SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

The Sermons of Saint Peter Chrysologus

Sermones

VOLUME II · III

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Saint Peter Chrysologus (c. 380–c. 450)
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Sermo LVI.

De symbolo apostolorum

Sollicitaret me acerbi partus subita et confusa tempestas, et immatura germinum me pullulamenta turbarent, nisi crebro disruptis temporum moris, et rudi latrocinio, et effractis viscerum claustris, repentina vivendi lucra quaererent et raperent nascituri. Hinc est quod homo saepe mensis decimi despiciens terminum, septimo mense angustas primae domus et arctas uteri abjicit et deserit mansiones, ut praeliator novus ante se tempus evicisse gaudeat quam dependat ipse suam temporibus servitutem.

Et si hoc humanae licet naturae, naturae coelesti quid obsistere poterit et divinae? Aut quid sanctus Spiritus non potest, si hoc potest caro? Aut quomodo gratia superna non efficit, quod fragilitas obtinet, et implet humana? Nonne sic Paulus acerbo dolore viam nostrae vexavit, et viscera genitricis, ut coelesti turbine, ac tota tempestate Ecclesiae praeveniret tempora parientis, ut subito, et in via nasceretur, qui erat ad fidem viam gentibus praebiturus? Merito se abortivum nuncupat, et miratur se fuisse natum, qui novit se nulla conceptus tempora pertulisse. Namque cum adhuc hostis ipse caederet extrinsecus sanctae matris uterum, et in ipso ortu pignora veneranda collideret, repente sanctum mutatur in germen, qui ipsius germinis fuerat ferocissimus persecutor. Eunuchus etiam generatur in via. Ut quem castraverat humana temeritas ad hominis servitutem, et intra regis aulam invita castitas collocarat, voluntaria castitas, et votiva ad coelestis aulae gloriam, ad aeterni regis promoveret et transferret obsequium. Beatus iste cui datum est ut palatii infulas non amitteret, sed mutaret.

Haec dicit ratio, filioli, ut vos quos tristes suscepimus ad matris uterum, laetissimos perducamus uno eodemque momento. Audite fidem, orationem discite. Sed quia, impediente tempore, nec nos vobis possumus aperire mysterium, nec vos nobis potestis solemniter reddere quae traduntur, agite ut et nunc symboli simpliciter verba discatis, et paschali tempore quo plenius haec traduntur, sacramenti ipsius interiora possitis agnoscere. Accipite quod vultis, quod desideratis invadite, quia regnum coelorum vim patitur, et qui vim faciunt diripiunt illud. Accipite quod vultis; et quod vis potest tollere, gratia largiatur.

Sermon LVI.

On the Apostles' Creed

The sudden and confused storm of a premature birth would make me anxious, and the unripe shootings of the offspring would trouble me, were it not that often, the delays of time broken through, by a rough robbery, the bars of the womb burst open, those about to be born seek and snatch the sudden gains of living. Hence it is that a man often, disdaining the term of the tenth month, in the seventh month casts off and deserts the narrow mansions of his first house, the tight mansions of the womb, so that, a new fighter, he may rejoice to have overcome time before he himself pays his servitude to the times.

And if this is permitted to human nature, what will be able to stand against heavenly and divine nature? Or what can the Holy Spirit not do, if the flesh can do this? Or how does heavenly grace not accomplish what human frailty obtains and fulfils? Did not Paul so trouble, with bitter pain, the way and the womb of our bearer, that by a heavenly whirlwind and with the whole storm he forestalled the times of the Church in labour, so that he was born suddenly, and on the way (Acts 9:3), he who was to provide the Gentiles with the way to faith? Rightly he calls himself one untimely born (1 Cor 15:8), and marvels that he was born, he who knows that he endured no times of conception. For while he himself, still an enemy, was striking from outside the womb of the holy mother, and dashing her venerable children at their very birth, suddenly he who had been the most ferocious persecutor of that very shoot is changed into a holy shoot. The eunuch too is begotten on the way (Acts 8:36–38). So that him whom human rashness had castrated for the servitude of a man, and whom an unwilling chastity had placed within a king's court, a willing chastity, a vowed chastity, might advance and transfer to the glory of the heavenly court, to the service of the eternal King. Blessed is he, to whom it was given not to lose the insignia of the palace, but to change them.

This is what reason says, little children: that you, whom we received sad into the mother's womb, we may bring forth most joyful in one and the same moment. Hear the faith, learn the prayer. But since, as time hinders us, neither can we open the mystery to you, nor can you solemnly give back to us what is handed over, see to it that you now learn the words of the Creed simply, and at Easter time, when these things are handed over more fully, you may come to know the inner things of the sacrament itself. Take what you wish, seize what you desire, for the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and those who do violence carry it off (Matt 11:12). Take what you wish; and what force can carry off, let grace bestow.

Ingressus vitae, janua salutis, introitus fidei, singularis, innocens et pura confessio perdocetur, dicente propheta: Intrate portas ejus in confessione. Unde idem propheta taliter admonitus, Dei in se loquentis aditum domorum postulat, dicens: Aperite mihi portas justitiae, et ingressus in eas confitebor Domino. Videtis quia non potest confiteri, qui non fuerit ingressus hanc domum salutis et fidei, in quam sicut intromittit confessio, ita negatio de ea indubitanter excludit. Sed quomodo confitendum sit audiamus. Corde, inquit Apostolus, creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem. Et quid crederetur ostendit. Si credis, inquit, Dominum Jesum in corde tuo, et ore confessus fueris, salvus eris. Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore confessio fit ad salutem. Magnum, filioli, per hoc fidei nostrae videmus esse compendium, quando inter cor et linguam totum salutis humanae versatur et geritur sacramentum. Habes homo unde credere debeas, corde creditur ad justitiam; habes unde debeas confiteri, ore confessio fit ad salutem. Et quid dicam? Totum in se habet homo, qui se habet; ipse autem se habet, qui Deum habet; Deum vero habet, qui eum suum credit, et confitetur auctorem.

