non negati; injuriis dati, sed injuriis non relicti; captores piscium, sed piscatores hominum jam decreti.

Venite, inquit, et faciam vos fieri piscatores hominum; ut vitalis escae jactu, ut hamo coelestis verbi, de mortis gurgite animas ad lucem tollerent sempiternam. Captores piscium fiunt hominum piscatores, de labore transeunt ad laborem, quia labor nescit lassescere meditatus. Omnia quae de usu veniunt, non fatigant. Virtus exercitio perseverat. Hinc est quod Apostolos suos Christus humanis laboribus exercere voluit, ut eos indefessos redderet in divinis: voluit eis Deus manere fortitudinem, de exercitio praestare virtutem. Et quia fructus provenit ex labore, voluit eos labores non perdere, sed mutare: ipse ante illis usum laboris indulsit, qui postea eis tolerantiam dedit virtutis. Hinc est quod regna, gentes, carceres, vincula, tormenta, mortes, saevientes homines terris omnibus sic vicerunt.

Sermon XXVIII.

On the calling of Matthew, publican and rich man, and on Christ eating with publicans and choosing poor men as apostles

That poverty is akin to the virtues, earthly and heavenly discipline alike prove. The athlete comes naked to the wrestling, the sailor contends naked with the waves, the soldier stands in the battle line only when unencumbered; he who strives towards philosophy first despises all that lies in possessions. Poverty therefore is akin to the virtues; and if poverty is thus held to be the parent of the virtues, the companion of the virtues, it is fitting to understand why Christ thus chose poor men for the office of virtue.

Peter and Andrew, James and John, a brotherhood paired, or rather a poverty twinned, are chosen as princes of the apostles: poor in wealth, lowly in station, mean in craft, obscure in life, common in labour, given over to night watches, slaves to the waves, denied honours, handed over to injuries, with the net for their only support, gaining their food and clothing by the catch of fish alone. But in these men, the meaner their worldly aspect seemed, the more precious were the souls that God's gaze then saw. They were poor in wealth, but rich in innocence; lowly in station, but sublime in holiness; mean in craft, but precious in simplicity; obscure in life, but shining with the merit of their life; common in labour, but singular in purpose: given over to night watches, but already called to heavenly victories; slaves to the waves, but not drowned by the waves; denied honours, rather enriched with honours, not denied them; handed over to injuries, but not abandoned to injuries; catchers of fish, but already appointed fishers of men.

Come, he says, and I will make you become fishers of men (Matt 4:19); that by the cast of the life-giving bait, by the hook of the heavenly word, they might draw souls up from the whirlpool of death to the everlasting light. Catchers of fish become fishers of men, they pass from labour to labour, because labour that has been practised does not know how to grow weary. Whatever comes from use does not weary. Virtue endures by exercise. Hence it is that Christ willed to exercise his apostles in human labours, that he might render them unwearied in divine ones: God willed that fortitude should remain in them, that exercise should furnish them with virtue. And because fruit comes from labour, he willed them not to lose their labours but to change them: he himself first granted them the practice of labour who afterwards gave them the endurance of virtue. Hence it is that in every land they thus overcame kingdoms, nations, prisons, chains, torments, deaths, raging men.

Diximus quod in apostolis amica virtutum, Deo chara, sit electa paupertas. Matthaeum de telonio divitem, de usuris locupletem, lucris saeculi onustum quod in apostolatum Christus elegerit, quid dicemus? Hodie Matthaeus de seipso sic coepit: Et cum transiret inde Jesus, vidit hominem sedentem in telonio, Matthaeum nomine; et ait illi, sequere me. Matthaeus publicanus generat nobis non parvam suis quaestibus quaestionem, et magnum nobis negotium sua negotiatione proponit. Sed dicit aliquis: Quam quaestionem? Quod negotium? Deus suscipit pauperes, sed divites non repellit. Habens suscipit et ad se attrahit non habentes. Abraham dives, dives Job, David dives. Et quid Abraham beatius? Quid fortius Job? Quid David sanctius? Nam et Abraham post terrenos moerores pias animas et revolantes ad coelum in gremium suae consolationis includit. Et Job in ipsis divitiarum machinis diabolum et ipse vicit, et nobis vincendi eum reliquit exemplum. Abraham sic possedit divitias, ut eas saepe et oblatas contemneret et calcaret indultas; et sic diligeret possidere divitias, non a divitiis possideri; habere eas ad largitatis materiam, non ad cupiditatis incendium.

Sed ad haec respondetur, fuerunt sanctis innocentes divitiae, utpote a Deo datae, non turpiter acquisitae; concessae ad usum vitae, non ad mortis usuram. Matthaeum vero publicanum divitiae, sic cupiditatis publicant magistrum, fornace avaritiae sic coquebant, sic alligabant vinculis cautionum, sacculorum ponderibus sic premebant, ut levari ad innocentiam, ad justitiam surgere, ad virtutem progredi non valeret. Unde et sedere ejus erat jam subsidere, non sedere. Hunc ergo talem ad sua cur vocaverit Christus, cur elegerit ad divina, nisi quaeratur altius facit altissimam quaestionem, et non tantum quaestionem, sed et scandalum, sicut illo tempore circumstantium patefecit intentio. Quomodo enim infirmitas non laboraret humana, quando videbat apud Christum pecuniam sic valere, ut daret fraudulento fidem, venali gratiam, cupiditatis magistro officium largitatis, doctori fenoris magisterium sanctitatis, publicano saeculi coeleste secretum? Urebat videntes, quod usura quae vastat terram tollebatur ad coelum, et hanc quam detestantur homines Deitas advocabat. Sic autem sensisse tunc videntes aperit Matthaeus ipse, qui dicturus vera de se, non potuit haec tacere.

We have said that in the apostles poverty was chosen, the friend of the virtues, dear to God. That Christ chose for the apostolate Matthew, rich from the toll-house, wealthy from usury, laden with the gains of the world, what shall we say of it? Today Matthew began thus about himself: And as Jesus was passing on from there, he saw a man sitting at the toll-house, Matthew by name; and he said to him: Follow me (Matt 9:9). Matthew the publican, with his gains, raises no small question for us, and with his trading sets great business before us. But someone says: "What question? What business? God receives the poor, but does not repel the rich. He who has receives and draws to himself those who do not have (Luke 16). Abraham rich, rich Job, David rich. And what more blessed than Abraham? What braver than Job? What holier than David? For Abraham too, after earthly griefs, gathers into the lap of his consolation the devout souls that fly back to heaven. And Job, amid the very engines of riches, both overcame the devil himself and left us an example of overcoming him. Abraham so possessed riches that he often despised them when they were offered and trampled on them when they were granted (Gen 14:22–23); and he so loved to possess riches, not to be possessed by riches; to have them as matter for largess, not as the burning of cupidity."

But to this it is answered: the saints' riches were innocent, given as they were by God, not basely acquired; granted for the use of life, not for the interest of death. But as for Matthew the publican, his riches so publish him as master of cupidity, so baked him in the furnace of avarice, so bound him with the chains of securities, so pressed him down with the weight of money-bags, that he could not be lifted to innocence, rise to justice, advance to virtue. Hence his sitting was already a sinking down, not a sitting. Why, then, Christ called such a man to his own, why he chose him for divine things, unless it is sought out more deeply, makes a very deep question, and not a question only, but even an offence, as the intent of the bystanders made plain at that time. For how should human weakness not be troubled, when it saw money so prevail with Christ that he gave faith to the fraudulent, grace to the venal, the office of largess to the master of cupidity, the mastership of holiness to the teacher of loans, the heavenly secret to the publican of the world? It burned those who saw it that usury, which lays waste the earth, was raised up to heaven, and that she whom men detest the Godhead was summoning. That those who saw it then felt so, Matthew himself discloses, who, being about to tell the truth about himself, could not keep silent about this.

Cum autem Jesus discumberet in domo, ecce veniebant multi Publicani et peccatores, et discumbebant cum eo et discipulis ejus. Pharisaei autem videntes, dicebant discipulis ejus: Quare cum Publicanis et peccatoribus manducat magister vester? Et hoc dicebant Pharisaei, ut esset magnum malum, quod et malis poterit displicere: et si erat nefas publicanos Christo participes, vel in cibo esse, divinis sociare quid erat publicanum? Fratres, in quaestione hac ingenium laboraret interpretis, si non ipse Dominus, cui fit ipsa quaestio, totum quod est quaestionis auferret.

Repetamus ergo ordinem lectionis: Christus quare ad Matthaeum venerit audiamus. Cum transiret, inquit, Jesus. Non dixit, cum staret ibi: transivit, et pertransivit inde Jesus, ne Matthaeus remaneret ibi; transivit inde Jesus, ne Matthaeus ibi taliter permaneret. Vidit hominem. Non dixit, vidit Matthaeum, quia in Matthaeo hominem liberarat; hoc est, homines quos pecunia possidebat servire Deo nequeunt, pecuniae servientes. Non potestis, inquit, Deo servire et mammonae. Veni, sequere me. Non dixit, Affer ad me, quia Matthaeum, non Matthaei sacculos requirebat. Veni, sequere me. Hoc est, depone pondera, disrumpe vincula, solve laqueos. Me sequere. Quaere te, perde usuram, ut te valeas invenire.

Sed jam Pharisaeis quid responderit, audiamus: Non est opus, inquit, sanis medicus, sed male habentibus. Ecce quare ad Matthaeum venerat Christus, ut avaritiae curaret vulnera, ut saniem sanaret usurae. Euntes, inquit, discite, quid est Misericordiam volo, et non sacrificium. Misericordiam voluit, ut Matthaeus, quod tulerat per miseriam, in misericordias prorogaret; et inde redimeret poenam, unde comparaverat culpam. Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. Sic dicens, non repulit justos, sed injustos, qui se justos mentiebantur, exclusit. Christus ergo quod ad peccatores venit, peccata delere voluit, non peccatoribus voluit commanere. Quod est dare vitam mortuo, hoc largitatem tribuere est avaro. Itaque Christus quod Matthaeum vocat, non est illa pecuniae ratio, sed est ratio tota virtutis. Denique Matthaeus mox factus est terrae pauper, ut dives haberetur in coelo.

And as Jesus was reclining at table in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and reclined with him and his disciples (Matt 9:10). But the Pharisees, seeing it, said to his disciples: Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? (Matt 9:11) And the Pharisees said this to make it a great evil, one that could displease even the wicked: and if it was an impiety for publicans to be partakers with Christ even in food, what was it to associate a publican with divine things? Brothers, the wit of an interpreter would labour over this question, if the Lord himself, to whom the question is put, did not take away all that is questionable in it.

Let us go back, then, over the order of the reading: let us hear why Christ came to Matthew. As Jesus was passing, he says. He did not say, "As he was standing there": Jesus passed, and passed on from there, so that Matthew should not remain there; Jesus passed on from there, so that Matthew should not stay there in such a state. He saw a man. He did not say, "He saw Matthew", because in Matthew he had set the man free; that is, men whom money possessed cannot serve God, while they serve money. You cannot, he says, serve God and mammon (Matt 6:24). Come, follow me. He did not say, "Bring it to me", because he was seeking Matthew, not Matthew's money-bags. Come, follow me. That is, put down your burdens, break your chains, loose your snares. Follow me. Seek yourself, lose usury, that you may be able to find yourself.

But now let us hear what he answered the Pharisees: It is not the healthy, he says, who need a physician, but those who are ill (Matt 9:12). Behold why Christ had come to Matthew: to cure the wounds of avarice, to heal the festering of usury. Go, he says, and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice (Matt 9:13). He desired mercy, so that Matthew might lay out in mercies what he had taken through misery, and redeem the penalty from the very source from which he had purchased the fault. I did not come to call the just, but sinners. In saying this, he did not reject the just, but shut out the unjust, who falsely claimed to be just. Christ, then, in coming to sinners, willed to blot out sins, not willed to remain with sinners. What it is to give life to the dead, that it is to bestow largess on the avaricious. So Christ's calling Matthew is not that account of money, but it is wholly the account of virtue. Indeed, Matthew at once became poor to the earth, that he might be held rich in heaven.

Sermo XXIX.

De eisdem, et de auro

Cum Matthaeum publicanum Dominus ad apostolatus fastigium evocat et extollit, dat manum lapsis, spem restituit desperatis, reddidit vitae, quos sibi jam mors detinebat addictos. Cum praeteriret, inquit, Jesus, vidit Levi Alphaei sedentem ad telonium. Sedebat utique, qui stare non poterat pondere cupiditatis oppressus, et ipsa totus conscientia fraudis incurvus.

Aurum natura grave, gravius fit avaritia nimis. Hinc est quod plus habentem deprimit quam ferentem, et vehementius aggravat corda quam corpora. Nascitur in terra profunda, sectatur ipsa montium fundamenta, perque ima venarum caecis discurrit anfractibus, et dum suam semper repetit ad naturam coelestes animos ad inferna deponit: obscurat sensus semper, alta mentium semper in terrena demergit. Aurum erogare bonum, reponere malum, contemnere validum, fugere persecurum: quod sicut vincere virtutis est, ita felicitatis est evasisse. Auri furor ardentius humano fervet in pectore quam caminus totus ignescit incendiis, et acrius homines dissolvit in terra quam solvitur in calore flammarum. Crudelitatis dominus, saevus hostis, amando laedit, nudat ditando, ipsum etiam captivat aspectum, fidem frangit, violat affectum, vulnerat charitatem, turbat quietem, adimit innocentiam, docet furtum, suadet fraudes, imperat latrocinium. Et quid plura? Hoc est, quod Apostolus dixit: Radix omnium malorum est avaritia. Est commutatio sane una, si homo prudens illud ante mittat ad coelum, quam mittatur ab illo, ut stultus, in Tartarum. Mittat per manum pauperis, quia quidquid propter Deum pauperi dedit, ad coelum sine dilatione transmittit.

Merito Matthaeum Dominus talibus vinculis absolvi cupiens praepeditum suscitat, dicendo: Sequere me. Hoc est me sequere de supernis ad superna tendentem, et non aurum de inferis ad inferna mergentem. Ubi fuerit thesaurus tuus, illic et cor tuum erit. Aurum patriarcharum stirpem, progeniem sanctam, tantam germanitatis singularem coronam adeo corrupit, et totius reddidit pietatis extorrem, ut Joseph Aegyptiis, fratrem barbaris, innocentem noxiis, ingenuitatem traderent servituti.

Sermon XXIX.

On the same, and on gold

When the Lord calls forth Matthew the publican to the summit of the apostolate and raises him up, he gives a hand to the fallen, restores hope to the desperate, gives back to life those whom death was already holding bound to itself. As Jesus was passing by, he says, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the toll-house (Mark 2:14). He was sitting, of course, he who could not stand, weighed down by the burden of cupidity, and wholly bent by the very consciousness of fraud.

Gold, heavy by nature, becomes far heavier by avarice. Hence it is that it presses down the one who has it more than the one who carries it, and weighs more heavily on hearts than on bodies. It is born deep in the earth, it pursues the very foundations of the mountains, and runs through the depths of the veins in blind windings, and in ever seeking its own nature again, it brings heavenly hearts down to the underworld: it always darkens the senses, it always sinks the heights of minds into earthly things. To pay out gold is good, to hoard it evil, to despise it strong, to flee it safest of all: and as to conquer it belongs to virtue, so to have escaped it belongs to happiness. The frenzy for gold seethes more fiercely in the human breast than a whole furnace glows with its fires, and it melts men down on earth more sharply than it is itself melted in the heat of the flames. Lord of cruelty, savage enemy, it wounds by being loved, strips by enriching, takes captive even the very sight, breaks faith, violates affection, wounds charity, troubles quiet, takes away innocence, teaches theft, counsels frauds, commands robbery. And what more? This is what the Apostle said: The root of all evils is avarice (1 Tim 6:10). There is indeed one exchange: if a prudent man sends it ahead to heaven before he is sent by it, like a fool, into Tartarus. Let him send it by the hand of the poor, because whatever he has given to the poor for God's sake he transmits to heaven without delay.

Rightly does the Lord, desiring Matthew, fettered by such chains, to be set free, rouse him, saying: Follow me. That is: follow me, who make my way from the heights to the heights, and not gold, which sinks from the underworld to the underworld. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt 6:21). Gold so corrupted the stock of the patriarchs, a holy offspring, so great and singular a crown of brotherhood, and made it such an exile from all piety, that they handed over Joseph to the Egyptians, a brother to barbarians, the innocent to the guilty, freeborn status to servitude (Gen 37:28).

Sic siccavit mentes, sic corda depressit, sic quod in eis fuerat humani sensus, ferinam in rabiem commutavit, ut non offensam Dei, non sancti patris dolorem, non proprii sanguinis sensum meminisse permiserit. Intuere quid auro gravius, quod cum mores hominum perdit, perdit et naturam. Aurum Judaicum populum sic suo captivavit aspectu, vicit illecebris, specie perdecepit, ut hoc esse Deum crederent, et Deum verum, Deum tot beneficiis cognitum denegarent; sic convertit homines in jumenta, ut vituli caput, caput suum crederent, et omnium rerum capiti caput pecudis anteferrent. Attendite quam sit pernicies ista fugienda, quae cum mores hominum, honestatem, vitamque perdiderit, ipsum quoque Deum voluit homini et contendit auferre. Hoc est, quod Judam fecit esse proditorem, ut hominem cogeret Deum negare, vendere germanum sui sanguinis, distrahere conditorem, et ipsum sanguinem taxare pretio quem sponte Dominus erat nostrum largiturus in pretium. Sed ne multa super hoc generent exempla fastidium, transeamus ad reliqua.

Sequere me, et surgens secutus est eum. Saepe legitur et in hoste utilis virtus, saepe in adversario comprobatur. Matthaeus non subtrahitur operi, sed mutatur, et telonium suscipit magis quam relinquit, ut mansura Deo, non homini peritura conquirat, ut non trigesimum in quadragesimum quinquagesimumque nummum tristis redigat supputator; sed trigesimum in sexagesimum et centesimum gaudii fructum laetus recondat divinis commodis profuturum. Et surgens secutus est eum. Generosus animus, qui sic ea quae magna putarat, facile, et quasi nulla contempsit: apparet illum per ignorantiam lucra ante praesentia conquisisse, a quibus ut se sensit, et vidit liberum, sic raptus est ad divina.

Et factum est, dum accumberet in domo illius, multi Publicani et peccatores discumbebant cum Jesu et discipulis ejus. Discumbebat Jesus plus in Matthaei mente quam sigmate, et epulabatur non cibis, sed reditu peccatoris, ut revocaret convivio, collegio, humanitatis affectu, dulcissima sui confabulatione discumbentes, quos sciebat posse judicis agnita potestate dissolvi, percelli terrore majestatis suae, de nuda mox praesentia posse prosterni, velatus humano corpore, qui homini voluit subvenire. Occultavit dominum, qui servis dignatus est fiduciam non negare; majestatem texit, qui fragilem studuit parentis amore complecti.

So it dried up their minds, so it pressed down their hearts, so it changed into bestial rage whatever human feeling had been in them, that it did not let them remember the affront to God, the grief of their holy father, the feeling of their own blood. Consider what is more grievous than gold, which, when it ruins men's morals, ruins their nature as well. Gold so took the Jewish people captive by its sight, overcame them with its allurements, deceived them utterly by its appearance, that they believed it to be God, and denied the true God, the God known by so many benefits; so it turned men into beasts, that they believed a calf's head to be their head, and set the head of a beast before the Head of all things (Exod 32). Mark how this pestilence must be fled, which, having ruined men's morals, honour and life, willed and strove to take from man God himself as well. This is what made Judas a traitor, so as to compel a man to deny God, to sell the brother of his own blood, to sell off his Maker, and to put a price on that very blood which the Lord was of his own will to bestow as our price (Matt 26:15). But lest many examples on this matter breed weariness, let us pass on to the rest.

Follow me. And he rose and followed him (Mark 2:14). Often we read of a useful virtue even in an enemy, often it is proved even in an adversary. Matthew is not withdrawn from work but changed, and he undertakes the toll-house rather than leaves it, so as to acquire things that will last for God, not things that will perish for man; so that he should not, a gloomy reckoner, bring the thirtieth into the fortieth and the fiftieth coin, but, a glad one, should store away the thirtyfold, the sixtyfold and the hundredfold fruit of joy, to profit the interests of God. And he rose and followed him. A noble mind, which so easily despised, as though they were nothing, the things it had thought great: it is clear that he had before amassed his present gains through ignorance, and as soon as he felt and saw himself free of them, he was swept up to divine things.

And it came to pass, while he was reclining at table in his house, many publicans and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples (Mark 2:15). Jesus reclined more in Matthew's mind than on his couch, and he feasted not on food but on the return of a sinner, so as to call back by the banquet, by fellowship at table, by the affection of humanity, by the sweetest conversation with himself, those who were reclining there, whom he knew could be undone once the power of the judge was recognised, could be struck down by the terror of his majesty, could be laid low at once by his bare presence; veiled in a human body, he who willed to come to man's help. He hid the lord, he who deigned not to deny confidence to servants; he covered his majesty, he who was eager to embrace frail man with a parent's love.

Sed offenduntur Judaei, dicentes: Quare cum Publicanis et peccatoribus manducat et bibit magister vester? Miraris, Judaee, cur misceatur convivio peccatorum, qui propter peccatores et nasci voluit, et non recusavit occidi: oblatras cur peccatorum vinum bibat, qui pro peccatoribus suum sanguinem fudit. Et si vis posse amplius, suscepit ipse peccatum, ne perderet peccatores; in se sententiam suam judex retorsit, ut amasse se peccatores proderet magis solvendo debitum quam donando. Sed talibus ipsum Dominum respondisse sufficiat, Non necesse habent sani medico, sed male habentes; non enim veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. Et quis non erat aegrotus, ipsa generis humani sic aegrotante natura? Ad omnes ergo venit, qui omnes male habentes ut curaret invenit; sed plane mori meruit, qui medicum contempsit ne se accusaret, vel confiteretur aegrotum.

Sed dicti sui Dominus aperit mox figuram, dicendo: Non enim veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. Non hic Dominus justos respuit, sed superbos; et eos notat, qui cum non sint, esse se jactant justos. Et ubi erant justi, cum juxta prophetam: Non erat qui faceret bonum, non erat usque ad unum? Ut intelligant aegritudinem, medicum, ut curentur, admittant, confiteantur se peccatores, ut modo Christus parens et conviva largiatur veniam, ne post judex ferat in contumaces debitam sine fine sententiam.

But the Jews take offence, saying: Why does your master eat and drink with publicans and sinners? (Mark 2:16) You wonder, Jew, why he mingles in the banquet of sinners, he who for sinners willed both to be born and did not refuse to be slain: you bark at him because he drinks the wine of sinners, he who for sinners poured out his own blood. And if you would have him able to do more: he himself took up sin, so as not to lose sinners; the judge turned his sentence back upon himself, to show that he had loved sinners, by paying their debt rather than by forgiving it. But let it suffice that the Lord himself answered such men: The healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are ill; for I did not come to call the just, but sinners (Mark 2:17). And who was not sick, when the very nature of the human race was so sick? To all, then, he came, he who found all ill, so that he might cure them; but he plainly deserved to die who despised the physician, so as not to accuse himself or confess himself sick.

But the Lord at once opens the figure of his words, saying: For I did not come to call the just, but sinners. Here the Lord does not reject the just, but the proud; and he marks out those who, though they are not just, boast that they are. And where were the just, when, according to the Prophet, there was none who did good, there was not even one (Ps 14:3)? That they may understand their illness, let them admit the physician, that they may be cured; let them confess themselves sinners, so that Christ, now parent and guest at table, may grant pardon, lest afterwards as judge he bring upon the obstinate the endless sentence that is their due.

Sermo XXX.

De eisdem

Hodierna evangelica lectio Matthaeum publicanum sic in apostolum commutavit, ut qui erat fraudator pecuniae fieret gratiae distributor, et de impietatis schola ad pietatis magisterium perveniret; fieretque doctor misericordiae, qui avaritiae fuerat institutor. Dum transiret Jesus, vidit hominem sedentem in telonio, Matthaeum nomine. Cum transiret inde Jesus, bene transiret inde: transibat Judaeam, ut veniret ad gentes; praeteribat Synagogam, ut Ecclesia permaneret; praetergrediebatur carnis patriam, ut deitatis suae remearet ad sedem. In Christo, fratres, transitoria est carnis injuria, in quo divinitatis honor est sempiternus.

Dum transiret inde, vidit hominem. Vidit plus divinis oculis quam humanis. Vidit hominem, ut peccata hominis non videret. Vidit opus suum, ut despiceret opera peccatorum. Vidit illum Deus, ut ille videret Deum. Vidit illum Christus, ut ille pecuniae latebras amplius non videret. Vidit illum christus sedentem, quia pressus cupiditatis pondere, surgere non valebat.

Fratres, deterius sedebat in telonio publicanus iste, quam paralyticus, de quo ante diximus, jacebat in lecto. Quia ille carnis patiebatur paralysim, iste mentis; in illo fuerat compago turbata membrorum, in isto totus ordo fuerat sensuum dissipatus; ille jacebat captus carne, sedebat corpore et animo iste captivus; ille doloribus succumbebat invitus, iste vitiis voluntarius serviebat; iste sibi innocens avaritiae videbatur in crimine, ille se cognoscebat inter vulnera peccatorem; iste lucrorum cumulabat peccata, ille dolorum gemitibus peccata delebat. Merito igitur paralytico dicitur, Confide, fili, dimittuntur tibi peccata tua, quia compensarat delicta doloribus; publicano autem dicitur: Veni, sequere me. Hoc est, ut sequendo me repares quod consequendo pecuniam perdidisti.

Sed dicit aliquis: Quare Publicanus, qui major videtur in crimine, major habetur in munere? Nam mox apostolatus certa praeditus dignitate, non solum ipse accepit, sed aliis indulgentiam tribuit peccatorum: totum orbem splendore evangelicae praedicationis irradiat, et paralyticus sola dignus venia vix habetur. Vis nosse quare plus consecutus sit Publicanus? Quia juxta Apostolum, ubi abundavit peccatum, superabundavit et gratia.

Sermon XXX.

On the same

Today's Gospel reading so changed Matthew the publican into an apostle, that he who was a defrauder of money became a distributor of grace, and passed from the school of impiety to the mastership of piety; and he who had been an instructor of avarice became a teacher of mercy. As Jesus was passing by, he saw a man sitting at the toll-house, Matthew by name (Matt 9:9). When Jesus was passing on from there, rightly was he passing on from there: he was passing through Judaea, to come to the Gentiles; he was passing by the Synagogue, so that the Church might remain; he was going beyond the homeland of the flesh, to return to the seat of his Godhead. In Christ, brothers, the injury of the flesh is transitory, for in him the honour of divinity is everlasting.

As he was passing on from there, he saw a man. He saw with divine eyes more than with human ones. He saw the man, so as not to see the man's sins. He saw his own work, so as to disregard the works of sinners. God saw him, that he might see God. Christ saw him, that he might no longer see the hiding places of money. Christ saw him sitting, because, weighed down by the burden of cupidity, he was not able to rise.

Brothers, this publican sat worse at the toll-house than the paralytic, of whom we spoke before, lay on his bed. For that man suffered paralysis of the flesh, this man of the mind; in that man the frame of the limbs had been thrown into disorder, in this man the whole order of the senses had been scattered; that man lay captive in the flesh, this man sat captive in body and in heart; that man succumbed to his pains against his will, this man served his vices of his own will; this man seemed to himself innocent in the crime of avarice, that man knew himself a sinner amid his wounds; this man heaped up the sins of gain, that man blotted out his sins with the groans of his pains. Rightly, then, it is said to the paralytic: Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven you (Matt 9:2), because he had paid for his offences with his pains; but to the publican it is said: Come, follow me. That is, that by following me you may repair what you lost by pursuing money.

But someone says: "Why is the publican, who seems greater in crime, held greater in office?" For at once, endowed with the sure dignity of the apostolate, he not only received it himself but bestowed the indulgence of sins on others: he lights up the whole world with the splendour of the Gospel preaching, while the paralytic is scarcely held worthy of pardon alone. Do you want to know why the publican obtained more? Because, according to the Apostle, where sin abounded, grace also abounded the more (Rom 5:20).

Scimus ut Publicanus gentilis populi typum teneat, paralyticus Judaici populi sit figura, qui hodieque malae valetudinis tenetur in lecto, ut nisi portatus fuerit fide gentium, oblatus Christo miseratione sanctorum, Christiani populi credulitate salvatus, ad domum fidei, ad domum patriae non potest pervenire.

Et discumbente eo in domo, ecce veniebant, inquit, multi publicani et peccatores, et discumbebant cum eo et discipulis ejus. Videntes autem Pharisaei dicebant discipulis ejus, Quare cum publicanis et peccatoribus magister vester manducat? Arguitur Deus, quia inclinat se homini, quare conjacet peccatori, quare esurit poenitentiam, quare sitit reditum peccatorum, quare acceptat misericordiae fercula, quare sumit poculum pietatis. Fratres, venit ad prandium Christus, venit ad convivium Vita, ut faceret secum convivere morituros; jacuit Resurrectio, ut de sepulcris surgerent qui jacebant; decubuit indulgentia, ut peccatores levaret ad veniam; venit ad humanitatem divinitas, ut ad divinitatem veniret humanitas; venit judex ad reorum prandium, ut humanitas praeveniret reatus sententiam; venit ad languentes medicus, ut reficeret convescendo defessos; inclinavit pastor bonus humeros suos, ut ovem perditam salutares reportaret ad caulas. Sed hoc Pharisaeus detestatur et arguit, qui prandium Dominicum putat non virtutis esse, sed ventris; non spiritus, sed carnis; non divinae bonitatis, sed voluptatis humanae; terreni luxus, non gratiae coelestis. Sic, sic se videt, qui Deum non videt. Quis arguit medicum jacentibus conjacentem, nisi humanae salutis inimicus? quis pastorem subnixum lasso pecori reprehendit, nisi qui lucrosi gregis amorem nescit? quis judicem de pietate judicat, nisi ille qui fuerit desperatus? quis communionem Dei, nisi sacrilegus, spernit? indulgentiam quis, nisi crudelis horrescit?

Quare magister vester cum Publicanis et peccatoribus manducat? Et quis est peccator, nisi qui se peccatorem negat? Magis ipse peccator est, et, ut verius dicam, ipse jam peccatum est, qui se jam non intelligit peccatorem. Et quis injustus, nisi qui se judicat justum? Legisti, Pharisaee, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens. Quamdiu sumus in mortali corpore, et fragilitas dominatur in nobis; et si actu peccata vincimus, vincere peccata cogitationum non possumus, et injustitias fugere: qui si corpore possumus evitare, et si conscientiam malam devincere valemus, culpas negligentiae, ignorantiae peccata quemadmodum possumus abolere? Pharisaee, confitere peccatum, ut Christi venire possis ad mensam, ut sit tibi panis Christus et panis ipse frangatur in tuorum veniam peccatorum, ut fiat tibi poculum Christus, qui in tuorum delictorum remissionem funditur.

We know how the publican bears the type of the Gentile people and the paralytic is a figure of the Jewish people, who to this day is held on his bed by an evil sickness, so that unless he is carried by the faith of the Gentiles, offered to Christ by the compassion of the saints, saved by the belief of the Christian people, he cannot reach the house of faith, the house of the fatherland.

And as he reclined in the house, behold, he says, many publicans and sinners came and reclined with him and his disciples (Matt 9:10). But the Pharisees, seeing it, said to his disciples: Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? (Matt 9:11) God is reproached because he bends down to man: why does he recline beside the sinner, why does he hunger for penance, why does he thirst for the return of sinners, why does he accept the dishes of mercy, why does he take the cup of piety? Brothers, Christ came to the meal, Life came to the banquet, to make those who were to die share his life; the Resurrection lay down at table, that those who lay in the sepulchres might rise; Indulgence reclined, to raise sinners to pardon; divinity came to humanity, that humanity might come to divinity; the judge came to the meal of the accused, that humanity might forestall the sentence of guilt; the physician came to the sick, to restore the weary by eating with them; the good shepherd bent his shoulders, to carry the lost sheep back to the saving folds. But this the Pharisee detests and reproaches, who thinks the Lord's meal a matter not of virtue but of the belly; not of the spirit but of the flesh; not of divine goodness but of human pleasure; of earthly luxury, not of heavenly grace. So, so does he see himself, who does not see God. Who blames the physician for lying beside those who lie sick, but an enemy of human salvation? who reproaches the shepherd for stooping under the weary flock, but one who knows nothing of love for a flock of gain? who judges the judge for his loving-kindness, but one who is beyond hope? who spurns communion with God, but a sacrilegious man? who shudders at indulgence, but a cruel one?

Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? And who is a sinner, but one who denies he is a sinner? He is the greater sinner, and, to speak more truly, he is already sin itself, who no longer understands himself to be a sinner. And who is unjust, but one who judges himself just? You have read, Pharisee, that no one living will be justified in your sight (Ps 143:2). As long as we are in a mortal body, frailty too holds sway in us; and even if we overcome sins in act, we cannot overcome the sins of our thoughts, nor flee injustices: and even if we can avoid these in the body, and even if we are able to subdue an evil conscience, how can we abolish the faults of negligence, the sins of ignorance? Pharisee, confess your sin, that you may come to Christ's table, that Christ may be bread to you and the bread itself be broken for the pardon of your sins, that Christ may become a cup to you, he who is poured out for the remission of your offences.

Pharisaee, prande cum peccatoribus, ut possis prandere cum Christo; agnosce te peccatorem, ut tecum prandeat Christus; intra cum peccatoribus convivium Domini tui, ut possis non esse peccator; intra domum misericordiae cum Christi venia, ne cum tua justitia extra domum misericordiae puniaris exclusus: agnosce Christum, audi Christum, audi Dominum tuum, audi coelestem medicum, calumnias tuas peremptorie confutantem.

Non est opus sanis medicus, sed male habentibus. Si vis curam, agnosce languorem. Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. Si cupis misericordiam, confitere peccatum. Euntes, inquit, discite quid est, Misericordiam volo, et non sacrificium. Christus misericordiam vult, et non sacrificium; aut quod sacrificium quaeret, qui ut te quaereret sacrificium factus est ipse? Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. Non repulit justos, sed quia sine Christo innocens non habetur in terris. Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. Sic dicendo non repulit justos, sed quia omnes reperit peccatores. Audi Psalmistam. Dominus de coelo prospexit super filios hominum, ut videat si est intelligens aut requirens Deum. Omnes declinaverunt, simul inutiles facti sunt; non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum. Fratres simus, simus peccatores confessione nostra, ut Christi venia non simus peccatores.

Pharisee, dine with sinners, that you may dine with Christ; acknowledge yourself a sinner, that Christ may dine with you; enter with sinners the banquet of your Lord, that you may be able not to be a sinner; enter the house of mercy with the pardon of Christ, lest with your justice you be shut out of the house of mercy and punished: acknowledge Christ, hear Christ, hear your Lord, hear the heavenly physician refuting your calumnies once and for all.

It is not the healthy who need a physician, but those who are ill (Matt 9:12). If you want a cure, acknowledge your sickness. I did not come to call the just, but sinners (Matt 9:13). If you desire mercy, confess your sin. Go, he says, and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. Christ desires mercy, and not sacrifice; or what sacrifice will he seek, who, to seek you, himself became a sacrifice? I did not come to call the just, but sinners. He did not reject the just; it is because without Christ no one is held innocent on earth. I did not come to call the just, but sinners. In saying so he did not reject the just; it is because he found all to be sinners. Hear the Psalmist. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there is any who understands or seeks God (Ps 14:2). All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one (Ps 14:3). Brothers, let us be, let us be sinners by our confession, that by the pardon of Christ we may not be sinners.

Sermo XXXI.

De Pharisaeorum et discipulorum Joannis jejunio

Bonitas virtutum mater, malitia origo vitiorum; virtutes comitatur gloria, inhaeret vitiis cognata confusio; sicut vitia teguntur dolis, ita illustrantur libertate virtutes. Hinc est quod Christus virtutum lux, agebat libere, loquebatur pure, praestabat ut Deus, patiebatur ut parens, ut dominus arguebat: Judaei vero viperinum germen, genitricis mors, genitoris occisio, dum perimunt Christum Synagogae matris uterum diruperunt. Vere sicut scriptum est: Progenies viperarum submittebant capita, adulabantur lingua, vulnera dabant dolis, blasphemiis venena fundebant: et quasi non sufficeret ad odium contemptus, despectus ad injuriam, sic Christum persequebantur insidiis, tentabant dolis, interrogatione pulsabant, appetebant contumeliis, et tota cupidi simulatione vallabant. Objiciebant curandos sabbato, ut si non curasset, fieret de impossibilitate contemptus; de lege manaret calumnia si curasset. Interrogabant in qua potestate faceret sua jussione virtutes, ut si dixisset, deitatis, invidiam commoverent; si tacuisset, artis magicae crimen inferrent. Dicebant enim in Beelzebub principe daemoniorum ejicit daemonia: et, sicut hodie lectum est, apud discipulos in magistrum notam de Publicanorum convivio componebant. Apud magistrum discipulos jejunii nescios gulae deditos accusabant; sed discipulis de magistro, magistro de discipulis odiorum causas, discordiae semina livore jactabant.

Accesserunt, inquit, discipuli Joannis, dicentes: Quare nos et Pharisaei jejunamus frequenter, discipuli autem tui non jejunant? Et cum discipulis Joannis quae societas Pharisaeis? nisi quia junxerat invidia, quos disjunxerat disciplina. Hic jam sua perdit jura zelus, junxit disjungere consuetus. Judaei postponi Moysen Domino non ferebant, discipuli Joannis Christum nolebant Joanni ullatenus anteferri: sic in Christum fremebant utrique livore communi.

Sermon XXXI.

On the fasting of the Pharisees and of John's disciples

Goodness is the mother of the virtues, malice the origin of the vices; glory accompanies the virtues, confusion clings to the vices as their kin; as the vices are covered by guile, so the virtues are made illustrious by freedom. Hence it is that Christ, the light of the virtues, acted freely, spoke purely, bestowed as God, endured as a parent, rebuked as a lord: but the Jews, a viper's brood, the death of their bearer, the slaying of their begetter, in destroying Christ tore open the womb of their mother the Synagogue. Truly, as it is written, offspring of vipers (Matt 3:7), they bowed their heads, flattered with the tongue, dealt wounds by guile, poured out venom in blasphemies: and as if contempt were not enough for hatred, scorn for injury, so they pursued Christ with ambushes, tried him with tricks, assailed him with questioning, attacked him with insults, and in their eagerness hemmed him in with every pretence. They put before him those to be cured on the sabbath, so that, if he did not cure them, contempt might arise from his inability; if he cured them, calumny might flow from the Law. They asked by what power he did mighty works by his command (Luke 20:2), so that, if he said it was the Godhead's, they might stir up ill will; if he kept silent, they might bring against him the crime of the magic art. For they said: He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Matt 12:24); and, as was read today, before the disciples they were composing a slur against their master over the banquet of the publicans. Before the master they accused the disciples of knowing nothing of fasting and being given to gluttony; but out of spite they were throwing causes of hatred and seeds of discord to the disciples about the master, to the master about the disciples.

There came, he says, the disciples of John, saying: Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast? (Matt 9:14) And what society have the Pharisees with the disciples of John? only that envy had joined those whom discipline had parted. Here jealousy now loses its own rights: accustomed to divide, it has joined. The Jews could not bear that Moses be placed after the Lord, John's disciples would by no means have Christ preferred to John: so both raged against Christ with a common spite.