Signate vos. Fides quae capitur auditu, corde creditur, ore promitur ad salutem, in secreto mentis est collocanda: et ipsis est nostri pectoris committenda vitalibus, ne dum chartis, et atramento describitur incaute, non reservetur credulis ad vitam, sed prodatur perfidis ad ruinam. In te, homo, custodire debes, quod tibi extra te positum poterit deperire.

The entrance of life, the gate of salvation, the way into faith, is taught thoroughly to be a confession single, innocent and pure, as the Prophet says: Enter his gates in confession (Ps 100:4). Hence the same Prophet, so admonished, asks for entry to the houses of God, who spoke within him, saying: Open to me the gates of justice, and having entered them I will confess to the Lord (Ps 118:19). You see that he cannot confess who has not entered this house of salvation and faith, into which, as confession admits, so denial without doubt shuts out of it. But let us hear how one must confess. With the heart, says the Apostle, one believes for justice, and with the mouth confession is made for salvation (Rom 10:10). And he showed what was to be believed. If you believe, he says, the Lord Jesus in your heart, and have confessed with your mouth, you will be saved (Rom 10:9). With the heart one believes for justice, with the mouth confession is made for salvation. Great, little children, is the short way of our faith that we see in this, since between the heart and the tongue the whole mystery of human salvation turns and is accomplished. You have, man, the means by which you ought to believe: with the heart one believes for justice; you have the means by which you ought to confess: with the mouth confession is made for salvation. And what shall I say? That man has everything in himself who has himself; and he has himself who has God; and he has God who believes him to be his own, and confesses him his author.

Sign yourselves. The faith which is taken in by hearing, believed with the heart, uttered with the mouth for salvation, is to be placed in the secret of the mind, and committed to the very vitals of our breast, lest, by being incautiously written down on paper and in ink, it should not be kept for believers for life, but betrayed to unbelievers for ruin. In yourself, man, you must guard what, placed outside you, could be lost to you.

Sermo LVII.

In symbolum apostolorum

Beatus Isaias, evangelista non minus quam Propheta, immunda labia se habere et in medio populi habentis labia immunda se habitare deplorat, dicens: O miser ego, quoniam compunctus sum, quia cum sim homo, et immunda labia habeam, in medio quoque populi habentis labia immunda ego habitem, regem Dominum Sabaoth vidi oculis meis. Super humano percellitur hic dolore, quia quod de Deo sentit et videt, loqui non valet, annuntiare non potest, non potest confiteri. Quantum caro angusta est, animo suo arcta sunt labia tantum, lingua tantum brevis est suae mentis interpres. In carne ignis anhelat inclusus, vaporat venas, inflammat viscera, exaestuat in medullis, totaque hominis interna semper incendit, quia quod mentis contemplatur affectu, ore depromere, effundere labiis, lingua distinguere, et in totum non sufficit evaporare sermonem. Hinc est quod Isaias, ubi vidit regem coeli, hoc est Christum, ipsumque esse Dominum Sabaoth, clara visione conspexit, sua suique populi labia immunda deflevit; quia sicut illustrat corda, purgat ora, labia emundat Christi confessa divinitas, ita Christi polluit negata majestas. Sed quid iste profecerit prophetae gemitus audiamus. Et missus est, inquit, ad me unus de seraphim, qui in manu habebat carbonem, quem forcipe tulerat de altari, et tetigit os meum, dicens: Ecce hoc tetigit labia tua, et abstulit iniquitates, et peccata circumpurgavit.

Non est hujus temporis dicere cur unus mittitur, et quis sit iste qui mittitur, et quantus est qui carbonem superni ignis sic manu gestat intrepidus, immo sic suo temperat attactu, ut prophetae purget labia, non perurat; sed nunc nos etiam toto cordis compungamur affectu, nosque in hac miseria carnis miseros esse fateamur, immunda quoque labia nos habere piis gemitibus defleamus, ut unus iste de seraphim legis gratiae forcipe, acceptum de superno altari nobis ignitum fidei deferat sacramentum, talique moderamine nostrorum tangat ora labiorum, ut iniquitates auferat, peccata depurget, et ora nostra sic in flammam plenae confessionis accendat, ut sit ista salutis adustio, non doloris.

Sermon LVII.

On the Apostles' Creed

Blessed Isaiah, no less an evangelist than a prophet, laments that he has unclean lips and that he dwells in the midst of a people that has unclean lips, saying: O wretched am I, for I am pierced with compunction, because, though I am a man and have unclean lips, and dwell also in the midst of a people that has unclean lips, I have seen with my eyes the king, the Lord Sabaoth (Isa 6:5). He is struck down by a pain beyond the human, because what he perceives and sees of God he is not able to speak, cannot announce, cannot confess. As narrow as the flesh is, so tight are the lips for his heart, so short is the tongue as interpreter of his mind. In the flesh a fire pants, shut in, steams through the veins, inflames the bowels, seethes in the marrow, and ever sets on fire all the inner parts of a man, because what he contemplates with the affection of the mind, he is not able to bring forth with the mouth, to pour out with the lips, to articulate with the tongue, and wholly to breathe out in speech. Hence it is that Isaiah, when he saw the king of heaven, that is Christ, and beheld in clear vision that he is the Lord Sabaoth, wept over his own lips and those of his people as unclean; because, as the divinity of Christ, confessed, enlightens hearts, purges mouths, cleanses lips, so the majesty of Christ, denied, defiles them. But let us hear what this groaning of the prophet achieved. And there was sent, he says, to me one of the seraphim, who had in his hand a coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar, and he touched my mouth, saying: Behold, this has touched your lips, and has taken away iniquities, and has purged away sins (Isa 6:6–7).