Quare nos et Pharisaei jejunamus frequenter, discipuli autem tui non jejunant? Quare? quia penes vos est de lege, non de voluntate, jejunium; jejunium non jejunantem respicit, sed lubentem. Et quis vobis jejunii fructus est, qui jejunium jejunatis invitum? Jejunium est singulare sanctitatis aratrum, colit corda, eradicat crimina, evellit delicta, vitia subruit, charitatem serit, copiam nutrit, parat innocentiae messem. Discipuli ergo Christi in tota sanctitatis segete constituti, et virtutum manipulos colligentes, habentes panem jam novi fructus, inveterata non possunt jejunia jejunare. Quae jactantur verbis, pallore proponuntur, venditantur defectu, placent humanis oculis, non divinis.

Quare nos et Pharisaei jejunamus frequenter, discipuli autem tui non jejunant? Respondit Dominus: Numquid possunt filii sponsi jejunare, quamdiu cum illis est sponsus? Quid est hoc? Interrogatus Joannes sponsum esse sic testatus est Christum: Qui habet sponsam sponsus est; amicus autem sponsi, qui stat et audit cum gaudio, gaudet propter vocem sponsi. Convenienter ergo discipulis Joannes magistri sui voce respondit, ut vel illi crederent et non cogerent tempora sponsi laeta tristis intrare jejunii: quia qui quaerit sponsam jejunia seponit, relinquit austera, totum se dat gaudiis, epulis indulget, totus blandus, totus amabilis, totus festivus incedit, et facit totum quod sponsae tenera requirit affectio. Christus ergo qui tunc Ecclesiam desponsabat, indulgebat se mensis, convivantibus se non negabat, humanum, comem, blandum se pia charitate reddebat, donec divinis humana conjungeret, et faceret de terrena societate coeleste consortium.

Adjecit Dominus dicens: Nemo immittit commissuram panni rudis in vestimentum vetus, tollit enim plenitudinem ejus a vestimento, et pejor scissura fit. Antiquae legis supellectilem dicit Judaicis studiis attritam, corruptis sensibus, sectis scissam, impuris actibus obsoletam. Pannum rudem Evangelii nuncupat indumentum. Sed audi pannum non scissurae partem, sed principium texturae. Tunc enim primum regalis indumenti tela de Christi vellere texebatur, de vellere quod dabat Agnus. Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi. Texebatur autem regium vestimentum, quod in purpureum fulgorem cruor tingeret passionis. Merito ergo Christus hunc pannum rudem Judaicae vetustati prohibebat immitti, ne pejor scissura fieret, si Judaicam vetustatem novitas scinderet Christiana.

Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast? Why? because with you fasting is a matter of the Law, not of the will; fasting regards not the one who fasts, but the one who fasts gladly. And what fruit of fasting is there for you, who fast an unwilling fast? Fasting is the singular plough of holiness: it tills hearts, uproots crimes, plucks out offences, undermines vices, sows charity, nourishes plenty, prepares the harvest of innocence. Christ's disciples, therefore, set in the whole harvest of holiness, and gathering the sheaves of the virtues, having already the bread of the new fruit, cannot fast the fasts that have grown old. These are boasted of in words, displayed by pallor, advertised by faintness; they please human eyes, not divine ones.

Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast? The Lord answered: Can the sons of the bridegroom fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Matt 9:15) What does this mean? John, when he was questioned, thus testified that Christ is the bridegroom: He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears with joy, rejoices at the voice of the bridegroom (John 3:29). Fittingly, then, John answered his disciples with the voice of his master, so that they at least might believe and not force the glad times of the bridegroom to enter upon a sad fast: because he who seeks a bride puts fasts aside, leaves austerities, gives himself wholly to joys, indulges in feasts, goes about all gentle, all lovable, all festive, and does all that the tender affection of a bride requires. Christ, then, who was at that time betrothing the Church, gave himself to tables, did not deny himself to those who feasted with him, made himself human, courteous, gentle with devoted charity, until he should join human things to divine, and make a heavenly fellowship out of an earthly society.

The Lord added, saying: No one puts a patch of rough cloth on an old garment, for it takes away its fullness from the garment, and a worse rent is made (Matt 9:16). He means the gear of the ancient Law, worn by Jewish pursuits and corrupted senses, torn by sects, made shabby by impure acts. The rough cloth he calls the garment of the Gospel. But hear: the cloth is not a part of a rent, but the beginning of a weaving. For then for the first time the web of the royal garment was being woven from the fleece of Christ, from the fleece which the Lamb gave. The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). And the royal garment was being woven which the blood of the Passion would dye into a purple splendour. Rightly, then, Christ forbade this rough cloth to be put on Jewish oldness, lest a worse rent be made, if Christian newness tore Jewish oldness.

Et geminat exemplum, dicens: Neque mittunt vinum novum in utres veteres, alioquin rumpunt utres; et vinum effunditur, et utres pereunt; sed vinum novum mittunt in utres novos, et ambo conservantur. Utres veteres Judaeos vocat; novos utres nuncupat Christianos: quia sicut utres pellium ab omni squalore purgantur, et pigmentis liniuntur odoratis, ut saporem vini possint inviolabilem custodire, ita jejuniis corpora humana ab omni carnalium delictorum squalore purgantur, et fiunt utres divinis torcularibus apti, ut de prelo crucis accipiant vinum novum, et incorruptam novitatem conservent. Sed hoc sicut accipiunt Christiani; ita Judaei, nisi Christiani fuerint, non habebunt: qui corrupti vitiis et inveterati malis, vinum novum quod est Evangelii verbum, sic acceperint ut rumpantur et fundant. Agnoscendum est ergo quia Christus per exempla haec non discipulos suos noluit jejunare, sed noluit jejunium verum fraudulento miscere jejunio.

And he doubles the example, saying: Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, otherwise they burst the skins, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish; but they put new wine into new skins, and both are preserved (Matt 9:17). He calls the Jews old skins; the Christians he names new skins: because, as skins of hide are cleansed of all filth and smeared with fragrant spices, so that they may keep the taste of the wine unspoiled, so by fasts human bodies are cleansed of all the filth of carnal offences and become skins fit for the divine winepresses, to receive the new wine from the press of the cross and keep its newness uncorrupted. But as the Christians receive this, so the Jews, unless they become Christians, will not have it: corrupted by vices and grown old in evils, they would so receive the new wine, which is the word of the Gospel, as to burst and pour it out. It must be acknowledged, then, that by these examples Christ did not refuse to have his disciples fast, but refused to mingle the true fast with a fraudulent fast.

Sermo XXXII.

De eo qui habebat manum aridam

Omnia signorum Christi opera stupenda virtutum, non humanitus, neque casu, sed divina procuratione credenda sunt evenisse, sicut hodie nobis evangelicum demonstravit eloquium. Et intravit, inquit, Jesus in synagogam, et erat ibi homo habens manum aridam. Christus quidem ingreditur synagogam, sed Judaeus nec recipit intrantem, nec agnoscit praesentem, nec operantem caecatus intelligit. Cernite quam nihil sit praesentia corporalis, ubi fuerit mentis miseranda separatio; sicut contra nihil efficit absentia corporalis, ubi corda fuerint sociata per fidem.

Et erat ibi homo, habens manum aridam. In hoc homine omnium hominum imago figuratur, in hoc geritur cura cunctorum, in hoc universorum sanitas diu exspectata reparatur. Aruerat enim manus hominis magis stupore fidei quam siccitate nervorum, et plus culpa conscientiae quam debilitate carnali. Antiqua nimis ista erat, et quae in ipso mundi principio contigerat aegritudo, nec arte hominis aut beneficio poterat haec curari; quae justa Dei fuerat indignatione contracta, tetigerat vetita, inconcessa praesumpserat, cum se ad arborem sciendi bonum, malumque porrexerat, auctore indigebat, non qui malagma imponeret, sed qui posset illatam relaxare sententiam, et ignoscendo resolvere quod religaverat indignando. In hoc homine nostrae tantum geritur umbra sanitatis, perfecta autem salus nobis reservatur in Christo, quia tunc ariditas nostrae manus miserando dissolvitur, cum cruore perfunditur Dominicae passionis, cum illo vitali ligno crucis extenditur, cum carpit fructuosam de dolore virtutem, cum totam arborem salutis amplectitur, cum clavis Domini corpus affigitur, quo numquam ad arborem concupiscentiae, et aridae redeat voluntatis.

Sermon XXXII.

On the man who had a withered hand

All the works of Christ's signs, astonishing works of power, must be believed to have come about not humanly, nor by chance, but by divine providence, as the word of the Gospel has shown us today. And Jesus entered, he says, the synagogue, and there was a man there who had a withered hand (Mark 3:1). Christ indeed enters the synagogue, but the Jew neither receives him as he enters, nor acknowledges him present, nor, blinded, understands him at work. See how bodily presence is nothing where there is a pitiable separation of mind; just as, on the contrary, bodily absence counts for nothing where hearts are associated through faith.

And there was a man there who had a withered hand. In this man the image of all men is figured, in him the cure of all is carried out, in him the long-awaited health of all is restored. For the man's hand had withered more by the numbness of faith than by the dryness of the sinews, and more by the fault of conscience than by bodily infirmity. Very ancient was this illness, and one that had befallen at the very beginning of the world, nor could it be cured by man's art or kindness; contracted by the just indignation of God, it had touched forbidden things, presumed upon what was not granted, when it stretched itself out to the tree of knowing good and evil (Gen 3); it needed its author, not one who would apply a poultice, but one who could relax the sentence imposed, and by forgiving undo what he had bound up in his indignation. In this man only a shadow of health is enacted for us; but perfect health is reserved for us in Christ, because the dryness of our hand is dissolved by mercy then, when it is drenched with the blood of the Lord's Passion, when it is stretched out on that life-giving wood of the cross, when it plucks fruitful virtue from pain, when it embraces the whole tree of salvation, when the body is fastened with the nails of the Lord, so that it may never return to the tree of concupiscence and of a withered will.

Observabant, inquit, pharisaei si sabbatis curaret, ut accusarent eum. Ad infamiam judicis et nequitiam cognitoris, quaeritur de cura crimen, de pietate accusatio, reatus de virtute, de salute supplicium. Sed mirum non est: semper offendunt bona malos, pia impios, sancta profanos; aut quando non lascivus disciplinam, virtutem vitiosus, innocentiam criminosus accusat? Observabant solliciti sacerdotes sabbatis, non si peccaret, sed si curaret, ut accusarent eum. Amatores criminum invigilant, insidiantur in accusatione virtutum, quasi contra salutem, non pro salute sabbatum sit provisum. Si sabbatis curaret; observant: tali legis interprete, non dico laborat nimis, sed funditus et exspirat aegrotus. Sabbatum non impie curam denegavit infirmis, sed tota pietate aliquoties quietem praestitit fessis nimio labore mortalibus.

Et ait homini habenti manum aridam: Surge in medium, professor debilitatis propriae, supernae pietatis exactor, testis divinae virtutis, Judaicae incredulitatis assertor. Surge in medium, ut quos non compungit virtus tanta signorum, quos non opera tantae salutis inclinant, vel debilitatis tantae miseratio constringat et mitiget.

Tunc dicit eis, licet sabbatis benefacere an male; animam salvam facere, an perdere? Hoc dicendo, bonitatem commendat operis sui, et illorum malitiae conceptae conscientiam accusat: quia cum ille hominem salvum facere corpore animoque gestiret, illi eum accusandi studio perdere moliuntur, qui et patiebantur eum sabbatis curare; insidiantes animo utrum curaret, ut cum curasset, sensus sui malignitate damnarentur, et essent tali patientia quam ipsa malitia nequiores, et plus furentes dolo quam tali judicio dementes.

At illi tacebant, et circumspiciens eos cum ira, contristatus super caecitate cordis eorum. Circumspiciens dixit, non conspiciens, id est, non tantum faciem ut homo intuens, sed ut Deus corpora, corda, mentes, sensus, praeterita, praesentia, futura contemplatus. Circumspiciens eos cum ira, contristatus. Irascitur ut dominus, contristatur ut parens, dolet ut homo, intuetur ut Deus. Dicit homini, extende manum tuam; et extendit, et restituta est manus illius. Extende manum tuam: jussione solvitur, quae fuerat jussione devincta. Extende manum tuam. Agnovit poena judicem, opus Deum, indulgentia prodidit conditorem.

The Pharisees watched, he says, whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him (Mark 3:2). To the infamy of the judge and the wickedness of the examining judge, a crime is sought out of a cure, an accusation out of loving-kindness, guilt out of power, punishment out of healing. But it is no wonder: good things always offend the wicked, devout things the impious, holy things the profane; or when does the wanton man not accuse discipline, the vicious virtue, the criminal innocence? The priests watched intently on the sabbath, not whether he would sin, but whether he would cure, so that they might accuse him. Lovers of crimes keep vigil, lie in wait to accuse virtues, as though the sabbath had been provided against health and not for health. Whether he would cure on the sabbath: they watch; with such an interpreter of the Law, I do not say the sick man suffers sorely, but he utterly expires. The sabbath did not impiously deny cure to the sick, but with all loving-kindness from time to time granted rest to mortals weary with excessive labour.

And he said to the man who had the withered hand: Rise into the midst (Mark 3:3), you who profess your own infirmity, who claim the loving-kindness from above, witness of divine power, proof of Jewish disbelief. Rise into the midst, so that those whom so great a power of signs does not prick, whom the works of so great a healing do not bend, may at least be constrained and softened by compassion for so great an infirmity.

Then he says to them: Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or evil; to save a life or to destroy it? (Mark 3:4) In saying this, he commends the goodness of his work and accuses the conscience of the malice they had conceived: for while he longed to make the man whole in body and mind, they in their eagerness to accuse were striving to destroy him; they who even allowed him to cure on the sabbath, lying in wait in their minds whether he would cure, so that, once he had cured, they might be condemned by the malignity of their own sense, and might be more wicked by such forbearance than by malice itself, and more raging in guile than mad in such a judgement.

But they were silent; and looking round at them with anger, grieved at the blindness of their heart (Mark 3:4–5). He said "looking round", not "looking at"; that is, not merely gazing on the face as a man, but contemplating as God bodies, hearts, minds, senses, things past, present, to come. Looking round at them with anger, grieved. He is angry as lord, he grieves as parent, he feels pain as man, he beholds as God. He says to the man: Stretch out your hand; and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored (Mark 3:5). Stretch out your hand: by a command is loosed the hand that had been bound by a command. Stretch out your hand. The penalty recognised its judge, the work its God, the indulgence betrayed its Maker.

Orate, fratres, ut sola Synagoga tali debilitate fuscetur; nec sit in Ecclesia cujus manum arefaciat cupiditas, contrahat avaritia, rapina debilitet, tenacitas aegrotam constringat: sed si acciderit idipsum, audiat Dominum et cito eam in opere pietatis extendat, relaxet, et in misericordia, in eleemosynis porrigat. Sanari nescit, qui nescit pauperi fenerari.

Tunc egressi Pharisaei statim cum Herodianis consilium faciebant, quomodo eum perderent. Semper Judaeus Herodianis jungitur, ut invadat Christianos. Jesus, inquit, cum discipulis secessit ad mare. Ut comparatione fluctuum praviorem Judaeorum probaret et demonstraret errorem. Sed quia Jesus, deserviente navicula, id est, Ecclesia, sequestratur a confusione turbarum, et Christiani populi gubernator residet indefessus vario genere medendi, et imperavit ventis et mari ut tandem tranquillitatis obedientia conquiescant, juxta prophetam: Dirumpamus vincula eorum, et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum, ut sub jugo pietatis manentes, divinae gloriae mereamur esse participes.

Pray, brothers, that the Synagogue alone may be darkened by such an infirmity; and that there may be no one in the Church whose hand cupidity withers, avarice contracts, rapine weakens, tightfistedness cramps into sickness: but if this very thing should happen, let him hear the Lord and quickly stretch it out in the work of piety, relax it, and hold it out in mercy, in almsgiving. He does not know how to be healed who does not know how to lend at interest to the poor.

Then the Pharisees went out and at once took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him (Mark 3:6). The Jew is always joined to the Herodians, to attack Christians. Jesus, he says, withdrew with his disciples to the sea (Mark 3:7). So that by comparison with the waves he might prove and show the error of the Jews to be more crooked. But because Jesus, with the boat serving him, that is, the Church, is set apart from the confusion of the crowds, and the helmsman of the Christian people sits unwearied at every kind of healing, and has commanded the winds and the sea (Mark 4:39) to be still at last in the obedience of calm, as the prophet says: Let us burst their chains, and cast their yoke from us (Ps 2:3), so that, remaining under the yoke of piety, we may deserve to be partakers of the divine glory.

Sermo XXXIII.

De filia archisynagogi, deque muliere sanguinis profluvio laborante

Audituri estis hodie, fratres, et, sancto evangelista Marco referente, mecum pariter cognituri qualiter ante Christum Synagogae prolabitur et proruit principatus, et eum duplici modo Deum et Dominum confitetur, cum adoret pro legis imperio sic dicentis: Dominum Deum tuum adorabis et redditorem vitae indicat, cum salutem filiae morientis implorat. Venit, ait, ad eum quidam archisynagogus nomine Jairus: et videns eum, procidit ante pedes ejus, et deprecabatur eum multum dicens, Filia mea in extremis est; veni, impone manum tuam super eam, ut salva sit et vivat.

Antequam sermo evangelici sensus aperiat sacramentum, libet in hoc loco paululum parentum prodere passiones, quas sumunt et proferunt de affectibus et amore filiorum. Circumstante familia inter tenera et blanda obsequia propinquorum, molli filia decumbit in lectulo: pater pronus sicca jacet et versatur in terra; illa deficit corpore, hic mente et animo contabescit; illa secretas languoris sui sustinet passiones, hic foedus et lugubris totus, toto fertur et jactatur in populo; illa moritur ad quietem, hic vivit ad poenam. Et certe omisimus anxia parentum vota cum gignunt: periculosos ordines sobolem cum producunt, cum nutriunt, moestos labores et juges poenas cum fuerint aegrotantes: pejor est mortis dies pignora cum praecedunt. Heu me! cur tanta filii nesciunt? cur ista non sentiunt? cur vicem parentibus reddere non desudant? et tamen parentum pietas perseverat: quia quidquid filiis parentes impenderint, repensabit parentibus parens omnium Deus.

Sed ad proposita redeamus. Venit autem quidam archisynagogus, nomine Jairus, et videns eum procidit ante pedes ejus, et deprecabatur eum multum, dicens: Filia mea in extremis est; veni, et impone manum tuam super eam, ut salva sit. Quod supplicatione flebili extrema filiae sic lamentatur, quod remedium languoris sic postulat, desperatum satis probat et demonstrat affectum; unde est quod curae ordinem sic deposcit: Veni, impone manum tuam super eam. Aegrotus non quemadmodum curetur imperat, sed tantum ut curetur implorat.

Sermon XXXIII.

On the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, and on the woman suffering from a flow of blood

You are about to hear today, brothers, and, as the holy Evangelist Mark relates, to learn together with me, how before Christ the rulership of the Synagogue falls down and collapses, and confesses him God and Lord in a twofold way, when it worships at the command of the Law, which says: You shall worship the Lord your God (Deut 6:13), and when it declares him the restorer of life, as it implores the health of a dying daughter. There came to him, he says, one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jairus: and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and besought him much, saying: My daughter is at the point of death; come, lay your hand on her, that she may be saved and live (Mark 5:22–23).

Before the sermon opens the mystery of the Gospel's sense, it is pleasing at this point to set forth a little the sufferings of parents, which they take on and bring forth from their affections and their love for their children. With the household standing round, amid the tender and gentle attentions of kinsfolk, the daughter lies on a soft little bed: the father lies prone on the dry ground and rolls on the earth; she fails in body, he wastes away in mind and heart; she endures the secret sufferings of her sickness, he, all squalid and mournful, is borne about and tossed among all the people; she dies to rest, he lives to punishment. And indeed we have passed over the anxious prayers of parents when they beget: the perilous stages when they bring forth offspring, when they nurse them, the sad labours and constant torments when they are sick: worse is the day of death when their pledges go before them. Alas! why do children not know such great things? why do they not feel them? why do they not toil to repay their parents in turn? and yet the piety of parents perseveres: because whatever parents spend on their children, God, the parent of all, will repay to the parents.

But let us return to what we set out to do. And there came one of the rulers of the synagogue, named Jairus, and seeing him he fell at his feet, and besought him much, saying: My daughter is at the point of death; come, and lay your hand on her, that she may be saved. That he so laments his daughter's last hours with tearful supplication, that he so asks a remedy for her sickness, proves and shows abundantly a despairing affection; hence it is that he so prescribes the order of the cure: Come, lay your hand on her. The sick do not command how they are to be cured, but only implore that they be cured.

Sed cum esset archisynagogus, legis notitiam hic habebat; et cum verbo caetera, hominem manu Dei legerat esse figuratum. Credidit ergo Deo, quia eadem manu qua creatam senserat filiam, recreari et reduci posset ad vitam. Cognovimus quid sit.

Veni, et impone manum tuam super eam. Ut qui sponte posuit ad creandum, ad reparandum iterum exoratus imponat. Hoc est quod propheta fatetur, cum decantat in Psalmis: Tu formasti me, et posuisti super me manum tuam. Quia qui posuit cum formaret ex nihilo, imposuit iterum, ut reformaret ex perdito. Denique idem Psalmista, ut manus hujus salutare sensit, et adeptus est largitatem, repetitam prorupit in vocem: Dextera, inquit, Domini fecit virtutem, dextera Domini exaltavit me; dextera Domini fecit virtutem. Et ut meruisse se quod archisynagogus poposcerat demonstraret, adjecit: Non moriar, sed vivam. Ille, cum peteret, dixerat: Veni, impone manum tuam, ut salva sit, et vivat; hic jam consecutus exsultat: Non moriar, sed vivam. Dextera Domini Christus est, sicut prophetico docemur eloquio. Et vere fecit virtutem diabolum dum debellat; dum alligato forti, sicut ipse dixit, vasa fortis diripit; dum infernum destruit, dum ipsam mortificat mortem. Et vere exaltavit nos, quos de profundo extulit, et elevavit ad coelum.

Sed jam ad mulierem sermo transeat, quae occulto vulneri et verecundo languori remedium sic quaesivit, ut et suum pudorem tegeret, et curantis reverentiam custodiret. Et abiit cum illo, et sequebatur, inquit, eum turba multa, et comprimebant eum: et ecce mulier quae erat in profluvio sanguinis annis duodecim, et fuerat multa perpessa a compluribus medicis, et erogaverat omnia sua, nec profecerat quidquam, sed deterius habebat, cum audisset de Jesu, venit in turba retro, et tetigit vestimentum ejus, dicens: Si vel vestimentum ejus tetigero, salva ero. Et confestim siccatus est fons sanguinis ejus, et sensit corpore quod curata est a plaga.

Non tantum duo maria confunduntur fluctibus suis, quantum mulieris hujus animus ancipiti cogitationum cumulo jactabatur. Post certamina desperata medicorum, post medicamina sumptuosa, post inanem et antiquissimam curam, ubi ars et peritia jam defecerat curantem, ubi languentis omnis jam consumpta fuerat substantia, ipsi auctori verecundum vulnus non casu, sed divinitus occurrit, ut quod humana arte tot annis curari non potuit, sola fide et humilitate curaretur.

But since he was a ruler of the synagogue, he had knowledge of the Law; and while the rest were made by the word, he had read that man was formed by the hand of God. He believed God, then, that by the same hand by which he knew his daughter had been created she could be re-created and brought back to life. We have learned what it is.

Come, and lay your hand on her. That he who of his own will laid it on to create, may, entreated, lay it on again to restore. This is what the Prophet acknowledges, when he sings in the Psalms: You formed me, and laid your hand upon me (Ps 139:5). For he who laid it on when he formed from nothing, laid it on again, to re-form from what was lost. Indeed, the same Psalmist, as soon as he felt the saving power of this hand and obtained its bounty, broke out in a repeated cry: The right hand of the Lord, he says, has wrought power, the right hand of the Lord has exalted me; the right hand of the Lord has wrought power (Ps 118:16). And to show that he had obtained what the ruler of the synagogue had asked, he added: I shall not die, but live (Ps 118:17). The one, in asking, had said: Come, lay your hand, that she may be saved and live; the other, having already obtained it, exults: I shall not die, but live. The right hand of the Lord is Christ, as we are taught by the prophetic word. And truly he wrought power in vanquishing the devil; in binding the strong man, as he himself said, and plundering the strong man's goods (Matt 12:29); in destroying hell, in putting death itself to death. And truly he has exalted us, whom he lifted out of the depth and raised to heaven.

But now let the sermon pass to the woman, who so sought a remedy for a hidden wound and a shameful sickness, as both to cover her own modesty and to keep the reverence due to the one who cured her. And he went with him, he says, and a great crowd followed him, and pressed upon him: and behold, a woman who had been in a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered much from many physicians, and had spent all she had, and had gained nothing, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came behind in the crowd and touched his garment, saying: If I touch even his garment, I shall be saved (Mark 5:24–28). And at once the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was cured of the scourge (Mark 5:29).

Not so much are two seas confounded by their waves, as this woman's mind was tossed by a doubtful heap of thoughts. After the desperate struggles of physicians, after costly medicines, after a vain and most ancient cure, when art and skill had now failed the one who treated her, when all the sick woman's substance had now been consumed, the shameful wound ran to meet its very author, not by chance but divinely, so that what could not be cured by human art in so many years might be cured by faith and humility alone.

Mulier stabat eminus, quam natura pudore perfuderat, quam per hoc immundam Judaica lex notarat, dicens: Immunda erit, et sanctum non continget; contingere metuens, ne Judaicum furorem, ne legis posset subire sententiam. Dicere non est ausa, ne circumstantium confunderet et oneraret auditum, ne fieret populorum fabula, quae tot annis stadium et σκάμμα fuerat passionum. Siquidem et amplius ferre et sustinere dolor diuturnus et continuus non sinebat, et deliberandi tempus Christi praetereuntis celeritas amputabat, et e contra noverat quod tacenti, quod occultanti, morbum suum sanitas non daretur.

Inter haec bella cogitationum, solam salutis viam mulier, curam ut furaretur, invenit, ut raperet tacita quod petere non valebat, et pro sua verecundia et pro reverentia praestaturi; et quae non merebatur corpore, corde perveniret ad medicum, fide Deum, manu tantum tangeret vestimentum: sciens hanc fraudem non solum veniam, sed et remedium praestaturam, quam non voluntas, sed necessitas verecunda generavit; praesertim cum et furantis lucrum quaereret, et ei cui auferebatur nullum gigneret detrimentum. Pium latrocinium, quod ministra fide, fide attrahente committitur. Ecce ubi virtus est quaesita contrariis, ubi fraus fide conveniente quod nitebatur obtinuit.

Mulier inter comprimentes, ut nesciretur accedit, et praesumpsit furari se posse curam fide sola, ut habitu lateret et corpore; retro accedit, et ad videndum se judicabat indignam. Curavit fides intra ictum temporis, quod duodecim annis ars humana curare non potuit. Post hoc exemplum suo vitio longa trahit in languoribus tempora, et sua negligentia diu laborat, qui sola fide nescit curari, sed aromatum dispendiis onerari. Tetigit vestimentum mulier, et curata est: et ab antiquo est absoluta languore.

Miseri, qui quotidie corpus Domini tractamus et sumimus, et a nostris vulneribus non curamur. Non Christus infirmantibus, sed fides deest: nam multo magis modo in nobis manens poterit vulneratos curare, qui latentem mulierem praeteriens sic curavit. Sufficit hodie, fratres, furta fidei, et Domini praetereuntis narrasse virtutem: cur autem Dominus veluti ignorans quaerit, quam virtutis suae opere scit curatam, quia nunc longum est, sequenti sermone narrabimus.

The woman stood far off, she whom nature had suffused with modesty, whom on this account the Jewish Law had branded unclean, saying: She shall be unclean, and shall not touch anything holy (Lev 15:25; 12:4); she was afraid to touch, lest she incur the Jewish fury, lest she incur the sentence of the Law. She did not dare to speak, lest she should confound and burden the hearing of the bystanders, lest she should become a byword of the peoples, she who for so many years had been the stadium and skamma of sufferings. For the long and continuous pain would not let her bear and endure any longer, and the speed of Christ as he passed cut short the time for deliberating, and on the other hand she knew that health would not be given to one who kept silent, who hid her disease.

Amid these wars of thoughts, the woman found the only way of salvation, to steal her cure, so as to seize in silence what she could not ask, both for her own modesty and for reverence towards the one who would grant it; and that she who did not merit it in body might reach the physician in heart, God by faith, and touch with her hand only his garment: knowing that this fraud, which not will but modest necessity had begotten, would procure not only pardon but also remedy; especially since she was seeking a thief's gain and caused no loss to him from whom it was taken. A devout robbery, committed with faith as its servant, faith drawing it on. Behold where power was sought by contrary means, where fraud, with faith consenting, obtained what it strove for.

The woman approaches among those pressing round, so as not to be known, and presumed that she could steal a cure by faith alone, so as to be hidden in her bearing and her body; she approaches from behind, and judged herself unworthy to look on him. Faith cured in a moment of time what human art could not cure in twelve years. After this example, he drags out long seasons in sicknesses by his own vice, and labours long through his own negligence, who does not know how to be cured by faith alone, but only how to be burdened with the expense of spices. The woman touched his garment and was cured: and she was released from her ancient sickness.

Wretched are we, who daily handle and receive the body of the Lord, and are not cured of our wounds. It is not Christ who is lacking to the sick, but faith: for much more will he, remaining now in us, be able to cure the wounded, who, passing by, so cured the woman who lay hidden. It is enough for today, brothers, to have told of the thefts of faith and the power of the Lord as he passed by: but why the Lord, as though ignorant, asks for her whom he knows to have been cured by the work of his power, we shall tell in the following sermon, because it is long now.

Sermo XXXIV.

De eisdem

Omnes evangelicae lectiones, fratres charissimi, magna nobis et praesentis, et futurae vitae commoda largiuntur. Sed hodierna lectio, et totum quod est spei, contulit, et quidquid est desperationis exclusit. Est nobis dura et deflenda conditio: peccare nos cogit fragilitas innata, et confiteri prohibet confusio cognata peccati; malum enim facere pudor non est, et pudor est confiteri: timemus dicere, quod committere non timemus. Sed hodie mulier, cum quaereret medicinam tacitam vulneri verecundo, invenit silentium, per quod possit peccator ad veniam pervenire. Prima est felicitas in peccatorum turpitudinem non venisse, sed felicitas est secunda peccatorum veniam peccatis latentibus invenisse. Hoc propheta senserat, qui dicebat: Beati, quorum remissae sunt iniquitates: et quorum tecta sunt peccata.

Ecce, inquit evangelista, mulier, quae sanguinis fluxum patiebatur ab annis duodecim, accessit retro et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Confugit mulier ad fidem subitam, cui longa defecerat cura: quae confundebatur medicinam petere, furari voluit sanitatem; nesciri se ab eo voluit, a quo se credidit posse salvari. Ut aer ventorum turbine, sic cogitationum procellis mulier turbabatur: confligebat cum fide causa, cum timore spes, necessitas cum pudore; timoris frigus exstinguebat crudelitatis ardorem, obscurabat lucem fidei vis pudoris, spei confidentiam necessitas verecunda frangebat. Sic mulier magni maris instar confusis aestibus jactabatur: quaerebat quomodo faceret occultum de publico, de turba secretum; agebat ut sibi et rediret sanitas, et verecundia non periret; curabat ne cura sua ad curantis redundaret injuriam; providebat ut redderetur sibi salus, salva reverentia Salvatoris. Tali ergo sensu mulier merito de summitate fimbriae pervenit totam ad deitatis summam.

Accessit, inquit, retro. Sed ubi retro? Et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Accessit retro. Sed ubi? Retro nil erat, ibi faciem quam declinabat invenit. Erat in Christo corpus multiplex, sed erat deitas simplex; erat totus oculus, qui post se supplicem sic videbat. Accessit retro, et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. O quid ista mulier vidit habitare in interioribus Christi, quae in Christi fimbria divinitatis totam vidit inhabitare virtutem! O quam docuit mulier quantum sit corpus Christi, quae in Christi fimbria tantum esse monstravit!

Sermon XXXIV.

On the same

All the Gospel readings, dearest brothers, bestow on us great benefits both for the present and for the future life. But today's reading has both conferred all that belongs to hope and shut out whatever belongs to despair. Hard and lamentable is our condition: an inborn frailty compels us to sin, and the confusion that is kin to sin forbids us to confess; for to do evil is no shame, and to confess is a shame: we fear to say what we do not fear to commit. But today the woman, seeking a silent medicine for a shameful wound, found a silence through which the sinner may come to pardon. The first happiness is not to have come into the foulness of sins, but the second happiness is to have found pardon of sins while the sins lay hidden. This the Prophet had perceived, who said: Blessed are they whose iniquities are remitted, and whose sins are covered (Ps 32:1).

Behold, says the Evangelist, a woman who had suffered a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind and touched the hem of his garment (Matt 9:20). The woman, whom long care had failed, took refuge in sudden faith: she who was ashamed to ask for medicine wished to steal health; she wished to be unknown to him by whom she believed she could be saved. As the air by the whirlwind, so the woman was troubled by the storms of her thoughts: her plight contended with faith, hope with fear, necessity with modesty; the chill of fear was quenching the heat of cruelty, the force of modesty was darkening the light of faith, modest necessity was breaking the confidence of hope. So the woman was tossed with confused surges like a great sea: she was seeking how to make something hidden out of what was public, a secret out of a crowd; she was striving that health might return to her and modesty not perish; she was taking care that her cure should not redound to the injury of the one who cured; she was providing that health might be restored to her with the reverence due to the Saviour kept safe. With such a sense, then, the woman rightly came from the edge of the hem to the whole summit of the Godhead.

She came up, he says, behind. But where is behind? And touched the hem of his garment. She came up behind. But where? There was no behind: there she found the face she was avoiding. In Christ the body was manifold, but the Godhead was simple; he was all eye, who so saw the suppliant behind him. She came up behind, and touched the hem of his garment. O what did this woman see dwelling in the inner parts of Christ, she who in the hem of Christ saw the whole power of divinity dwelling! O how this woman taught how great is the body of Christ, she who showed that so much is in the hem of Christ!

Audiant Christiani, qui quotidie corpus Christi attingunt, quamnam de ipso corpore sumere possunt medicinam, quando mulier totam rapuit de sola Christi fimbria sanitatem. Sed quod nobis flendum est, mulier de vulnere medicinam tulit, nobis medicina ipsa retorquetur in vulnus. Hinc est quod Apostolus tangentes indigne corpus Christi taliter admonet, et deplorat: Qui enim tangit indigne corpus Christi, judicium sibi sumit. Et quod inde temeritas infirmitatem capiat, unde fides accipere debebat sanitatem, rursus intulit: Propterea inter vos multi infirmi et imbecilles, et dormiunt multi. Item dormientes mortuos dicit, quos luget in vivo corpore jam sepultos. Petrus et Paulus, principes fidei Christianae, notitiam nominis Christi toto orbe diffuderunt; mulier accedendi ad Christum prima tradidit disciplinam; mulier prima dedit formam quomodo peccator tacita confessione deleat sine confusione peccatum; quomodo delinquens, soli Deo cognitus, de reatu nudare apud homines verecunda conscientiae non cogatur; quomodo homo possit venia judicium praevenire.

At Jesus, inquit, conversus, et videns eam, inquit, Confide, filia, fides tua te salvam fecit. At Jesus conversus non motu corporis, sed divinitatis aspectu. Christus conversus est ad mulierem, ut mulier converteretur ad Christum, ut ab ipso curam sumeret unde sumpserat vitam, et sciret sibi praesentis vulneris causam fuisse perpetuae rem salutis. Conversus et videns eam. Vidit eam divinis oculis, non humanis; vidit ut saluti redderet, non ut agnosceret quam sciebat; vidit eam; donatur bonis, malis caret, quem viderit Deus. Hoc universitas sentit ex usu, de felicibus sic dicendo: Vidit illum Deus. Vidit ergo istam Deus, quam curando reddidit sic felicem. Et quid plura? Christus mulieris docuit exemplo, quam fides sola totam proficiat ad salutem.

Sed de Synagogae principe jam loquamur, qui dum Christum ducit ad filiam suam, viam dedit qua mulier perveniret ad Christum. Sic coepit hodiernae principium lectionis. Ecce princeps unus accedens adorabat eum, dicens: Domine, filia mea modo defuncta est, sed veni, impone manum tuam super eam, et vivet. Futurorum praescium Christum non latebat quod praedictae mulieris eveniret occursus: per quam Judaeorum princeps disceret Deum non movendum locis, non itinere ducendum, non trahendum praesentia corporali, sed credendum quam sit Deus ubique praesens, ubique totus, ubique semper; et quam totum possit jussu facere, non labore; virtutes mittere, non deferre; mortem non manu, sed imperio effugare; vitam non arte reddere, sed praecepto.

Let Christians hear, who daily touch the body of Christ, what medicine they can take from that body itself, when a woman snatched complete health from the hem of Christ alone. But what we must weep for: the woman drew medicine from a wound, for us the medicine itself is twisted back into a wound. Hence it is that the Apostle admonishes and laments over those who touch the body of Christ unworthily: For he who touches the body of Christ unworthily takes judgement upon himself (1 Cor 11:29). And that rashness takes weakness from the very source from which faith ought to have received health, he added in turn: For this reason many among you are weak and feeble, and many sleep (1 Cor 11:30). By "those who sleep" he likewise means the dead, whom he mourns as already buried in a living body. Peter and Paul, the princes of the Christian faith, spread the knowledge of the name of Christ through the whole world; a woman first handed down the discipline of approaching Christ; a woman first gave the pattern of how a sinner may blot out sin by silent confession without confusion; how one who offends, known to God alone, may not be compelled to lay bare before men the shame of his conscience concerning his guilt; how man may forestall judgement by pardon.

But Jesus, he says, turning and seeing her, says: Take heart, daughter, your faith has saved you (Matt 9:22). But Jesus turning: not by a movement of the body, but by the gaze of divinity. Christ turned to the woman, that the woman might be turned to Christ, that she might receive a cure from him from whom she had received life, and might know that the cause of her present wound had been for her the matter of perpetual salvation. Turning and seeing her. He saw her with divine eyes, not human; he saw her to restore her to health, not to recognise her whom he knew; he saw her; he on whom God has looked is endowed with good things and is free of evils. This the whole world feels from use, saying thus of the fortunate: "God has looked on him." God looked, then, on this woman, whom by curing he made so fortunate. And what more? Christ taught by the woman's example how faith alone avails for the whole of salvation.

But let us now speak of the ruler of the Synagogue, who, in leading Christ to his daughter, gave the way by which the woman might come to Christ. So began the beginning of today's reading. Behold, one ruler came up and worshipped him, saying: Lord, my daughter has just died; but come, lay your hand on her, and she will live (Matt 9:18). It did not escape Christ, who foreknew the future, that the meeting with the woman we have spoken of would come about: through which the ruler of the Jews would learn that God is not to be moved by places, not to be led on a journey, not to be drawn by bodily presence, but is to be believed how God is everywhere present, everywhere whole, everywhere always; and how he can do all by command, not by toil; send forth his powers, not carry them; drive away death not by hand but by command; restore life not by art but by precept.