This is not the time to say why one is sent, and who he is that is sent, and how great is he who thus fearlessly carries in his hand the coal of heavenly fire, or rather so tempers it with his touch that he purges the prophet's lips and does not burn them up; but now let us too be pierced with the whole affection of the heart, and acknowledge that we are wretched in this wretchedness of the flesh, and lament with pious groans that we too have unclean lips, so that this one of the seraphim, with the tongs of the law of grace, may bring down to us the fiery mystery of faith taken from the altar above, and touch the mouths of our lips with such restraint as to take away iniquities, purge away sins, and so kindle our mouths into the flame of full confession, that this may be a burning of salvation, not of pain.

Petamus etiam, ut ad corda usque nostra perveniat calor iste carbonis, ut de tanta suavitate mysterii, non solum labiis gustum, sed ipsis totam satietatem sensibus et mente capiamus; et sicut Isaias post emundationem labiorum ineffabilem partum Virginis est locutus, dicens: Ecce Virgo in utero accipiet, et pariet filium, sic nos passionis sacramentum et resurrectionis referamus gloriam: Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem.

In Deum vos hodie merito confitemini credidisse, quando deos deasque sexu dispares, numero confusos, turba populares, viles genere, fama turpes, impietate maximos, primos scelere, crimine singulares, ipsis etiam sepulcrorum suorum vultibus accusatos, laetamini vos fugisse; quia miseriae, doloris et infelicitatis est tantos et tales habuisse servulos, quantos vos et quales dominos hactenus pertulistis. Sed ad unum vivum, verum, solum, sed non solitarium Deum vos pervenisse gaudete, dicendo: Credo in Deum Patrem. Jam confiteatur Filium, qui nominat Patrem: quia qui vocari Pater, Pater dici voluit, habere se Filium clementer ostendit, quem non accepit ex tempore, non genuit in tempore, non suscepit ad tempus. Divinitas nec initium capit, nec recipit finem, nec admittit posterum, quae non agnoscit occasum. Deus Filium non doloribus parturit, sed virtutibus esse manifestat; nec praeter se facit quod ex se est, sed generat; dumque in se est, aperit et revelat. De Patre processit Filius, non recessit; nec successurus patri prodivit ex Patre, sed prodivit mansurus semper in Patre. Audi Joannem dicentem: Hoc erat in principio. Et alibi: Quod fuit ab initio. Quod erat utique non accessit; quod fuit, apparet utique non coepisse. Ego sum, inquit, primus, et ego novissimus. Qui primus est, non est iste post alterum; qui novissimus, post se alterum non relinquit; sed ista cum dicit, non excludit Patrem, sed in se et Patre universa concludit.

Sed ad ea, quae sequuntur accedamus: Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus unicum Dominum nostrum. Sicut reges triumphorum suorum titulis nuncupantur, et subjectarum gentium nominibus conquirunt numerosissima cognomenta; ita Christus bonorum suorum titulis nuncupatur: a chrismate enim vocatus est Christus, qui divinitatis unguentum aridis jam mortalium membris pius medicator infudit; et ut a chrismate Christus, sic Jesus vocatus est a salute, qui ob hoc nos divino infudit unguento, ut aegris certam salutem, perditis perpetuam redderet sanitatem. Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus unicum. Quia etsi sunt multi filii per gratiam, iste unus et singularis est per naturam. Dominum nostrum. Qui nos de tantorum, tam crudelium, tam turpium liberatos servitio dominorum, ut non ad conditionem pristinam vindicet, sed ut ad perpetuam libertatem manumittat, inquirit.

Let us ask also that the heat of this coal may reach even to our hearts, so that from such great sweetness of the mystery we may take not only a taste on the lips, but full satiety in the very senses and in the mind; and as Isaiah, after the cleansing of his lips, spoke of the ineffable childbearing of the Virgin, saying: Behold, a virgin shall receive in the womb, and shall bear a son (Isa 7:14), so may we tell the sacrament of the Passion and the glory of the resurrection: "I believe in God the Father almighty."

Rightly do you confess today that you have believed in God, when you rejoice to have escaped gods and goddesses unequal in sex, confused in number, common in their crowd, base in birth, shameful in repute, greatest in impiety, first in wickedness, singular in crime, accused even by the very faces of their sepulchres; for it would be a matter of wretchedness, pain and misfortune to have had as little slaves as many and such as you have endured until now as masters. But rejoice that you have come to the one God, living, true, alone, but not solitary, saying: "I believe in God the Father." Let him who names the Father now confess the Son: because he who willed to be called Father, to be named Father, showed in his clemency that he has a Son, whom he did not get from time, did not beget in time, did not take on for a time. Divinity neither takes a beginning nor receives an end, nor admits a successor, since it knows no setting. God does not bring forth the Son in pains, but shows by powers that he is; nor does he make outside himself what is from himself, but he begets; and while he is in himself, he opens and reveals. The Son proceeded from the Father, he did not withdraw; nor did he go forth from the Father to succeed a father, but he went forth to remain always in the Father. Hear John saying: This was in the beginning (John 1:2). And elsewhere: What has been from the beginning (1 John 1:1). What "was" certainly was not added; what "has been" is plainly shown not to have begun. I am, he says, the first, and I am the last (Isa 44:6). He who is first is not after another; he who is last leaves no other after him; but when he says these things, he does not shut out the Father, but shuts up all things in himself and the Father.

But let us come to what follows: "And in Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord." As kings are named by the titles of their triumphs, and gain very many surnames from the names of subject nations, so Christ is named by the titles of his benefits: for he is called Christ from chrism, who as a loving healer poured the ointment of divinity into the now dry limbs of mortals; and as Christ from chrism, so he is called Jesus from salvation, who poured the divine ointment on us for this purpose, that he might restore to the sick a sure salvation, to the lost a perpetual health. "And in Christ Jesus, his only Son." Because, though there are many sons by grace, he is one and only by nature. "Our Lord." Who seeks us out, freed from the servitude of so many, such cruel, such base masters, not to claim us back for our former condition, but to set us free into perpetual liberty.

Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto. Ita et taliter tibi nascitur Christus, donec tibi homo nascendi ordinem mutet, ut sit tibi novus ortus in vita, cui vetustus semper in morte manebat occasus. Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine. Ubi spiritus generat, virgo parturit, totum divinum geritur, nil humanum; nec ullus infirmitati locus est, ubi virtus est sociata virtuti. Soporatus est Adam, ut de viro virgo sumeretur; nunc stupuit Virgo, ut vir repararetur ex Virgine. Quid sibi de tanto, de tali partu natura poterit vindicare, ubi dum videt novari ordinem suum, tota sua conspicit jura mutari, venisse in suam sobolem suum sentit et miratur auctorem? Videatur hoc perfidis vile, magnum est credentibus sacramentum.

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus. Audis judicis nomen, ut tempus etiam passionis agnoscas; audis crucifixum, ut nobis salutem perditam per quod perierat reparatam esse agnoscas, et ibi videas pendere credentium vitam, ubi mors pependerat perfidorum. Audis sepultum, ne mors putetur illusa. Hoc est divinae virtutis insigne, cum mors morte moritur, auctor mortis proprio mucrone truncatur, praedo capitur sua praeda, infernus vita dirumpitur deglutita.

Tertia die resurrexit a mortuis. Tres dies sepulturae suae tribus impendit Christus habitationibus profuturus, inferis, terrae, coelo; instauraturus quae in coelo sunt, et quae sunt reparaturus in terra, et quae apud inferos redempturus, simul ut Trinitatis gratiam tridui sacramento datam panderet hominibus ad salutem.

Ascendit in coelos. Ascendit, non ut se referret in coelum, qui semper mansit in coelo, sed ut te perferret, quem taliter vinctum absolvit et subtraxit inferno. Intellige unde, ubi, homo, per Deum sis levatus, ut esses in coelestibus stabilis, qui eras lubricus, ac semper nutabundus in terra. Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Sed suis Pater nil habet a sinistris. Confessio nostra non divini consessus loca, sed virtutis assignat indicia: Deus loca nescit, Divinitas recipit nil sinistrum.

Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. Esto vivos, mortuos quemadmodum poterit judicare? Sed illi vivunt, qui nobis mortui computantur. Ergo resurrecturos eos confitemini ad judicium, quos infidelitas existimat deperiisse; ut qui mortui fuerint, et qui reperientur vivi, pariter suorum reddant actuum vitaeque rationem.

"Who was born of the Holy Spirit." Thus and in such a way is Christ born for you, until he changes for you, man, the order of being born, so that you may have a new rising in life, you for whom the old setting always remained in death. "Who was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." Where the Spirit begets, a virgin brings forth, all that is done is divine, nothing human; nor is there any place for weakness, where power is associated with power. Adam was put to sleep, so that a virgin might be taken from the man (Gen 2:21); now the Virgin was astonished (Luke 1:29), so that the man might be restored from the Virgin. What can nature claim for itself from so great, from such a childbearing, where, while it sees its order made new, it beholds all its rights changed, and perceives and marvels that its author has come into its offspring? Let this seem base to unbelievers; to believers it is a great mystery.

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." You hear the name of the judge, so that you may also recognise the time of the Passion; you hear "crucified", so that you may recognise that the salvation which was lost has been restored to us through that by which it had perished, and may see the life of believers hang there where the death of unbelievers had hung. You hear "buried", lest the death be thought a pretence. This is the sign of divine power: when death dies by death, the author of death is cut down by his own sword, the robber is caught by his own prey, hell is burst open by the life it has swallowed.

"On the third day he rose from the dead." Christ spent the three days of his burial so as to profit three dwellings, the underworld, the earth, heaven; to restore the things that are in heaven, to repair those that are on earth, and to redeem those that are in the underworld, so that at the same time he might lay open to men, for salvation, the grace of the Trinity given in the mystery of the three days.

"He ascended into the heavens." He ascended, not to carry himself back into heaven, he who always remained in heaven, but to carry you through, whom, bound as you were, he released and withdrew from hell. Understand from where, to where, man, you have been raised through God, so that you might be steadfast in the heavenly places, you who were slippery and ever tottering on earth. "He sits at the right hand of the Father." But for his own the Father has nothing on the left. Our confession assigns not places in the divine sitting together, but signs of power: God knows no places, Divinity admits nothing on the left.

"From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." Granted the living: how will he be able to judge the dead? But they are alive who are reckoned dead by us. Confess, then, that those will rise again for judgement whom faithlessness reckons to have perished; so that those who have died, and those who will be found alive, may alike render account of their deeds and of their life.

Credo in Spiritum sanctum. Postquam susceptae carnis confessus es sacramentum, oportet te deitatem spiritus confiteri, ut Trinitatis unitas aequa, Patris, Filii, sancti Spiritus per omnia, et in omnibus, virtutis integram fidei in nostra confessione custodiat et teneat veritatem. Sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam. Quia neque a capite membra, neque sponsa separatur a sponso: sed tum tali conjunctione spiritus fit unus, fit omnia, et in omnibus Deus. Ergo ipse in Deum credit, qui in Deum sanctam Ecclesiam confitetur.