Filia mea modo defuncta est, sed veni. Hoc est dicere: Adhuc vitae manet calor, adhuc animae vestigia videntur, adhuc est in via spiritus, adhuc dominus domus habet filiam, adhuc mortuam tartarus nescit; ergo ut euntem possis animam retinere, festina. Stultus putavit Christum non posse suscitare mortuam, nisi teneret. Hinc est quod Christus ubi pervenit ad domum, et vidit puellam quasi perditam fleri, ut infideles animos promoveret ad fidem, dormire eam dicit, non defunctam, ut crederent facilius de morte posse surgere quam de somno.

Non est, inquit, mortua puella, sed dormit. Et vere apud Deum mors somnus est: quia velocius Deus mortuum ad vitam suscitat quam de somno dormiens ab homine suscitetur, et ante Deus frigentibus morte membris vivificantem refundit calorem, quam homo sepultis somno corporibus vigorem possit infundere. Audi Apostolum: In momento, in ictu oculi, mortui resurgent. B. Apostolus quia velocitatem resurrectionis non potuit referre verbis, aptavit exemplis. Aut quomodo ibi celeritatem sermonis perstringeret, ubi ipsam celeritatem praevenit vis divina? At quomodo apparet ibi tempus, ubi aeterna sine tempore res donatur! Sicut temporalitatem tempus attulit, sic exclusit aeternitas tempus.

My daughter has just died; but come. That is to say: the warmth of life still remains, traces of the soul are still seen, the spirit is still on its way, the master of the house still has his daughter, Tartarus does not yet know her dead; so, that you may hold back the departing soul, make haste. Foolish man, he thought that Christ could not raise the dead girl unless he held her. Hence it is that Christ, when he came to the house and saw the girl being wept over as though lost, to move faithless minds forward to faith, says that she sleeps, not that she is dead, so that they might believe that one can rise more easily from death than from sleep.

The girl is not dead, he says, but sleeps (Matt 9:24). And truly with God death is sleep: because God raises the dead to life more quickly than a sleeper is roused from sleep by a man, and God pours back life-giving warmth into limbs cold with death before man can pour vigour into bodies buried in sleep. Hear the Apostle: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead will rise (1 Cor 15:52). The blessed Apostle, because he could not convey in words the swiftness of the resurrection, fitted it to examples. Or how could he compress the speed of speech there, where divine power outstrips speed itself? But how does time appear there, where an eternal thing is given without time! As time brought temporality, so eternity has shut out time.

Sermo XXXV.

De muliere profluvio sanguinis obnoxia

Quid sit Christum tangere, hodie docuit mulier in profluvio sanguinis constituta: quae cum tangit fimbriam Christi, tum divini pectoris pulsat arcanum, et furto fidei summam rapuit de fimbriae summitate virtutem. Felix fraus, quae et lucrum salutis contulit, et damna sustulit mox pudoris. Probat hoc evangelicae lectionis auditus. Ecce, inquit, mulier quae sanguinis fluxum patiebatur duodecim annis, accedens retro, tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus, dicens intra se: Si tetigero tantum vestimentum ejus, salva ero. In arduis languoribus dat crebro consilium vis doloris, in desperatis causis est saepe magistra necessitas, invenit ipsa sibi passio medicinam. Hinc est quod mulier verecundo vulneri qualiter subveniret invenit, ut fidei insinuaret silentio quod insinuare publico clamore non poterat, ut secreta spiritus via coelestem perveniret ad medicum, ad quem pervenire manifesto carnis itinere non valebat. Dabat audaciam multam pietas curantis, sed fiduciam pudendi languoris necessitas auferebat; cogebat ad Christum doloris accedere magnitudo, sed adire Christum foeditas ulceris non sinebat. Sic anceps mulier, et fidei trepidante consilio, maluit de fide judicari quam de foedo vulnere sic perire.

Accessit retro, et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Sciens quod Deum nec tactus polluit, nec offendit visus, nec odor exasperat, nec auditus sauciat, nec inquinat humana cogitatio. Nam si sol tangit stercora, non tamen stercoribus inquinatur, quanto magis creator solis tangit omnia, et tamen non potest ullis contactibus inquinari? Et si medicus cum saniem vulnerum tractat, cum curat verecunda membrorum, non injuriam computat, sed honorem: quanto magis Deus non arbitratur injuriam, dum vulnera nostra curando respicit, tangit ad remedium, visitat ad salutem?

Sermon XXXV.

On the woman subject to a flow of blood

What it is to touch Christ, the woman set in a flow of blood taught today: who, when she touches the hem of Christ, then knocks at the secret of the divine breast, and by the theft of faith snatched the highest power from the edge of the hem. Happy fraud, which both conferred the gain of salvation and at once removed the losses of modesty. The hearing of the Gospel reading proves this. Behold, he says, a woman who had suffered a flow of blood for twelve years, coming up behind, touched the hem of his garment, saying within herself: If I only touch his garment, I shall be saved (Matt 9:20–21). In grievous sicknesses the force of pain often gives counsel, in desperate cases necessity is often the teacher, suffering itself finds its own medicine. Hence it is that the woman found how to help her shameful wound: to make known by the silence of faith what she could not make known by public outcry, to come by the secret way of the spirit to the heavenly physician, whom she could not reach by the open road of the flesh. The loving-kindness of the healer gave her great boldness, but the necessity of a shameful sickness took away her confidence; the greatness of her pain compelled her to approach Christ, but the foulness of her ulcer did not let her go to Christ. So the woman, in two minds, and with the counsel of faith trembling, preferred to be judged for her faith rather than thus to perish of a foul wound.

She came up behind, and touched the hem of his garment. Knowing that touch does not pollute God, nor sight offend him, nor smell exasperate him, nor hearing wound him, nor human thought defile him. For if the sun touches dung, and yet is not defiled by the dung, how much more does the Creator of the sun touch all things, and yet cannot be defiled by any contact? And if a physician, when he handles the pus of wounds, when he treats the shameful parts of the limbs, reckons it not an injury but an honour: how much more does God not think it an injury, when, curing, he looks upon our wounds, touches them for remedy, visits them for salvation?

Dei conspectum offendunt peccatorum vulnera, non dolorum; morbi criminum, non corporum passiones; vitiorum sanies, non viscerum fluxus: quia homo habetur voluntarius in delictis, in languoribus tenetur invitus. Hinc est quod peccator poenam recipit, aegrotus recipit curam. Mulier ergo non voluntatis conscia, sed doloris, nec confusa crimine, sed confusa languore, accessit retro, ut turbae declinaret oculos, non Christi vitaret aspectum; a populis nesciri voluit, non a Christo; gestivit non Deum latere, sed homines: quia non nisi a solo Deo potuit latens videri, audiri tacens, celata curari.

Accessit et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Quia in Christo nil postremum credidit, nil judicavit extremum; quia nec minoratur Deus in homine, nec virtus attenuatur in fimbria, nec coelestis natura membrorum variatur officiis. Hinc est quod mulier per dorsum pervenit ad faciem, per vestimentum penetravit interna, et per fimbriam capitis tetigit summitatem. Nec hoc sine mysterio; audite prophetam dicentem: Sicut unguentum quod descendit in oram vestimenti ejus. Videtis, fratres, in fimbriam vestimenti hujus totam plenitudinem divini chrismatis, totam divini capitis transisse virtutem. Scienter ergo mulier sacram Christi fimbriam gestivit attingere, ut de occulto mysterio vulneris posset sumere medicinam.

Fratres, magna haec mulier, et nimium permiranda, quae scientia doctores legis vicit, sacramento omnes Judaeos superavit, fide praecessit apostolum. Nam Judaea cum scribis et doctoribus suis Deum totum despexit in corpore: Thomas apostolus ut Christum Deum crederet, immisit manus, injecit digitos, patefecit vulnera; et ut Christum crederet, iterum pati compulit Christum.

Sed haec mulier quam personam teneat, cujus typum praeferat, cujus praesentet imaginem, spirituali intelligentia perquiramus. Quae est ista quam sic genuinus sanguis, naturalis debilitas, originalis morbus, ad causas mortis, ad lethale vulnus, ad foedi languoris adduxit angustias? et quam sic sordidavit vitiis, foedavit criminibus, secretis vulneribus sauciavit, ut eam ars curare, non solum videre oculus, non solum honestas pateretur, non praevaleret lex ipsa mundare, immo quam lex jusserat arceri templo, prohiberi sacris, sanctis omnibus abstinere: et quam sic dixerat immundam, ut quidquid tetigisset, haberetur immundum. Ista est, fratres, ista est Ecclesia, quae primi hominis vulnerata peccato, tota fluebat sanguine, tota originaliter decurrebat in mortem.

What offends the sight of God are the wounds of sins, not of pains; the diseases of crimes, not the sufferings of bodies; the pus of vices, not the flux of the bowels: because a man is held to be willing in his offences, but is held against his will in his sicknesses. Hence it is that the sinner receives punishment, the sick man receives a cure. The woman, then, conscious not of will but of pain, confounded not by crime but by sickness, came up behind, to avoid the eyes of the crowd, not to escape the sight of Christ; she wished to be unknown to the peoples, not to Christ; she longed to be hidden not from God, but from men: because by God alone could she be seen though hidden, heard though silent, cured though concealed.

She came up and touched the hem of his garment. Because in Christ she believed nothing to be hindmost, judged nothing to be at the edge; because neither is God lessened in man, nor is power diminished in the hem, nor is the heavenly nature varied by the offices of the members. Hence it is that the woman came through the back to the face, through the garment penetrated to the inner parts, and through the hem touched the summit of the head. Nor is this without mystery; hear the Prophet saying: Like the ointment which ran down to the border of his garment (Ps 133:2). You see, brothers, that the whole fullness of the divine chrism, the whole power of the divine head, has passed into the hem of this garment. Knowingly, then, the woman longed to touch the sacred hem of Christ, that from a hidden mystery she might take medicine for her wound.

Brothers, great is this woman, and exceedingly to be admired, who surpassed the doctors of the Law in knowledge, outdid all the Jews in mystery, went before an apostle in faith. For Judaea with its scribes and doctors despised the whole God in a body: the apostle Thomas, to believe Christ God, put in his hands, thrust in his fingers, laid open the wounds; and, to believe Christ, compelled Christ to suffer again (John 20:27).

But what person this woman bears, whose type she presents, whose image she represents, let us search out with spiritual understanding. Who is she, whom inborn blood, natural infirmity, original sickness, so brought to the causes of death, to a lethal wound, to the straits of a foul sickness? and whom it so befouled with vices, defiled with crimes, wounded with secret wounds, that art could not bear to cure her, nor the eye even to see her, nor decency even to admit her, nor could the Law itself prevail to cleanse her; or rather, whom the Law had ordered to be kept from the temple, barred from sacred things, to abstain from all holy things: and whom it had so declared unclean that whatever she touched was held unclean? This is she, brothers, this is the Church, which, wounded by the sin of the first man, flowed wholly with blood, ran wholly from its origin into death.

Sermo XXXVI.

De Haemorrhoissa, et filia archisynagogi

Verecundi debitoris est mox promissa dissolvere, nec creditoris animum, aut deludere moris, aut longa exspectatione suspendere. Cum archisynagogi vel Haemorrhoissae mulieris connexa sibi et producta narratio a consueta sermonis nostri brevitate discederet, maluimus dimidiare tractatum, ne non recrearetur tantum, quantum vester oneraretur auditus.

Domino archisynagogus occurrit, et totus prolabitur in terram, causam refert, insinuat dolorem, movet praestantis affectum, imperat ut properet et accedat ad curam; e contra mulieri Dominus non quaesitus occurrit, praeteriens, occasionem salutis ingessit, tacens causam tacentis agnovit, occultum vulnus etiam celantis aspexit. Inter Dominum et mulierem furtivae salutis agitur tam grande commercium: et dum publica petitione viam facit rogatus, fidei cogitatio divinum penetrat, et pervenit ad secretum. Felix mulier, quae in tanta multitudine est sola cum Christo, ut sola sit conscia et salutis redditae, et virtutis excelsae! Beata, quae talem reperit accessum, cui nullus possit obsistere! Beata, quae tali via ad suum proripuit et irrepsit auctorem; quae antequam de vulnere suo confunderetur ab homine, careret ipsius vulneris foeditate, sciens sibi apud homines et per homines interclusum totius aditum sanitatis, qui horrere magis quam curare vulnera consueverunt! Deus abstergit vulnera humana, non despicit; neque horret languores hominum, sed depellit; nec detestatur immunditias humani corporis, sed emendat: quia creaturae suae ad tactum nescit Deus, Deus non potest sordidari.

Sed evangelista generat quaestionem, cum dicit: Et statim Jesus in semetipso cum cognovisset virtutem quae exierat de eo, conversus ad turbam aiebat: Quis tetigit vestimenta mea? Dum interrogat, velut ignorantiam profitetur: exiisse virtutem de se sentit, ad quam exierat nescit? quod praestiterat novit, cui praestiterit ignorat? de persona dubitat, qui certus est de salute collata? Verum non ignorantis errore, sed majestate Dominus hic scientis et praescientis interrogat; nec quod occultum sibi esset requirit, sed et ipsum sibi bene esse cognitum sic demonstrat, dum taliter quaerendo cunctis ignorantibus solus aperit quod latebat.

Sermon XXXVI.

On the woman with the flow of blood, and the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue

It is the part of a modest debtor to discharge his promises at once, and not to mock the creditor's mind with delays or keep it in suspense with long waiting. Since the narrative of the ruler of the synagogue and of the woman with the flow of blood, linked together and drawn out, departed from the usual brevity of our sermon, we preferred to halve the exposition, lest your hearing be less refreshed than burdened.

The ruler of the synagogue runs to meet the Lord, and falls full length on the ground, states his case, makes known his pain, moves the affection of the giver, bids him hasten and come to the cure; the woman, on the contrary, the Lord meets unsought: passing by, he offered her the occasion of salvation; silent, he recognised the case of the silent woman; he looked upon the hidden wound of one who even concealed it. Between the Lord and the woman so great a commerce of stolen salvation is transacted: and while he, entreated, makes his way at a public petition, the thought of faith penetrates the divine and reaches the secret. Happy woman, who in so great a multitude is alone with Christ, so that she alone is conscious both of the health restored and of the sublime power! Blessed she, who found such an access, which no one could block! Blessed she, who by such a way burst forth and crept up to her author; who, before she could be confounded by man on account of her wound, was rid of the very foulness of the wound, knowing that with men and through men all access to health was closed to her, men who are wont to shudder at wounds rather than to cure them! God wipes away human wounds, he does not despise them; nor does he shudder at the sicknesses of men, but drives them away; nor does he detest the uncleannesses of the human body, but amends them: because at the touch of his creature God does not know how to be soiled: God cannot be soiled.

But the Evangelist raises a question when he says: And at once Jesus, knowing in himself the power that had gone out from him, turned to the crowd and said: Who touched my garments? (Mark 5:30) When he asks, it is as though he professes ignorance: he feels that power has gone out from him, and does not know to whom it went out? he knows what he had granted, and is ignorant to whom he granted it? he doubts of the person, who is certain of the health bestowed? But it is not by the error of one who does not know, but by the majesty of one who knows and foreknows, that the Lord asks here; nor does he seek what was hidden from him, but shows that the very thing was well known to him, in that by so asking he alone discloses to all, who did not know, what lay hidden.

Interpellatricem tacitam, et suggerentem cogitationibus solis, ac post tergum virtutis suae consiliis adhaerentem, non ut discussor nescius, sed ut praescius inquisitor producit in medium, suisque facit astare conspectibus, ut quae sibi portarat salutem, omnibus reportaret et fidem; et quae virtutem probarat, agnosceret majestatem; nec rediret, ut putabat, incognita, quae plenam sui dederat notionem.

Dum erubescit vulnus, dum in tali cura ipsum veretur ut Deum, fidei suae mulier non parva nubila sustinebat, et mentis suae lumine confusionum nebulis ipsa caligabat. Vox ergo inquirentis Domini, velut flatus salutaris, fugavit nubes, dispersit nebulas, illustravit fidem, et illam quae noctis latebat in tenebris ipso sole reddidit clariorem. Aut minor est ista sole, quae toto orbe radiat, quae toto Ecclesiae fulget et resplendet in coetu? si sic rediisset invisa, date veniam, eluserat medicum, non probarat; et sibi quod consecuta fuerat, ascribere potuit, non sananti; quae se curam rapuisse de fimbria curantis crediderat, non de sensu: aut quid illius esse crediderat, cujus in se virtutem senserat, voto tamen judicabat extraneum? Quae utique, et si ante curam verecundiae fuerat quod latebat, humilitatis quod se judicabat indignam, cur post curam non sponte, ut ageret gratias, ut honorem redderet, ut gloriam tanti operis referret, occurrit? sed posteaquam vidit Dominum in inquisitione persistere, et discipulis excusantibus et compressionem turbae opponentibus, non posse conspicit se latere, postquam illam timor et tremor conscientiae coepit arguere, venit in medium, ut quem occulte senserat medicum, palam profiteretur, et adoraret ut Deum, et tam praesentibus quam futuris fieret de tanto suo languore medicina, dicente evangelista: Mulier autem timens, ac tremens, sciens quod factum esset in se, venit et procidens ante pedes ejus, dixit ei omnem veritatem.

Verum, quia historica relatio ad altiorem semper est intelligentiam sublimanda, et figuris praesentibus futura sunt noscenda mysteria, archisynagogus, vel ejus filia, sive mulier in fluxu sanguinis constituta, quid sub harum specie personarum teneant sacramenti allegorico nunc sermone pandendum est. Archisynagogi filia, ad quam venit Christus, vadit, et properat, et humano gradu iter facit, qui divinitus loco non potest promoveri, sine dubio synagoga est, dicente Domino: Non sum missus, nisi ad oves quae perierunt domus Israel.

The silent petitioner, who pleaded with her thoughts alone, and clung behind his back to the counsels of his power, he brings into the midst, not as an ignorant examiner but as a foreknowing inquirer, and makes her stand before his eyes, so that she who had carried off health for herself might carry back faith as well for all; and she who had proved his power might acknowledge his majesty; and that she should not go back unknown, as she thought, she who had given full knowledge of herself.

While she blushes at her wound, while in such a cure she reveres him as God, the woman was suffering no small clouds upon her faith, and in the light of her mind she herself was darkened by the mists of confusion. The voice of the Lord, then, as he inquired, like a saving breath, put the clouds to flight, scattered the mists, lit up her faith, and made her who lay hidden in the darkness of night brighter than the sun itself. Or is she less than the sun, she who shines through the whole world, who gleams and is resplendent in the whole assembly of the Church? if she had gone back thus unseen, by your leave, she would have cheated the physician, not proved him; and she could have ascribed what she had obtained to herself, not to the one who healed her; she who had believed that she had snatched the cure from the hem of the healer, not from his perception: or what had she believed to be his, whose power she had felt in herself, and whom yet in her intention she judged a stranger? She, assuredly, even if before the cure her lying hidden had been from modesty, her judging herself unworthy from humility, why after the cure did she not come forward of her own accord, to give thanks, to render honour, to give back the glory of so great a work? but after she saw the Lord persist in his inquiry, and, though the disciples excused it and pleaded the pressing of the crowd, perceives that she cannot be hidden, after the fear and trembling of conscience began to accuse her, she came into the midst, to profess openly as physician him whom she had felt in secret, and to worship him as God, and that a medicine might be made of so great a sickness of hers for those present as for those to come, as the Evangelist says: But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done in her, came and, falling down before his feet, told him the whole truth (Mark 5:33).

But since the historical account must always be raised to a higher understanding, and future mysteries are to be known through present figures, what sacrament the ruler of the synagogue, or his daughter, or the woman set in the flow of blood hold under the appearance of these persons must now be laid open in allegorical discourse. The daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, to whom Christ comes, goes, and hastens, and makes his way at a human pace, he who divinely cannot be moved by place, is without doubt the Synagogue, as the Lord says: I was not sent except to the sheep that have perished of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24).

Sed dum ad illam Christus tendit, Ecclesia, quae in cunctis gentibus posita, amisso naturae bono, perdebat et profundebat sanguinem generis humani; cujus languorem peritia humana dum curare nititur, ipsum cumulabat: nam censura fragilitatis humanae, ac mundanae districtio disciplinae, et populorum semper sanguinem fudit, et tamen nec hostes abolere, nec civium bella compescere, nec criminum potuit dementiam perdelere; haec ergo talibus confossa curis, ubi quidquid suae fuerat et erat substantiae, vidit esse consumptum, id est, animum, mentem, sensum, ingenium, laborem, industriam, rationem, quae utique rectoribus ad profectum velut medicantibus commodamus, ubi Christi praetereuntis sensit praesentiam, retro accessit, quia videre eum sanguine polluta non merebatur. Accedit retro, hoc est, fidei sequitur auditum, et extrema Christi velut ipsam tangit fimbriam, dum non honoratur in patribus, non sanctificatur in lege, non se jactitat in prophetis, non Dominico ipso honoratur in corpore, dum ab illo generationis Christi ordine habetur extranea. Post tergum, hoc est novissimo tempore Christum sequitur, et sancitur occulto fidei sacramento, et vere tetigit vestimentum, quod in sepulcro reperit, per quod resurgentis Domini credidit, et praedicavit insignia. Sed dum circa hanc Christus suis virtutibus occupatur, in archisynagogi filia deficit, et moritur Synagoga: ut et ipsa ad vitam per fidem redeat, quae per legem mortua fuerat, et perierat per naturam.

Inter haec veniunt de domo archisynagogi, et dicunt, Noli vexare magistrum, mortua est puella. Hodieque Judaei nolunt vexari Christum, quem cupiunt non venire, et mortem pronuntiant, qui spem resurrectionis infideliter perdiderunt; sed et illud huic assertioni nostrae quam convenit, quod archisynagogi filia duodecim annos egisse refertur in vita, et haec duodecim annos perseverasse memoratur in vulnere, cum utriusque novissimo et expleto tempore salus redderetur et vita. Nam iste numerus tempus humanae vitae concludit: qui ut annum faciat, duodecim distinguitur et numeratur in mensibus: unde et propheta sub annum Domini acceptum Christum indicat advenisse; et Apostolus temporis plenitudine Christum venisse approbat, dicens: Postquam venit temporis plenitudo, misit Deus Filium suum. Orate, fratres, ut sicut sibi et legi, ut Christo viveret, defuncta est Synagoga; ita et nos peccatis moriamur, et carni, ut vivere possimus in Christo.

But while Christ is making his way to her, the Church, which, set among all the nations, having lost the good of nature, was losing and pouring out the blood of the human race; whose sickness human skill, in striving to cure it, was only increasing: for the censure of human frailty and the strictness of worldly discipline both always shed the blood of peoples, and yet could neither abolish enemies, nor restrain the wars of citizens, nor utterly blot out the madness of crimes; she, then, pierced through by such cures, when she saw consumed whatever had been and was of her substance, that is, heart, mind, sense, talent, labour, industry, reason, which we lend to rulers for progress as though to physicians, when she felt the presence of Christ passing by, came up behind, because, polluted with blood, she did not merit to see him. She comes up behind, that is, she follows the hearing of faith, and touches the extremities of Christ as it were the very hem, since she is not honoured in the fathers, not sanctified in the Law, does not boast herself in the prophets, is not honoured in the Lord's very body, since she is held a stranger to that order of Christ's generation. Behind his back, that is, in the last time, she follows Christ, and is consecrated by the hidden mystery of faith, and truly touched the garment which she found in the sepulchre, through which she believed and proclaimed the tokens of the risen Lord. But while Christ is occupied about her with his powers, in the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue the Synagogue fails and dies: so that she too may return to life through faith, she who had died through the Law and had perished through nature.

Meanwhile they come from the house of the ruler of the synagogue and say: Do not trouble the master; the girl is dead (Luke 8:49). And to this day the Jews do not want Christ troubled, whom they desire not to come, and they pronounce death, they who faithlessly have lost the hope of resurrection; but how well this too fits our assertion, that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue is related to have spent twelve years in life, and this woman is recorded to have persisted twelve years in her wound, since at the last and fulfilled time of each health and life were given back. For this number encloses the time of human life: for, to make a year, it is divided and counted in twelve months: whence the prophet too indicates that Christ came in the acceptable year of the Lord (Isa 61:2); and the Apostle confirms that Christ came in the fullness of time, saying: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son (Gal 4:4). Pray, brothers, that as the Synagogue has died to itself and to the Law, so that it might live to Christ, so we too may die to sins and to the flesh, that we may be able to live in Christ.

Sermo XXXVII.

De Jonae prophetae signo

Fratres, sanctorum gesta casibus non sunt deputanda, sed signis: et quae vitia putantur illorum, mysteriis sunt applicanda, non lapsibus, sicut hodie Dominica signavit et patefecit instructio, dicens: Turbis autem concurrentibus coepit dicere Jesus: Generatio haec nequam est; signum quaerit, et signum non dabitur ei, nisi signum Jonae prophetae; sicut enim Jonas signum fuit Ninivitis, ita erit et Filius hominis generationi isti. Ecce prophetae fuga ipsius Domini vertitur in figuram, et quod celebratur ferale naufragium, hoc sacramentum Dominicae resurrectionis existit. Nam quemadmodum Jonas typum per omnia tenuerit et impleverit Salvatoris, historiae, quae de ipso scripta est, textus ostendit.

Fugit, inquit, Jonas a facie Dei. Nonne Dominus, ut hominis faciem praeferret, et formam, faciem formamque propriae deitatis aufugit? Apostolo sic dicente: Qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo, sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens. Formam suscepit servi Dominus, ut lateret mundum, ut diabolum praeveniret, in hominem se fugat ipsum. Et bene typus Christi ipsius Jonae servatur in verbis. Non dixit: Fugio Deum, sed A facie Dei ego fugio. Deus qui ubique est, quo seipsum fugiet non est; sed Christus non ut loco, sed sicut specie faciem deitatis aufugeret, totum nostrae servitutis confugit ad vultum.

Descendit, inquit, Jonas in Joppen, ut fugeret in Tharsis. Audi descensorem: Nemo, inquit, ascendit in coelum, nisi qui de coelo descendit. Descendit Dominus de coelo ad terram, descendit deitas ad humana, descendit ad nostram superna dominatio servitutem. Et tamen qui descenderat ad navem, navem navigaturus ascendit: sic Christus, qui in hunc mundum descendit, virtutibus et mirabilibus, Ecclesiae suae conscendit in navem.

Sermon XXXVII.

On the sign of the prophet Jonah

Brothers, the deeds of the saints are not to be put down to chance but to signs: and what are thought to be their vices are to be referred to mysteries, not to lapses, as the Lord's instruction signified and laid open today, saying: And as the crowds were gathering, Jesus began to say: This generation is an evil one; it seeks a sign, and a sign will not be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah; for as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of man also be to this generation (Luke 11:29–30). Behold, the flight of the prophet is turned into a figure of the Lord himself, and what is celebrated as a deadly shipwreck stands forth as the mystery of the Lord's resurrection. For how Jonah bore and fulfilled in all things the type of the Saviour, the text of the history written about him shows.

Jonah, he says, fled from the face of God (Jonah 1:3). Did not the Lord, to bear before him the face and form of man, flee from the face and form of his own Godhead? As the Apostle says: Who, though he was in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil 2:6–7). The Lord took up the form of a servant, to be hidden from the world, to forestall the devil; he puts himself to flight into man. And well is the type of Christ kept in the very words of Jonah. He did not say: "I flee God", but: From the face of God I flee. God, who is everywhere, has nowhere to flee from himself; but Christ, in order to flee the face of the Godhead not as by place but as by appearance, took refuge in the whole countenance of our servitude.

Jonah, he says, went down to Joppa, to flee to Tarshish. Hear him who came down: No one, he says, has ascended into heaven, but he who descended from heaven (John 3:13). The Lord descended from heaven to earth, the Godhead descended to human things, the dominion on high descended to our servitude. And yet he who had gone down to the ship went up into the ship to sail: so Christ, who came down into this world, by powers and wonders went up into the ship of his Church.

Quid sibi vult autem confusa ventis procella, nisi diabolum qui cor Judae penetrans, reges, gentes, populos, militiam, judices, marinos elevavit, et inflavit in fluctus, ut ascendentes et cadentes undae auctorem suum saeculi peterent ad quietem? Audi undas saeculi, audi prophetam dicentem: Quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania? Astiterunt reges terrae, et principes convenerunt in unum adversus Dominum, et adversus Christum ejus. Et quia sors Jonam proditura non defuit, implet super Christum Davidicam prophetiam, quae dicit: Et super vestimentum meum miserunt sortem.

Quod autem Jonas auctor suae demersionis existit, cum dicit: Tollite me, et mittite in mare, voluntariam Domini indicat passionem; nam quare sibi illi sustinent haec juberi, qui sibi in periculo tali sponte poterant subvenire? Quando enim multorum salus petit unius mortem, mors in intereuntis arbitrio collocatur, quia et moriturum retardare potest ad mortem voluntas, et periclitantis mors periculum praevenire: sic hic ubi totum Domini geritur in figuram exspectatur morientis auctoritas, ut mori non sit necessitas, sed potestas. Audi Dominum dicentem: Potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam: et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam: nemo tollit eam a me. Quomodo? quia Christus etsi emisit spiritum, non amisit, quia qui omnium in sua manu recipit et tenet animas, ipse animam suam quemadmodum possit perdere non videtur. Audi prophetam dicentem: Anima mea in manibus tuis semper. Et alibi: In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum. Sed quid plura?

Currit, occurrit, adest bellua de profundo totum Dominicae resurrectionis impletura et proditura, immo conceptura et paritura mysterium; adest bellua, adest imago horrida et crudelis inferni, quae dum fertur avidis faucibus in prophetam, vigorem sui sensit et degustavit auctoris, incurrit namque jejunium devorando. Sed domicilium cordis sui tremens ad superni hospitis aptat et praeparat mansionem: ut ipsa quae fuerat tota causa discriminis, ipsa fieret necessariae navigationis inaudita vectura, vectorem suum servans, et post triduum referens ad superna; et hoc daret gentibus quod abstulerat Judaeis, quibus signum quaerentibus solum dandum Dominus esse signum hoc decernit, per quod scirent gloriam quam in Christo speraverant, totam esse gentibus conferendam.

But what does the storm stirred up by the winds mean, if not the devil, who, entering the heart of Judas, raised up kings, nations, peoples, soldiery, judges like the sea, and swelled them into waves, so that the waves, rising and falling, might demand their own author for the quiet of the world? Hear the waves of the world, hear the Prophet saying: Why have the nations raged, and the peoples devised vain things? (Ps 2:1) The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord, and against his Christ (Ps 2:2). And because the lot that would betray Jonah was not lacking, it fulfils upon Christ the prophecy of David, which says: And upon my garment they cast the lot (Ps 22:19).

But that Jonah was the author of his own plunging, when he says: Take me up and cast me into the sea (Jonah 1:12), points to the voluntary Passion of the Lord; for why do they allow themselves to be bidden this, who could of their own accord have helped themselves in such a peril? For when the safety of many demands the death of one, death is placed in the choice of the one who perishes, because both his will can hold back the man who is to die from death, and the death of the one in peril can forestall the peril: so here, where the whole of the Lord's work is enacted as a figure, the authority of the one who dies is awaited, so that to die may be not a necessity but a power. Hear the Lord saying: I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again: no one takes it from me (John 10:18). How? Because Christ, though he sent forth his spirit, did not lose it; because it is not seen how he who receives and holds in his hand the souls of all could himself lose his own soul. Hear the Prophet saying: My soul is in your hands always (Ps 119:109). And elsewhere: Into your hands I commend my spirit (Ps 31:6). But what more?

It runs, it rushes to meet him, the beast is there from the deep, to fulfil and to disclose, or rather to conceive and to bring forth, the whole mystery of the Lord's resurrection; the beast is there, the horrid and cruel image of hell is there, which, while it is borne with greedy jaws upon the prophet, felt and tasted the vigour of its own author, for in devouring it fell into a fast. But trembling, it fits and prepares the abode of its heart as a lodging for the heavenly guest: so that it, which had been the whole cause of the peril, might itself become the unheard-of carrier of a necessary voyage, keeping its passenger safe and after three days bringing him back to the world above; and might give to the Gentiles what it had taken from the Jews, to whom, seeking a sign, the Lord decrees that this sign alone is to be given, through which they might know that the glory which they had hoped for in Christ was to be conferred entire on the Gentiles.

Generatio, inquit, haec nequam est; signum quaerit, et signum non dabitur illi, nisi signum Jonae prophetae. Sicut enim Jonas signum fuit Ninivitis, ita erit et Filius hominis generationi isti. Quia Judaica perfidia fluctuante inferni Christus demersus est in profundum; et triduano cursu tota tartari occulta percurrens, et Judaicae crudelitatis, et majestatis suae ac peremptae mortis dedit indicium cum resurgeret.

Merito ergo surgent Ninivitae in judicio, et condemnabunt illam generationem, quia illi unius prophetae naufragi, advenae, ignoti, praeconio corriguntur; isti post virtutes tantas, mirabilia tanta, cum toto resurrectionis corusco, ad fidem non veniunt, ad poenitentiam non moventur. Ipsum namque resurrectionis signum non credunt, sed gestiunt infamare, dum pretio militum claudunt oculos, corda corrumpunt, quod scierant, quod viderant, ut tacerent; redimentes mendacium, ut tollerent veritatem. Facinus suum in Christi retorsere discipulos, cum dicunt: Dicite quia discipuli illius nocte venerunt, et furati sunt. Erras, Judaee: hoc discipuli non tulerant, sed magister; et ipse se furatus est, qui videbatur occisus. Sed miror quod Judaeus Christum requirit, quem inter duos latrones feraliter collocarat: committit male, custodit impie, iniquius quaerit.

Judaee, Christus perire non potest, sed tu eum tibi tuo scelere perdidisti, Veniet, veniet in judicium regina austri et eo ipso, qui furatus putabatur, judice, te condemnabit: quia illa venit ab extremo terrae audire sapientiam Salomonis, et tu ad te venientem sapientiam Dei infelicissimus occidisti. Ninivitae crediturarum gentium, regina austri Ecclesiae tunc provisa est in figuram. Beati sumus, fratres, quia quod praecessit in typo, quod promissum est in figura, nos specie, veritate veneramur, cernimus et habemus.

This generation, he says, is an evil one; it seeks a sign, and a sign will not be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of man also be to this generation. Because, as Jewish unbelief surged, Christ was plunged into the deep of hell; and running in a three days' course through all the hidden places of Tartarus, he gave a token both of Jewish cruelty and of his own majesty and of death destroyed, when he rose again.

Rightly, then, the Ninevites will rise in the judgement, and will condemn that generation (Luke 11:32), because they were corrected by the preaching of one prophet, shipwrecked, a stranger, unknown; these, after such great powers, such great wonders, with the whole flash of the resurrection, do not come to faith, are not moved to penance. For they do not believe the very sign of the resurrection, but long to defame it, in that with a price they close the soldiers' eyes and corrupt their hearts, so that they should keep silent about what they had known, what they had seen; buying a lie, to take away the truth. They turned their own misdeed back upon the disciples of Christ, when they say: Say that his disciples came by night and stole him (Matt 28:13). You are wrong, Jew: it was not the disciples who had carried this off, but the master; and he who seemed slain stole himself away. But I wonder that the Jew seeks Christ, whom he had savagely placed between two thieves: he commits wickedly, guards impiously, seeks more iniquitously still.

Jew, Christ cannot perish, but you have lost him for yourself by your wickedness. She will come, the queen of the South will come into the judgement, and, with him who was thought to have been stolen as judge, she will condemn you: because she came from the end of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and you, most unhappy one, slew the wisdom of God as it came to you (Luke 11:31). The Ninevites were then provided as a figure of the Gentiles who would believe, the queen of the South as a figure of the Church. Blessed are we, brothers, because what went before in type, what was promised in figure, we venerate, behold and possess in its form, in truth.

Sermo XXXVIII.

De injuria aequo animo toleranda

Quanta sit coelestis philosophiae magnitudo, quanta virtus militiae Christianae, hodie docuit Dominus, sic dicendo: Si quis te percusserit in dexteram maxillam tuam, praebe illi et alteram. Hoc putat arduum, qui praemia patientiae quanta sint nescit. Putasne potest ille vulneribus invenire victoriam, qui nec ictu palmae acquirere vult coronam? Potest iste morte inquirere gloriam, cui pro honore divino humana gravis videtur injuria? Homo, nonne praeceptis talibus infantiae tuae rudimenta componuntur? Palmae, parvulorum sunt verbera, non virorum. Hinc est quod levibus mandatis pueritia Christi animatur, ut ad gravia toto jam robore evangelica juventus accedat; ut hoc laboribus, poenis, morte se gaudeat obtinere, quod per infantiam parvis injuriis acquirere non valebat.

Ut autem dura non esse quae praecepta sunt approbentur, mandatorum series ipsa replicetur. Audistis, quia dictum est antiquis, oculum pro oculo, et dentem pro dente; ego autem dico vobis non resistere malo: sed si quis te percusserit in dexteram maxillam tuam, praebe illi et alteram; et qui vult tecum in judicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, remitte illi et pallium; et qui te angariaverit mille passus, vade cum illo et alia duo.

Audistis quia dictum est antiquis. Quibus antiquis? utique Judaeis, quos antiquos plus malitia fecerat quam vetustas, quos furor vindictae cupidos sic tenebat, ut pro oculo caput, pro dente animam postularent. Hinc est quod eos lex ad vindictae vicissitudinem refrenabat, ut qui veniam culpae sapere non valebant, vel modum saperent ultionis, et tantum vindictae exigerent quantum laesionis intulerat vis furentis. Sed hoc antiquis, nobis autem per gratiam innovatis divina quid imperet bonitas, audiamus.

Ego autem dico vobis. Quibus? utique Christianis. Non resistere malo. Sic cum dicit, vult nos vitia non repensare vitiis, sed superare virtutibus, et in ipsis scintillis adhuc exstinguere iram, quae si pervenerit ad totum furoris incendium, sine sanguine non sedatur. Ira vincitur lenitate, mansuetudine exstinguitur furor, malitia bonitate palpatur, crudelitas pietate prosternitur, impatientia patientia punitur, contentio superatur blanditiis, superbiam humilitas sternit. Ergo, fratres, qui vult vitia vincere, pietatis arma teneat, non furoris.

Sermon XXXVIII.

On bearing injury with an even mind

How great is the greatness of the heavenly philosophy, how great the virtue of the Christian service, the Lord taught today, saying thus: If anyone strikes you on your right cheek, offer him the other as well (Matt 5:39). He thinks this hard who does not know how great are the rewards of patience. Do you think that man can find victory in wounds, who will not gain a crown even by the blow of a palm? Can this man seek glory by death, to whom a human injury seems heavy, when it is borne for divine honour? Man, are not the rudiments of your infancy composed of such precepts? Slaps of the palm are the beatings of little children, not of men. Hence it is that Christ's boyhood is encouraged by light commands, so that the youth of the Gospel may come with its full strength to heavy things; so that it may rejoice to obtain by labours, punishments, death, what in infancy it could not acquire by small injuries.

But that what has been commanded may be shown not to be hard, let the very series of the commands be gone over again. You have heard that it was said to those of old: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say to you, not to resist evil: but if anyone strikes you on your right cheek, offer him the other as well; and whoever wishes to go to law with you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well; and whoever forces you to go a thousand paces, go with him two more (Matt 5:38–41).

You have heard that it was said to those of old. To which men of old? To the Jews, of course, whom malice more than age had made old, whom the frenzy of vengeance held so greedy that for an eye they demanded a head, for a tooth a life. Hence it is that the Law curbed them to a like return in vengeance, so that those who could not savour the pardon of a fault might at least savour a measure in revenge, and exact only as much vengeance as the force of the raging man had inflicted in injury. But this was for those of old; let us hear what divine goodness commands us, who have been made new through grace.

But I say to you. To whom? To Christians, of course. Not to resist evil. In saying this, he wants us not to repay vices with vices, but to overcome them with virtues, and to quench anger while it is still in sparks; for if it reaches the full blaze of fury, it is not stilled without blood. Anger is overcome by gentleness, fury is quenched by meekness, malice is soothed by goodness, cruelty is laid low by piety, impatience is punished by patience, contention is overcome by caresses, humility lays pride low. Therefore, brothers, whoever wishes to overcome vices, let him hold the arms of piety, not of fury.

Et quamvis possit lucere sapienti quid sit quod instituuntur injuriis primordia Christiana: tamen quia non intelligunt quidem esse hoc virtutis, esse hoc bonitatis culmen, pietatis esse hoc fastigium, hoc esse divinae philosophiae non humanae, non resistere malo, sed vincere in bono malum, maledicenti benedicere, percutienti iterum percutiendi licentiam non negare, tollenti tunicam dimittere pallium, et rapienti praedam facere largitatem, angarianti mille passus addere suam ad alia duo millia servitutem; ut vincat necessitatem voluntas, impietatem pietas; et hoc sic patientis virtus, quod imperat vis cogentis: ergo quamvis ista doceant quale miles Christi ad virtutem roboretur injuriis, tamen ut plus pateat, qua ex causa sint praecepta altius requiramus. Fratres, ubi se peccatorum morbus, vitiorum scelus, impietatis phrenesis mentibus infudit humanis, et quidquid erat scientiae, sensus et rationis exstinxit, furore vesano fecit per orbem diffusas gentes Deum fugere, sequi daemones, creaturas colere, contemnere Creatorem, desiderare vitia, horrere virtutes, agi gladiis, vulneribus ruere, vivos mortibus deperire. Unde sanari aliter homines non valebant, nisi coelestis medici armati pietate tota et patientia niterentur, qui sic laborantium phrenesi paterentur injurias, maledicta portarent, sustinerent verbera, vulneribus scinderentur, donec eos ad sobrietatem sensus, ad sinceritatem spiritus, ad mentium reducerent sanitatem; ac sic Deum quaerere, fugere daemones, languores sentire, sapere sanitatem, abjicere vitia, capere virtutes, declinare vulnera, horrere sanguinem, recusare mortem, vitam desiderare perficerent.

Et si vultis ut quod diximus plenius innotescat, carnalium medicorum loquamur exempla. Nonne quoties miserum hominem cholerae inflammaverit incendium, et dominante febre vesanum reddiderit aegrotantem, turbatur sensus, mens deperit, feritas accedit, recedit humanitas, et ne multis, moriente homine furor vivit? Hinc est quod frendit dentibus, parentes laniat, scindit proximos, caedit pugno, morsu agit, atque afficit obsequentes. Tunc medicus ad virtutis laudem, ad artis gloriam, ad famae cumulum armatur patientia: tolerantiam sumit, injurias despicit, morsus sustinet, fert labores, et non leves poenas patitur, ut a poena liberet laborantem; fovet oleo, insistit curis, erogat medicinam, certus quod mercedem honoris obsequiis repenset aegrotus dum receperit sanitatem.

Rogo, quae major phrenesis, quae gravior vis furoris, quae par dementia sancti hominis percutere maxillam? mansueti fratris faciem verberare? placidi vultus gratiam tristi livore perfundere? nudare hominem solo quo tegitur vestimento? et ob vilem praedam nil Deo, nil homini, nil naturae relinquere, nil pudori? angariare hominem suis actibus occupatum? et alienam poenam suum solatium computare?

And although it may be clear to the wise what it means that Christian beginnings are trained by injuries, yet, because they do not indeed understand that this belongs to virtue, that this is the summit of goodness, this the height of piety, that this belongs to a divine philosophy, not a human one: not to resist evil, but to overcome evil with good, to bless the one who curses, not to deny the one who strikes the licence of striking again, to let the one who takes the tunic have the cloak, and to make the robber's booty a largess, to add one's own service for another two thousand to the one who forces a thousand paces; so that will may overcome necessity, piety impiety; and that the virtue of the one who suffers may so overcome what the force of the compeller commands: therefore, although these things teach how the soldier of Christ is strengthened for virtue by injuries, yet, that it may be plainer, let us inquire more deeply for what cause the precepts have been given. Brothers, when the disease of sins, the wickedness of vices, the frenzy of impiety had poured itself into human minds, and extinguished whatever there was of knowledge, sense and reason, with insane fury it made the nations spread through the world flee God, follow demons, worship creatures, despise the Creator, desire vices, shudder at virtues, be driven on by swords, rush upon wounds, perish alive by deaths. Hence men could not be healed otherwise unless heavenly physicians, armed with all piety and patience, strove, who would so endure the injuries of the frenzy of the sick, bear their curses, sustain their blows, be torn with wounds, until they brought them back to sobriety of sense, to sincerity of spirit, to soundness of mind; and so made them seek God, flee demons, feel their sicknesses, savour health, cast off vices, take on virtues, avoid wounds, shudder at blood, refuse death, desire life.

And if you wish what we have said to become more fully known, let us speak of examples from the physicians of the flesh. Is it not so that whenever the fire of bile has inflamed a wretched man, and, with the fever reigning, has made the sick man insane, his sense is disturbed, his mind perishes, savagery comes on, humanity departs, and, to say no more, while the man is dying the frenzy lives? Hence it is that he gnashes his teeth, mangles his parents, tears at his neighbours, strikes with his fist, bites, and assails those who wait on him. Then the physician, for the praise of his skill, for the glory of his art, for the increase of his fame, arms himself with patience: he takes on endurance, disregards injuries, bears bites, endures labours, and suffers no light torments, to free the sufferer from torment; he soothes with oil, keeps at his cares, dispenses medicine, sure that the sick man will repay his services with a reward of honour once he has recovered health.

I ask, what greater frenzy, what heavier force of fury, what madness can equal striking the cheek of a holy man? beating the face of a meek brother? suffusing the grace of a calm countenance with a sad bruise? stripping a man of the only garment that covers him? and for a vile booty leaving nothing to God, nothing to man, nothing to nature, nothing to shame? forcing a man busy with his own affairs into service? and counting another's torment one's own comfort?

Ergo, fratres, si talia perpetrantes gravissima phrenesi laborare cognovimus, obediamus Christo, et furentium fratrum morsus, verbera, onera, tota pietatis virtute portemus, ut et fratres nostros liberemus a poena, et nos aeternum patientiae praemium consequamur.

Nec dedignetur servus hoc accipere a conservis, quod Dominus a servis et pro servis dignanter accepit: palmis faciem non negavit, tollenti tunicam et pallium dimisit et corpus; angariantem se ad laborem, gratus ac libens est secutus ad mortem. Ergo, fratres, si dignum Dominus pati duxit, pati servum quomodo, quomodo videtur indignum? Erramus, erramus, fratres; qui non facit quod jussit Dominus, gratis sperat Dominus quod promisit.

Therefore, brothers, if we know that those who commit such things labour under a most grievous frenzy, let us obey Christ, and bear with all the strength of piety the bites, blows and burdens of our raging brothers, so that we may both free our brothers from torment and ourselves attain the eternal reward of patience.

Nor let the servant disdain to receive from his fellow servants what the Lord deigned to receive from servants and for servants: he did not refuse his face to the slaps, to the one who took his tunic he gave up both his cloak and his body; the one who forced him into labour he followed, grateful and willing, to death. Therefore, brothers, if the Lord thought it worthy to suffer, how, how does it seem unworthy for the servant to suffer? We err, we err, brothers; he who does not do what the Lord commanded hopes in vain for what the Lord promised.

Sermo XXXIX.

De perseverantia orationis

Per se semper sibi divina sufficiunt, sed ob hoc hominibus humanis frequenter insinuantur exemplis, quia coelestis providentia non quid ipsa dicere, sed quid auditor capere possit, attendit. Sic fons per tenues venarum primitus erumpit meatus, atque angustis sensim serpit in rivulis donec digno successu in totam se fluviorum latitudinem prorumpat, et valenter effundat. Et ut vobis de nobis loquar: nato parvulo, mox coaevum praeparat succum natura, escam commutat in potum, et stupentes adhuc fauces, torpentesque internorum meatus, ad usum solidioris cibi, longa lactis infusione componit. Sic nos Dominus ad capienda divina vernaculis erigit, et informat exemplis, dicendo: Quis vestrum habebit amicum, et ibit ad illum media nocte, et dicet illi: Amice, commoda mihi tres panes quoniam amicus meus venit de via ad me, et non habeo quod ponam ante illum; et ille de intus respondeat, Noli mihi molestus esse, quia jam ostium clausum est, et pueri mei mecum sunt in cubili, non possum surgere et dare tibi? Dico vobis, si non dabit illi surgens, quia amicus ejus est, propter improbitatem tamen ejus surget, et dabit illi quotquot habet necessarios.

O quam dare vult, qui se inquietari taliter, taliter patitur suscitari! O quam necessitatis esse suae, quod suae potestatis est, vult videri! O quam pulsanti iste gestivit occurrere, qui sic secreti sui cubile ipsam collocavit ad januam! O quam negare noluit, qui sibi etiam neganti qualiter extorqueretur, ostendit! O quam non ad januam tantum Dominus, sed ipsa janua Dominus fuit! Ego sum, inquit, janua, qui, dormientibus servis, pulsantis necessitatem solus et primus audivi. O quam pius, quam misericors, qui quod mandatis docet, probat et informat exemplis! Cum facis, inquit eleemosynam, noli tuba canere. Et iterum: Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextra tua.

Sermon XXXIX.

On perseverance in prayer

Divine things are always sufficient to themselves of themselves, but they are often made known to men by human examples for this reason, that heavenly providence attends not to what it could say itself, but to what the hearer could take in. So a spring at first breaks out through the slender channels of the veins, and creeps little by little in narrow rivulets, until by fitting increase it bursts out into the whole breadth of rivers, and pours itself out mightily. And, to speak to you of ourselves: when a little child is born, nature at once prepares a nourishment born with it, turns food into drink, and by a long infusion of milk fits the throat, still numb, and the sluggish passages of the inner parts for the use of more solid food. So the Lord raises us up by homely examples to grasp divine things, and instructs us, saying: Which of you will have a friend, and will go to him at midnight, and say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he answers from within: Do not trouble me, for the door is already shut, and my servants are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you? (Luke 11:5–7) I tell you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needs (Luke 11:8).

O how he wishes to give, who lets himself be so disturbed, so roused! O how he wishes that to seem a matter of his necessity which is a matter of his power! O how he longed to run to meet the one who knocked, he who placed the very bed of his privacy thus at the door! O how unwilling he was to refuse, who showed even the one he was refusing how it might be wrung from him! O how the Lord was not only at the door, but the Lord was the door itself! I am, he says, the door (John 10:9), I who, while the servants slept, alone and first heard the necessity of the one knocking. O how loving, how merciful he is, who proves and shapes by examples what he teaches by commands! When you give alms, he says, do not sound a trumpet (Matt 6:2). And again: Let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing (Matt 6:3).

Quis vestrum habebit amicum, et ibit ad illum media nocte? Parum est quod facienti misericordiam nox velabat, quod largitatem dantis petentis obtegebat improbitas, nisi ad cumulum pietatis velandae ascriberetur et somnus. Indicit in hac humanitate geminam necessitatis speciem, petentis et dormientis, ut illum petere hospes, dare compellat hunc somnus: utpote qui propterea se daturum ei dicat in tempore, quod non occurrere amico, sed recurrere videatur ad somnum; et ut ei magis dormire liceat, quam dare libeat sic petenti. Quid plura? ecce pulsanti illi plus somnus, quam sonus exstitit suffragator.

Nec otiosum reor esse quod horam petendi sic aperit, sic designat, dicendo: Quis vestrum habet amicum, et ibit ad illum media nocte? Quasi non et prima, et secunda et tertia hora noctis, cum se sopor blandus dormientibus primum fundit in corpora, et visceribus diurno labore fessis dulcis, ac totus illabitur, molesta et aspera sit inquietantis improbitas. Sed hoc tempus est quod devotum et juge pernoctantis demonstrat judicium; hoc tempus est quo inter praeteritos et futuros labores ardens animus, sed ad divina, nil indulget corpori, nil quieti: sed antequam finiat transacti diei opera, inchoat et anticipat jam futuri. Ista satis hora est efficax impetrandi. Hoc sciens propheta, ipsum tempus suae supplicationis asserit exstitisse, cantando: Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi. In hac hora vigilantibus, semper sponsus ille coelestis occurrit, qui dicit: Media nocte clamor factus est, ecce sponsus venit.

Non potuit non impetrare quod voluit, qui ut reciperet hospitem, hospitem reficeret, totam sibi requiem denegavit. Aut quomodo sic petenti, sic pulsanti non responderet ille, qui se in hospite suscipi confitetur, cum dicit: Hospes fui, et suscepistis me? Aestimo hoc dixisse pulsantem, aut forte aliter convenisse: Feci quod jussisti, redde quod promisisti; tibi credidi dicenti: Nolite solliciti esse in crastinum. Unde hesterno hospiti quod apponerem non reliquit: si tibi ego sic habenti molestus sum, quanto mihi ille exstitit molestior non habenti? Et tamen ego illi me excusare non potui, quia tibi obedire contendi. Plus hic jubentis quam non habentis verecundia nunc laborat. Hospes in domo est, et tu dormis, immo tu dormis, qui non dormis. Ego suscepi hospitem, nisi dederis panem, panem hospiti tu negasti. Merito sic pulsanti, petenti taliter, quotquot necessarios habuit evangelicus iste fenerator largitus est panes.

Which of you will have a friend, and will go to him at midnight? It is little that the night veiled the one doing mercy, that the importunity of the asker covered the largess of the giver, unless sleep too were added to heap up the veiling of his loving-kindness. In this act of humanity he sets forth a twofold kind of necessity, of the one asking and of the one sleeping, so that the guest compels the one to ask, sleep compels the other to give: inasmuch as he says that he will give to him in time for this reason, that he may seem not to run to meet his friend, but to run back to sleep; and that he may rather be allowed to sleep than be pleased to give to one asking so. What more? behold, sleep more than sound proved that knocker's advocate.

Nor do I think it idle that he so discloses, so designates the hour of asking, saying: Which of you has a friend, and will go to him at midnight? As if at the first and second and third hour of the night too, when gentle slumber first pours itself into the bodies of sleepers and glides sweetly and wholly into the inner parts tired by the day's labour, the importunity of a disturber were not troublesome and harsh. But this time shows the devoted and constant judgement of one who keeps vigil through the night; this is the time at which the mind, burning, but towards divine things, between labours past and labours to come, grants nothing to the body, nothing to rest: but before it finishes the works of the day that is over, it already begins and anticipates those of the day to come. This hour is well able to obtain what is asked. Knowing this, the Prophet declares that this very time was the time of his supplication, singing: At midnight I rose to confess to you (Ps 119:62). At this hour that heavenly bridegroom always comes to meet those who watch, he who says: At midnight a cry was raised: Behold, the bridegroom is coming (Matt 25:6).

He could not fail to obtain what he wanted, who, to receive a guest, to refresh a guest, denied himself all rest. Or how could he not answer one so asking, so knocking, he who confesses that he himself is received in the guest, when he says: I was a guest, and you took me in (Matt 25:35)? I think that the one knocking said this, or perhaps pleaded otherwise: "I did what you commanded; give what you promised; I believed you when you said: Do not be anxious about tomorrow (Matt 6:34). That is why it left me nothing to set before yesterday's guest: if I am a trouble to you who have plenty, how much more of a trouble was he to me who have nothing? And yet I could not excuse myself to him, because I strove to obey you. Here the shame of the one who commands is now more at stake than that of the one who has nothing. The guest is in the house, and you sleep; or rather, you sleep, you who do not sleep. I took in the guest: if you do not give bread, it is you who have denied bread to the guest." Rightly, to one so knocking, so asking, that lender of the Gospel gave as many loaves as he needed.

Quid faciunt qui se non in cubili, sed ipso collocant in sepulcro? qui se non somno, sed morti tradunt? quos gallus non commonet, lucifer non suscitat, sol ipse non revocat et producit ad lucem? Isti et tempus supplicandi, et hospitis mercedem, et ipsa diei opera perdiderunt. Contristamur, fratres, quando nos diluculo stamus ante Dominum, et nobiscum nostros filios non videmus. Ille noctis medio sic pulsavit, in cujus domo hospes venerat. Rogo, tu quare non vel diluculo vigilas, cui est hospes in domo? quod ille gratiae, tu tribue vel pigritiae; quod ille humanitati, tu necessitati saltem, plus somni quam tui amator, impende.

Certe ut possis vigilare ad vitam, qui dormis ad mortem, quae sequuntur, ausculta: Et ego dico, inquit, petite, et dabitur vobis; quaerite et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis. Omnis enim qui petit, accipit; et qui quaerit, invenit; et pulsanti aperietur. Sed dicis, Esto quod petere possim, pulsare quomodo potero coeleste secretum? Quemadmodum? Iterando preces, et exspectando judicium largitoris, moras dantis patientissime sustinendo; quia quicumque cum semel pulsaverit, indignatur mox si non fuerit auditus, iste non est petitor supplex, sed est imperiosus exactor. Audi prophetam dicentem: Exspecta Dominum, viriliter age, et confortetur cor tuum. Et si iterum distulerit in futurum, tu Dominum tuum patienter exspecta. Ubi autem quid quaerere debeas vis nosse, sunt divitiae in sinu pauperis, et regnum coelorum intra te est. Intra vos est regnum coelorum, dicit Dominus.

Quis sit autem amicus qui dormit, et quis amicus qui de via venit, et qui sunt pueri qui dormiunt, et quis est iste qui pulsat, et cur sub certo numero tres tantum postulat panes, cum petiero, quaesiero, pulsavero, et pervigil inquietator accipere meruero, vobis amicis mei Domini non negabo. Sed dicitis mihi, Ecce amicus Domini tui venit ad te; iste dare, non accipere, consuevit; hanc denique sitarciam de viatici sui copia pastor avidus explevit, ut de nostrae paupertatis vilissima praeparatione gustaret; nec passus est intempesta nocte me sibi aliunde petere hospitum locupletissimus quod habebat. Nec mirum, fratres; semper dare vult dives ad pauperem, cum declinat. Iste illius evangelici amici semper manet in janua; in istius cubili ille cum pueris suis largitor evangelicus perseverat, in cujus corde Pater et Filius, et Spiritus sanctus faciunt semper et collocant mansionem. Quid plura? Pater est: ab ipso petere, in ipso quaerere, per ipsum pulsare me credidi; et ideo me vobis daturum non incautus promissor asserui.

What do those do who place themselves not in bed but in the sepulchre itself? who give themselves up not to sleep but to death? whom the cock does not warn, the morning star does not rouse, the sun itself does not call back and bring forth to the light? These have lost both the time for supplication, and the reward of the guest, and the very works of the day. We are saddened, brothers, when we stand at daybreak before the Lord and do not see our children with us. He in whose house a guest had come knocked thus in the middle of the night. I ask, why do you not keep watch at least at daybreak, you who have a guest in your house? what he gave to grace, give at least to sloth; what he spent on humanity, spend at least on necessity, you who love sleep more than yourself.

Surely, that you who sleep for death may be able to keep watch for life, listen to what follows: And I say, he says, ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Luke 11:9). For everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks it will be opened (Luke 11:10). But you say: "Granted that I can ask, how shall I be able to knock at the heavenly secret?" How? By repeating prayers, and awaiting the judgement of the bestower, enduring most patiently the delays of the giver; because whoever, having knocked once, is at once indignant if he has not been heard, is not a suppliant petitioner but an imperious exactor. Hear the Prophet saying: Wait for the Lord, act manfully, and let your heart be strengthened (Ps 27:14). And if he puts it off again into the future, wait patiently for your Lord. But if you wish to know where you ought to seek: there are riches in the bosom of the poor, and the kingdom of heaven is within you. Within you is the kingdom of heaven, says the Lord (Luke 17:21).

But who is the friend who sleeps, and who the friend who comes from a journey, and who are the servants who sleep, and who is he who knocks, and why under a fixed number he asks only three loaves, when I have asked, sought, knocked, and, a wakeful disturber, have merited to receive, I will not deny to you, the friends of my Lord. But you say to me: "Behold, the friend of your Lord has come to you." He is accustomed to give, not to receive; indeed, these provisions the eager shepherd has filled up from the abundance of his own store for the journey, so as to taste of the meanest preparation of our poverty; nor did he, the richest of guests, allow me at dead of night to seek elsewhere for him what he himself had. Nor is it any wonder, brothers; the rich man always wants to give when he turns aside to the poor. This man ever stays at the door of that friend of the Gospel; in this man's chamber that giver of the Gospel remains with his servants, in whose heart the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit always make and set their dwelling. What more? He is a father: from him to ask, in him to seek, through him to knock, I have trusted; and therefore I, no careless promiser, have declared that I will give to you.

Sermo XL.

De bono pastore

Ubi vernalis aurae tempus annuos ovium coeperit partus aperire, ubi per campos, prata, vias coeperit fecundi gregis germina copiosa dispergere, pastor bonus seponit, et cantus, et discursu anxio teneros quaerit, legit, colligit fetus, atque eos collo, humeris, ulnis, laetus vector imponit, ut salvos omnes perferat, et tutas perducat ad caulas. Sic nos, fratres ubi Quadragesimae arridente verno, ecclesiasticum gregem videmus fundere uberes partus, tractatus nostri cantus et consueti sermonis epulas seponentes totam curam in colligendo et comportando coelesti germine, anxii gravissimo labore dependimus. Sed quia agnos redditos gregi, et totos intra Christi videmus esse jam septa, divinos laetissimi revocamur ad cantus, Dominici vobis cibi exsultatione tota vitales copias apponentes: ut quos socios senserimus in labore, participes in gaudiis habere possimus. Et quia praefatio haec nostra pastoris boni fecit et intulit mentionem de ipso qui solus bonus, solus pastor, solus pastorum pastor est, tota sermonis nostri et tractatus repleatur et habeatur intentio.

Pastor inquit, bonus, animam suam ponit pro ovibus suis. Fortem facit vis amoris, quia nil durum, nil amarum, nil grave, nil lethale, computat amor verus. Quod ferrum? quae vulnera? quae poena? quae mortes, amorem praevalent separare perfectum? Amor impenetrabilis est lorica, respuit jacula, gladios excutit, periculis insultat, mortem ridet, si amor est, vincit omnia.

Sed quaeramus utrum sit ovibus commoda mors ista pastoris, quae destituit oves, quae lupis tradit inerme pecus, quae sic charum gregem ferinis morsibus derelinquit, direptioni dat, et exponit morti, sicut ipsius pastoris Christi probatur ex morte. Ex quo namque posuit ipse animam suam pro ovibus suis, seque Judaico furore permisit occidi, oves ejus gentilium, velut praedonum, diripiuntur incursu; mactandae in carceribus, velut latronum clauduntur antris; a persecutoribus quasi saevientibus lupis sine cessatione laniantur, ab haereticis quasi ab extraneis canibus rabido dente carpuntur.

Sermon XL.

On the good shepherd

When the season of the spring air has begun to open the yearly births of the sheep, when it has begun to scatter the abundant young of the fruitful flock over fields, meadows and roads, the good shepherd sets aside even his songs, and, running anxiously to and fro, seeks, picks up and gathers the tender young, and lays them, a glad carrier, on his neck, his shoulders, his arms, so as to bring them all safe and lead them secure to the folds. So we, brothers, when in the smiling spring of Lent we see the Church's flock pour forth rich births, set aside the songs of our exposition and the feasts of our customary sermon, and, anxious, spend all our care with the heaviest labour in gathering and carrying in the heavenly offspring. But since we see the lambs restored to the flock, and all of them now within Christ's folds, we are called back, most joyful, to the divine songs, setting before you with all exultation the life-giving supplies of the Lord's food: so that those whom we have felt to be our companions in labour we may have as partakers in joy. And since this preface of ours has made and brought in mention of the good shepherd, of him who alone is good, alone shepherd, alone the shepherd of shepherds, let the whole intent of our sermon and exposition be filled with him and kept on him.

The good shepherd, he says, lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). The force of love makes him brave, because true love counts nothing hard, nothing bitter, nothing heavy, nothing deadly. What sword? what wounds? what punishment? what deaths can prevail to separate perfect love? Love is an impenetrable breastplate: it spurns darts, strikes swords aside, mocks dangers, laughs at death; if it is love, it conquers all.

But let us ask whether this death of the shepherd is to the sheep's advantage, a death that leaves the sheep destitute, that hands the unarmed flock to the wolves, that so abandons the dear flock to the bites of wild beasts, gives it up to plunder and exposes it to death, as is proved from the death of Christ the shepherd himself. For from the time he himself laid down his life for his sheep and allowed himself to be killed by the fury of the Jews, his sheep are plundered by the onslaught of the Gentiles as of robbers; destined for slaughter, they are shut up in prisons as in robbers' dens; they are torn without ceasing by persecutors as by raging wolves; they are mangled with rabid tooth by heretics as by strange dogs.

Hoc apostolorum peremptus probat chorus, hoc martyrum toto orbe diffusus clamat sanguis, hoc Christianorum membra data bestiis, consumpta ignibus, demersa fluminibus, patenter demonstrant: quod utique totum sicut mors intulit, ita vita potuit prohibere pastoris. Ideo pro te pastor amorem morte probat, quia cum videat ovibus imminere discrimen, cum gregem defensare non possit, mavult mori antequam mali de suis ovibus quid videat. Sed quid faciamus, quia Vita mori non poterat, nisi voluisset? datori animae animam quis tollere potuisset nolenti? dicente ipso: Potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam; nemo tollit eam a me. Ergo mori voluit, qui se, cum mori non posset, permisit occidi.

Quaeramus ergo hujus quae vis, quae ratio sit amoris, quae hujus causa mortis, quae hujus sit utilitas passionis. Et plane vis certa, vera ratio, causa lucens, utilitas tanti sanguinis peraperta: namque pastoris una ex morte virtus emicuit singularis; pastor pro ovibus morti, quae ovibus imminebat, occurrit; ut auctorem mortis diabolum novo ordine captus caperet, victus vinceret, puniret occisus, et ovibus moriendo viam vincendae mortis aperiret. Nam et diabolus, dum in hominem tendit, prosilivit in Deum; dum in reum saevit, incurrit in judicem; invenit supplicium, dum ingerit poenam; ipse accipit, dum dat sententiam; et vivens mortalium pastu mors moritur, dum devorat vitam; absorbens reos mors, absorbetur, innocentiae dum deglutit auctorem; et perit mors ipsa, quae perdebat omnes, dum omnium perimere vult salutem. Ergo tali forma praecessit oves pastor, pastor ab ovibus non recessit; nec illas dedit lupis, sed tradidit lupos illis quibus donavit suos eligere sic praedones, ut occisae viverent, laniatae resurgerent, sanguine suo tinctae fulgerent regali purpura, niveo vellere perlucerent. Sic bonus pastor pro ovibus cum posuit animam, non amisit; et oves taliter tenuit, non reliquit; nec destituit oves taliter, sed invitavit, quas per mortales campos, per iter mortis, vitalia vocavit et perduxit ad pascua.

Sed dicit aliquis, Quando haec erunt? Ecce interim oves, id est, apostoli, prophetae, martyres et confessores jacent sepulti: discerpti toto sparguntur in orbe, involuti sanguine, tetris clauduntur sepulcris. Et quis dubitat quod resurgant, vivant, regnent occisi martyres, quando Christus illis resurrexit, vivit et regnat occisus? Audi vocem pastoris hujus: Oves meae vocem meam audiunt et sequuntur me. Necesse est ut quae sunt ad mortem secutae, sequantur ad vitam; quae ad contumeliam comitatae sunt, comitentur ad honorem; et sint participes gloriae, quae passionis participes exstiterunt. Ubi sum, inquit, ego, ibi erit et minister meus.Ubi? utique super coelos, ubi Christus est ad dexteram Dei sedens.

This the slain choir of the apostles proves, this the blood of the martyrs spilt over the whole world cries aloud, this the limbs of Christians given to beasts, consumed by fires, sunk in rivers, plainly show: all of which, surely, as the shepherd's death brought it on, so his life could have prevented it. So for your sake a shepherd proves his love by death, because, when he sees danger hanging over the sheep, when he cannot defend the flock, he prefers to die rather than see any harm come to his sheep. But what are we to make of it, since Life could not die unless it had willed? who could have taken life from the giver of life against his will? as he himself says: I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again; no one takes it from me (John 10:18). So he willed to die who, though he could not die, allowed himself to be killed.

Let us ask, then, what force this love has, what reason, what is the cause of this death, what the profit of this passion. And plainly the force is sure, the reason true, the cause shining, the profit of so much blood wide open: for from the one death of the shepherd a singular power shone out; the shepherd went to meet, for the sheep, the death that hung over the sheep; so that by a new order he might, captured, capture the devil, the author of death, conquered, conquer him, slain, punish him, and by dying open to the sheep the way of conquering death. For the devil too, in aiming at man, leapt out against God; in raging against the accused, he runs into the judge; he finds punishment in inflicting penalty; he himself receives sentence in passing it; and death, living by feeding on mortals, dies in devouring life; death, swallowing the guilty, is swallowed in gulping down the author of innocence; and death itself perishes, which destroyed all, in seeking to destroy the salvation of all. In this way, then, the shepherd went before the sheep, the shepherd did not withdraw from the sheep; nor did he give them to the wolves, but he handed the wolves over to them, granting them so to choose their own robbers that, slain, they should live, mangled, rise again, dyed in their own blood, shine in royal purple, gleam in a snowy fleece. So the good shepherd, when he laid down his life for the sheep, did not lose it; and he held the sheep in this way, he did not leave them; nor did he in this way abandon the sheep, but invited them, and through mortal fields, by the road of death, called them and led them to life-giving pastures.

But someone says: "When will these things be? Look: meanwhile the sheep, that is, the apostles, prophets, martyrs and confessors, lie buried: torn apart, they are scattered over the whole world; wrapped in blood, they are shut up in gloomy sepulchres." And who doubts that the slain martyrs rise again, live and reign, when Christ, slain, has risen again for them, lives and reigns? Hear the voice of this shepherd: My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me (John 10:27). Those who followed him to death must follow him to life; those who went with him to dishonour must go with him to honour; and those who were partakers of the passion must be partakers of the glory. Where I am, he says, there will my servant be also (John 12:26). Where? Surely above the heavens, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Homo, non te turbet fides, spes te longior non fatiget: quia certa tibi res est, quae in ipso tibi rerum servatur auctore. Mortui, inquit, estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo; cum autem apparuerit Christus vita vestra, tunc et vos cum illo apparebitis in gloria. Laborans messor quod in semine non videt, videbit in messe, et qui in sulco deflet, gaudebit in fructu.

Man, do not let faith trouble you, nor a hope too long weary you: for what is kept for you in the very author of things is a sure thing for you. You have died, he says, and your life is hidden with Christ in God; but when Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory (Col 3:3–4). The toiling reaper will see in the harvest what he does not see in the seed, and he who weeps in the furrow will rejoice in the fruit.

Sermo XLI.

De jejunio et eleemosyna

Bella gentium legimus superasse quamplurimos, quos tamen pugnas carnis legimus non vicisse, et audivimus eos dedisse delictis pectora, qui dorsa hostibus non dederunt. Proh dolor! Victores gentium vitiorum fuisse captivos, nationum dominos turpi servisse criminibus servitute; stetisse inter saevientes gladios, et inter enervata lenocinia corruisse; regnis fuisse terrori, ludibrio fuisse peccatis; adversas acies contrivisse jejunos, et crapulatos suarum castra dissolvisse virtutum; jacuisse effuso vino, qui jacere effuso sanguine nescierunt. Unde est hoc? unde? quia hoc non est ratio, sed languor; non vita, sed febris; phrenesis, non natura. Nam quotiens ciborum cruditas vitalia dejicit, infirmat stomachum, corrumpit sanguinem, vitiat humores, succendit choleram, extremum febris gignit incendium toties aeger mentem perdit, amittit sensum, fertur desideriis, contrariis urgetur, salutaria respuit, quaerit noxia, fugit curam. Tunc medici satagunt abstinentiae remedio subvenire ut sanetur, ut sanet abstinentia quod voracitas sauciarat. Et si pro temporali cura aegri medicis obediunt, servant arduam parcitatem; quare pro sempiterna salute sit durum Christo moderatis obedire jejuniis, corpus gubernare mensura, mentem regere parcitate, sensum sobrietate frenare? Sicut terrae nubes caligant coelum, sic obscurant animas intemperata convivia; sicut ventorum turbines elementa confundunt, sic fercula congesta stomachum conturbant; ut navem fluctus, corpus ebrietas sic demergit, hominem dat in profundum, lucra vitae aufert, mortis facit subire naufragium.

Est ergo febris, est febris quam beatus Apostolus anhelare in humanis visceribus sic deplorat: Scio quia non habitat in me, hoc est, in carne mea, bonum: si non bonum, utique malum. Quod malum? Fragilitas certe, quae dum serpit in carne, in venis aestuat, intrat ossa, conditur in medullis, fervet in sanguine, in vitiorum phrenesim sic erumpit. Fragilitas febris naturae, languorum mater, genitrix passionum; fragilitas est, quae nobis ejusmodi necessitates imponit: et ubi necessitas, non voluntas; ubi exstat de conditione captivitas, judicium de potestate non constat.

Sermon XLI.

On fasting and almsgiving

We read that a great many overcame the wars of the nations who yet, we read, did not win the battles of the flesh; and we have heard that those gave their breasts to offences who did not give their backs to enemies. Alas! That the conquerors of nations were the captives of vices; that the lords of peoples served crimes in shameful servitude; that they stood firm among raging swords, and fell among enervating allurements; that they were a terror to kingdoms, a plaything to sins; that fasting they crushed the opposing battle lines, and gorged they broke up the camps of their own virtues; that they lay low in spilt wine who did not know how to lie low in spilt blood! Whence is this? whence? Because this is not reason, but sickness; not life, but fever; frenzy, not nature. For as often as undigested food casts down the vital organs, weakens the stomach, corrupts the blood, vitiates the humours, kindles the bile and begets the utmost blaze of fever, so often the sick man loses his mind, lets go his senses, is carried off by his desires, is driven by what is contrary, spurns what is healthful, seeks what is harmful, flees the cure. Then the physicians busy themselves to come to his aid with the remedy of abstinence, so that he may be healed, so that abstinence may heal what voracity had wounded. And if for a temporal cure the sick obey their physicians and keep a hard sparingness, why should it be hard, for eternal salvation, to obey Christ by moderate fasts, to govern the body by measure, to rule the mind by sparingness, to bridle the senses with sobriety? As the clouds of the earth darken the sky, so intemperate banquets obscure souls; as whirlwinds confound the elements, so heaped-up dishes upset the stomach; as the waves a ship, so drunkenness sinks the body, sends the man to the deep, takes away the gains of life, makes him undergo the shipwreck of death.

It is a fever, then, it is a fever which the blessed Apostle thus laments as panting in the human vitals: I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh (Rom 7:18): if not good, then surely evil. What evil? Frailty, surely, which, while it creeps in the flesh, boils in the veins, enters the bones, lodges in the marrow, seethes in the blood, thus breaks out into the frenzy of vices. Frailty is the fever of nature, the mother of sicknesses, the bearer of passions; it is frailty that lays such necessities upon us: and where there is necessity, not will; where captivity arises from the condition, no judgement on power holds.

Fragilitas est per quam vadit homo, non quo invitat voluntas, sed quo necessitas ducit. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Non quod volo hoc ago. Fragilitas dum parat homini necessaria, facit illum ad non necessaria pervenire; dum parat cibum, perducit ad crapulam; ebrietatem suadet, dum potum ministrat; offert somnum, ut inertiam tradat; curat ventris onera, ut salutis auferat curam; dat carni totum, ut animae nil relinquat: facit corpus passionum pompam; facit ut sit homo sui mors, vita vitiorum. Unde si se homo taliter sentit aegrotum, medico se coelesti tradat, secure ejus monitis acquiescat, a cibis se temperet, mensuram servet in potu, ut possit sic fragilitatis superare languorem, fragilitatem fugere passionum, febrim ac phrenesim vitare vitiorum.

Abstinentia est hominis prima medicina; sed ad plenam curam, misericordiae requirit expensas. Abstinentia exstinguit febrem, sed arefacta membra longae febris incendio, nisi largo infundantur unguento, nisi blandissimis rigentur fomentis, nisi juventur medicinae sumptu, ad integram sanitatem redire non possunt: sic jejunium quamvis excludat vitiorum morbos, carnis amputet passiones, criminum causas propellat; tamen sine misericordiae unguento, sine pietatis rivo, sine eleemosynae sumptu, perfectam salutem mentibus non reponit. Jejunium sanat vulnera peccatorum, sed cicatrices vulnerum sine misericordia non emundat. Audi Dominum dicentem: Date eleemosynam, et ecce sunt vobis omnia munda. Jejunium singulari cultu evellit vitia, eradicat crimina, ad fructus bonos agrum parat et mentis et corporis: sed nisi misericordiae fecerit fundamenta, senium est studium jejunantis. Jejunium est sanctitatis hostia, sacrificium castitatis; sed sine misericordiae incenso ad divinum non potest conspectum in odorem suavitatis ascendere. Quod anima est corpori, hoc misericordiam constat esse jejunio: quando jejunium ex misericordia vivit, tunc vivificat jejunantem.

Jejunium, virtutum navis, portat quaestum vitae, lucrum salutis advectat. Sed qui intrat carnis pelagus, scindit vitiorum fluctus, inter scopulos criminum transit, praeterit littora passionum; nisi cito portum pietatis intraverit, exercere virtutes non potest, lucrum non potest habere virtutum. Qui se stare novit in hujus vitae lubrico, qui se intelligit carnis viam transire per lapsum, qui se sentit incursionibus ignorantiae, negligentiae casibus subjacere, sic jejunium teneat, ut misericordiam non relinquat. Jejunium nobis aperit coelum, jejunium nos intromittit ad Deum; sed nisi tunc adfuerit nobis misericordia nostrarum patrona causarum, qui de innocentia constare non possumus, securi de venia non erimus, dicente Domino: Judicium sine misericordia illi qui non fecerit misericordiam.

It is frailty through which man goes, not where will invites, but where necessity leads. Hear the Apostle saying: It is not what I will that I do (Rom 7:15). Frailty, in providing man with what is necessary, makes him come to what is not necessary; in providing food, it leads on to surfeit; it urges drunkenness in serving drink; it offers sleep so as to hand over sloth; it cares for the burdens of the belly so as to take away the care of salvation; it gives everything to the flesh so as to leave nothing to the soul: it makes the body a parade of passions; it makes man his own death and the life of vices. Hence, if a man feels himself sick in this way, let him hand himself over to the heavenly physician, rest securely in his counsels, refrain from foods, keep measure in drink, so that in this way he may overcome the sickness of frailty, flee the frailty of the passions, avoid the fever and the frenzy of vices.