Et remissionem peccatorum. Ipsi sibi donat veniam, qui sibi peccata per Christum remitti posse confidit. Carnis resurrectionem. Bene credis, si te per Deum credis resurgere ex morte posse, cui resurgunt semper elementa: sic tempus ex tempore, sic ex nocte dies, sic de sepultura sua semina. Nec tu perire poteris, cum illa reviviscant: nec difficile est Deo facere de te sene quod tu facis semper ipse de semine. Vitam aeternam.

Haec fides, hoc sacramentum non est, committendum chartis, non scribendum litteris, quia chartae et litterae magis cauta quam gratiam proloquuntur; ubi vero Dei gratia, donatio divina consistit, ad pactum fides, altitudo cordis sufficit ad secretum: ut hoc salutis symbolum, hoc vitae pactum, divinus arbiter noverit, testis falsus ignoret.

Signate vos. Ipse autem Dominus Deus noster sensus vestros, corda vestra custodiat; et in his quae praecepit vobis, ipse vobis fautor assistat.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." After you have confessed the mystery of the flesh taken up, you must confess the Godhead of the Spirit, so that the unity of the Trinity, equal in power, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through all things and in all things, may guard and hold in our confession the entire truth of the faith. "The holy catholic Church." Because neither are the members separated from the head, nor the bride from the bridegroom: but then, by such a joining, one spirit comes to be, and God becomes all things and in all things. Therefore he believes in God who confesses the holy Church in God.

"And the remission of sins." He grants himself pardon who trusts that his sins can be remitted to him through Christ. "The resurrection of the flesh." You believe well, if you believe that you can rise from death through God, for whom the elements are always rising again: so time from time, so day from night, so seeds from their burial. Nor will you be able to perish, since they come to life again: nor is it hard for God to make of you, an old man, what you yourself are always making of a seed. "Eternal life."

This faith, this mystery, is not to be committed to paper, not to be written in letters, because paper and letters speak out safeguards rather than grace; but where the grace of God, the divine gift, stands, faith suffices for the pact, the depth of the heart for the secret: so that this Creed of salvation, this pact of life, the divine arbiter may know, the false witness may not know.

Sign yourselves. And may the Lord our God himself guard your senses, your hearts; and in the things that he has commanded you, may he himself stand by you as your helper.

Sermo LVIII.

In idem

Qui fidem quaerit, rationem non quaerit; qui divina postulat, seponit humana; qui Deo genitore nascitur, transcendit naturam, et tempori nil debet, qui temporis meretur auctorem. Ecce pia fidei germina videmus ante nasci vos velle quam concipi, ante percipere coeli regnum quam ventris angustias sustinere; sic tendere ad patris gaudia, ut matris transeatis languores; nec putatis abortivum, quod maturum creditis esse per Christum. Sic Paulus apostolus per fidem maturus nascitur, qui se abortivum clamat esse per tempus. Accipite ergo fidem sola fide; nec quaeratis aperiri vobis ipsius fidei rationem, quam vos ne requireretis intra fidem vestra festinatione clausistis.

Ad fidem vos, Filii, hodie fides vestri auctoris invitat, qui promissionis suae ante fidem implet quam fidem vestrae percipiat sponsionis; et hoc restituit rebus humanis, ut olim verbo promiserat per prophetam. Dilata, inquit, os tuum et adimplebo illud. Hoc est, tu dilata in confessione, et ego illud ipsius confessionis replebo sacramento, et mystico sermone ditabo, et replebo illud toto eloquio coelestis arcani. Et revera, Filii, quidquid audientis, quidquid respondentis obedientia profitetur, hoc donantis et docentis Dei redundat ad gratiam. Accepturi ergo symbolum, hoc est, pactum vitae, salutis placitum, et inter vos et Deum fidei insolubile vinculum pectora parate, non chartam; sensum acuite, non calamum; et audita non atramento, sed spiritu ministrante describite: quia committi non potest caducis et corruptibilibus instrumentis aeternum et coeleste secretum, sed in ipsa arca animae, in ipsa bibliotheca interni spiritus est locandum; ne profanus arbiter, ne improbus quod dilaceret discussor inveniat, et fiat ad contemnentis et ignorantis ruinam, quod confitentis et credentis donatum est ad salutem. Sed dicenti tibi prophetae: Dilata os tuum et adimplebo illud, tu respondere possis: In corde meo abscondi eloquia tua, ut non peccem tibi.

Sermon LVIII.

On the same

He who seeks faith does not seek reasons; he who asks for divine things sets aside human ones; he who is born with God for begetter transcends nature, and owes nothing to time, he who merits the author of time. Behold, we see that you, the pious shoots of faith, wish to be born before you are conceived, to receive the kingdom of heaven before you endure the narrowness of the womb; so to strive for the joys of the father as to pass by the sicknesses of the mother; and you do not think untimely what you believe to be ripe through Christ. So Paul the apostle is born ripe through faith, he who cries out that he is untimely born as to time (1 Cor 15:8). Receive, then, faith by faith alone; and do not seek to have the grounds of faith itself laid open to you, which you, so as not to ask for them, have shut up within faith by your haste.