Abstinence is man's first medicine; but for a full cure it requires the outlay of mercy. Abstinence quenches the fever, but limbs dried out by the blaze of a long fever cannot return to full health unless they are anointed with abundant ointment, unless they are moistened with the gentlest poultices, unless they are helped by the outlay of medicine: so fasting, though it shuts out the diseases of vices, cuts off the passions of the flesh, drives away the causes of crimes, yet without the ointment of mercy, without the stream of piety, without the outlay of almsgiving, does not restore perfect health to minds. Fasting heals the wounds of sins, but without mercy it does not cleanse the scars of the wounds. Hear the Lord saying: Give alms, and behold, all things are clean for you (Luke 11:41). Fasting, with a singular tillage, plucks out vices, roots out crimes, prepares the field both of the mind and of the body for good fruits: but unless it has laid the foundations of mercy, the zeal of the one who fasts is decay. Fasting is the victim of holiness, the sacrifice of chastity; but without the incense of mercy it cannot rise to the divine sight in an odour of sweetness. What the soul is to the body, mercy, it is clear, is to fasting: when fasting lives by mercy, then it gives life to the one who fasts.

Fasting, the ship of the virtues, carries the profit of life, brings home the gain of salvation. But he who enters the sea of the flesh, cleaves the waves of vices, passes between the rocks of crimes, sails past the shores of the passions, unless he quickly enters the harbour of piety, cannot exercise the virtues, cannot have the gain of the virtues. He who knows that he stands on the slippery ground of this life, who understands that he passes along the road of the flesh by way of falling, who feels that he lies open to the assaults of ignorance and the mishaps of negligence, let him so keep the fast as not to leave mercy behind. Fasting opens heaven to us, fasting brings us in to God; but unless mercy, the patroness of our causes, stands by us then, we who cannot stand firm on our innocence will not be secure of pardon, as the Lord says: Judgement without mercy to him who has not shown mercy (Jas 2:13).

Dies gratus, sed gratior est serenus: erit ergo jejunium nostrum illo clarius, si nobis Quadragesimae dies splendor misericordiae dat serenos. Clamat Deus: Misericordiam volo. Homo, da Deo quod vult, si vis tibi dari a Deo quod vis. Misericordiam volo Dei vox est, Deus a nobis misericordiam petit, et si dederimus quid dicturus est? illud quod hodie lectum est: Esurivi, et dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et dedistis mihi potum. Et quid? Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi. Qui dederit esurienti panem, dabit sibi regnum; negabit sibi fontem vitae, sitienti aquae calicem qui negarit. Amore pauperis Deus suum regnum vendit: et ut emere illud omnis homo possit, fragmentum panis ponit in pretium, quia vult habere omnes, qui tantum petit pretii quantum hominem scit habere. Deus regnum suum fragmento panis vendit; quis excusare poterit non ementem, quem tanta vilitas venditionis accusat?

Fratres, prandium nostrum sit pauperis coena, ut mensa Christi nostrum paretur in prandium, promittente ipso, cum dicit: Manducabitis in mensa mea in regno meo. Fratres, sint deliciae pauperum nostra jejunia, ut temporale jejunium nostrum in aeternas possit nobis delicias immutari. Homo, dando pauperi das tibi; quia quod pauperi non dederis, habebit alter. Tu solum quod pauperi dederis, hoc habebis.

A day is welcome, but a clear one is more welcome: our fast, then, will be the brighter for it, if the splendour of mercy gives us clear days of Lent. God cries out: I desire mercy (Hos 6:6). Man, give God what he wants, if you want to be given by God what you want. I desire mercy is the voice of God; God asks mercy of us, and if we give it, what is he going to say? What was read today: I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink (Matt 25:35). And what then? Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the origin of the world (Matt 25:34). He who gives bread to the hungry will give himself a kingdom; he who refuses a cup of water to the thirsty will refuse himself the fountain of life. For love of the poor God sells his kingdom: and so that every man may be able to buy it, he sets a fragment of bread as its price, because he wants to have all, he who asks as much in price as he knows a man to have. God sells his kingdom for a fragment of bread; who will be able to excuse the man who does not buy, when so great a cheapness of the sale accuses him?

Brothers, let our midday meal be the poor man's supper, so that Christ's table may be made ready for our meal, as he himself promises when he says: You shall eat at my table in my kingdom (Luke 22:30). Brothers, let our fasts be the delights of the poor, so that our temporal fast may be changed for us into eternal delights. Man, by giving to the poor man you give to yourself; for what you have not given to the poor man, another will have. You will have only that which you have given to the poor man.

Sermo XLII.

De eisdem

Jejunii bona, fratres, prout potuimus, superiori sermone perstrinximus; et quod esset oratio cognata jejunio, patefecimus ipsa conclusione sermonis. Sed quia jejunium sine misericordia deficit, jejunium sine pietate jejunat, sine miseratione infirmatur oratio, oratio sine largitate lassescit, reficiamus nostrum misericordiae exhibitione jejunium, orationem nostram pietatis erigamus auditu, adhibeamus jejunio misericordiam patronam: quia fames est avaritiae jejunium sine misericordia, cupiditatis poena est sine pietate jejunium; ultio, non devotio est, non Deo jejunare, sed sacculo; atterere se abstinentia, et hydropi cupiditati inflari; exonerare ventrem cibis et mentem pecuniae pondere praegravare. Ipsum se redigit in sacculum, qui pecuniam nescit prorogare, sed claudere: iste alienorum custos, non dominus est suorum; quia parat alii, negat sibi, cum misericors eroget quod avarus oppressit.

Est ager cultus sine semine, sine miseratione jejunans. Ager cultus caret sentibus, vitat gramina, evadit totum quod est negligentiae, quod est squaloris. Sed sicut sine semine fit sterilis, ipso cultu fructum non dat, dat laborem, et ad bonam frugem non valet pervenire; jejunans ita recolit animam, purgat sensus, cor mundat, abscindit vitia, eradicat crimina, dat menti cultum, corpori dat decorem; sine misericordia ad fructum vitae non pervenit, ad salutis praemium non vadit. Quod est sine rege aula regia, hoc est sine largitate jejunium. Aula regis fulget auro, nitet marmore, picturis splendet, grandescit spatiis, levatur culmine, amoenatur viretis, ipso terribilis est secreto: sed sine rege honorem non habet, caret gloria, est vacua solitudo, est clausa eremus, est horribilis solitudo. Sic jejunium lucet innocentia, radiat castitate, fulget actu, pingitur moribus, incessu micat sanctitatis toto magnificatur ornatu; sed sine misericordia gloriam non habet, mercede caret, palmam non tenet, perdit fiduciam supplicandi, impetrandi meritum non capescit, attestante Scriptura, quae dicit: Qui claudit aurem ne audiat infirmum, et ipse clamabit, et non erit qui exaudiat.

Sermon XLII.

On the same

The goods of fasting, brothers, we touched on, as far as we could, in the preceding sermon; and that prayer is akin to fasting we made plain in the very conclusion of the sermon. But since fasting without mercy fails, fasting without piety fasts, prayer without tender mercy grows weak, prayer without generosity grows weary, let us restore our fasting by the showing of mercy, let us raise up our prayer by the hearing of piety, let us bring mercy to fasting as its patroness: for fasting without mercy is the hunger of avarice, fasting without piety is the punishment of cupidity; it is vengeance, not devotion, to fast not for God but for one's purse; to wear oneself down with abstinence and be swollen with a dropsical cupidity; to unburden the belly of food and weigh the mind down with the weight of money. He reduces himself to a purse who does not know how to dispense money, but only to shut it up: such a man is the keeper of what belongs to others, not the master of his own; because he prepares for another, denies to himself, since the merciful man pays out what the miser held down.

The man who fasts without tender mercy is a field tilled without seed. A tilled field is free of thorns, escapes weeds, avoids all that belongs to neglect, all that belongs to squalor. But as without seed it becomes barren, by its very tilling gives no fruit, gives labour, and cannot come to a good crop; so the man who fasts tills his soul afresh, purges his senses, cleanses his heart, cuts off vices, roots out crimes, gives cultivation to the mind, gives comeliness to the body; without mercy he does not come to the fruit of life, does not go on to the reward of salvation. What a royal hall is without a king, that is fasting without generosity. The king's hall gleams with gold, shines with marble, is resplendent with paintings, grows great in its spaces, rises in its roof, is made lovely with greenery, is awe-inspiring in its very seclusion: but without the king it has no honour, it lacks glory, it is an empty solitude, a shut-up wilderness, a dreadful solitude. So fasting shines with innocence, beams with chastity, gleams in its conduct, is adorned with good habits, sparkles in its bearing, is magnified with the whole adornment of holiness; but without mercy it has no glory, lacks reward, does not hold the palm, loses the confidence to supplicate, does not grasp the merit of obtaining, as Scripture attests, which says: He who shuts his ear so as not to hear the weak, he too will cry out, and there will be no one to hear him (Prov 21:13).

Quomodo petet misericordiam, qui negavit? Judicium, inquit, sine misericordia fiet illi, qui non fecerit misericordiam. Misericordiam, qui non dat alteri, tollit sibi. Misericordia sibi erit, qui spargit pauperi. Dispersit, inquit, dedit pauperibus, justitia ejus manet in saeculum saeculi. Misericordiam qui seminat inopi, sibi metet. Qui seminant, inquit, in lacrymis, in gaudio metent. Non sic imber infundit terram, quomodo jejunium lacrymae rigant pauperum. Homo, in lacrymas pauperum jacta semina jejunii tui, quia siccantur jejunii virtutes, arescunt jejunantium messes, quae pauperum fletibus non fuerint irrigatae. Coeli pluvia infundit terram, lacrymae pauperis coelum rigant; ergo sitit coelum, et exspectat de ploratu pauperum vicem roris, quia misericordia arat coeli campos, sulcos ducit pietas per superna, illic misericordia seminat; quia quae susceperit manus pauperis, ibi metit; ibi segetem colligit, qui semen suum pauperi commiserit hic serendum. Beatus cui seminanti sic aeterna horrea perpetem praeparantur ad vitam. Hunc serentem B. Apostolus perscribebat, cum diceret: Hoc autem dico: Qui parce seminat, parce et metet: et qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet: unusquisque sicut proposuit cordi suo, non ex tristitia aut ex necessitate; hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus.

Magna sunt opera Domini, sed magnitudinem praecellit misericordiae magnitudo: nam cum dixisset propheta: Magna opera Domini, adjecit alibi: Misericordiae ejus super omnia opera ejus. Misericordia, fratres, implet coelum, replet terram. Domine, inquit, in coelo misericordia tua. Et idem ipse: Misericordia Domini plena est terra . Et revera, fratres, periisset totum quod Deus fecerat, nisi misericordia subvenisset. Culpa et ultio quidquid in hunc mundum venerat, auferebant; quia et fragilitas semper tendebat ad lapsum, et cogebatur ad vindictam semper censura judicantis. Sic angelus dejicitur e coelo; sic de paradiso exsulat homo; sic mundus diluvio deletur; sic gentes confunduntur linguis, dantur gladio; sic exuruntur urbes incendio divino; sic ex Aegypto plebs educta in eremo occulebatur; sic terra hians vorat populum; et ne multis, sic Judaeam ultor Christi sanguinis Romanus delevit exercitus.

Haec est Christi magna, larga, sola misericordia, quae judicium omne in diem servavit unum, et homini totum tempus ad poenitentiae deputavit inducias; ut quod de vitiis infantia suscipit, rapit adolescentia, invadit juventus, corrigat vel senectus; et de peccato vel tunc poeniteat, quando sentit jam se non posse peccare; et tunc saltem reatum deserat, quando illum reliquerit jam reatus; faciat de necessitate virtutem, moriatur innocens, qui totus vixit in crimine.

How will he ask for mercy who has refused it? Judgement, he says, without mercy will be done to him who has not shown mercy (Jas 2:13). He who does not give mercy to another takes it away from himself. He who scatters to the poor man will have mercy for himself. He has scattered, he says, he has given to the poor; his justice remains for ever and ever (Ps 112:9). He who sows mercy for the needy will reap it for himself. Those who sow, he says, in tears will reap in joy (Ps 126:5). Rain does not soak the earth as the tears of the poor water fasting. Man, cast the seeds of your fasting into the tears of the poor, because the virtues of fasting dry up, and the harvests of those who fast wither, if they have not been watered by the weeping of the poor. The rain of heaven soaks the earth, the tears of the poor man water heaven; so heaven thirsts, and waits for the weeping of the poor in place of dew, because mercy ploughs the fields of heaven, piety draws furrows through the heights above, there mercy sows; for what the poor man's hand has received, it reaps there; there he gathers the crop who has entrusted his seed to the poor man to be sown here. Blessed is he for whom, as he sows thus, eternal granaries are made ready for unending life. The blessed Apostle was describing this sower when he said: But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows in blessings will also reap of blessings: each one as he has purposed in his heart, not out of sadness or out of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:6–7).

Great are the works of the Lord, but the greatness of mercy surpasses greatness: for when the Prophet had said: Great are the works of the Lord (Ps 111:2), he added elsewhere: His mercies are above all his works (Ps 145:9). Mercy, brothers, fills heaven, fills the earth. Lord, he says, your mercy is in heaven (Ps 36:6). And the same: The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord (Ps 33:5). And indeed, brothers, all that God had made would have perished, had mercy not come to its aid. Fault and vengeance were carrying off whatever had come into this world; because frailty was always tending towards a fall, and the strictness of the one who judges was always driven to punishment. So an angel is cast down from heaven (Isa 14:12); so man is exiled from paradise (Gen 3:23); so the world is blotted out by the flood (Gen 7); so the nations are confounded in their tongues (Gen 11:7–9), are given to the sword (Gen 14); so cities are burnt up by divine fire (Gen 19:24); so the people led out of Egypt was hidden away in the desert (Exod 19); so the gaping earth swallows a people (Num 16:32); and, not to say much, so the Roman army, avenger of Christ's blood, destroyed Judaea (Matt 24).

This is Christ's great, generous, sole mercy, which has kept all judgement for one day, and has assigned to man the whole of time as a truce for penance; so that what infancy takes on of vices, youth seizes, manhood invades, old age at least may correct; and that he may repent of sin at least then, when he feels that he can no longer sin; and may abandon guilt at least then, when guilt has already left him; may make a virtue of necessity, may die innocent who has lived wholly in crime.

Hinc est quod propheta ad misericordiam currit totus, quia fiduciam de sua justitia non habebat: Miserere, inquit, mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. Et quare magnam? Quia misericordia tua, inquit, magna est super me; et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori. Et si Deus reddit per misericordiam quod per judicium deperierat, homo, tibi quid stare, quid constare sine misericordia tu putabas? Probatum est ergo tibi non jejunium solum, sed omnes sine misericordia nutare virtutes.

Abraham coelestis convivii principem, humanitas ardens, Deo impensa, perficit: nam quia duos cum Deo terrenam suscepit ad mensam, Orientis et Occidentis populum mensam suscepit ad coelestem. Venient, inquit, ab Oriente et Occidente, et recumbent cum Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob in regno coelorum. Loth, quia hospitio suscepit angelos, judicium praevenit. Hinc gehennam vicit in carne, misericordem nescit divinus ignis exurere. Facit ergo misericordiam, qui vult gehennae incendium non timere.

Denique veniens Christus ante de misericordia disputat quam judicet de reatu. Cum sederit, inquit, super thronum gloriae suae dicet: Esurivi, et non dedistis mihi manducare. Non dixit, Occidistis, furtum fecistis; sed Esurivi ego, et non dedistis mihi manducare. De crimine non praestabit causas, cui de misericordia causa constabit. Quare? quia Date eleemosynam, et ecce sunt vobis omnia munda. Non judicabitur de culpa, cui de largitate laus defertur a judice; vindictam non exigit, humanitatis debitum qui fatetur. Esurivi, inquit, et non dedistis mihi manducare. Manducat Deus in coelo panem quem perceperit pauper in terra. Quamdiu fecistis uni ex minimis istis, mihi fecistis. Da ergo panem, da potum, da vestimentum, da tectum, si Deum debitorem, non judicem vis habere; nihil nos nocebit in terra, si nobis in coelo misericordia sit patrona.

Hence it is that the Prophet runs wholly to mercy, because he had no confidence in his own justice: Have mercy on me, he says, O God, according to your great mercy (Ps 51:3). And why great? Because your mercy, he says, is great upon me; and you have rescued my soul from the lower hell (Ps 86:13). And if God gives back through mercy what had perished through judgement, man, what did you think would stand, what would hold firm for you without mercy? So it is proved to you that not fasting alone but all the virtues totter without mercy.

Ardent humanity, spent on God, makes Abraham the chief of the heavenly banquet (Gen 18): for because he received two with God at an earthly table, he received the people of the East and the West at the heavenly table. They will come, he says, from the East and the West, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 8:11). Lot, because he received angels in hospitality, forestalled the judgement (Gen 19). Hence he overcame Gehenna in the flesh; the divine fire does not know how to burn up the merciful man. So he shows mercy who wishes not to fear the fire of Gehenna.

Indeed, when Christ comes, he discusses mercy before he judges guilt. When he has sat, he says, upon the throne of his glory, he will say: I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat (Matt 25:31, 42). He did not say: "You killed, you committed theft"; but: I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat. He will not have to answer a cause of crime whose cause of mercy stands proven. Why? Because: Give alms, and behold, all things are clean for you (Luke 11:41). He will not be judged for his fault to whom the judge offers praise for his generosity; he does not exact vengeance who acknowledges a debt of humanity. I was hungry, he says, and you did not give me to eat. God eats in heaven the bread that the poor man has received on earth. As long as you did it to one of these least, you did it to me (Matt 25:40). Give, then, bread, give drink, give clothing, give a roof, if you want to have God as debtor, not as judge; nothing will harm us on earth if mercy is our patroness in heaven.

Sermo XLIII.

De oratione, jejunio et eleemosyna

Populis populariter est loquendum; communio compellanda est sermone communi; omnibus necessaria dicenda sunt more omnium; naturalis lingua chara simplicibus, doctis dulcis: docens loquatur omnibus profutura; ergo hodie imperito verbo veniam dent periti. Tria sunt, tria, fratres, per quae stat fides, constat devotio, manet virtus. Oratio, jejunium, misericordia. Quod oratio pulsat, impetrat jejunium, misericordia accipit. Oratio, misericordia, jejunium, sunt haec tria unum, dant haec sibi invicem vitam. Est namque orationis anima jejunium; jejunii vita misericordia est. Haec nemo rescindat, nesciunt separari. Horum qui unum tantum habet, vel ista qui simul non habet, nihil habet. Ergo qui orat, jejunet; qui jejunat, misereatur: audiat petentem, qui petens optat audiri; auditum Dei aperit sibi, qui suum supplicanti non claudit auditum. Jejunium jejunator intelligat; esurientem sentiat, qui vult Deum sentire quod esurit; misereatur, qui misericordiam sperat; pietatem qui quaerit, faciat; qui praestare sibi vult, praestet. Improbus petitor est, qui quod alii negat sibi postulat. Homo, esto tibi misericordiae forma; sic quomodo vis, quantum vis, quam cito vis, misericordiam tibi fieri; tam cito aliis tantum, taliter ipse miserere. Ergo oratio, misericordia, jejunium, sint unum patrocinium pro nobis ad Deum, pro nobis haec advocatio sint una, una haec pro nobis oratio sint triformis.

Haec sunt, fratres, haec sunt quae tenent coeli arcem, quae secretum Dei judicis pulsant, quae ante tribunal Christi causas humani generis exsequuntur, quae injustorum petunt indulgentiam, reorum veniam promerentur. Haec cui in coelestibus non assistunt, ipse non subsistit in terris; haec cum teneant in coelestibus principatum, in terris rerum summam moderantur; haec regunt prospera, haec adversa propellunt; vitia exstinguunt ista, virtutes ista succendunt; haec reddunt casta corpora, corda pura, haec pacem membris, mentibus dant quietem; humanos ista sensus scholam faciunt disciplinae, per haec in templum Dei pectora humana consurgunt; haec hominem praestant angelum, homini Deitatis deferunt haec honorem.

Sermon XLIII.

On prayer, fasting and almsgiving

To the people one must speak in the people's way; the congregation must be addressed in common speech; what is necessary for all must be said in the manner of all; natural language is dear to the simple, sweet to the learned: let the teacher speak what will profit all; so today let the learned pardon an unlearned word. There are three things, three, brothers, by which faith stands, devotion holds firm, virtue remains. Prayer, fasting, mercy. What prayer knocks for, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy, fasting: these three are one, these give life to one another. For fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the life of fasting. Let no one tear these apart: they do not know how to be separated. Whoever has only one of these, or does not have them together, has nothing. So let him who prays fast; let him who fasts show mercy; let him hear the one who asks, who in asking wishes to be heard; he opens God's hearing to himself who does not close his own hearing to the suppliant. Let the faster understand fasting; let him feel for the hungry man who wants God to feel that he is hungry; let him show mercy who hopes for mercy; let him who seeks piety practise it; let him who wants to grant to himself, grant. He is a shameless petitioner who asks for himself what he denies to another. Man, be yourself the pattern of mercy for yourself: in the way you want, as much as you want, as quickly as you want mercy to be shown to you, so quickly, so much, in such a way show mercy to others yourself. So let prayer, mercy, fasting be one patronage for us before God, let these be one advocacy for us, let these be for us one threefold prayer.

These, brothers, these are what hold the citadel of heaven, what knock at the secret chamber of God the judge, what plead the causes of the human race before the tribunal of Christ, what ask indulgence for the unjust, what merit pardon for the accused. He whom these do not stand by in heaven does not stand firm on earth; these, since they hold rule in heaven, govern the sum of things on earth; these direct prosperity, these drive back adversity; these quench vices, these kindle virtues; these make bodies chaste, hearts pure; these give peace to the limbs, rest to the minds; these make the human senses a school of discipline; through these human breasts rise up into a temple of God; these make man an angel, these bring to man the honour of the Godhead.

Hinc est, quod fit horum suffragio Moyses Deus, et ad triumphos militares sibi omnia mandat elementa: jubet mare discedere, durari undas, profunda siccari, coelum pluere; dat frumenta, ventos spargere cogit carnes; noctem splendore solis illustrat, solem nubis temperat velamento; petram percutit, ut de recenti vulnere frigida sitientibus det fluenta; primus dat terris legem coeli, scribit vitae normam, figit terminos disciplinae. Per haec Elias nescit mortem, relinquit terras, coelos intrat, commoratur angelis, convivit Deo: et terrenus hospes supernas possidet mansiones. Per ista Joannes fit angelus in carne, coelestis in terra, et auditu, visu, tactu, totam solus capit, tenet, complectitur Trinitatem. Et nos, fratres, si volumus Moysi gloriae, Eliae vitae, Joannis virtutibus, omnium sanctorum meritis applicari, insistamus orationi, vacemus jejunio, misericordiae serviamus. Qui in his vixerit, qui per ista fuerit communitus, jacula peccati, diaboli tela, mundi machinas, vitiorum cuneos, mala carnis, voluptatum laqueos, arma mortis, Christianus armiger, bellator Dominicus non timebit.

Sed nos qui ad incerta consurgimus, qui inter insidias diem ducimus, qui horarum varietates, momentorum motus, verborum lapsus, actuum pericula sustinemus, quid est quod ecclesiam mane nolumus intrare? Quid est quod matutina prece totius diei custodiam nolumus postulare? quid est quod homini astare toto tempore libet, et Deo assistere nec puncto libet? Non est nostrum, fratres, non est nostrum; inimici est ista surreptio, decipere parat quos non patitur orationibus communiri. Quid de adversis queritur, qui sibi prospera non precatur? Audiamus vocem Dei monentem: Orate, ne intretis in tentationem. In tentationem vadit, qui ad orationem non vadit. Hoc sciens propheta, cantabat: Venite adoremus, et procidamus ante eum: et ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos. Putasne ante Deum lacrymas fundere dignatur, qui verba non dignatur expromere? Manicemus, oremus, vel humano timore, si non amore divino; si non invitati bonis, vel coacti malis. Mala tempora facit nobis contemptus Dei, temporum cursus non facit.

Hence it is that by their support Moses becomes God (Exod 7:1), and commands all the elements for himself to military triumphs: he bids the sea part, the waves harden, the depths dry up (Exod 14), the sky rain; he gives grain, he compels the winds to scatter meat (Exod 16); he lights up the night with the brightness of the sun, he tempers the sun with the veil of a cloud (Exod 13); he strikes the rock, to give cold streams to the thirsty from its fresh wound (Num 20); he is the first to give the earth the law of heaven, he writes the norm of life, he fixes the bounds of discipline (Exod 24; 34). Through these Elijah does not know death, leaves the earth, enters the heavens, dwells with angels, lives with God (2 Kgs 2:11): and an earthly guest possesses the mansions above. Through these John becomes an angel in the flesh, heavenly on earth, and by hearing, sight and touch he alone grasps, holds and embraces the whole Trinity. And we, brothers, if we wish to be joined to the glory of Moses, the life of Elijah, the virtues of John, the merits of all the saints, let us persevere in prayer, give ourselves to fasting, serve mercy. He who has lived in these, who has been fortified by them, will not fear, a Christian armour-bearer, a warrior of the Lord, the darts of sin, the weapons of the devil, the engines of the world, the wedges of vices, the evils of the flesh, the snares of pleasures, the arms of death.

But we who rise to uncertainties, who spend the day among ambushes, who endure the changes of the hours, the shifts of the moments, the slips of words, the perils of acts, why is it that we will not enter the church in the morning? Why is it that we will not ask, by morning prayer, for the safekeeping of the whole day? why is it that we are glad to stand by a man the whole time, and are not glad to attend on God for a moment? It is not our doing, brothers, it is not our doing; this stealth is the enemy's: he prepares to deceive those whom he does not allow to be fortified by prayers. Why does he complain of adversity who does not pray for prosperity for himself? Let us hear the voice of God admonishing: Pray, that you may not enter into temptation (Matt 26:41). He goes into temptation who does not go to prayer. Knowing this, the Prophet sang: Come, let us worship, and fall down before him, and weep before the Lord who made us (Ps 95:6). Do you think that he deigns to shed tears before God who does not deign to utter words? Let us rise early, let us pray, at least from human fear, if not from divine love; if not invited by good things, at least compelled by evils. It is contempt of God that makes the times bad for us; the course of the times does not.

Quod ergo contemptu perdidimus, jejuniis conquiramus: animas nostras jejuniis immolemus, quia nihil est quod Deo praestantius offerre possimus, probante propheta, cum dicit: Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus; cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non spernit. Homo, offer Deo animam tuam, et offer oblationem jejunii, ut sit pura hostia, sacrificium sanctum, vivens victima, quae et tibi maneat, et data sit Deo. Hoc qui non dederit Deo, excusatus non erit, quia daturus se non potest non habere.

Sed accepta ut sint ista, misericordia subsequatur; jejunium non germinat, si de misericordia non rigetur, siccatur jejunium misericordiae siccitate: quod imber terris, hoc jejunio misericordia est. Quamvis cor excolat, carnem mundet, eradicet vitia, virtutes serat; si misericordiae fluenta non dederit, fructum non colligit jejunator. Jejunator, ager tuus misericordia jejunante jejunat; jejunator, quod tu in misericordia fuderis, tibi in horreo hoc redundat. Homo ergo, ne servando perdas, collige prorogando; homo, dando pauperi, da tibi: quia quod tu alteri reliqueris, non habebis.

What we have lost by contempt, then, let us regain by fasts: let us sacrifice our souls by fasts, because there is nothing more excellent that we can offer to God, as the Prophet proves when he says: A sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit; a contrite and humbled heart God does not despise (Ps 51:19). Man, offer God your soul, and offer the oblation of fasting, so that it may be a pure victim, a holy sacrifice, a living sacrificial victim, which both remains yours and has been given to God. He who has not given this to God will not be excused, because one who is to give himself cannot be without it.

But that these may be accepted, let mercy follow; fasting does not sprout if it is not watered by mercy; fasting dries up with the drought of mercy: what rain is to the earth, that mercy is to fasting. Though the faster cultivate his heart, cleanse his flesh, root out vices, sow virtues, if he has not given streams of mercy, he gathers no fruit. Faster, your field fasts when mercy fasts; faster, what you have poured out in mercy overflows for you in the barn. Man, then, so as not to lose by keeping, gather by dispensing; man, by giving to the poor, give to yourself: for what you have left to another you will not have.

Sermo XLIV.

De consilio impiorum, via peccatorum, et cathedra pestilentiae, in psalmum I

Peritus medicus, quoties vario languore defessis plenam desiderat conferre medicinam, altas aperit morborum causas, latentes pestilentiae exponit incursus, pestiferas caveri commonet regiones, quamplurima remediorum genera demonstrat, herbarum vires pandit, medicamentorum loquitur qualitates, obedientibus promittit longissimam sanitatem: sic aegros arduas et asperas suadet et perducit ad curas. Hinc est quod propheta sanctus, corporis animaeque medicinam coelitus prolaturus, impietatis profundos patefacit recessus, opertos peccatorum nudat morbos, iniquitates ostentat, secretum virus, vitiorum naturas, origines delictorum, radices criminum mirabili ratione depromit. Sic aegras mortalium mentes moderatione pia, pro aetate, pro sexu, pro tempore, pro viribus ad salutem perpetim divina curatione perducit. Psalmus quem hodie cantavimus, Psalmorum praefatio est, immo et Psalmorum psalmus, titulorum titulus; est argumentum generans argumenta, est tota causa sequentium canticorum. Et sicut clavis aulae regalis, ubi primam januam patefecit, penetrabiles reddit intimas ac multiplices mansiones; ita psalmus iste, ubi reseraverit aditus intelligentiae primos, psalmorum omnium pandit mysterium, pandit secretum.

Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit, et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit Beatus vir: sicut dimicaturo cum bestiis, et gravissimorum certaminum discrimina subituro, pronuntiantur ante bravia, praemia, coronae; propheta beatitudinem sic praemisit, ut provocaret hominem, totam, quam post enumerat, criminum vincere feritatem. Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit. Quod in consilio abire, et in via stare dixit, forsitan videatur absurdum, cum in consilio consistere et in via abire, magis hominum sit in usu. Perversa quidem sunt universa perversis, nec possunt tenere ordinem, quae per ordinem non aguntur. Tamen hic propheta non de corporis loquitur, sed mentis incessu; neque prohibet pedum lapsus, sed ruinas arcet animarum.

Sermon XLIV.

On the counsel of the ungodly, the way of sinners and the chair of pestilence, on Psalm 1

A skilled physician, whenever he wishes to bring full medicine to those worn out by various sickness, opens the deep causes of diseases, explains the hidden onsets of pestilence, warns them to beware of pestilential regions, shows a great many kinds of remedies, sets out the powers of herbs, speaks of the qualities of medicaments, promises the obedient the longest health: so he persuades the sick to hard and harsh cures and brings them through. Hence it is that the holy Prophet, about to bring forth from heaven the medicine of body and soul, lays open the deep recesses of ungodliness, bares the covered diseases of sinners, displays iniquities, and with wonderful reasoning brings out the secret poison, the natures of vices, the origins of offences, the roots of crimes. So, with a tender moderation, according to age, sex, season and strength, he leads the sick minds of mortals by a divine cure continually to health. The psalm that we sang today is the preface of the Psalms, or rather the psalm of the Psalms, the title of titles; it is the argument that begets arguments, it is the whole cause of the songs that follow. And as the key of a royal hall, once it has opened the first door, makes the inner and manifold apartments accessible, so this psalm, once it has unlocked the first entrances of understanding, opens the mystery of all the psalms, opens their secret.

Blessed is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the chair of pestilence (Ps 1:1). Blessed is the man: as for one about to fight with beasts and undergo the dangers of the heaviest contests the prizes, rewards and crowns are proclaimed beforehand, so the Prophet set beatitude first, to rouse man to conquer the whole savagery of crimes which he enumerates afterwards. Blessed is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners. That he said "go away in counsel" and "stand in the way" may perhaps seem absurd, since to stand firm in counsel and to go away on a way is more in the usage of men. To the perverse, indeed, all things are perverse, and things that are not done in order cannot keep order. Yet here the Prophet speaks not of the gait of the body but of the mind; he does not forbid the slips of the feet, but wards off the ruin of souls.

Beatus vir, qui non abiit in consilio impiorum. Abiit, abiit a se, a Deo impius cum recessit; nec stat in consilio, impiis cogitationibus qui vagatur. Iste modo fertur ad coelum, modo refertur ad terras, jactatur per maria, levatur fluctibus, mergitur in profundo: cumque sua semper mente volutetur ut ebrius, non se computat, et computat coelum. Qui se scire existimat totum, se nescit; qui si sciret se, numquam coelum, solem, lunam, ligna, lapides adoraret, quae sunt omnia suae data et subdita servituti; sed adorat lapidem, servit ligno, qui Deo vivo, Deo vero servire contempsit. Et ut ab ipso principio rerum, impietatis facta replicemus, impietatis consilium perduxit ad inferna, angelum de supernis, nuntium coelestis secreti in diabolum commutavit, hominem de regimine vitae ad mortalis habitaculi transmisit exsilium, de paradisi deliciis aerumnosos saeculi pepulit ad labores; mulierem de virginitatis gloria gemitus conscios dejecit ad partus. Inde est quod antequam gaudeat, non ignorat dolores, et solvit ante de reatu poenam, quam sobolis gaudeat de processu. Multiplicans, inquit, multiplicabo tristitias tuas et gemitus tuos; in tristitia et gemitu paries filios. Qualis finis est, ubi est origo poenalis? in vita laetitia quem tenebit, qui vitae sumit exordium de moerore? Hoc propheta noverat qui dicebat: In iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea.

Si sic, fratres, ab utero in viam projicimur peccatorum, et delictorum iter totas currimus per aetates, cogitemus infantiae vanitates, adolescentiae lapsus, juventutis ruinas, senectutis morbos, et tunc nos non viam vitae, sed peccatorum viam carpere sic videbimus. Hanc viam notat Christus, sic dicendo: Quam lata et spatiosa via quae ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt qui intrant per eam. Delictis lata, diffusa fluctibus, criminibus spatiosa, et vere via est vita praesens, in quam venit et vadit homo. Generatio, inquit, vadit, et generatio venit, et terra in aeternum stat. Et ideo ante dixit: Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit. Non dixit, Non venit; nemo enim in viam non venit peccatorum, in qua nos lex ipsa naturae perducit et mortis; sed Beatus ille qui non stat in ea. Stat ille, ille demoratur in ea, qui levat onera peccatorum, et onustus viator tarde pervenit, et coelestem clausam sibi invenit mansionem. Istis ponderibus impeditus flebat propheta, dicens: Iniquitates meae superposuerunt caput meum, et sicut onus grave gravatae sunt super me.

Blessed is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly. He has gone away, the ungodly man has gone away from himself, when he has withdrawn from God; nor does he stand in counsel who wanders in ungodly thoughts. Such a man is now carried to heaven, now carried back to earth, tossed over the seas, lifted on the waves, sunk in the deep: and since he is always rolled about in his own mind like a drunkard, he does not reckon himself, and reckons the heavens. He who thinks he knows everything does not know himself; if he knew himself, he would never worship the sky, the sun, the moon, wood, stones, which have all been given and subjected to his service; but he worships a stone, serves a block of wood, who has scorned to serve the living God, the true God. And to unfold the deeds of ungodliness from the very beginning of things: the counsel of ungodliness led the angel down from the heights to the underworld, changed the messenger of the heavenly secret into the devil, sent man from the governance of life into the exile of a mortal dwelling, drove him from the delights of paradise to the toilsome labours of the world; it cast woman down from the glory of virginity to childbirths that know groaning. Hence it is that before she rejoices she is not without knowledge of pains, and pays the penalty for guilt before she rejoices in the coming forth of offspring. Multiplying, he says, I will multiply your sorrows and your groanings; in sorrow and groaning you will bring forth children (Gen 3:16). What sort of end is there where the origin is penal? whom will joy hold in life who takes the beginning of life from mourning? The Prophet knew this who said: In iniquities I was conceived, and in offences my mother bore me (Ps 51:7).

If thus, brothers, we are thrown from the womb on to the way of sinners, and run the road of offences through all our ages, let us think of the vanities of infancy, the slips of youth, the ruins of manhood, the diseases of old age, and then we shall see that thus we are taking not the way of life but the way of sinners. Christ marks out this way, speaking thus: How wide and spacious is the way that leads to perdition, and many are those who enter by it (Matt 7:13). Wide with offences, spread wide with billows, spacious with crimes, the present life is truly a way, on to which man comes and on which he goes. A generation, he says, goes, and a generation comes, and the earth stands for ever (Eccl 1:4). And therefore he said before: Blessed is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners. He did not say, "has not come"; for there is no one who does not come on to the way of sinners, on to which the very law of nature and of death leads us; but: Blessed is he who does not stand on it. He stands, he lingers on it, who lifts up the burdens of sins; and, a laden traveller, he arrives late, and finds the heavenly dwelling shut against him. Hampered by these weights the Prophet wept, saying: My iniquities have gone over my head, and like a heavy burden they have weighed heavy upon me (Ps 38:5).

Et quia toto vitae tempore has ferebat, exclamat: Miser factus sum, et incurvatus sum usque in finem . Peccatorum viam viator ille pertransit, qui mala hujus vitae videt, sed despicit; sentit, sed calcat; patitur, sed vincit; et dum fugit illa, plus currit: unde illi occurrit coelestis janitor, coelestis illi mansio se non claudit.

Sed quid est quod peccatorum viae impietatis consilium sic praemisit: Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit? Quia etsi natus homo mox peccatorum venit in viam, jacet tamen primum: non mox peccati currit in viam, sed ubi coeperit impietatis venena gustare, tunc saporem trahit de pinguedine peccatorum. Impius in Deum tendit, a Deo vadit cum delinquit; peccatores Deus contemnit, qui ante mandavit non debere peccare. Lucem tenebrae fugiunt, tenebrae luce redeunt abscedente: ubi Deus, peccatum nullum; ubi peccatum, non ibi Deus. Et ut scias, homo, a conspectu Dei hominem viam cursitare peccatorum, audi prophetam: Non est Deus in conspectu ejus, polluuntur viae ejus in omni tempore. Gravius ergo homo tunc in via labitur peccatorum, quando in ea per praerupta impietatis illabitur.

Et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit. Impietatem probat qui facit, amat; qui amat, non potest non docere: hinc est quod docens impietatem, pestilentiae residet in cathedra, et sermone mellito virus doctrinae lethalis audientibus sic diffundit. Pestilentiae cathedram philosophiam posuit, quae docuit, aut deos multos; aut eum qui est, vel non esse, vel non posse docuit inveniri; qui ipsam creaturam naturae dedit, ut naturae negaret Auctorem. Cathedram pestilentiae Pharisaeus proposuit, qui traditiones humanas decretis coelestibus anteponens, vastam lucem fudit populo Judaeorum. In cathedra pestilentiae haereticus sedit, qui sub specie fidei, scindit, rumpit, distrahit unitatem.

Beatus ergo vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit, et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit. Et plane beatus, quia ista tria declinando ad Trinitatis beatitudinem meruit pervenire. Meditetur ergo in lege Domini, et meditetur die ac nocte, ut quae sequuntur mereatur videre in futuro, et audire latius tempore competenti.

And because he carried them the whole time of his life, he cries out: I have been made wretched, and I have been bowed down to the end (Ps 38:7). That traveller passes right through the way of sinners who sees the evils of this life, but despises them; feels them, but tramples on them; suffers them, but conquers; and in fleeing them, he runs the more: hence the heavenly doorkeeper runs to meet him, the heavenly dwelling does not shut itself against him.

But why is it that he thus set the counsel of ungodliness before the way of sinners: Blessed is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners? Because, although man, once born, comes at once on to the way of sinners, yet at first he lies there: he does not at once run along the way of sin, but when he has begun to taste the poisons of ungodliness, then he draws a relish from the richness of sins. The ungodly man aims against God, goes away from God when he does wrong; sinners God scorns, he who commanded beforehand that they ought not to sin. Darkness flees the light, darkness returns as the light departs: where God is, no sin; where sin is, God is not there. And that you may know, man, that man runs up and down the way of sinners away from the sight of God, hear the Prophet: God is not in his sight; his ways are defiled at all times (Ps 10:4–5). So man slips more gravely on the way of sinners when he slides into it down the precipices of ungodliness.

And has not sat in the chair of pestilence. He who does ungodliness approves it, loves it; he who loves it cannot but teach it: hence it is that, teaching ungodliness, he sits in the chair of pestilence, and thus with honeyed speech pours out on his hearers the poison of deadly doctrine. As the chair of pestilence he set up philosophy, which taught either many gods, or taught that he who is either does not exist or cannot be found; and he gave creation itself to nature, so as to deny the Author of nature. The chair of pestilence the Pharisee set forth, who, putting human traditions before heavenly decrees, overthrew the great light of the people of the Jews. In the chair of pestilence the heretic has sat, who under the appearance of faith cleaves, breaks, tears apart unity.

Blessed, then, is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the chair of pestilence. And plainly blessed, because by turning aside from these three he has deserved to come to the beatitude of the Trinity. Let him meditate, then, on the law of the Lord, and meditate day and night, so that he may deserve to see in the future what follows, and to hear it more fully at a suitable time.

Sermo XLV.

De homine fragili Deum orante, ne se arguat in ira; in psalmum VI

Responsorium quod hodie propheta supplicante cantavimus, opportunum tempori, aptum malis praesentibus mecum vestra probat et cognoscit affectio. Domine, inquit, ne in ira tua arguas me, neque in furore tuo corripias me. Et Deus tumescit ira? calescit furore? absit, fratres. Deus nec subjacet passioni, nec ira accenditur, nec furore turbatur: sed ira Dei est delinquentium poena, furor Dei est supplicium peccatorum. Fratres, pulvere concreti, plasmati luto, calcamur vitiis, subdimur delictis, curis conficimur, arescimus membris, morte dissolvimur, fetidis horremus sepulcris, et sic inhabiles ad virtutes, ad vitia habiles invenimur. Propheta ergo memor fragilitatis humanae, et carnalis substantiae conscius, quia non confidebat de meritis, ad auxilium misericordiae convolavit, ut Dei constaret circa eum de pietate, non de severitate judicium.

Domine, ne in ira tua arguas me. Hoc est dicere, argue me, sed non in ira; corripe me, sed non in furore: argue me ut pater, non ut judex; corripe me non ut dominus, sed ut parens; argue me, non ut perdas, sed corripias; corripe me, non ut interimas, sed emendes: et hoc quare? quoniam infirmus sum.

Miserere, inquit, mei, Domine, quoniam infirmus sum. Quid infirmius homine, quem sensus fallit, ignorantia decipit, circumvenit judicium, pompa laedit, tempus deserit, mutat aetas, hebetat infantia, juventus praecipitat, senectus frangit? Huic ergo Deum irasci in ira, indignari in furore, non est creatoris pii, sed est severissimi cognitoris.

Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam infirmus sum. Et quid vis? Sana me, Domine. Sentit iste status sui vulnera, sentit morsum serpentis antiqui, sentit primi parentis ruinam, agnoscit se ad has infirmitates venisse nascendo, agnoscit se ad mortem naturaliter pervenisse: et quia mortem removere non poterat ars humana, divinam cogitur expetere medicinam; et ut facilius aegritudinis suae impetret curam, ipsius aegritudinis causas aperit, qualitates narrat, magnitudinem pandit, exprimit vim doloris. Sana me, Domine. Quare? Quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea.

Sermon XLV.

On frail man praying God not to rebuke him in anger; on Psalm 6

The responsory that we sang today as the Prophet made supplication, suited to the season, fitting for the present evils, your affection approves and recognises together with me. Lord, he says, do not rebuke me in your anger, nor chasten me in your wrath (Ps 6:2). And does God swell with anger? grow hot with wrath? Far from it, brothers. God neither lies subject to passion, nor is kindled with anger, nor troubled with wrath: but the anger of God is the penalty of those who do wrong, the wrath of God is the punishment of sinners. Brothers, compacted of dust, moulded of clay, we are trampled by vices, subjected to offences, worn out by cares; we wither in our limbs, are dissolved by death, become a horror in fetid sepulchres; and thus, unfit for the virtues, we are found fit for the vices. So the Prophet, mindful of human frailty and conscious of his fleshly substance, since he had no confidence in his merits, flew to the help of mercy, so that God's judgement about him might stand on loving-kindness, not on severity.

Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger. That is to say: rebuke me, but not in anger; chasten me, but not in wrath: rebuke me as a father, not as a judge; chasten me not as a master, but as a parent; rebuke me, not to destroy me, but to chasten me; chasten me, not to slay me, but to amend me: and why this? Because I am weak.

Have mercy on me, he says, Lord, for I am weak (Ps 6:3). What is weaker than man, whom sense misleads, ignorance deceives, judgement cheats, pomp harms, time deserts, age changes, infancy dulls, youth hurls headlong, old age breaks? For God, then, to be angry with him in anger, indignant with him in wrath, is not the part of a loving Creator, but of the severest examining judge.

Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am weak. And what do you want? Heal me, Lord. He feels the wounds of his state, feels the bite of the ancient serpent, feels the ruin of the first parent, acknowledges that by being born he has come into these weaknesses, acknowledges that by nature he has arrived at death: and because human art could not remove death, he is compelled to seek divine medicine; and in order to obtain the cure of his illness more easily, he opens the causes of the illness itself, recounts its qualities, unfolds its greatness, expresses the force of the pain. Heal me, Lord. Why? For my bones are troubled.

Totam structuram corporis ossa portant; et si ossa turbantur, quae membrorum firmitas? quae fortitudo nervorum? ubi carnis miseranda substantia? Turbantur ossa, fratres, peccatorum pondere, metu mortis, terrore judicii. Audi ipsum alibi hoc dicentem: Non est, inquit, sanitas in carne mea a facie irae tuae, non est pax ossibus meis a facie peccatorum meorum. Et post: Anima mea impleta est illusionibus, et non est sanitas in carne mea.

Merito ergo addit: Et anima mea turbata est valde. Inter Dei praecepta et cordis passiones, inter virtutes et vitia, inter adversa et prospera, inter poenas et praemia, inter vitam et mortem, stans in acie, bella sustinens, suscipiens vulnera, raro stans, occumbens sensu, turbatur anima, turbatur valde, quia carnis impedita ponderibus, priusquam ad virtutes veniat, vitiorum fit ante captiva. Haec bella describit Apostolus, cum dicit: Caro concupiscit adversus spiritum, et spiritus adversus carnem: ut non quae vultis, illa faciatis. Et alibi: Video aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati.

Allegans ergo beatus propheta has infirmitates, haec bella, has animorum turbationes, Deum tali voce convenit: Et tu, Domine, usquequo? Hoc est, quousque pateris? quousque dissimulas? quousque non subvenis? quousque dissipari opus tuum, deleri imaginem tuam, tuam tibi creaturam perire permittis? Ubi est Christus tuus toties nuntiatus per legem, per nos, per prophetas multifarie repromissus? Veniat, veniat, priusquam pereunte saeculo, in saeculo nil inveniat quod resalvet. Veniat, veniat, ut carnem reparet, innovet animam, ipsam naturam in coelestem commutet substantiam. Veniat, ut peccatum tollat, mortem deleat, destruat infernum, vitam reddat, donet coelum, ne amplius terrena labes possit in nobis invenire quod perdat.

Hoc autem petere prophetam, sequens sermo demonstrat, Convertere, Domine. Homo Deo, reus judici, addictus sic loquitur cognitori? Convertere, Domine. Homo peccat, et Deus convertitur? Ita, fratres, quia juxta prophetam: Iste peccata nostra portat, et pro nobis dolet. Et beatus Joannes: Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Suscepit peccatum, ut peccatum tolleret, non haberet. Convertere, Domine. Unde? ubi? De Deo in hominem, de domino in servum, de judice in patrem, ut pium conversio te demonstret, quem potestas terribilem comminatur.

The bones carry the whole structure of the body; and if the bones are troubled, what firmness is there in the limbs? what strength in the sinews? where is the pitiable substance of the flesh? The bones are troubled, brothers, by the weight of sins, by the dread of death, by the terror of judgement. Hear him saying this elsewhere: There is no health, he says, in my flesh before the face of your anger; there is no peace for my bones before the face of my sins (Ps 38:4). And afterwards: My soul is filled with mockeries, and there is no health in my flesh (Ps 38:8).

Rightly, then, he adds: And my soul is greatly troubled (Ps 6:4). Between the commandments of God and the passions of the heart, between virtues and vices, between adversity and prosperity, between penalties and rewards, between life and death, standing in the battle line, sustaining wars, receiving wounds, seldom standing, falling in sense, the soul is troubled, greatly troubled, because, hampered by the weights of the flesh, before it comes to the virtues it is first made captive to the vices. The Apostle describes these wars when he says: The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: so that you do not do the things that you will (Gal 5:17). And elsewhere: I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and leading me captive in the law of sin (Rom 7:23).

So the blessed Prophet, alleging these weaknesses, these wars, these disturbances of minds, appeals to God with such a voice: And you, Lord, how long? That is: how long will you bear it? how long will you look away? how long will you not come to our aid? how long will you allow your work to be scattered, your image to be blotted out, your own creature to perish for you? Where is your Christ, so often announced through the Law, promised again in many ways through us, through the prophets? Let him come, let him come, before, as the world perishes, he finds nothing in the world to save again. Let him come, let him come, to restore the flesh, renew the soul, change nature itself into a heavenly substance. Let him come, to take away sin, blot out death, destroy hell, give back life, grant heaven, so that earthly stain may no longer be able to find in us anything to destroy.

That the Prophet asks this, the following word shows: Turn, Lord (Ps 6:5). Does a man so speak to God, the accused to the judge, the condemned man to the examining judge? Turn, Lord. Man sins, and God turns? Even so, brothers, because, according to the prophet: He bears our sins, and feels pain for us (Isa 53:4). And blessed John: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). He took up sin, so as to take sin away, not to have it. Turn, Lord. From where? to where? From God into man, from lord into servant, from judge into father, so that your turning may show you loving, whom your power threatens as terrible.

Convertere, Domine; libera animam meam. De inferno inferiori. Salvum me fac propter misericordiam tuam. Non propter meritum meum, quem labor afficit, gemitus sauciat, solvunt lacrymae, ira turbat, impugnat inimicus. Sed hoc ut clareat, ipsa prophetae decantetur oratio. Salvum me fac propter misericordiam tuam. Quare? Quia non est in morte qui memor sit tui, in inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi? Laboravi in gemitu meo, lavabo per singulas noctes lectum meum: lacrymis meis stratum meum rigabo.

Hoc dicebat sanctus David in regali vertice constitutus: qui sic agebat principatum potestatis humanae, ut in se sanctitatem spiritus, prophetae gratiam custodiret, et nos in ira tota Dei positi nescimus dicere: Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me. Terra negat fructus, coelum temperiem, aer salubritatem: hinc pestilentia ubique diffusa per urbes, per agros vario morborum genere consumit genus omne mortalium, et tamen nos non dicimus: Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas nos, neque in ira tua corripias nos. Ille post triumphos gemitibus, noctes et dies lacrymis occupabat; nos sub hostili gladio subjacentes, nulla tempora Deo damus, nullas vel ad horam lacrymas Deo fundimus: sed jugiter rapinis, fraudibus, perjuriis, dolis, detractionibus nosmetipsos tradimus et donamus, ut magis magisque iram Dei in nos fomentis criminum suscitemus.

Venite, fratres, venite cum propheta: Venite, adoremus, et procidamus ante eum, et ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos; venite, dicamus; Domine, ne in ira tua arguas nos, neque in furore tuo corripias nos. Ut memor misericordiae suae iram mutet in misericordiam, reddet perdita, captiva liberet; nosque sibi cum laetitia servire jam donet, qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Turn, Lord; deliver my soul. From the lower hell (Ps 86:13). Save me for the sake of your mercy. Not for the sake of my merit, mine, whom toil afflicts, groaning wounds, tears dissolve, anger troubles, the enemy assails. But that this may be clear, let the Prophet's prayer itself be sung through. Save me for the sake of your mercy. Why? Because there is no one in death who is mindful of you; but in hell who will confess to you? (Ps 6:6) I have laboured in my groaning; every night I will wash my bed: with my tears I will water my couch (Ps 6:7).

Holy David said this when he was set on the royal summit, he who so exercised the rule of human power as to keep in himself the holiness of the spirit, the grace of a prophet; and we, set in the whole anger of God, do not know how to say: Lord, do not rebuke me in your wrath. The earth refuses its fruits, the sky its mildness, the air its wholesomeness: hence a pestilence spread everywhere, through cities, through fields, consumes every kind of mortals with various kinds of diseases; and yet we do not say: Lord, do not rebuke us in your wrath, nor chasten us in your anger. He, after his triumphs, filled nights and days with groans and tears; we, lying under the enemy's sword, give no time to God, pour out no tears to God even for an hour: but continually we hand ourselves over and give ourselves up to robberies, frauds, perjuries, deceits, detractions, so as to stir up the anger of God against us more and more with the fuel of crimes.

Come, brothers, come with the Prophet: Come, let us worship, and fall down before him, and weep before the Lord who made us (Ps 95:6); come, let us say: Lord, do not rebuke us in your anger, nor chasten us in your wrath. So that, mindful of his mercy, he may change anger into mercy, give back what was lost, set the captives free; and grant us now to serve him with joy, he who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo XLVI.

De exsultatione spirituali et confessione peccatorum, in psalmum XCIV

Sicut graviter aestuanti, et longo sitis ardore succenso, fons frigidus satis laetus et satis salubris occurrit; ita nobis positis in moerore, et nimium tribulationum pondere depressis, ad gaudia hodie propheticae vocis excitat cantilena: Venite, inquit, exsultemus Domino. Venite: quo? vel unde? Ex te, homo, in te, ubi non locorum mutatio, sed conversio sensuum adversa depellit, moerores fugat, desperationes abjicit, excludit angustias, et intrat domicilium sinceri pectoris, laetitiae divinae aeternam praeparat mansionem. Exsultemus Domino. Et ubi est illud: Beati qui lugent, et Vae vobis qui ridetis? Plane beati qui lugent mundo, et vae qui rident mundo: sed beati qui exsultant Domino, qui nesciunt de rapinis, nesciunt de fraudibus, nesciunt laetari de lacrymis proximorum. Exsultemus Domino. Ille exsultat Domino qui verbo, actu, opere, non sibi, sed suo exsultat auctori. Exsultemus Domino. Ille exsultat Domino, cui sola et tota laetitia semper est Deus.

Jubilemus inquit, Deo salutari nostro. Non est ovium vox ista, pastoris est: qui dulci jubilo, et varia modulatione, aut gregem producit ad pascua, aut sub nemore umbroso fessum pecus retinet ad quietem, aut alta collium salubrioris graminis hortatur cupiditate conscendere, aut ad devexa vallium sensim tota necessitate descendere. Sed beatae sunt oves illae, quae sui vocem admittunt pastoris, attrahunt, nutriunt, congregant, et vere pastori suo jubilant: quae germina sui gregis Domino multiplicare moliuntur.

Praeveniamus faciem ejus in confessione. Et quis praevenit peccatorum cognitorem, scrutatorem cordium, cogitationum conscium, futurorum praescium, praesentem semper et ubique? Sed praeveniendus est non sensuum vicinitate, sed ingenii sagacitate; non velocitate pedum, sed provido confessionis obsequio: siquidem non dixit, Praeveniamus eum tantum, sed Praeveniamus faciem ejus in confessione.

Sermon XLVI.

On spiritual exultation and the confession of sins, on Psalm 94 (95)

As to one who burns with heat and is inflamed by a long thirst a cool spring comes, very gladdening and very wholesome, so to us, set in mourning and weighed down by the excessive weight of tribulations, the song of the prophetic voice today stirs us to joy: Come, he says, let us exult in the Lord (Ps 95:1). Come: where? or from where? From yourself, man, into yourself, where not a change of places but a turning of the senses drives away adversity, puts mourning to flight, casts off despair, shuts out distress, and enters the abode of a sincere breast, and makes ready an eternal dwelling for divine joy. Let us exult in the Lord. And where is that saying: Blessed are those who mourn (Matt 5:4), and: Woe to you who laugh (Luke 6:25)? Plainly, blessed are those who mourn to the world, and woe to those who laugh to the world: but blessed are those who exult in the Lord, who know nothing of robberies, know nothing of frauds, do not know how to rejoice at the tears of their neighbours. Let us exult in the Lord. He exults in the Lord who by word, act and deed exults not for himself but for his author. Let us exult in the Lord. He exults in the Lord for whom God is always his only and his whole joy.

Let us shout with joy, he says, to God our Saviour. This is not the voice of the sheep, it is the shepherd's: who with sweet jubilation and varied melody either leads the flock out to pasture, or keeps the weary herd at rest under the shady grove, or urges them, with the desire of more wholesome grass, to climb the heights of the hills, or to go down gently, as all need requires, to the slopes of the valleys. But blessed are those sheep that admit the voice of their shepherd, draw others, nourish, gather them, and truly shout with joy to their shepherd: those that strive to multiply for the Lord the young of their flock.

Let us go before his face in confession (Ps 95:2). And who goes before the examining judge of sins, the searcher of hearts, the one who is aware of thoughts, who foreknows what is to come, present always and everywhere? But he must be gone before not by nearness of the senses, but by sharpness of wit; not by speed of feet, but by the provident homage of confession: for he did not say: "Let us go before him" only, but: Let us go before his face in confession.

Hoc est, cum spes misericordiae est, cum tempus est veniae, cum poenitentiae locus est, confiteamur patri, ne judicem sentiamus; prodamus quae fecimus pietati, ne severitati cogamur exsolvere quae tacemus: dicamus indulgentiae tempore delicta nostra, ne si tacemus, ad excipiendam sententiam defleamus. Et quid plura, fratres? non judicem, sed judicium nos hortatur propheta clementissimus praevenire. Et in psalmis, inquit, jubilemus ei. Ne indicta pectori nostro irrationabilis jubilatio crederetur. In psalmis jubilemus. Ut in psalmis divinum resonet sacramentum, et quod ad provectum salutis animos promoveat audientium.

Quoniam Deus, inquit, magnus Dominus. Hic dominici corporis aperit sacramentum, quia Deus etiam in nostro corpore magnus Dominus. Et rex magnus super omnes deos. Juxta illud: Quis similis erit Deo inter filios Dei? quia omnes supernae virtutes cum regant caeteros, ipsae tamen reguntur a Christo. Quia in manu ejus sunt omnes fines terrae. Quia quae in manu Dei sunt, sine Deo nequeunt obtineri si dilatare fines, si prorogare terminos, si desideramus amissa revocare. Deum ergo fidei viribus deprecemur, per cujus offensam nobis ista depereunt; et ipsius propitiatione redeunt ampliata, qui dat sicut vult, tollit, et cum vult; si reddere non potest, omnipotens non habetur; multa facit ad suae majestatis indicium, ad nostrae emendationis et correctionis exemplum. Vacant aliena praesidia, si nostri regis non subvenerint adjutoria.

Quoniam ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud. Ne putetis quaesitum, inventum, et non a Deo conditum. Ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud, et aridam manus ejus formaverunt. Ubi sunt qui Deum de materia, et maxime de aqua mundum figurasse confingunt? Deus noster in coelo, et in terra, non ut inventor, sed ut conditor materiae, ex nihilo cuncta perfecit.

Venite, inquit, adoremus. Quae sequuntur, fratres, ignorantibus veluti immemorem prophetam exsultationis suae fuisse, demonstrant, dum provocatos ad gaudia mox evocat ad ploratus. Venite, inquit, adoremus et procidamus ante eum, et ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos. Dixerat: Venite, exsultemus; verum hic propheta secum fletus suorum nos desiderat fundere gaudiorum: quia semper lacrymae sicut dolore magno, ita producuntur et gaudio, quae utique interni pectoris exponunt, et testantur affectum.

That is, while there is hope of mercy, while it is the time of pardon, while there is room for penance, let us confess to the father, so as not to feel the judge; let us reveal what we have done to loving-kindness, so as not to be compelled to pay to severity for what we keep silent; let us tell our offences in the time of indulgence, so that we may not, if we keep silent, weep at receiving the sentence. And what more, brothers? It is not the judge but the judgement that the most clement Prophet urges us to go before. And in psalms, he says, let us shout with joy to him. So that jubilation, left unspoken in our breast, might not be thought irrational. In psalms let us shout with joy. So that in the psalms the divine mystery may resound, and what may move the minds of the hearers to the advance of salvation.

For God, he says, is the great Lord (Ps 95:3). Here he opens the mystery of the Lord's body, because God even in our body is the great Lord. And a great king above all gods. As in that verse: Who will be like God among the sons of God? (Ps 89:7) For although all the powers above rule the rest, they themselves are nevertheless ruled by Christ. For in his hand are all the ends of the earth (Ps 95:4). For what is in the hand of God cannot be obtained without God, if we desire to widen our borders, to extend our boundaries, to recover what has been lost. Let us, then, beseech God with the strength of faith, through whose disfavour these things are being lost to us; and by his propitiation they come back enlarged, he who gives as he wills, takes away, and when he wills; if he cannot give back, he is not held almighty; he does many things as a sign of his majesty, as an example for our amendment and correction. Other defences are empty, if the help of our king does not come to our aid.

For the sea is his, and he made it (Ps 95:5). Do not think it was sought out, found, and not founded by God. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Where are those who invent the tale that God shaped the world out of matter, and above all out of water? Our God, in heaven and on earth, not as the finder but as the Maker of matter, accomplished all things from nothing.

Come, he says, let us worship (Ps 95:6). What follows, brothers, shows to those who do not understand the Prophet as though he had been forgetful of his own exultation, when he calls those he has roused to joy straight away to weeping. Come, he says, let us worship, and fall down before him, and weep before the Lord who made us. He had said: Come, let us exult; but here the Prophet wishes us to pour out with him tears of our joys: because tears are always brought forth by joy as by great pain, and they indeed set forth and bear witness to the affection of the inner breast.

Qui ergo lapidibus prosternebantur, et lignis, vero tandem Deo cognito, vult nos adorare, procidere et repensare lacrymis, atque continuo devotionis obsequio, quod diu et longo tempore negleximus. Plorat ergo, dum de praeteritis poenitet, gaudet de praesentibus, aestuat et metuit de futuris. Perfectae autem laetitiae fletus fuisse ex sequentibus sic demonstrant: Venite, adoremus et procidamus ante eum, et ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos. Et quasi interrogaretur, quare? reddit causas, aperit rationes: Quia ipse est Deus noster, et nos populus pascuae ejus et oves manus ejus. Ex hoc utique quantum devotus est ille qui gaudet, tantum certe qui contristatur ingratus.

Sed jam quae admonet audiamus intentius: Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra, sicut in irritatione secundum diem tentationis in deserto, ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri: probaverunt, et viderunt opera mea. Quadraginta annis proximus fui generationi illi, et dixi: Semper hi errant corde; ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias meas quibus juravi in ira mea, si introibunt in requiem meam. Cum dicit, hodie, te convenit, ad te loquitur, quicumque homo es auditor, ne audita voce ejus, contemptus reatum, contumaciae crimen incurras, quem non praecepta, quem non correxit exemplum. Nam ob hoc Judaicam duritiem longo sermone narravit, ut te, Christiane, faceret cautiorem, cui non quadraginta annis tantum conversatur, et cohabitat Deus, sed toto vitae tempore paret, et militat ad salutem.

So he wants us, who used to fall prostrate before stones and wood, now that the true God is at last known, to worship, to fall down, and to repay with tears and with the continual homage of devotion what we neglected for long and for a long time. So he weeps in repenting of the past, rejoices in the present, burns and fears for the future. That they were tears of perfect joy the words that follow show thus: Come, let us worship, and fall down before him, and weep before the Lord who made us. And as if he were asked why, he gives the causes, opens the reasons: For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand (Ps 95:7). From this, surely, as devoted as he is who rejoices, so ungrateful certainly is he who is saddened.

But now let us hear more attentively what he admonishes: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the desert, where your fathers tempted me: they put me to the test, and saw my works (Ps 95:7–9). Forty years I was near to that generation, and I said: These always err in heart; but they have not known my ways; to whom I swore in my anger, if they shall enter into my rest (Ps 95:10–11). When he says "today", he addresses you, he speaks to you, whoever you are, man, who hear, so that, having heard his voice, you may not incur the guilt of contempt, the crime of contumacy, you whom neither commandments nor example have corrected. For this is why he told the hardness of the Jews at such length: to make you, Christian, more cautious, you with whom God not only lives and dwells for forty years, but whom through the whole time of life he obeys, and for whose salvation he does battle.

Sermo XLVII.

De parabolis inventae margaritae et sagenae missae in mare

Christus Deus noster, quod coelum, terram, mare, et in eis magnas, multas, varias condiderit creaturas, miranda potentiae suae documenta monstravit: quod vero humana suscipit, agit hominem, intrat tempora, transit aetates, docet verbo, virtute curat, similitudines loquitur, proponit exempla, affectus nostri in se pondus aperit, inesse sibi dilectionis humanae pandit ineffabilem charitatem. Hinc est quod coelestia terrenis commendat exemplis, de praesentibus sapere dat futura, invisibilia visibilibus insimulat argumentis; probant hoc similitudines quas nobis hodie evangelicus clamat auditus: Simile est regnum coelorum homini negotiatori quaerenti bonas margaritas: inventa autem una pretiosa margarita, abiit, et vendit omnia quae habuit, et emit eam. Neminem qui hoc audit nomen negotiatoris offendat: hic negotiatorem loquitur qui dat misericordiam, non qui dat fenoris semper usuram; providentem ornamenta virtutum, non irritamenta vitiorum; gravitatem morum, non lapidum pondera perferentem; honestatis, non luxus monilia portantem, gestantem non voluptatis pompam, sed insignia disciplinae. Iste ergo negotiator has cordis et corporis margaritas proponit, non humano commercio, sed divino exercitio; non ad praesens commodum, sed ut futurum mercetur; non ad terrenam gloriam, sed coelestem: quatenus coelorum regnum possit virtutum praemio comparare, et innumeris bonis unam redimere perpetuae vitae margaritam.

Adjecit autem similitudinem Dominus dicens: Iterum simile est regnum coelorum sagenae missae in mare, et ex omni genere piscium congreganti: quam cum impleta esset, educentes; et secus littus sedentes, elegerunt bonos in vasa, malos autem foras miserunt. Simile est regnum coelorum sagenae missae in mare. Similitudo haec prodit cur in apostolatum piscatores elegerit Christus, et captores piscium fecerit hominum piscatores, ut divini judicii typus arte piscatoria monstraretur. Pisces congregat captura confusos, sed in vasa discretio dat electos: sic vocatio Christiana justos, et injustos, malos, bonosque congregat; sed bonos, malosque electio divina discernit.

Sermon XLVII.

On the parables of the pearl found and of the net cast into the sea

Christ our God, in founding heaven, earth, sea, and in them creatures great, many and varied, showed wondrous proofs of his power: but in that he takes up what is human, acts as man, enters times, passes through ages, teaches by word, heals by power, speaks in similitudes, sets forth examples, he opens in himself the weight of our affection, he reveals that there is in him the ineffable charity of human love. Hence it is that he commends heavenly things by earthly examples, gives us to understand future things from present ones, represents invisible things by visible proofs; this is proved by the similitudes that the Gospel proclaims to our hearing today: The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking good pearls: and having found one precious pearl, he went away, and sells all that he had, and buys it (Matt 13:45–46). Let the name of merchant offend no one who hears this: here he speaks of a merchant who gives mercy, not one who is forever giving out the interest of a loan; who provides the ornaments of virtues, not the incitements of vices; who carries the gravity of good morals, not the weight of stones; who bears the necklaces of honour, not of luxury; who wears not the pomp of pleasure, but the insignia of discipline. This merchant, then, sets out these pearls of heart and body, not for human commerce but for divine exercise; not for present advantage but to purchase the future; not for earthly glory but for heavenly: so that he may be able to acquire the kingdom of heaven at the price of the virtues, and with countless goods buy the one pearl of perpetual life.

The Lord added a similitude, saying: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind of fish: which, when it was full, they drew out; and sitting by the shore, they chose the good into vessels, but the bad they threw out (Matt 13:47–48). The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea. This similitude reveals why Christ chose fishermen for the apostolate, and made catchers of fish into fishers of men: so that the type of the divine judgement might be shown by the fisherman's art. The catch gathers the fish all mixed together, but sorting delivers the chosen into the vessels: so the Christian calling gathers the just and the unjust, the bad and the good; but the divine election distinguishes the good and the bad.

Simile est regnum coelorum sagenae missae in mare. Ad hujus saeculi mare tumens pompa, elatum vertice, undosum sectis, inscitia fluctuans, clamosum litibus, fremens ira, saevum perfidia, peccatis naufragum, impietate demersum, misit piscatores suos Christus, hoc est, Petrum, Andream, Jacobum, Joannem, probatos arte, cum dicit: Venite post me, faciam vos fieri piscatores hominum. Misit ergo piscatores suos retia portantes praeceptis legalibus, et evangelicis innodata, monitis circumcincta, virtutum donis et gratia dilatata, evangelico sinu congregantia sine fine capturam. Hoc tempus modo, hoc agitur, fratres: per gentes, per populos Christi retia nunc trahuntur, et ducunt confusas toto orbe capturas sine discretione personas.

Sed quia saeculi vicinus est finis, et ad judicii littus capturae nostrae retia jam propinquant, pisces, hoc est homines, qui profundo saeculi discursu feriato ac libero vagabuntur, siccitate littoris, hoc est, finis propinquitate turbati, tota se rerum dispensatione collidunt: videntes impias gentes triumphis succedentibus ampliari, angustiari captivos toto orbe populos Christianos, impios prosperis gaudere successibus, pios malorum continuata successione calcari, subdi dominos servituti, dominari dominis servos, rebelles filios in parentes, senes juvenibus esse contemptui, omnemque naturae statum, vitae ordinem deperiisse. Sed haec cum ita sint, fortes non turbant, immo infirmos turbant, fortes turbare non possunt, quia sumunt vires de similitudine, fortitudinem de figura. Ejecti de profundo pisces parum quidem in littore sui confusione volvuntur, sed citata discretio dum malos abjicit, eligit bonos; facit bonos, non turbat, brevis ista et cito transitura confusio. Ista discretio superna, quae dat malos poenis, bonos rapit ad honorem, impios deducit ad tartarum, pios transmittit ad regnum, patres, senes, justos, electos, omnes de contumelia exigua perpetua gloria consolaturi.

Probat hoc autem comparatio ipsa, cum dicitur: In consummatione saeculi exibunt angeli Dei, segregabunt malos de medio justorum. In consummatione saeculi: qui consummationem saeculi credit, qui de saeculi minoratione causatur, qui confidit mansura succedere, habere quid quaerit transitura? Fratres, mundus de fine principium sumit; fine innovatur, non deficit creatura; saeculum deficit non Creatori, sed crimini; neque justis, sed peccatoribus finiuntur elementa. In consummatione saeculi exibunt angeli separare justos.

The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea. To the sea of this world, swelling with pomp, lifted high in its crest, billowing with sects, tossing with ignorance, loud with lawsuits, roaring with anger, savage with unbelief, shipwrecked by sins, sunk in ungodliness, Christ sent his fishermen, that is, Peter, Andrew, James, John, proved in their craft, when he says: Come after me, I will make you become fishers of men (Matt 4:19). So he sent his fishermen carrying nets knotted with the precepts of the Law and of the Gospel, bordered with admonitions, widened with the gifts of the virtues and with grace, gathering an endless catch into the bosom of the Gospel. This is the time now, this is what is being done, brothers: through the nations, through the peoples, the nets of Christ are now being drawn, and they bring in persons from the whole world, caught all together without distinction.

But since the end of the world is near, and the nets of our catch are already drawing near to the shore of judgement, the fish, that is, men, who roam the deep of the world in a free and holiday course, troubled by the dryness of the shore, that is, by the nearness of the end, dash themselves against the whole dispensation of things: seeing ungodly nations enlarged by triumph upon triumph, Christian peoples hemmed in as captives throughout the world, the ungodly rejoicing in prosperous successes, the godly trampled by an unbroken succession of evils, masters subjected to servitude, servants lording it over masters, sons rebellious against parents, the old an object of contempt to the young, and every state of nature, the order of life, perished. But though these things are so, they do not trouble the strong; rather they trouble the weak; the strong they cannot trouble, because these take strength from the similitude, fortitude from the figure. The fish cast up from the deep toss for a little while indeed on the shore in their confusion, but swift sorting, in throwing away the bad, chooses the good; this brief confusion, soon to pass, makes the good, does not trouble them. This is the sorting from above, which gives the bad to punishments, snatches the good away to honour, leads the ungodly down to Tartarus, sends the godly on to the kingdom; fathers, old men, the just, the elect, all of them to be consoled with perpetual glory for a little dishonour.

The comparison itself proves this, when it is said: At the consummation of the world the angels of God will go out, they will separate the bad from among the just (Matt 13:49). At the consummation of the world: he who believes the consummation of the world, who complains of the lessening of the world, who trusts that things that will remain are to follow, why does he seek to have things that will pass? Brothers, the world takes its beginning from its end; by the end creation is renewed, it does not fail; the age fails not for the Creator but for crime; nor are the elements ended for the just, but for sinners. At the consummation of the world the angels will go out to separate the just.

Nec quisquam dubitet sanctis angelos esse parituros, quibus obsequium suum promittit et Christus. Christi vox est: Praecingam me, et ministrabo vobis. Exibunt angeli Dei et segregabunt malos de medio justorum. Portate, justi, portate, immo inducias justi date, brevis ista mixtura longa separatione pensabitur.

Separabunt malos de medio justorum, et mittent eos in caminum ignis. Ecce qui ejiciunt vicinos, qui expellunt hospites, qualem sibi eligunt mansionem; ecce qui sibi hic delicias pauperis fame poenis praeparant alienis, ibi ignem sibi quantum de exigua voluptate succendunt. Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium. Quam male stridet ibi, qui hic male ridet; et qui nunc malis pauperum gaudet, de bonis pauperum tunc lugebit, quia potuit cum paupere gaudere, sed noluit: vos autem fideles gaudete in Domino semper.

And let no one doubt that the angels will obey the saints, to whom Christ too promises his homage. It is the voice of Christ: I will gird myself, and serve you (Luke 12:37). The angels of God will go out and separate the bad from among the just. Bear it, you just, bear it, or rather, you just, grant a truce: this brief mingling will be made up for by a long separation.

They will separate the bad from among the just, and will cast them into the furnace of fire (Matt 13:50). See what kind of dwelling they choose for themselves who throw out their neighbours, who drive out guests; see: those who here prepare delights for themselves by the hunger of the poor, by the punishments of others, what a fire they kindle for themselves there from a little pleasure! There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. How ill he gnashes there who ill laughs here; and he who now rejoices at the evils of the poor will then mourn over the goods of the poor, because he could have rejoiced with the poor man, but would not: but you, faithful, rejoice in the Lord always (Phil 4:4).

Sermo XLVIII.

De Christo fabri filio appellato, et de invidia

Evangelista hodie Judaeorum circa Christum prodituras invidiam, sic coepit: Venit, inquit, Jesus in patriam suam, et docebat eos in synagogis eorum, ita ut mirarentur et dicerent: Unde huic sapientia et virtus? Nonne hic est fabri filius? Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria, et fratres ejus Jacobus, et Joseph, et Simon, et Judas; et sorores ejus nonne omnes apud nos sunt? Unde ergo huic omnia ista? Non sic nubes coelum, nox diem, solem caligo, quomodo mentem caecat, et tenebrat invidia. Livor hoc Judaicus probat, qui Christi sapientiam miratur, virtutes stupet, attollit opera, dicta suscipit, et tamen ne in ipso videatur divinitas, deitas sentiatur, carnalium parentum nomina commonet et divulgat.

Venit, inquit, Jesus in patriam suam. Nemo miretur, si conditor rerum, coelorum Dominus, Deus omnium, patriam locumque sortitur, quando se claudit utero, metitur cunis, uberibus occupat, arctat gremio, dat in ulnas; et ut angustias tollat humanas, humanis se dedit atque aptavit angustiis. Homo, ad te Deus se per ista deponit, te per ista sequitur, per istas te perquirit angustias; ut quem formavit opere, reformet exemplo; quem judicio repulit, reducat affectu, et in se servet quem praeter se conspicit deperiisse.

Venit, inquit, Jesus in patriam suam, et docebat eos in synagogis eorum. Non in templo suo, sed in synagogis eorum. Synagogae non poterant ejus esse, in quibus se turbae perfidiae, non fidei congregabant; in quibus conveniebat invidiae populus, non amoris; in quibus considebat consilium malignantium, non bonae consilium disciplinae. Docebat in synagogis eorum, ita ut mirarentur. Mirabantur indignatione, non gratia; stupebant livore, non laude; furebant, quia quod sapere non poterant superba subsellia, stans humilitas producebat, ita ut mirarentur, et dicerent: Unde huic haec sapientia?

Sermon XLVIII.

On Christ called the craftsman's son, and on envy

The Evangelist, about to bring to light today the envy of the Jews towards Christ, began thus: Jesus came, he says, into his own country, and he taught them in their synagogues, so that they marvelled and said: Whence has this man wisdom and power? (Matt 13:54) Is this not the craftsman's son? (Matt 13:55) Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas; and his sisters, are they not all with us? (Matt 13:55–56) Whence, then, has this man all these things? Clouds do not so blind the sky, nor night the day, nor darkness the sun, as envy blinds and darkens the mind. This the spite of the Jews proves, which marvels at Christ's wisdom, is astounded at his mighty works, extols his deeds, receives his sayings, and yet, so that divinity may not be seen in him nor the Godhead perceived, recalls and spreads abroad the names of his fleshly parents.

Jesus came, he says, into his own country. Let no one wonder if the Maker of things, the Lord of the heavens, the God of all, has a country and a place allotted to him, when he shuts himself in a womb, measures himself by a cradle, busies himself at the breast, confines himself in a lap, gives himself into arms; and to take away human straits, he gave himself up and fitted himself to human straits. Man, through these things God lays himself down to you, through these he follows you, through these straits he seeks you out; so that whom he formed by his work he may re-form by his example; whom he drove away by judgement he may lead back by affection, and may keep in himself the one he sees to have perished apart from him.