To faith, children, the faith of your author invites you today, who fulfils the faith of his promise before he receives the faith of your pledge; and this he has restored to human affairs, as long ago he had promised by word through the Prophet. Open wide, he says, your mouth, and I will fill it (Ps 81:11). That is: you open wide in confession, and I will fill it with the mystery of that very confession, and enrich it with mystic speech, and fill it with the whole utterance of the heavenly secret. And indeed, children, whatever the obedience of the one who hears, whatever that of the one who answers professes, this redounds to the grace of God who gives and teaches. About to receive, then, the Creed, that is, the pact of life, the agreement of salvation, and the indissoluble tie of faith between you and God, prepare your breasts, not paper; sharpen your sense, not a pen; and write down what you hear not with ink, but with the spirit as minister: because the eternal and heavenly secret cannot be committed to perishable and corruptible instruments, but must be placed in the very ark of the soul, in the very library of the inner spirit; lest a profane arbiter, lest a wicked examiner find what he may tear apart, and what was given for the salvation of one who confesses and believes become the ruin of one who despises and does not know. But to the Prophet who says to you: Open wide your mouth, and I will fill it, may you be able to answer: In my heart I have hidden your words, that I may not sin against you (Ps 119:11).

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Qui confessus est Patrem, confitetur et Filium, quia sine Filio Pater dici non potest; et quia Deo augeri, Deo addi nil potest. Semper fuit Filius, quia fuit semper et Pater; nescit inchoari Filius, quia deficere Pater nescit; nec crescit Genitus, ubi Genitor non senescit: aeterna et coaeterna Patris et Filii substantia non gradibus humanis, sed divinis est aestimanda virtutibus.

In Christum Jesum Filium ejus unicum, Dominum nostrum. Christum unctum accipe non communi oleo, sed sancto, quo natus est Spiritu. Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto. Tali nativitate consecrata est in Deo humanitas, non tali dignatione minorata est in homine deitas. Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine. Virginitas Deum credidit, quia non nisi per Deum ipsa virgo esse potuit et mater.

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est, et sepultus. Judicem indicat ut tempus designet; crucifixum memorat, ut passionis conferat qualitatem: et inde fides argumentum divinae virtutis et verae resurrectionis colligat, unde impietas materiam contumeliae et occasionem praesumpsit erroris. Crucifixus in cruce, in edito coram omnibus inimicis, et tota crudelitate spectantibus, et tota acerbitate observantibus, mortem suscepit. Sepulturam patitur, ne mortem non adiisse ut vinceret, sed simulasse ut eluderet, ab impiis jactaretur. Sepultus, tertia die resurrexit. Et si in passione nostrae se carnis veram probavit habuisse substantiam, per trium dierum figuram totam Trinitatis resurgit in gloriam.

Ascendit in coelos. Ascendit nos perferens, non se referens, qui numquam recessit e coelo. Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Ordo ibi divinus est, non humanus; sic a dextris sedet Filius, ut Pater non sedeat a sinistris: unica et singularis est divina consessio, ubi superna virtus recipit nil sinistrum. Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. Desinant homines, desinant haeretici judicare judicem suum; sperent veniam, ne incurrant de tali praesumptione sententiam.

Credo in Spiritum sanctum. Nunc perfecta est tua in Trinitate confessio, quando Spiritum sanctum unius cum Patre et Filio substantiae fideli voce confessus es. Et sanctam Ecclesiam. Quia sic conjuncta Christo est, ut totam divinitatis transferatur in gloriam. Remissionem peccatorum. Acquire tibi tua fide veniam: quia satis sibi inimicus est, qui hoc sibi dari non credit, quod tota benignitate largissimus promittit indultor.

"I believe in God the Father almighty." He who has confessed the Father confesses the Son also, because without the Son he cannot be called Father; and because nothing can be increased for God, nothing added to God. The Son always was, because the Father too always was; the Son does not know how to begin, because the Father does not know how to fail; nor does the Begotten grow, where the Begetter does not grow old: the eternal and co-eternal substance of the Father and the Son is to be reckoned not by human degrees, but by divine powers.

"In Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord." Understand Christ as anointed not with common oil, but with the holy one, the Spirit of whom he was born. "Who was born of the Holy Spirit." By such a birth manhood was consecrated in God; by such a condescension Godhead was not lessened in man. "Who was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." Virginity believed God, because only through God could she be both a virgin and a mother.

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." It names the judge, to mark the time; it recalls "crucified", to set forth what kind of Passion it was: and so that faith may gather the proof of divine power and of a true resurrection from that from which impiety presumed to take matter for insult and occasion for error. Crucified on a cross, on a height, before all his enemies, who watched with all cruelty and observed with all bitterness, he took up death. He suffers burial, lest the impious should boast that he did not go to death in order to conquer it, but feigned it in order to elude it. "Buried, on the third day he rose." And if in the Passion he proved that he had the true substance of our flesh, through the figure of the three days he rises into the whole glory of the Trinity.

"He ascended into the heavens." He ascended carrying us through, not carrying himself back, he who never withdrew from heaven. "He sits at the right hand of the Father." The order there is divine, not human; the Son sits at the right in such a way that the Father does not sit on the left: unique and singular is the divine sitting together, where the power on high admits nothing on the left. "From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." Let men cease, let heretics cease to judge their judge; let them hope for pardon, lest by such presumption they incur sentence.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." Now your confession in the Trinity is complete, when with faithful voice you have confessed the Holy Spirit of one substance with the Father and the Son. "And the holy Church." Because she is so joined to Christ that she is carried over into the whole glory of divinity. "The remission of sins." Acquire pardon for yourself by your faith: because he is very much an enemy to himself who does not believe that this is given him which the most bountiful giver of indulgence promises with all kindness.

Carnis resurrectionem. Crede carnis resurrectionem: quia qui hoc non credit, fidem non habet in praedictis, dicente Apostolo: Si mortui non resurgunt, neque Christus resurrexit. Quos judicabit quibus regnabit Deus, si vitae, si judicio resurrectio non reddiderit quos saeculo mors ademit? Vitam aeternam. Manifestum est, quia vita aeterna ipsa morte moriente succedit.