Jesus came, he says, into his own country, and he taught them in their synagogues. Not in his temple, but in their synagogues. The synagogues could not be his, in which crowds of unbelief, not of faith, gathered; in which a people of envy, not of love, came together; in which there sat the council of the malignant, not the council of good discipline. He taught in their synagogues, so that they marvelled. They marvelled with indignation, not with gratitude; they were astounded with spite, not with praise; they raged because a humility that stood brought forth what the proud benches could not understand, so that they marvelled, and said: Whence has this man this wisdom?

Sic dicit qui Deum, ex quo est sapientia, ex quo virtus, ignorat; sic dicit qui Christum nescit esse Dei sapientiam, Dei esse virtutem. Unde sit sapientia, Salomon probat, qui cum regni apicem parvulus suscepisset, ut creditum sibi populum regeret virtute, non fastu; sapientia, non tumore; corde, non vertice; a Deo sapientiam voluit, poposcit, accepit.

Unde huic haec sapientia et virtus? Virtutem quae dat oculos quos natura non dedit, quae auditum reddit debilitate conclusum, quae in mutis sui solvit vincula sermonis, quae claudos reducit ad cursum, quae animas apud inferos jam devinctas propria redire cogit ad corpora, a Deo esse, nisi salutis invidus non negaret. At Judaei sciebant Christi opera divinae virtutis esse, non esse possibilitatis humanae; sed livoris nubilum, malitiae fumus, visum spectantium caligabant, ne lumen Christi, ne tempus Evangelii perviderent dicendo: Nonne hic est fabri filius? Dicebant, Hic est fabri filius; sed cujus fabri filius non dicebant; dicebant fabri filius, ut arte vili ars lateret auctoris, et deitatis nomen fabrile nomen absconderet. Christus erat fabri filius, sed illius qui mundi fabricam fecit non malleo, sed praecepto; qui elementorum membra non ingenio, sed jussione compegit; qui massam saeculi auctoritate, non carbone conflavit; qui solem non terreno igne, sed superno calore succendit; qui lunam, tenebras, noctem formavit, et tempora, qui stellas variata luce distinxit; qui cuncta fecit ex nihilo, et fecit, o homo, tibi, ut opificem operis aestimatione pensares. Sed tu, Judaee, hujus fabri filium notas, cui pro tantis beneficiis repensare vicem deberes in filium: hinc est, quod non accipis futura, quia de praesentibus existis ingratus.

Nonne hic est fabri filius? Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria? Iterum, Judaee, matris nomen clamas, occultas Patris; patrem dicis, nomen non dicis; fabrum dicis, opus non dicis. Judaee, decipiunt te ista, non decipiunt credituros. Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria, et fratres ejus Jacobus et Joseph, et Simon, et Judas; et sorores ejus nonne omnes apud nos sunt? Si mater, si fratres, si sorores apud vos sunt, pater ubi est? vobiscum non est, quia Deus odit fictos, invidos deserit, declinat ingratos, sibi non sinit crudeles et impios commorari.

So speaks the man who does not know God, from whom is wisdom, from whom is power; so speaks the man who does not know that Christ is the wisdom of God, is the power of God. Whence wisdom comes Solomon proves, who, when as a little boy he had taken up the summit of the kingdom, in order to rule the people entrusted to him by virtue, not by pride; by wisdom, not by swelling; by heart, not by height, wished for, asked for and received wisdom from God.

Whence has this man this wisdom and power? That the power which gives eyes that nature did not give, which restores hearing shut off by infirmity, which in the dumb loosens the ties of their speech, which brings the lame back to running, which compels souls already bound in the underworld to return to their own bodies, is from God, no one would deny but one who envies salvation. But the Jews knew that the works of Christ were of divine power, not of human possibility; but the cloud of spite, the smoke of malice, darkened the sight of those who looked on, so that they should not see through to the light of Christ, to the time of the Gospel, when they said: Is this not the craftsman's son? They said: "This is the craftsman's son"; but whose craftsman's son they did not say; they said "the craftsman's son", so that under a mean craft the craft of the author might lie hidden, and the craftsman's name might hide the name of the Godhead. Christ was a craftsman's son, but the son of that craftsman who made the fabric of the world not with a hammer but with a command; who fitted together the members of the elements not by ingenuity but by order; who forged the mass of the world by authority, not with coal; who kindled the sun not with earthly fire but with heavenly heat; who formed the moon, the darkness, the night and the seasons; who distinguished the stars with varied light; who made all things from nothing, and made them, O man, for you, so that you might weigh the artificer by your estimate of the work. But you, Jew, sneer at the son of this craftsman, to whom, for such great benefits, you ought to make return in his son: hence it is that you do not receive the things to come, because you are ungrateful for the present.

Is this not the craftsman's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Again, Jew, you cry out the mother's name, you hide the Father's; you say father, you do not say the name; you say craftsman, you do not say the work. Jew, these things deceive you; they do not deceive those who are to believe. Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas; and his sisters, are they not all with us? If the mother, if the brothers, if the sisters are with you, where is the father? He is not with you, because God hates the false, deserts the envious, turns away from the ungrateful, does not allow the cruel and the ungodly to dwell with him.

Et fratres ejus et sorores ejus, nonne omnes apud nos sunt? Callide fratres ingeris, ostentas sorores, ut numeroso partu sanctae matris virginitas lateat, obscuretur integritas, et sentiatur de filio totum quod humanum est, nihil divinum. Judaee, quos dicis fratres et sorores Christi, Cleophae sororis Mariae filii sunt, non Mariae; et fratrum et sororum filios fratres nuncupat et divina lex et humana cognatio. Ergo Christi fratres fecit non matris virginitas, quae permansit virgo post partum, sed materterae ejus: fecit propinquitatis assertio. Beata Maria, si alios filios habuisset a Christo mater in ipso crucis tempore, in articulo ipso mortis non discipulo traderetur, non commendaretur extraneo.

Invidia de coelo abjecit angelum, de paradiso exclusit hominem. Ipsa primum contaminavit terras germano sanguine. Ipsa germanos compulit venumdare germanum. Ipsa Moysen fugavit, Aaron in fratris excitavit injuriam, Mariam maculavit livore germani; ac ne multis, quod pavet mens, quod visus tremit, quod auditus non capit, ipsum Christi attendit et pervenit ad sanguinem. Invidia omnibus malis pejor: quos ceperit, liberari nequeunt; quos vulneraverit, ad curam non veniunt, non redeunt ad salutem. Invidia delictorum venenum, criminum virus, peccatorum mater, origo vitiorum: hanc qui non viderit, bona videt; hanc qui nescierit, mala nescit; hanc qui fugerit, vivit. Invidia vitari fuga potest, non potest superari conflictu.

Sed jam quid Dominus responderit, audiamus: Non est propheta sine honore nisi in patria sua et in domo sua. Christus quidem venit in patriam suam et in domum suam quia scriptum est: In sua venit, et sui eum non receperunt. Verum dicendo: Non est propheta sine honore, nisi in patria sua et domo sua, docet quia inter suos posse morsus est, adustio est; inter cives eminere proximos, proximorum urit gloriam: propinqui propinquo si honorem debeant, computant servitutem.

Et non fecit, inquit, ibi virtutes multas propter incredulitatem illorum. Non fit ibi virtus, ubi incredulitas non meretur. Etsi mercedem cum sanat, non exigit Christus; indignatur tamen dum pro honore sibi fertur injuria, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus et gloriosus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

And his brothers and his sisters, are they not all with us? Cunningly you thrust brothers forward, you parade sisters, so that by a numerous childbearing the virginity of the holy mother may lie hidden, her integrity be obscured, and the whole of what is human be perceived in the son, and nothing divine. Jew, those whom you call the brothers and sisters of Christ are the sons of Cleopas, the sister of Mary, not of Mary; and both the divine law and human kinship call the sons of brothers and sisters brothers. So it was not the virginity of the mother, who remained a virgin after childbirth, that made Christ's brothers, but that of his mother's sister: the assertion of kinship made them. Blessed Mary, had she as mother had other sons besides Christ, would not, at the very time of the cross, at the very moment of death, be handed over to a disciple, would not be commended to a stranger.

Envy cast the angel down from heaven (Isa 14:12), shut man out of paradise (Gen 3:23). It was envy that first defiled the earth with a brother's blood (Gen 4:8). It drove brothers to sell their brother (Gen 37:28). It put Moses to flight (Exod 2:15), roused Aaron to wrong his brother, stained Miriam with spite against her brother (Num 12:1); and, not to be long, what the mind dreads, what the sight trembles at, what the hearing cannot take in, it aimed at and reached the very blood of Christ. Envy is worse than all evils: those it has caught cannot be freed; those it has wounded do not come to a cure, do not return to health. Envy is the venom of offences, the poison of crimes, the mother of sins, the origin of vices: he who has not seen it sees good things; he who has not known it does not know evils; he who has fled it lives. Envy can be escaped by flight; it cannot be overcome by combat.

But now let us hear what the Lord answered: A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and in his own house (Matt 13:57). Christ indeed came into his own country and into his own house, because it is written: He came to his own, and his own did not receive him (John 1:11). But by saying: A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and his own house, he teaches that to have power among one's own is a bite, is a burning; to stand out among one's fellow citizens burns up the glory of one's neighbours; if kinsmen owe honour to a kinsman, they count it servitude.

And he did not do many mighty works there, he says, because of their disbelief (Matt 13:58). No mighty work is done there where disbelief does not deserve it. Although Christ demands no fee when he heals, he is nevertheless indignant when injury is offered to him in place of honour, he who is God over all, blessed and glorious for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo XLIX.

De eisdem, secundum Marcum

Quoties humana Dominum sanctus evangelista sustinuisse aut egisse commemorat, toties carnalium sensus tota velut fluctuum commotione conturbat. Imbecilles namque mentes nesciunt Dominici corporis audire, discernere et dispensare mysteria, sicut hodierna lectio monstrat, quae dicit: Egressus inde Jesus, abiit in patriam suam. Egreditur unde, quo ingreditur, qui nullo continetur, nullo concluditur loco? Ad quam patriam vadit, orbem qui fecit et possidet universum? dicente propheta: Tui sunt coeli, et tua est terra: orbem terrarum, et plenitudinem ejus tu fundasti. Verum non sibi per se, sed per te tibi egreditur, et ingreditur Christus, donec te intromittat expulsum, exsulem revocet, reducat, et reportet ejectum.

Abiit ergo Jesus in patriam suam. Non ut suam sibi, sed ut tuam tibi, quam Adam perdiderat, patriam redonaret. Abiit in patriam suam. Si natus, quomodo non homo? si homo, quomodo non civis? si civis, esse illi patriam quis miretur? Sed hic humanitatis modus, non divinitatis ordo est, quem fatetur: quia qui est, et qui erat ante saecula Deus noster, parens noster, novissima voluit esse per saecula; ut quos potestate fecerat, pietate salvaret; et compatiendo reciperet, quos extorres arguendo fecerat et jubendo. Quidquid enim per hominem susceptum legimus egisse, aut pertulisse Christum, non ad divinitatis audiamus injuriam, sed profecisse hominis ad gloriam. Et sequebantur, inquit, illum discipuli ejus. Merito discipuli Christum redeuntem suam sequuntur ad patriam, quos jam in superni ordinis albo descriptos coelestis patriae cives, et municipes electio tanta, tantae gratiae perfecerat plenitudo, dicente Domino: Gaudete, quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in coelis.

Et facto sabbato, coepit in synagoga docere, et multi audientes mirabantur in doctrina ejus, dicentes: Unde huic haec omnia, et quae est sapientia quae data est illi? et virtutes tales quae per manus ejus efficiuntur? Infelix Judaicae mentis et detestanda nequitia, ad discutiendum semper promptior quam ad credendum; divinis virtutibus non ad fidem, sed ad calumniam sollicite commovetur, vel quia meruit audire sapientiam tantam.

Sermon XLIX.

On the same, according to Mark

Whenever the holy Evangelist relates that the Lord underwent or did human things, so often he throws the senses of the carnal into turmoil, as with a whole upheaval of waves. For feeble minds do not know how to hear, discern and dispense the mysteries of the Lord's body, as today's reading shows, which says: Going out from there, Jesus went away into his own country (Mark 6:1). From where does he go out, where does he go in, who is contained by no place, shut in by no place? To what country does he go, who made and possesses the whole world? as the Prophet says: Yours are the heavens, and yours is the earth: the world and its fullness you founded (Ps 89:12). But Christ goes out and goes in not for himself through himself, but through you for you, until he brings in you who were expelled, calls back the exile, leads back and carries back the one cast out.

So Jesus went away into his own country. Not to give his own country back to himself, but yours back to you, which Adam had lost. He went away into his own country. If born, how not man? if man, how not a citizen? if a citizen, who would wonder that he has a country? But what it acknowledges here is the manner of manhood, not the order of divinity: because he who is, and who was before the ages, our God, our parent, willed to be the last of things through the ages; so as to save by loving-kindness those he had made by power, and by suffering with them to receive back those whom he had made outcasts by rebuking and commanding. For whatever we read that Christ did or bore through the man he took up, let us hear it not as an injury to his divinity, but as having served the glory of man. And his disciples, he says, followed him. Rightly do the disciples follow Christ as he returns to his own country, whom so great an election, the fullness of so great a grace, had already made citizens and burgesses of the heavenly country, enrolled in the register of the order above, as the Lord says: Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

And when the sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many hearing him marvelled at his teaching, saying: Whence has this man all these things, and what is the wisdom that has been given to him? and such mighty works as are done by his hands? (Mark 6:2) Unhappy and detestable wickedness of the Jewish mind, always readier to discuss than to believe! it is eagerly stirred by divine powers not to faith but to calumny, even because it merited to hear so great a wisdom.

Sed unde sit malitiose curiosa, vel querula, in bonis suspicax, ad noxia satis facilis, doctrinam despicit quam miratur; quae probat praecepta, contemnit; ad Deum cunctatur, ad idola perproclivis; in divinis astuta, ligno, lapidibus tota resoluta; prophetiae rebellis, contraria veritati, auguriis, mendaciisque perdita. Rogo, cui cautum, quod caecus videt? cui sollicitum quod mortuus surgit? cui dubium, quod loquitur mutus? certe, quis nesciat esse Deum, cujus sola curatur omnis debilitas jussione? Moyses signa fecerat multa, Elias maxima monstraverat documenta virtutum, nec dissimilia opera fecerat Elisaeus: cur nemo personam discutit? cur nemo status commovet quaestionem? cur nemo unde essent, quive essent, unde ista, et per quem facerent curiositate sic requisivit ingratus. Sed judicatur hic solus qui solus judicare noluit ne puniret; improba severitate discutitur, qui ut largiretur veniam, nil quaesivit: et cum solus innocens invenerit omnes reos, ad indicium pietatis immensae suscipere maluit, quam abrogare sententiam, ut vitam mortalibus olim perditam redderet, et repararet occisos. Vere, sicut dixit Apostolus, Magnum pietatis est sacramentum, quod Christi nostri manifestatur in carne.

Extendit tamen adhuc curiositatem suam carnalis ista aemulatio, cui semper est inimica veritatis cogitatio: nec patitur Christum virtutibus et sapientia Deum credi, sed proximorum, parentum, fratrum, affinium documento, hominem tantum asserit, gestit, optat, intelligit, dicendo: Nonne iste est fabri filius et Mariae, frater Jacobi et Joseph, et Simonis et Judae? nonne et sorores ejus hic nobiscum sunt? Caiphas profano prophetat ore; et cum sacerdos esset, falsitatis suae sensum vicit officio veritatis; sententiam non suo, sed addicti probat imperio. Balaam maledico benedicit ore, et conductus ad nequitiam, tota loquitur mysteria veritatis: et sicut in spinis rosa, hoc est, in frutice horrenti miri odoris flosculi germinantur; ita sensus aliquoties pessimorum ad bona divinitatis impulsu aguntur inviti, ut non sit meriti, sed mysterii, quod loquuntur.

Quod tunc malitiae Judaicae videmus evenisse, quae in contumeliam Dominicae generationis, cum per artem Joseph prosapiae Christi exaggerat veritatem, veri genitoris confitetur et loquitur qualitatem, dicendo: Iste est fabri filius. Bene personam tacuit, ut proderet ex arte genitorem, dicendo, non Joseph, sed fabri filius. Et quis talis faber, qualis est iste, qui ex nihilo tantum talem fabricatus est mundum? et quis faber talis, qui totius bonae artis solus auctor, solus largitor existit?

But whence is it that, maliciously curious or querulous, suspicious of good things, very ready for harmful ones, it despises the teaching that it marvels at; scorns the precepts that it approves; hesitates towards God, is headlong towards idols; is astute in divine things, wholly slack before wood and stones; rebellious against prophecy, contrary to the truth, lost in auguries and lies? I ask, to whom is it a cause for caution that the blind man sees? to whom a cause for anxiety that the dead man rises? to whom a matter of doubt that the dumb man speaks? Surely, who would not know that he is God by whose command alone every infirmity is cured? Moses had done many signs, Elijah had shown the greatest proofs of powers, nor had Elisha done unlike works: why does no one discuss their person? why does no one raise a question about their standing? why has no one, ungrateful, inquired with such curiosity whence they were, or who they were, whence these things came, and through whom they did them? But this one alone is judged, who alone refused to judge so as not to punish; he is examined with wicked severity who, to grant pardon, made no inquiry: and though he alone, the innocent one, found all guilty, as a sign of his immense loving-kindness he chose to take the sentence upon himself rather than to annul it, so as to give back to mortals the life once lost and to restore the slain. Truly, as the Apostle said: Great is the mystery of godliness, which is manifested in the flesh of our Christ (1 Tim 3:16).

Yet this carnal rivalry, whose thought is always hostile to the truth, stretches out its curiosity still further: it does not allow Christ to be believed God by his powers and his wisdom, but on the evidence of his neighbours, parents, brothers, kinsmen by marriage, it asserts, longs, wishes, understands him to be man only, saying: Is this not the craftsman's son, and Mary's, the brother of James and Joseph, and Simon and Judas? and are not his sisters also here with us? (Mark 6:3) Caiaphas prophesies with a profane mouth; and since he was priest, he overcame the sense of his own falsehood by the office of truth; he proves the sentence not by his own authority, but by that of the one condemned (John 11:51). Balaam blesses with a cursing mouth, and, hired for wickedness, speaks all the mysteries of truth (Num 23–24): and as in thorns a rose, that is, little flowers of wondrous fragrance spring up in a bristling shrub, so sometimes the senses of the worst are driven against their will to good things by the impulse of divinity, so that what they speak is a matter not of merit, but of mystery.

This we see happened then to the malice of the Jews, which, to insult the Lord's generation, while through Joseph's craft it magnifies the truth of Christ's lineage, confesses and speaks of the quality of his true Begetter, saying: This is the craftsman's son. Well did it keep silent about the person, so as to reveal the Begetter by the craft, saying not "Joseph's", but "the craftsman's son". And what craftsman is such as this one, who out of nothing fashioned so great and such a world? and what craftsman is such that he alone is the author, alone the giver of every good craft?

Dic ergo, Judaee, fabri filium, ut Dei filium fatearis invitus; dic Mariae, ut verum hominem, sed Virginis filium confitearis impulsus; dic fratres, ut tantam dignationem tui praedices et proferas creatoris.

Et licet ipse genitricis sanctae per hoc virtutes moliaris abscondere; tamen evangelistae veritas non Joseph et Mariae, sed Cleophae sororis ejus filios, quos tu fratres appellas, probat et asserit exstitisse; usus enim temporis etiam praesentis germanorum et germanarum filios fratres noscitur nuncupasse. Numquam enim contra pietatis ordinem matrem Dominus extero, hoc est Joanni, commendasset ex cruce, si alios ipsa praeter illum filios suscepisset: sed virgini virginem tradit, ut inter tales cura sola sacramenti, sola societas religionis haberetur; nec mundanae sollicitudini discipulus tantus iste serviret, sed praedicaturus virginitatis partum, domi haberet unde hoc dubitantibus approbaret. At Jacobus unius feminae et matris habere non potuit curam, qui inter primordia, et in illo Judaico tunc furore Hierosolymitanam singulariter rexit Ecclesiam.

Bene addidit Dominus: Non est Propheta sine honore, nisi in patria sua. Ecce qualiter carnales sapiunt cives; ecce qualiter mundani parentes sentiunt et honorant. Beatus qui cum patrem meruit habere Deum, praeter coelestem patriam nil requirit.

Say, then, Jew, "the craftsman's son", so that unwillingly you may acknowledge the Son of God; say "Mary's", so that, compelled, you may confess a true man, but the Son of the Virgin; say "brothers", so that you may proclaim and set forth the great condescension of your Creator.

And though you yourself try by this to hide the virtues of the holy bearer, yet the truth of the Evangelist proves and asserts that those whom you call brothers were the sons not of Joseph and Mary, but of Cleopas her sister; for the usage even of the present time is known to call the sons of brothers and of sisters brothers. For the Lord would never, against the order of piety, have commended his mother from the cross to a stranger, that is, to John, if she herself had received other sons besides him: but he hands over a virgin to a virgin, so that between such as these there might be held only the care of the mystery, only the society of religion; and so that this great disciple might not serve worldly solicitude, but, being about to preach the childbearing of virginity, might have at home the means to prove it to those who doubted. But James could not take care of one woman and mother, he who, among the beginnings and in that Jewish fury of the time, ruled alone the church of Jerusalem.

Rightly the Lord added: A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country (Mark 6:4). See how carnal citizens think; see how worldly kinsmen feel and honour. Blessed is he who, having merited to have God as father, seeks nothing besides the heavenly country.

Sermo L.

De paralytico curato

Christum in humanis actibus divina gessisse mysteria, et in rebus visibilibus invisibilia exercuisse negotia, lectio hodierna monstravit. Ascendit, inquit, in naviculam, et transfretavit, et venit in civitatem suam. Nonne ipse est qui, fugatis fluctibus maris, profunda nudavit, ut Israeliticus populus inter stupentes undas sicco vestigio, velut montium concava, pertransiret? Nonne hic est, qui Petri pedibus marinos vertices inclinavit, ut iter liquidum humanis gressibus solidum praeberet obsequium? Et quid est quod sibi maris sic denegat servitutem, ut brevissimi lacus transitum sub mercede nautica transfretaret?

Ascendit, inquit, in naviculam, et transfretavit. Et quid mirum, fratres? Christus venit suscipere infirmitates nostras, et suas nobis conferre virtutes, humana quaerere, praestare divina, accipere injurias, reddere dignitates, ferre taedia, referre sanitates; quia medicus qui non fert infirmitates, infirmitates curare nescit; et qui non fuerit cum infirmo infirmatus, infirmo non potest conferre sanitatem. Christus ergo, si in suis mansisset virtutibus, commune cum hominibus nil haberet; et nisi implesset carnis ordinem, carnis in illo esset otiosa susceptio. Sustinuit ergo has necessitates, ut homo verus humanis necessitatibus probaretur.

Ascendit, inquit, in naviculam. Christus Ecclesiae suae navem, saeculi fluctus semper mitigaturus ascendit, ut credentes in se ad coelestem patriam tranquilla navigatione perducat; et municipes civitatis suae faciat, quos humanitatis suae fecit esse consortes. Non ergo Christus indiget navi, sed navis indiget Christo, quia sine coelesti gubernatore navis Ecclesiae per mundanum pelagus tali et tanto discrimine ad coelestem portum non valet pervenire.

Haec diximus, fratres, quantum ad intelligentiam pertinet spiritualem: verum nunc ipsius historiae ordinem prosequamur. Ascendit, inquit, in naviculam et transfretavit, et venit in civitatem suam. Creator rerum, orbis Dominus, posteaquam se propter nos nostra angustiavit in carne, coepit habere humanam patriam, coepit civitatis Judaicae esse civis: parentes habere coepit, parentum omnium ipse parens, ut invitaret amor, attraheret charitas, vinceret affectio, suaderet humanitas, quos fugarat dominatio, metus disperserat, fecerat vis potestatis extorres.

Sermon L.

On the paralytic healed

That Christ performed divine mysteries in human acts, and carried out invisible business in visible things, today's reading has shown. He went up, he says, into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city (Matt 9:1). Is he not the one who, putting the waves of the sea to flight, laid bare the depths, so that the people of Israel might pass with dry footstep between the astonished waters, as through the hollows of mountains (Exod 14:22)? Is not this the one who bowed down the crests of the sea under Peter's feet, so that the liquid path offered human steps a solid service (Matt 14:29)? And why is it that he so refuses for himself the servitude of the sea as to cross the passage of a very small lake for a boatman's fare?

He went up, he says, into a boat, and crossed over. And what wonder, brothers? Christ came to take up our weaknesses, and to bestow on us his powers; to seek what is human, to grant what is divine; to receive injuries, to give back dignities; to bear wearinesses, to bring back healths; because a physician who does not bear weaknesses does not know how to cure weaknesses; and he who has not been weak with the weak cannot bestow health on the weak. So Christ, if he had remained in his own powers, would have had nothing in common with men; and unless he had fulfilled the order of the flesh, the taking up of flesh would have been idle in him. So he sustained these necessities, so that he might be proved true man by human necessities.

He went up, he says, into a boat. Christ goes up into the ship of his Church, ever ready to calm the waves of the world, so as to lead those who believe in him to the heavenly country by a tranquil voyage, and to make burgesses of his city those whom he has made sharers of his manhood. So it is not Christ who needs a ship, but the ship needs Christ, because without the heavenly helmsman the ship of the Church cannot come to the heavenly harbour through the sea of the world amid such and so great peril.

This we have said, brothers, as far as concerns the spiritual understanding: but now let us follow the order of the narrative itself. He went up, he says, into a boat and crossed over, and came into his own city. The Creator of things, the Lord of the world, after he had straitened himself for our sake in our flesh, began to have a human country, began to be a citizen of a Jewish city: he began to have parents, he who is himself the parent of all parents, so that love might invite, charity draw, affection overcome, humanity persuade those whom dominion had put to flight, dread had scattered, the force of power had made outcasts.

Venit in civitatem suam, et ecce offerebant ei paralyticum jacentem in lecto, et respiciens, inquit, Jesus fidem illorum, dixit paralytico: Confide, fili: dimittuntur tibi peccata tua. Audit veniam, et tacet paralyticus, nec ullam respondet gratiam, quia plus corporis quam animae tendebat ad curam; et temporales aerumnas resoluti corporis sic deflebat, ut aeternas poenas resolutionis animae non defleret, gratiorem sibi praesentem vitam judicans quam futuram. Merito Christus offerentium fidem non respicit, et vecordiam respicit sic jacentis, ut fidei alienae suffragio paralytici anima ante curaretur quam corpus.

Respiciens, inquit, fidem illorum. Cernitis in hoc loco, fratres, Deum non quaerere insipientium voluntates, non spectare ignorantium fidem, non infirmorum stulta desideria perscrutari, sed ad alterius fidem subvenire, quod per solam gratiam conferebat, cum quidquid divinae voluntatis est, non negaret. Et re vera, fratres, quando medicus languentium aut quaerit, aut respicit voluntates, cum semper contraria desideret et requirat infirmus; hinc est quod nunc ferrum, nunc ignem, nunc amara pocula ingerit, et apponit invitis, ut curam sani sentiant, quam non poterant sentire aegrotantes. Et si homo injurias despicit, maledicta contemnit, ut sauciatis morbo sponte vitam conferat et salutem; quanto magis Christus medicus bonitate divina morbis saucios peccatorum, et phrenesi criminum laborantes, ad salutem etiam invitos attrahit, et nolentes? O si velimus, fratres, o si velimus omnem mentis nostrae paralysim pervidere, animam nostram virtutibus destitutam jacere in vitiorum stratis cernere; luceret nobis quemadmodum Christus, et nostras quotidie noxias respicit voluntates, et ad salutaria nos remedia pertrahit, et perurget invitos.

Fili, inquit, remittuntur tibi peccata tua. Haec dicens, Deum se volebat intelligi, qui per hominem oculis adhuc latebat humanis; virtutibus enim et signis comparabatur prophetis, qui per ipsum fecerant et ipsi virtutes: peccatis autem dare veniam, quia penes hominem non est, et est singulare deitatis insigne, Deum illum pectoribus inserebat humanis. Probat hoc Pharisaicus livor: nam cum dixisset: Remittuntur tibi peccata tua, responderunt Pharisaei: Hic blasphemat, quis enim potest peccata remittere nisi solus Deus? Pharisaee, qui sciendo nescis, confitendo negas, cum testaris, impugnas: si Deus est qui remittit peccata, cur tibi Christus Deus non est, qui unius indulgentiae suae munere totius mundi probatur abstulisse peccata? Ecce, inquit, Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi.

He came into his own city, and behold, they were offering him a paralytic lying on a bed, and Jesus, he says, regarding their faith, said to the paralytic: Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven you (Matt 9:2). The paralytic hears pardon and is silent, and gives no thanks in reply, because he was intent more on the cure of the body than of the soul; and he so bewailed the temporal miseries of his loosened body that he did not bewail the eternal penalties of the loosening of the soul, judging the present life more welcome to him than the future. Rightly Christ does not regard the faith of those who were offering him, and regards the folly of the one lying there so, that by the support of another's faith the paralytic's soul was cured before his body.

Regarding, he says, their faith. You see in this place, brothers, that God does not seek the wills of the foolish, does not look to the faith of the ignorant, does not search out the foolish desires of the sick, but comes to their help at the faith of another, a help he was bestowing by grace alone, since he would not refuse whatever belongs to the divine will. And indeed, brothers, when does a physician either seek or regard the wills of the sick, since the sick man always desires and demands what is contrary? hence it is that now the knife, now fire, now bitter draughts he forces upon them and applies to them against their will, so that when healthy they may feel the cure which when sick they could not feel. And if a man disregards insults, scorns curses, so as freely to bestow life and health on those wounded by disease, how much more does Christ the physician, of his divine goodness, draw to salvation, even against their will and refusing, those wounded by the diseases of sins and suffering from the frenzy of crimes? O if we would, brothers, O if we would see through the whole paralysis of our mind, see our soul, destitute of virtues, lying on the beds of vices, it would be clear to us how Christ both regards our harmful wills daily, and draws us to saving remedies, and urges us on against our will.

Son, he says, your sins are remitted to you. Saying this, he wished it to be understood that he was God, he who through the man was still hidden from human eyes; for in mighty works and signs he was compared with the prophets, who through him had themselves also done mighty works: but to give pardon to sins, since it is not in man's power and is the singular mark of the Godhead, set it in human breasts that he was God. The spite of the Pharisees proves this: for when he had said: Your sins are remitted to you, the Pharisees answered: This man blasphemes; for who can remit sins but God alone? (Matt 9:3; Mark 2:7) Pharisee, you who in knowing do not know, in confessing deny, while you bear witness attack: if he who remits sins is God, why is Christ not God to you, who by the gift of his one indulgence is proved to have taken away the sins of the whole world? Behold, he says, the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Ut autem possis majora capere ejus divinitatis insignia, audi eum pectoris tui penetrasse secretum; aspice eum ad cogitationum tuarum latebras pervenisse; intellige eum cordis tui tacita nudare consilia. Et cum vidisset, inquit, Jesus cogitationes eorum, dixit: Quid cogitatis mala in cordibus vestris? Quid enim est facilius dicere, Remittuntur tibi peccata tua, an dicere, Surge et ambula? Ut autem sciatis quia Filius Hominis habet potestatem dimittendi peccata, dixit paralytico, Surge, tolle lectum tuum, et vade in domum tuam; et surrexit, et abiit in domum suam. Scrutator animarum praevenit mentium maligna consilia, et deitatis suae potentiam operis attestatione monstravit, dum dissipati corporis membra componit, nervos stringit, jungit ossa, complet viscera, firmat artus, et gressus ad cursum suscitat in vivo cadavere jam sepultos.

Tolle lectum tuum. Hoc est, porta portantem, omnes muta vices, ut quod est infirmitatis testimonium sit probatio sanitatis, ut lectus doloris tui sit meae curationis indicium, ut receptae fortitudinis magnitudinem ponderis asserat magnitudo. Vade, inquit, in domum tuam, ne Christiana fide curatus, in viis Judaicae perfidiae jam moreris.

But that you may be able to grasp greater marks of his divinity, hear that he has penetrated the secret of your breast; see that he has reached the hiding places of your thoughts; understand that he lays bare the silent counsels of your heart. And when Jesus had seen, he says, their thoughts, he said: Why do you think evil things in your hearts? (Matt 9:4) For which is easier, to say: Your sins are remitted to you, or to say: Rise and walk? (Matt 9:5) But that you may know that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic: Rise, take up your bed, and go into your house; and he rose, and went away into his house (Matt 9:6–7). The searcher of souls forestalls the malignant counsels of minds, and showed the might of his Godhead by the witness of a work, in that he puts together the members of a dissolved body, tightens the sinews, joins the bones, fills the vitals, firms the limbs, and rouses to running the steps already buried in a living corpse.

Take up your bed. That is: carry what carried you, exchange all the roles, so that what is the witness of illness may be the proof of health, so that the bed of your pain may be the token of my cure, so that the greatness of the weight may declare the greatness of the strength regained. Go, he says, into your house, so that, healed by the Christian faith, you may no longer linger in the ways of Jewish unbelief.

Sermo LI.

De daemoniaco surdo et muto curato

Quia solito plus sese terris aestus infuderat, diu tacui, ne compressio quae ex desiderio nascitur audiendi, ipsa nobis cynocaumatum generaret incendium: nunc ubi aerem temperies mitigavit autumni, Dominicum, juvante Domino, revocamur ad verbum. Cum filium suum quidam surdi et muti spiritus furore possessum ingereret Domino curandum Dominum praeter morem patientiae suae evangelista sic retulit fuisse commotum, ut ante in patris vulnus ipse inveheretur quam ad filii moveretur curam. Respondens, inquit, unus de turba, dixit: Magister, attuli filium meum ad te, habentem spiritum mutum: qui ubicumque eum apprehenderit, allidit eum et spumat, et stridet dentibus et arescit; et dixi discipulis tuis ut ejicerent eum, et non potuerunt. Qui respondens, eis dixit: O generatio incredula!

Respondens unus de turba: Quid est quod, uno interrogante, feriuntur multi? quid est quod, conquirente uno, incredulitatis notantur omnes? quid est quod ad unius vocem tota generatio superba perfidiae nuncupatur? Quid est? Quia iste non ad Deum venerat, sed ad magistrum venerat; curam, non a virtute exigens, sed ab arte; tarditatem curae non causae deputans, sed curanti; impossibilitatem discipulorum magistri imperitiae assignans, Judaico livori invidiae Scribarum talem satisfaciens per clamorem, Et dixi discipulis tuis ut ejicerent eum, et non potuerunt. Hoc est dicere, esse diabolum qui Christo non crederet, esse daemonem qui parvi possit Christi nominis habere virtutem. Discipuli non suo, sed Christi nomine daemones de obsessis corporibus effugabant. Quod ergo daemon discipulis imperantibus non cedebat, iste ad infirmitatem Christi nominis, non discipulorum trahebat ad culpam. Videns ergo Dominus Judaeorum sic circumstantes sapere catervas, in filiis patrum perfidiam sic inurit, et in genitoribus germina sic venenosa percellit. O generatio incredula!

Sermon LI.

On the deaf and dumb demoniac healed

Because the heat had poured itself upon the earth more than usual, I have long been silent, lest the crowding that is born of the desire to hear should itself produce for us the blaze of the dog-day heat: now that the mildness of autumn has tempered the air, we are called back, with the Lord's help, to the Lord's word. When a certain man brought before the Lord, to be healed, his son, possessed by the fury of a deaf and dumb spirit, the Evangelist related that the Lord, beyond the wont of his patience, was so moved that he inveighed against the father's wound before he was moved to the cure of the son. One of the crowd, he says, answering, said: Teacher, I have brought my son to you, who has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down, and he foams, and gnashes his teeth, and withers away; and I told your disciples to cast it out, and they could not (Mark 9:17–18). He, answering them, said: O disbelieving generation! (Mark 9:19)

One of the crowd answering: why is it that when one asks, many are struck? why is it that when one disputes, all are branded with disbelief? why is it that at the voice of one the whole generation is named proud in unbelief? Why is it? Because this man had come not to God, but he had come to a teacher; demanding the cure not from power but from skill; laying the slowness of the cure not to the cause but to the one curing; assigning the disciples' inability to the master's lack of skill; satisfying the Jewish spite of the scribes' envy with such a clamour: And I told your disciples to cast it out, and they could not. That is to say, that it was a devil that did not believe Christ, a demon that could hold the power of Christ's name cheap. The disciples drove demons out of possessed bodies not in their own name, but in Christ's. So the fact that the demon did not yield when the disciples commanded, this man was dragging to the weakness of Christ's name, not to the fault of the disciples. So the Lord, seeing the crowds of the Jews standing round thinking thus, brands thus the unbelief of the fathers in the sons, and strikes thus the poisonous offspring in their begetters. O disbelieving generation!

Veniens, inquit, Dominus ad discipulos suos, vidit circa illos turbam magnam, et Scribas conquirentes cum illis; et confestim omnis populus videns Jesum stupefactus est, et expaverunt. Timentes utique ne quod insultaverant discipulis, veniente magistro, hoc perderent; et, tanto daemone fugato, ipsa fieret discipulis causa gloriae, quae fuerat confusionis occasio. Hinc est quod Dominus, uno omnibus interrogante, respondit: O generatio incredula, quamdiu apud vos ero? Quorum incredulitate neque unus daemon captivo fugatur ex corpore.

Quamdiu apud vos ero? Et non ad gentes mittam? ubi ad unius discipuli mei vocem templa corruunt, simulacra fugiunt, consumuntur arae, cadunt idola, caeduntur luci, tota daemonum potestas antiquis et veternosis sedibus suis gemens et tremens, et ejulans effugatur: commutantur in Ecclesias delubra, in altaria vertuntur arae, pecorum victimae mortuorum in vivam cordis hostiam transferuntur, auguria, divinationes, somnia, in solo Dei nutu, in Dei tantum constituuntur arbitrium. Quamdiu apud vos ero? quamdiu patiar vos? Patitur patientia non timore; non necessitate, sed misericordia; exspectatione, non metu hos patitur, portat, exspectat, qui redire vult impium, non perire.

Afferte illum ad me, quasi longe positum curare non possit, sed afferte vos incredulitatis vestrae causam, infidelitatis titulum, perfidiae documentum. Afferte illum. Ut qui saltem docenti Deo noluistis credere, vel daemone confitente credatis, et sentiatis vos ipso diabolo nequiores, cum videritis illum confiteri, tremere sui mox praesentia cognitoris.

Et attulerunt eum, et cum vidisset eum, statim spiritus conturbavit illum, et elisus in terra volvebatur spumans. Volvebatur homo, sed diabolus torquebatur; invasum vexabat cura, sed invasorem majestas judicis arguebat; sistebatur captus, sed puniebatur hostis, diaboli poena cruciatu humani corporis apparebat. Opus est, fratres, opus est Dei lumine, ne in opere Dei oculi sic fallantur humani.

The Lord, coming, he says, to his disciples, saw a great crowd around them, and scribes disputing with them; and at once all the people, seeing Jesus, were astounded, and they were afraid (Mark 9:14–15). Fearing, surely, that at the master's coming they would lose the ground on which they had mocked the disciples; and that, once so great a demon had been put to flight, the very thing that had been the occasion of confusion would become for the disciples a cause of glory. Hence it is that the Lord, when one was asking for all, answered: O disbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? By whose disbelief not even one demon is put to flight from a captive body.

How long shall I be with you? "And shall I not send to the Gentiles? where at the voice of one disciple of mine temples fall, images flee, altars of sacrifice are consumed, idols fall, groves are cut down, the whole power of demons is driven, groaning and trembling and wailing, from its ancient and decrepit seats: shrines are changed into churches, altars of sacrifice are turned into altars, the victims of dead beasts are transformed into the living victim of the heart, auguries, divinations, dreams are set in the sole will of God, in the choice of God alone." How long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? He bears with them by patience, not by fear; not by necessity, but by mercy; with expectation, not with dread, he bears with them, carries them, waits for them, he who wills that the ungodly man return, not perish.

Bring him to me: as if he could not cure him placed far off; but bring, you, the cause of your disbelief, the title of your faithlessness, the proof of your unbelief. Bring him. So that you who would not believe God even when he taught may at least believe when a demon confesses, and may feel yourselves more wicked than the devil himself, when you see him confess, and tremble at once at the presence of his examining judge.

And they brought him; and when he had seen him, at once the spirit threw him into convulsions, and dashed to the ground he rolled about foaming (Mark 9:20). The man rolled about, but the devil was tortured; the cure shook the one invaded, but the majesty of the judge convicted the invader; the captive was set before him, but the enemy was punished; the devil's punishment was showing in the torment of a human body. There is need, brothers, there is need of the light of God, so that in the work of God human eyes may not be so deceived.

Et interrogavit patrem ejus, quantum temporis est, ex quo hoc accidit ei? at ille ait, ab infantia. Requirit passionis tempus auctor temporis, medicus passionis tempus requirit, non ut nescius, sed ut sciens nescientibus prodat. Denique interrogatione tali tempus aperit, aetatem pandit, revolvit infantiam, ut tanti mali causa non tangat sobolem, sed parentem, quia a Deo sibi datum pignus ad diaboli gratiam, daemonum retulit ad honorem, dicente Scriptura. Et obtulerunt filios suos et filias suas daemoniis. Infantia ut in se diabolo locum faceret, quid criminis admiserat? quid reatus? sed replentur daemone parvuli, quando a parentibus suis offeruntur diabolo, daemonum ducuntur ad curam. Denique patris fide solvitur, quem patris infidelitas alligarat.

Patris vox est: Si quid potes, adjuva nos misertus nostri. Hoc est, nos adjuva, miserere nobis, quorum reatus aggravat innocentem, ad quorum poenam infantis periculum sic redundat. Et bene Dominus a parentibus fidem repetit, dicens: Si potes credere, omnia possibilia sunt credenti. Et pater, Credo, Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam. Pater credit; et, sicut diximus, patris liberatur fide, qui patris fuerit infidelitate damnatus. Nam cui genitoris fides profuit, quomodo ei genitoris perfidia potuit non obesse? Quomodo autem sanatus sit, vel quare discipuli, qui multos ejecerant daemones, hunc nequiverint effugare, juvante Domino secuturo sermone pandemus.

And he asked his father: How long a time is it since this happened to him? And he said: From infancy (Mark 9:21). The author of time asks the time of the suffering; the physician asks the time of the suffering, not as one who does not know, but so that, knowing, he may make it known to those who do not know. Indeed, by such a question he opens the time, unfolds the age, goes back over the infancy, so that the cause of so great an evil may touch not the offspring but the parent, because the pledge given him by God he had brought back to the devil's favour, to the honour of demons, as Scripture says: And they offered their sons and their daughters to demons (Ps 106:37). What crime had infancy committed, that it should make room in itself for the devil? what guilt? but little ones are filled with a demon when they are offered by their parents to the devil, are brought to the care of demons. Indeed, he is loosed by the father's faith whom the father's faithlessness had bound.

It is the father's voice: If you can do anything, help us, having pity on us (Mark 9:22). That is: help us, have mercy on us, whose guilt weighs down the innocent, to whose punishment the danger of the child thus redounds. And well does the Lord ask faith back from the parents, saying: If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23). And the father: I believe, Lord; help my disbelief (Mark 9:24). The father believes; and, as we have said, he is freed by the father's faith who had been condemned by the father's faithlessness. For him whom his begetter's faith profited, how could his begetter's unbelief fail to harm? But how he was healed, or why the disciples, who had cast out many demons, were unable to drive this one out, we shall set forth, with the Lord's help, in the following sermon.

Sermo LII.

De eodem

Doctoris officium est lecta disserere, et mysticis obscurata sensibus lucido astruere et demonstrare sermone, ne minor intelligentia inde perniciem generet auditori, unde scientiam conferre debuit et potuit salutarem.

Haec est igitur hodiernae consonantia lectionis. Et respondens unus de turba, dixit: Magister, attuli filium meum habentem spiritum surdum et mutum. Non dixit, Attuli filium meum surdum et mutum, sed, Attuli filium meum habentem spiritum surdum et mutum. Numquid nequitia spiritalis humanis distinguitur membris, et sensibus angustatur humanis, ut debilitates nostras, nostras perferat passiones; nec videre possit, nisi fenestris oculorum, et foraminibus aurium capere auditum; sermonem linguae aut oris officio proferre, et per hoc surdi mutique statum miserabilem sustinere, cum tenuis et aerea natura carnem nesciat, refutet ossa, velut aura spirans orbem totum temporis transeat in momento, diversas species assumat, varias mutetur in formas, corda penetret, illudat animabus, inspiret impias et turpissimas cogitationes, nec unde veniat aut quo redeat sentiatur, ac sic innocuas mentes, velut jaculum volans, lethali vulnere et tota facilitate transverberet? Parum esset si hoc pater solus sua supplicatione dixisset, cum dixit: Attuli filium meum habentem spiritum surdum et mutum, nisi Dominus ipse immundum spiritum tali increpatione depulisset: Surde et mute spiritus, ego praecipio tibi, exi ab eo.

Sed jam quae ad solutionem quaestionis pertinent prosequamur. Deus qui daemones est perpetuo crematurus incendio, qui jam eos, et in praesentia astringit vinculis, angit cruciatibus, urget poenis, potest et cum jusserit tota debilitate truncare, atque eo modo quo vident, quo audiunt, quo loquuntur, caecos reddere, surdos et mutos facere ne loquantur. Sed in hoc loco quid diabolus homini fecerit declaretur.

Sermon LII.

On the same

It is the teacher's office to discuss what has been read, and to establish and show in clear speech what is obscured by mystical senses, so that a lesser understanding may not breed ruin for the hearer from the very thing from which it ought and was able to bring him saving knowledge.

This, then, is the tenor of today's reading. And one of the crowd, answering, said: Teacher, I have brought my son, who has a deaf and dumb spirit (Mark 9:17). He did not say: "I have brought my son, deaf and dumb", but: I have brought my son, who has a deaf and dumb spirit. Can it be that spiritual wickedness is marked off by human members and confined by human senses, so as to bear our infirmities, our passions; and that it cannot see except through the windows of the eyes, nor take in hearing except through the openings of the ears, nor utter speech except by the office of tongue or mouth, and so endure the miserable state of the deaf and dumb, when its thin and airy nature knows no flesh, rejects bones, like a breathing breeze crosses the whole world in a moment of time, takes on diverse appearances, is changed into various forms, penetrates hearts, mocks souls, breathes in ungodly and most shameful thoughts, and is not perceived whence it comes or where it returns, and so, like a flying dart, pierces innocent minds with a deadly wound and with all ease? It would be little if the father alone had said this in his supplication, when he said: I have brought my son, who has a deaf and dumb spirit, had not the Lord himself driven out the unclean spirit with such a rebuke: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, go out of him (Mark 9:25).

But now let us go on to what belongs to the solution of the question. God, who is going to burn the demons with perpetual fire, who already, even in the present, binds them with chains, racks them with torments, presses them with punishments, can also, when he commands, maim them with total infirmity, and, in the way in which they see, in which they hear, in which they speak, make them blind, make them deaf and dumb, so that they cannot speak. But in this place let it be declared what the devil did to the man.

Antiquus refuga, ubi Deum terris reperit advenisse, obstruxit aures hominum, vinxit linguam, et obseratis humanis sensus foribus, speluncae suae latebram pectus fecit et paravit humanum: aestimans quod illuc auditus verbi, virtus divini nominis non veniret: simul, ut est dolosus et callidus, patrem capere parentesque tali se credidit decipere figmento, ut desperarent curari posse eum qui audire nec poterat, nec fari; et ut quod erat diabolici operis, esse crederent debilitatis humanae, deputarent pignori, ascriberent naturae, quod intulerat hostis inclusus.

Denique, sicut Matthaeus de eodem refert, et alia simulatione istius miseri fefellerat patrem; nam sibi sic supplicat: Domine, miserere filii mei, quia lunaticus est, et male torquetur. Aut humanae naturae aut coelestis elementi daemon, quod suae artis fuerat, voluit tunc videri, aptans lunae cursibus hominis passiones; vexabat corpus lunaribus incrementis, ut esse lunae crederent, quod erat diabolici criminis et furoris. Sic homines illusit, circumvenit ignaros, infamavit apud desides creaturam, quae lumini tantum condita laedere nescit homines quos continua magis juvare cogitur servitute. Verum posteaquam venit occultorum cognitor, inspector validissimus secretorum, cui latentia diaboli non poterunt obviare figmenta, adducitur puer sanandus praeceptione divina; ut quidquid diabolus vinxerat, solveretur a Christo. Egit, egit inimicus, ut hoc quod videbatur, esset naturae.

Sed quare discipuli non potuerunt ejicere eum? Quia hic homo gentilis populi producitur in figuram: siquidem gentilis populus juxta Apostolum, habebat spiritum aeris hujus. Aeris, inquit, spiritus, qui nunc operatur in filiis diffidentiae. Hic ergo erat surdus et mutus, qui nec audire legem poterat, nec Deum poterat confiteri, sed in igne gehennae, et per aquas amari semper gurgitis jactabatur; nec poterat a discipulis, vel ullo homine sanari, quia Christus olim auditus fidei, confessio salutis, gentium redemptio dicebatur et vita. Denique ubi imperio Christi fugatus est diabolus, patescunt clausa, vincula solvuntur, sermo redditur, auditus redit, homo reparatur, et solus diabolus deflet diuturna se possessione detrusum. Hinc est quod veniens ex gentibus impositione manus et exorcismis ante a daemone purgatur, et aperitionem aurium percipit, ut fidei capere possit auditum, ut possit ad salutem prosequente Domino pervenire.

The ancient deserter, when he found that God had come to the earth, blocked the ears of men, bound the tongue, and, the doors of the human senses barred, made and prepared the human breast as the hiding place of his cave, thinking that the hearing of the word, the power of the divine name, would not come there; at the same time, deceitful and cunning as he is, he believed that with such a fiction he could catch the father and deceive the parents, so that they would despair that one could be cured who could neither hear nor speak; and so that what was the devil's work they would believe to belong to human infirmity, would lay to the account of the child, would ascribe to nature, what the enemy shut up within had brought in.

Indeed, as Matthew relates of the same, he had deceived this wretch's father with another pretence too; for he begs him thus: Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is moonstruck, and is grievously tormented (Matt 17:15). The demon then wished what was the work of his own art to seem to be of human nature or of a heavenly element, fitting the man's sufferings to the courses of the moon; he harassed the body as the moon waxed, so that they would believe to be the moon's what was the devil's crime and fury. So he mocked men, got round the ignorant, defamed among the idle a creature which, made only for light, does not know how to harm men, whom it is rather compelled to help with continual service. But after the examining judge of hidden things came, the most powerful inspector of secrets, whom the hidden fictions of the devil will not be able to withstand, the boy is brought to be healed by divine command; so that whatever the devil had bound might be loosed by Christ. The enemy contrived, he contrived it, that what was seen should be nature's.

But why could the disciples not cast him out? Because this man is brought forward as a figure of the Gentile people; since the Gentile people, according to the Apostle, had the spirit of this air. The spirit, he says, of the air, who now works in the sons of distrust (Eph 2:2). This man, then, was deaf and dumb, who could neither hear the Law nor confess God, but was tossed in the fire of Gehenna and through the waters of the ever bitter whirlpool; nor could he be healed by the disciples or by any man, because Christ was of old called the hearing of faith, the confession of salvation, the redemption and the life of the Gentiles. Indeed, when the devil has been put to flight by Christ's command, what was shut lies open, the ties are loosed, speech is given back, hearing returns, the man is restored, and the devil alone laments that he has been thrust out of his long possession. Hence it is that one who comes from the Gentiles is first cleansed of the demon by the laying on of the hand and by exorcisms, and receives the opening of the ears, so that he may be able to take in the hearing of faith, so that he may be able to come to salvation with the Lord accompanying him.

Sermo LIV.

De Zachaeo

Beatus evangelista proxime dum divitis inhumani vitam describit et finem, humanos movit et moestificavit affectus: sed hodie Zachaei divitis humanitatem fidemque referendo, coeleste nos extulit, et provexit ad gaudium. Et ingressus, inquit, Jesus, perambulabat Jericho. Quare perambulat, non ambulat? Quia quod Moyses ambulaverat, perambulabat Christus; et populum quem Moyses induxit in via, Jesus ad quietem promissae mansionis adduxit. Perambulabat Jericho. Jericho civitas ipsa est, quam Jesus Nave septeno tubarum clangore subvertit. Sed quia Christus venit salvare quod perierat, ingreditur Jericho, ut quod lex terribili vociferatione dejecerat, Jesus clamore piae praedicationis attollat.

Jesus, inquit, ingressus perambulabat Jericho, et ecce vir nomine Zachaeus, et hic erat princeps Publicanorum, et ipse dives. Princeps publicanorum in civitate perdita, perditi operis Zachaeus egisse scribitur principatum: ex loco, persona, officio, reatus magnitudo monstratur, ut ex magnitudine criminis remittentis luceat magnitudo.

Et quaerebat Jesum videre. Qui Christum videre quaerit, coelum unde Christus est, non terram, de qua aurum est, intueatur. Dives ergo, qui sursum respicit, non portat divitias, sed proculcat; nec incurvatur divitiis, sed levatur; atque agit divitias ad largientis obsequium, non ad divitiarum avaritiae servitutem; divitiarum servus, non dominus est avarus: at misericors tot servos se probat habere quot nummos. Quaerebat Jesum videre, et non poterat prae turba, quia statura pusillus erat. Satis hic animo magnus erat, qui pusillus videbatur in corpore; nam mente tangebat coelos, qui corpore homines non aequabat. Nemo ergo de brevitate corporis, cui addere nil potest, curet; sed ut fide emineat, hoc procuret.

Sermon LIV.

On Zacchaeus

Lately the blessed Evangelist, in describing the life and the end of the inhuman rich man, moved and saddened our human feelings; but today, by relating the humanity and the faith of the rich man Zacchaeus, he has lifted us up and carried us forward to heavenly joy. And having entered, he says, Jesus was walking through Jericho (Luke 19:1). Why does he walk through, not walk? Because what Moses had walked, Christ was walking through; and the people whom Moses led into the way, Jesus brought to the rest of the promised dwelling. He was walking through Jericho. Jericho is that very city which Joshua son of Nun overthrew with the sevenfold blast of the trumpets (Josh 6:20). But because Christ came to save what had perished, he enters Jericho, so that what the Law had cast down with its terrible shouting, Jesus might raise up with the cry of loving preaching.

Jesus, he says, having entered, was walking through Jericho; and behold, a man named Zacchaeus, and he was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich (Luke 19:2). Chief of the publicans: in a lost city Zacchaeus is written to have held the chief place in a lost trade; from the place, the person, the office, the greatness of the guilt is shown, so that from the greatness of the crime the greatness of the one who remits it may shine out.

And he sought to see Jesus (Luke 19:3). Whoever seeks to see Christ, let him look at heaven, whence Christ is, not at the earth, whence gold is. So the rich man who looks upward does not carry his riches, but tramples on them; he is not bowed down by riches, but lifted up; and he drives his riches to the service of the one who lavishes them, not to the servitude of avarice for riches; the avaricious man is the servant of his riches, not their lord: but the merciful man proves that he has as many servants as coins. He sought to see Jesus, and could not because of the crowd, for he was small of stature. Very great in heart was he who seemed small in body; for with his mind he touched the heavens, he who in body did not equal men. Let no one, then, take care for the shortness of his body, to which he can add nothing; but let him take care that he stands high by faith.

Et praecurrens, ascendit in arborem. Quibus putas iste gradibus altissimae arboris pervenit ad ramos? Iste calcavit terram, superascendit aurum, transcendit avaritiam, et totam divitiarum supergressus est molem, ut prosiliens in arborem veniae, misericordiae apprehenderet fructum, et de specula confessionis indulgentiae cerneret largitorem. Ascendit in arborem sycomorum. Mysterio, non causa; ascendit in arborem sycomorum, ut unde Adam texerat nuditatem corporis, Zachaeus inde velaret feditatem avaritiae. Ascendit in arborem sycomorum, ut videret Jesum, quia inde erat transiturus. Vere dixit transiturus, quia Christus per terrenas vias et humanos labores non mansurus venerat, sed venerat transiturus.

Cum autem Jesus venisset ad locum, suspiciens, vidit eum. Quasi si illuc non vertisset oculos, non videret, qui Nathanael cum absens esset, sub eadem arbore longe vidit: sed vidit eum, vidit ad veniam, respexit ad gratiam, intendit ad vitam, contemplatus est ad salutem. Deus quem videt, non ut ignorans agnoscere cupit, sed ut sciens ad gloriam vult videre.

Vidit eum, et ait ad illum: Zachaee, festinans descende, quia hodie oportet me in domo tua manere. Si bene ascenderat, quare ei dicitur descende? Superius dixit: Praecurrens ascendit arborem. Praecurrit servus Dominum, et ante Zachaeus ascendit arborem quam crucem Dominator ascenderet; hinc est quod dicitur ei: Festinans descende. Si sapis, festinans descende: descende ante Dominum de Adamatica arbore, ut post crucem Dominicae passionis ascendas. Nisi quis tulerit crucem suam, et secutus me fuerit; non dixit, praecesserit me. Descende ergo, ut deponas tantae fraudis onera, pondera cupiditatis, usurarum molem, magisterium publicani, exactionis crudelissimae principatum, expeditus intres paupertatis scholam, discipulatum misericordiae, pietatis usum, patientiae disciplinam, studia virtutum, scientiam divinitatis, tolerantiam passionum, philosophiam mortis, atque inter vitalis ligni ardua jam perfectus ascendas.

Descende, quia hodie in domo tua oportet me manere. Cujus domum non intraverit Christus, ille ad divinam non perveniet mansionem; et cujus hic ad mensam non sederit Christus; ille coelestem non accumbet ad mensam. Et festinans descendit, et suscepit eum gaudens. Gaudet, quia suscepit susceptorem suum, quia pastorem suum pascit, quia reus judicem suffragio humanitatis inclinat, quia cibi et potus fenore debitorem suum sibi facit et acquirit; et sic fit, ut quaestum non perdat publicanus iste, sed mutet.

And running ahead, he climbed into a tree (Luke 19:4). By what steps, do you think, did this man reach the branches of a very high tree? He trod on the earth, climbed over gold, passed beyond avarice, and stepped over the whole mass of riches, so that, leaping into the tree of pardon, he might lay hold of the fruit of mercy, and from the watchtower of confession behold the bestower of indulgence. He climbed into a sycamore tree. For a mystery, not for the occasion; he climbed into a sycamore tree, so that from where Adam had covered the nakedness of his body, from there Zacchaeus might veil the foulness of his avarice. He climbed into a sycamore tree, to see Jesus, for he was to pass that way. Truly he said "to pass", for Christ had come through the ways of earth and the labours of men not to stay, but he had come to pass through.

And when Jesus had come to the place, looking up, he saw him (Luke 19:5). As if he would not have seen, had he not turned his eyes there, he who, while he was absent, saw Nathanael from afar under the same tree (John 1:48): but he saw him, saw him for pardon, looked on him for grace, gazed on him for life, contemplated him for salvation. Whom God sees, he does not desire to recognise as one who is ignorant, but, as one who knows, he wills to see him for glory.

He saw him, and said to him: Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay in your house. If he had done well to climb, why is he told: Come down? Above he said: Running ahead, he climbed the tree. The servant runs ahead of the Lord, and Zacchaeus climbed a tree before the Ruler climbed the cross; hence it is that he is told: Make haste and come down. If you are wise, make haste and come down: come down from the tree of Adam before the Lord does, so that after the cross of the Lord's Passion you may climb. Unless someone has taken up his cross, and followed me (Matt 10:38); he did not say, "gone before me". Come down, then, to lay down the burdens of so much fraud, the weights of greed, the mass of usury, the mastership of the publican, the chief place in a most cruel exaction, so that, unencumbered, you may enter the school of poverty, the discipleship of mercy, the practice of piety, the discipline of patience, the pursuits of the virtues, the knowledge of divinity, the endurance of sufferings, the philosophy of death, and, made perfect at last, climb among the heights of the tree of life.

Come down, for today I must stay in your house. He whose house Christ has not entered will not come to the divine dwelling; and he at whose table Christ has not sat here will not recline at the heavenly table. And making haste he came down, and received him joyfully (Luke 19:6). He rejoices, because he has received the one who receives him, because he feeds his shepherd, because the accused inclines the judge with the vote of his humanity, because with a loan of food and drink he makes his debtor his own and acquires him; and so it comes about that this publican does not lose his gain, but changes it.

Et cum viderent, inquit, omnes murmurabant dicentes, quod ad hominem peccatorem divertisset. Et quis sine peccato? Et si nemo, ipse sibi veniam negat, qui Deum, quod ad peccatores ingreditur, accusat. Deus, quando peccatorem quaerit, non peccata, sed hominem quaerit: ut peccatum, quod est opus hominis, despiciat, ut opus suum, quod homo est, non amittat. Audi prophetam dicentem: Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis, hoc est, ab operibus meis. De se autem: Opera manuum tuarum ne despicias. Judex, cum vult ignoscere, hominem respicit, non culpam; pater, cum misereri vult filio, affectum cogitat, non delictum: sic in homine Deus sui memor est operis, ut operis obliviscatur humani.

Tu ergo qui reprehendis, qui murmuras cur ad peccatorem diverterit Christus, viam salutis, exemplum veniae, misericordiae spem de tali ingressu cape, et cave ne hoc tibi sit blasphemandi materia, quod tibi occasio est salutis. Quo medicus nisi ad aegrum? Non est opus, inquit, sanis medicus, sed male habentibus. Quo anhelus pastor, nisi ad ovem perditam? Quando se rex hostibus immiscet, nisi cum vult liberare captivum? Et qui pretiosam perdit margaritam, loca squalida non dedignatur intrare, et eam inter stercora ipsa perquirere non abhorret. In quod praeceps post filium non se dat mater? Et arguitur Deus, qui creavit hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem suam, quare hominem inter peccata charitate conditoris inquirit? Murmuras, homo, quare hominem Deus inter peccata quaerat: quid facies cum videris eum propter hominem ipsas tenebras tartari penetrare?

Audi tamen quid ingressus ad peccatorem fecerit Christus. Stans, inquit, Zachaeus dixit. Vides quomodo erectus est, qui jacebat. Jacemus in vitiis, et jacemus oppressi; stamus, cum bonis operibus, erigimur ad profectum. Stans, inquit, Zachaeus, dixit, Dimidium bonorum meorum do pauperibus. Iste post mortem se credit esse victurum, qui dimidium bonorum jam futuram transmittit ad vitam. Sit licet ille perfectus, qui totum quod habet illuc, ubi victurus est, semper hinc praemittit; est iste tamen virtutum socius, consors prudentiae, fidei particeps, qui ad Deum vel dimidium mittit, quia homo quod hic reliquerit, hoc amittit. Et revera, fratres, sicut se iste ibi credit vivere, qui illuc transmittit sua; ita ille se tibi non credit esse victurum, qui sibi illic quod habere debeat nil pararit. Nam si paupertatem vix ferre possumus temporalem, in aeternum mendicus fieri quis durabit?

And when they saw it, he says, they all murmured, saying that he had turned aside to a sinful man (Luke 19:7). And who is without sin? And if no one is, he denies pardon to himself who accuses God because he goes in to sinners. God, when he seeks a sinner, seeks not the sins, but the man: so as to despise the sin, which is man's work, so as not to lose his own work, which man is. Hear the Prophet saying: Turn away your face from my sins (Ps 51:11), that is, from my works. But of himself: Do not despise the works of your hands (Ps 138:8). A judge, when he wishes to forgive, looks at the man, not at the fault; a father, when he wishes to have mercy on his son, thinks of his affection, not of the offence: so in man God is mindful of his own work, so as to forget the human work.

You, then, who reproach, who murmur that Christ turned aside to a sinner, take from such an entering the way of salvation, the example of pardon, the hope of mercy, and beware lest that be for you matter for blasphemy which is for you an occasion of salvation. Where should the physician go, if not to the sick? It is not the healthy, he says, who need a physician, but those who are ill (Matt 9:12). Where should the panting shepherd go, if not to the lost sheep? When does a king go in among the enemy, unless when he wishes to set a captive free? And he who loses a precious pearl does not disdain to enter squalid places, and does not shrink from searching for it among the very dung. Over what precipice will a mother not throw herself after her son? And is God blamed, who created man to his image and likeness (Gen 1:26), because he seeks man among his sins with the charity of a Maker? You murmur, man, that God seeks man among sins: what will you do when you see him, for man's sake, penetrate the very darkness of Tartarus?

Hear, however, what Christ did when he had gone in to the sinner. Standing, he says, Zacchaeus said (Luke 19:8). You see how he who lay low has been raised up. We lie in vices, and we lie oppressed; we stand when, with good works, we are raised up to advancement. Standing, he says, Zacchaeus said: Half of my goods I give to the poor. This man believes that he will live after death, who already sends half his goods ahead to the life to come. Granted that he is perfect who always sends ahead from here all that he has to the place where he will live; yet this man is a companion of the virtues, a sharer of prudence, a partaker of faith, who sends even half to God, because what a man leaves here, he loses. And indeed, brothers, just as this man believes that he will live there, since he sends his things over there, so that other man, I tell you, does not believe that he will live, who has prepared for himself nothing there that he may have. For if we can scarcely bear poverty in time, who will endure becoming a beggar for ever?

Quis militans non ad patriam mittit, quidquid bellico sudore conquirit, ut adolescentiae labores senectus deliciosa compenset? Et Christianus cui militare est id, quod vivit in saeculo, quomodo non cogitat ut pericula terrena otiis coelestibus consoletur? Qualiter haec faciat Christianus, Zachaeus ipse et verbo docet et monstrat exemplo.

Dimidium bonorum meorum do pauperibus, et si cui aliquid fraude abstuli, reddo quadruplum. Qui aliena prorogat, plus dando diripit quam furando; nec compescit inde dolentum gemitus, sed producit. Audeo dicere, qui de fraude Deo offert, cumulat crimina, non emundat; quia Deus in tali munere exuvias suorum pauperum, non misericordias intuetur. Sine causa Deo plorat, contra quem juste causa pauperis ploraverit Deo. Dei vox est: Si pignus tuleris fratri tuo tunicam, ante solis occasum reddes illi. Sicut furem lucerna prodit, ita sol eos qui fraudantur, accusat.

Si volumus Deo offerre nostra, si apud Deum quae nostra sunt possidere volumus, mereamur et nos audire talia, qualia Zachaeus audivit: Hodie domui huic salus advenit, quia et hic filius est Abrahae. Inhumanus dives cum esset filius Abrahae, factus est gehennae filius; iste cum esset rapinae filius, dando sua, aliena reddendo, Abrahae adoptatur in filium. Ne quis tamen putet Zachaeum offerendo dimidium bonorum perfectionis tenuisse fastigium, qui post omnia sua et seipsum sic dedit Domino, ut episcopatus honore fultus, a mensa publicani quaestus ad mensam dominici corporis perveniret; et fraudulentas saeculi divitias derelinquens, in paupertate Christi veras saeculi divitias inveniret.

What soldier does not send home whatever he acquires by the sweat of war, so that a delightful old age may make up for the labours of his youth? And the Christian, for whom living in the world is a soldier's service, how does he not take thought to console his earthly dangers with heavenly leisure? How the Christian is to do this, Zacchaeus himself both teaches by word and shows by example.

Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from anyone by fraud, I restore fourfold. He who pays out what is another's plunders more by giving than by stealing; nor does he thereby silence the groans of those in pain, but prolongs them. I dare to say it: he who offers to God out of fraud heaps up crimes, he does not wash them away; because in such a gift God looks on the spoils of his poor, not on works of mercy. Without cause does he weep before God, against whom the cause of the poor man will justly have wept before God. It is the voice of God: If you take your brother's tunic in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down (Exod 22:25). As the lamp betrays the thief, so the sun accuses those who defraud.

If we wish to offer to God what is ours, if we wish to possess with God the things that are ours, let us also merit to hear such words as Zacchaeus heard: Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham (Luke 19:9). The inhuman rich man, though he was a son of Abraham, became a son of Gehenna; this man, though he was a son of plunder, by giving what was his and restoring what was another's, is adopted as a son of Abraham. Yet let no one think that Zacchaeus, by offering half his goods, held the summit of perfection, he who, after all that was his, gave himself also to the Lord, so that, upheld by the honour of the episcopate, he passed from the table of the publican's gain to the table of the Lord's body; and, leaving behind the fraudulent riches of the world, he found in the poverty of Christ the true riches of the world.

Sermo LV.

De paterna Dei in nos dilectione, de patrum in filios charitate, et de Judaeorum poena

Posteaquam praecepta legis diffusa voluminibus, congesta libris, amorem nobis non suffecerunt commendare divinum, duris hominum praecordiis, comparationibus, exemplis, inseritur Dei et insinuatur affectus. Quis, inquit, ex vobis patrem petit panem, numquid lapidem dabit illi? aut piscem, numquid pro pisce serpentem dabit illi? aut si petierit ovum, numquid porriget illi scorpionem? Si ergo vos, cum sitis mali, nostis bona data dare filiis vestris, quanto magis Pater vester coelestis spiritum bonum dabit petentibus se?

Quis ex vobis patrem petit panem, numquid lapidem dabit illi? Charitas dolum non habet; fraudem pietas, affectio non recipit falsitatem. Si pater est, non potest non amare; si amat, nisi quod bonum est dare nescit. Negat patrem, qui de patris suspectus est largitate; ignorat se filium, quem data paterna sollicitant. Totum quod est pietatis excludit, qui salutare non credit quidquid dederit pater; aut quomodo pater poterit filiis dare mala pro bonis, qui mala semper pro filiis paratus est sustinere, qui pro filiis mortem non refugit, pericula non declinat? Ideoque te Deus patrem fecit, ideo a te voluit hominem procreari, qui utique quod te de terra fecerat, poterat fecisse quamplurimos: sed egit ut generando scires quanta esset generantis affectio, et in te amorem tui tantum probares auctoris, quantum ipse auctor pignoris tuo pignori conaris impendere.

Certe non solum in te quid esset generantis affectio, sentire te Deus voluit, sed in feris, et in pecudibus, et avibus, hoc Deus voluit te videre: quae cum de terra produxerit sola jussione, postea laborem sentire compulit generandi, mutare patrias, loca cubilibus apta conquirere, fetus locorum difficultatibus communire, gemitibus edere, maximis laboribus enutrire, ac se morti, si natos suos capi viderint, non negare. Unde si non hominis, vel ferarum comparatione, pecudum similitudine, exemplis avium, disce quanta sit in paterna charitate sinceritas.

Sermon LV.

On God's fatherly love for us, on fathers' love for their sons, and on the punishment of the Jews

After the precepts of the Law, spread through volumes, heaped up in books, did not suffice to commend divine love to us, God's affection is planted and insinuated into the hard hearts of men by comparisons, by examples. Which of you, he says, if his son asks his father for bread, will he give him a stone? Or a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he hand him a scorpion? (Luke 11:11–12) If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your sons, how much more will your heavenly Father give a good spirit to those who ask him? (Luke 11:13)

Which of you, if his son asks his father for bread, will he give him a stone? Charity has no guile; piety does not admit fraud, nor affection falsehood. If he is a father, he cannot not love; if he loves, he does not know how to give anything but what is good. He denies his father who is suspicious of his father's bounty; he does not know himself to be a son whom his father's gifts make uneasy. He shuts out all that belongs to piety who does not believe that whatever a father gives is salutary; or how will a father be able to give evils instead of goods to his sons, who is always ready to bear evils for his sons, who for his sons does not flee from death, does not avoid dangers? And therefore God made you a father, therefore he willed that man be procreated from you, he who, since he had made you from the earth, could surely have made a great many: but he so acted that by begetting you might know how great is the affection of one who begets, and might prove in yourself the love of your author to be as great as that which you yourself, the author of a child, strive to spend on your child.

Certainly God willed you to feel what the affection of one who begets is not only in yourself, but in wild beasts, and in cattle, and in birds he willed you to see it: though he brought them forth from the earth by his command alone, he afterwards compelled them to feel the labour of begetting, to change their homes, to seek out places fit for lairs, to fortify their young by the difficulty of the places, to bring them forth with groans, to rear them with the greatest labours, and not to refuse themselves to death if they see their young being taken. Hence, if not by the comparison of man, at least by that of wild beasts, by the likeness of cattle, by the examples of birds, learn how great is the sincerity in a father's charity.

Si ergo Deum credis, et confessus es patrem, quidquid jusserit, quidquid in te elegerit, crede tibi satis esse salutiferum, crede satis esse vitale. Matris data discutere non licet, patris monita retractare non convenit; sic licet paterni mandati species tristior, res tamen ipsa salutifera et vitalis. Sic Abraham ubi Deum patrem credidit, mandatorum formas non attendit asperas et acerbas; circumcisionem recipit verecundam; et quae coelestis Pater jubet, non discutit, sed judicat gloriosa: parricidium considerat perscelestum; sed quia Deus imperat, totum pietati committit. Hinc Isaac patris super se gladium cum videret, hostiam se esse, cum horrere, cum dolere poterat, est gavisus. Hinc Jephte filia patris munus, patris vota, sua morte tota gratulatione persolvit. Quare ergo jam sciens Deum de patris disputat datis, cum parvulus et innocuus quaerit a patre, non sibi bona et profutura percipit?

Sed cur has similitudines Dominus fecerit, perquiramus. Quis, inquit, ex vobis patrem petit panem, numquid lapidem dabit illi? Potuit dicere, numquid zizania, numquid lolium, quod ex vicinitate et similitudine mentitur panem, sed generat angustias? Sed Christus venerat filiis, id est Judaeis, quos genuisse tali clamore querebatur: Filios genui et exaltavi; ipsi autem spreverunt me; venerat ergo filiis, venerat panis de coelo, qui dixit: Ego sum panis qui de coelo descendi. Sed Judaeis est conversus in lapidem offensionis, et petram scandali, dicente Domino: Ecce pono in Sion lapidem offensionis, et petram scandali. Quare petram? Quia mordere petram, non panem a patre quaerere gestiebant. Circumdederunt me, inquit, canes multi. Denique posteaquam illi ex hominibus in canes probantur esse conversi, coelestis illis in petram conversus est panis, non dantis vitio, sed accipientis nequitia, qui illos non reficeret, sed necaret; nec in fundamento positus promoverat ad culmen, sed eos qui sui patris tendebant ad necem, in profundam daret et volveret in ruinam.

Adjecit aliam similitudinem: Numquid pro pisce serpentem dabit illi? Erat et piscis Christus Jordanis levatus ex alveo, qui carbonibus impositus passionum, post resurrectionem suis, id est discipulis, escam praebuit tunc vitalem; sed Judaeis in serpentem piscis iste commutatur, dicente Domino: Sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in eremo, ita exaltari oportet Filium Hominis. Judaei in serpente videbant Christum, quia impius oculus Deum videre non potest, non potest videre pietatem.

If, then, you believe God, and have confessed him father, whatever he commands, whatever he chooses for you, believe that it is very salutary for you, believe that it is very life-giving. A mother's gifts may not be examined, a father's warnings ought not to be revised; so, though the look of a father's command be rather sad, the thing itself is salutary and life-giving. So Abraham, when he believed God a father, did not attend to the harsh and bitter forms of the commands; he receives a shameful circumcision (Gen 17); and what the heavenly Father commands, he does not examine, but judges glorious: he weighs a most wicked parricide; but because God commands, he commits everything to piety. Hence Isaac, when he saw his father's sword over him, when he could have shuddered, when he could have felt pain, rejoiced to be a victim (Gen 22). Hence Jephthah's daughter paid her father's gift, her father's vows, with her own death, with all thanksgiving (Judg 11). Why, then, does one who now knows God dispute about his father's gifts? When a little and innocent child asks of his father, does he not receive what is good and profitable for him?

But let us search out why the Lord made these likenesses. Which of you, he says, if his son asks his father for bread, will he give him a stone? He could have said: will he give cockle, will he give darnel, which from its nearness and likeness passes itself off as bread, but brings on anguish? But Christ had come to sons, that is, to the Jews, whom he complained, with such a cry, that he had begotten: I have begotten sons and exalted them; but they have despised me (Isa 1:2); he had come, then, to sons, the bread from heaven had come, who said: I am the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:41). But for the Jews he was turned into a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Rom 9:33; Isa 8:14), as the Lord says: Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Rom 9:33). Why a rock? Because they were eager to bite a rock, not to seek bread from their father. Many dogs, he says, have surrounded me (Ps 22:17). Indeed, after they are shown to have been turned from men into dogs, the heavenly bread was turned for them into a rock, not by the vice of the giver, but by the wickedness of the receivers, so that it would not refresh them, but kill them; nor, laid in the foundation, had it raised them to the summit, but those who were bent on their father's murder it cast down and rolled into deep ruin.

He added another likeness: Will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Christ too was a fish, lifted from the bed of the Jordan, who, laid on the coals of the sufferings, after the resurrection provided his own, that is the disciples, with a food that was then life-giving; but for the Jews this fish is changed into a serpent, as the Lord says: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up (John 3:14). The Jews saw Christ in the serpent, because the impious eye cannot see God, cannot see loving-kindness.

Dixit et tertiam similitudinem: Numquid si petierit ovum, porriget illi scorpionem? Consuetum est et solemne semper parvulos ovum petere, et parentes ovum pusillis petentibus non negare: sed quia Christus venerat congregare sicut gallina pullos suos, ovum protulit verbi, per quod Ecclesiae germina sancta nutrirentur. Sed quia Judaeus per invidiam effundere magis quam sumere ovum id volebat, reperit ibidem scorpionem, ut juxta Apostolum, Mandatum quod erat illis in vitam, hoc illis esset ad mortem. In commendationem pietatis tria Dominus protulit, et demonstravit exempla, ut tribus testimoniis, sicut tribus testibus, et pios ad fidem sui amoris animaret, et confutaret impios, non patris, sed suo vitio charitatis gratiam non cepisse.

He spoke a third likeness too: If he asks for an egg, will he hand him a scorpion? It is customary and usual for little ones always to ask for an egg, and for parents not to refuse an egg to small children who ask: but because Christ had come to gather as a hen her chicks (Matt 23:37), he brought forth the egg of the word, by which the holy offspring of the Church were to be nourished. But because the Jew, out of envy, wished rather to spill that egg than to take it, he found a scorpion in that very place, so that, according to the Apostle, the commandment which was for life to them became for them a thing of death (Rom 7:10). In commendation of loving-kindness the Lord brought forth and showed three examples, so that by three testimonies, as by three witnesses, he might both rouse the godly to faith in his love, and refute the impious: that it was not by the father's vice, but by their own, that they had not received the grace of charity.