"The resurrection of the flesh." Believe the resurrection of the flesh: because he who does not believe this has no faith in what was said before, as the Apostle says: If the dead do not rise, neither has Christ risen (1 Cor 15:16). Whom will God judge, over whom will he reign, if resurrection does not give back to life, to judgement, those whom death has taken from the world? "Eternal life." It is plain that eternal life follows when death itself dies.

Sermo LIX.

In idem

Audistis vocem Patris, vocem vocantis audistis: Venite, filii, venite, venite, quia venit tempus fidei, credulitatis dies, confessionis hora. Venite, petitores fidei, afferte sincerum pectus, cor mundum, puram vocem, ut quod per nos sermo salutaris insinuat, vos sancto capiatis auditu. Fides ex auditu, auditus ex verbo constat. Placitum fidei, pactum gratiae, salutis symbolum tota simplicitate sensus audite, quatenus illud confessionis tempore et audire possitis et reddere: quia istud reddere est habere; divinum munus qui reddiderit, non amittit.

Daturus legem Deus, jussit ut populi lavarent vestes, lavarent corpora sua, totosque se ab omni carnis contagione mundarent, quia appropinquare Deo homo non potest faece corporali, mundano squalore pollutus. Lex illa, quae gratiae umbram tenuit et figuram, purificationem merito quaerit tantam, tantam merito exigit puritatem. Audituris Divinitatis sacramentum totum, quanta mentis, quanta corporis opus est puritate? Mundemus ergo corda, purificemus corpora, aperiamus oculos, reseremus sensum, animae januas patefaciamus totas, ut symbolum quod est fidei pactum, audire, capere, tenere, et in ipso cordis nostri secreto semper servare possimus.

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Credimus in Deum, si negamus deos, si renuntiamus idolis, si diabolum et ejus angelos abnegamus. Audi, inquit, Israel, Dominus Deus tuus unus est. Et iterum: Non erunt tibi dii alii absque me. Habebit ergo Deum verum, unum Deum, qui Deum alterum non habebit. Credimus in Deum, et eumdem confitemur Patrem, ut eumdem semper habuisse Filium nos credamus: habuisse autem Filium, non conceptum, non inchoatum, non separatum partu, non auctum tempore, non minoratum gradu, non aetatibus immutatum, sed intra aeternum Genitorem germen permanens in aeternum. Ego, inquit, in Patre et Pater in me est. Audivimus Patrem, credamus Filium virtute divina, ordine non humano, arcano Dei, non ratione mundana, non lege saeculi, sed potentia superna. Quod scire licet, discutere non licet; credere convenit, non convenit perscrutari: nam ob hoc omnipotentem Deum diximus, ut Deo impossibile nil putemus.

Sermon LIX.

On the same

You have heard the voice of the Father, you have heard the voice of one calling: "Come, children, come, come, for the time of faith has come, the day of belief, the hour of confession." Come, seekers of the faith, bring a sincere breast, a clean heart, a pure voice, so that what the word of salvation conveys through us, you may take in with holy hearing. Faith comes from hearing, hearing from the word (Rom 10:17). Hear with all simplicity of sense the agreement of faith, the pact of grace, the Creed of salvation, so that at the time of confession you may be able both to hear it and to give it back: because to give this back is to have it; he who has given back the divine gift does not lose it.

God, about to give the Law, commanded that the people wash their garments, wash their bodies, and cleanse themselves wholly from every contagion of the flesh (Exod 19:10), because man cannot approach God polluted with bodily dregs, with worldly squalor. That Law, which held the shadow and figure of grace, rightly seeks so great a purification, rightly demands so great a purity. For those who are to hear the whole mystery of the Divinity, how great a purity of mind, how great of body is needed? Let us then cleanse our hearts, purify our bodies, open our eyes, unbar our sense, throw wide all the doors of the soul, so that we may be able to hear, grasp, hold, and always keep in the very secret of our heart the Creed, which is the pact of faith.

"I believe in God the Father almighty." We believe in God if we deny gods, if we renounce idols, if we abjure the devil and his angels. Hear, he says, Israel: the Lord your God is one (Deut 6:4; Mark 12:29). And again: You shall have no other gods besides me (Exod 20:3). He will therefore have the true God, the one God, who will not have another god. We believe in God, and confess the same to be Father, so that we may believe that he has always had a Son: to have had a Son, however, not conceived, not begun, not separated by childbirth, not increased by time, not lessened in rank, not changed by ages, but a shoot remaining for ever within the eternal Begetter. I, he says, am in the Father and the Father is in me (John 14:10). We have heard the Father: let us believe the Son by divine power, in an order not human, by the secret of God, not by worldly reason, not by the law of the world, but by might from on high. What it is permitted to know, it is not permitted to discuss; it is fitting to believe, it is not fitting to pry: for this reason we have said "almighty God", that we may think nothing impossible for God.

Et in Jesum Christum Filium ejus unicum, Dominum nostrum. Ab unctione Christus, Jesus vocatus est a salute: quia et unctio, quae per reges, prophetas et sacerdotes olim cucurrerat in figuram, in hunc regem regum, sacerdotem sacerdotum, prophetarum prophetam, tota se plenitudine Spiritus divinitatis effudit; ut regnum et sacerdotium, quod per alios praemiserat temporaliter, in auctorem ipsum refunderet et redderet sempiternum. Et Jesus quidem, id est, salvator, recte dicitur salus, quia et dedit rebus esse, et idem pereuntibus dat salutem. Filium ejus unicum. In se est unicus Filius, qui quod aliis per suam gratiam donat, ipse sibi unicam possidet per naturam. Dominum nostrum. Sicut supra diximus, Dominus Deus: Deus unus constat in Christo: quia quidquid est, et deitate et humanitate Deus unus est. Desiit in Christo substantiarum diversitas, ubi caro coepit esse quod spiritus, quod Homo Deus, quod nostri corporis et deitatis una majestas.

Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto, ex Maria Virgine. Quid terrenum nascitur, ubi auctore spiritu virgo vocatur in partu? quis non divinum credat, quando quae peperit nil sensit humanum? Deum mulier virgineo portabat in templo: hinc est, quod et acquisivit honorem matris, virginitatis gloriam non amisit.

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus. Nomen judicis dicimus, ut passionis tempus, ut rei gestae veritas sic patescat. Crucifixus est. Ut quia per lignum mors venerat, rediret vita per lignum. Et sepultus. Ut officia tota mortis impleret, ut mors morte moreretur, ut ex illius semine corporis, omnis humanorum corporum satio vitalem surgeret et levaretur in messem.

Tertia die resurrexit a mortuis. Ut tribus in diebus Trinitatis beneficium panderetur, ut per triduanum tempus humana trium temporum generatio salvaretur, id est, ante legem, in lege et in gratia. Ascendit in coelos. Non ut petens, sed ut repetens coelos. Nemo ascendit in coelum, inquit, nisi qui de coelo descendit. Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Sed Patrem non habet ad sinistram. Divinitatis consessus recipit nil sinistrum. Sedet ad dexteram Patris, ut patris deitate una. Sedet ad dexteram, ne sit minor gradu, posterior ordine, sed Patri divinitate una, aequa potestate conregnet: Ego, inquit, et Pater unum sumus. Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. Si credimus venturum judicem, innocentes judici nos praeparemus: judicem negat esse, qui advenire non credit: judicandum se satis iste diffidit, qui male vivit. Judicat vivos, judicat et mortuos, quos utique judicaturus exsuscitat.

"And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." Christ from anointing, he is called Jesus from salvation: because the anointing too, which once had run through kings, prophets and priests as a figure, poured itself out with the whole fullness of the Spirit of divinity into this King of kings, Priest of priests, Prophet of prophets; so that the kingship and priesthood which it had sent ahead in time through others, it might pour back into its very author and render everlasting. And Jesus, that is, Saviour, is rightly called salvation, because he both gave being to things, and the same gives salvation to the perishing. "His only Son." In himself he is the only Son, who, what he gives to others by his grace, himself possesses for himself, unique, by nature. "Our Lord." As we said above, the Lord God: one God stands firm in Christ: because whatever he is, both by Godhead and by manhood he is one God. In Christ the diversity of substances ceased, where the flesh began to be what the spirit is, what Man God is, what the one majesty of our body and of the Godhead is.

"Who was born of the Holy Spirit, from the Virgin Mary." What earthly thing is born, where, with the Spirit as author, she is called virgin in childbearing? Who would not believe it divine, when she who gave birth felt nothing human? A woman carried God in a virginal temple: hence it is that she both acquired the honour of a mother and did not lose the glory of virginity.

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." We say the name of the judge so that the time of the Passion, the truth of the deed done, may thus be plain. "He was crucified." So that, because death had come through wood, life might return through wood. "And buried." So that he might fulfil all the duties of death, that death might die by death, that from the seed of that body the whole sowing of human bodies might rise and be lifted up into a living harvest.

"On the third day he rose from the dead." So that in three days the benefit of the Trinity might be laid open, so that through a space of three days the human generation of the three times might be saved, that is, before the Law, under the Law and in grace. "He ascended into the heavens." Not as claiming the heavens, but as claiming them back. No one has ascended into heaven, he says, but he who descended from heaven (John 3:13). "He sits at the right hand of the Father." But he does not have the Father on the left. The sitting together of Divinity admits nothing on the left. "He sits at the right hand of the Father", as in the one Godhead of the Father. "He sits at the right hand", lest he be less in rank, later in order, but that he may reign together with the Father in one divinity, with equal power: I and the Father, he says, are one (John 10:30). "From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." If we believe that the judge will come, let us prepare ourselves innocent for the judge: he denies that there is a judge who does not believe that he will come: he who lives badly very much doubts that he will be judged. He judges the living, he judges the dead also, whom indeed, being about to judge them, he raises up.

Credo in Spiritum sanctum. Hucusque Dominicae nativitatis, passionis, resurrectionis, ascensionis, adventus mysterium confitentes, ad confessionem sancti Spiritus jam venimus: ut sicut in Patrem, et Filium, in sanctum Spiritum sic credatur, ut unam in Trinitate deitatem, virtutem, gloriam praedicemus. Et sanctam Ecclesiam. Credimus et Ecclesiam, quam Christi receptam, confirmatam credimus, et confitemur in gloriam. Remissionem peccatorum. In novum hominem nasciturus, antiqui reatus, peccati veteris quid habebit? qui praeterita sibi remissa non credit debita, dubitat percipere se futura.

Carnis resurrectionem. Crede, homo, de morte resurgere te posse, quia antequam viveres nil fuisti: aut quare dubitas quod resurgas, cum tibi totum quod in rebus est quotidie sic resurgat? Sol occidit, et resurgit: dies sepelitur et redit: menses, anni, tempora, fructus, semina, cum transeunt ipsa moriuntur, cum redeunt sua ipsa morte reviviscunt, et ut resurrecturum te jugi et vernaculo instruaris exemplo, quoties dormis et vigilas, toties moreris et resurgis. Vitam aeternam. Amen. Necesse est ut qui resurgit vivat in aeternum, quia si in aeternum non viveret, non vitae resurgeret, sed morti.

Signate vos. Hoc spei pactum, hoc salutis placitum, hoc vitae symbolum, hanc fidei cautionem mens teneat, conservet memoria, ne divinitatis pretiosum munus depretiet charta vilis, ne mysterium lucis atrum tenebret atramentum, ne secretum Dei habeat indignus et profanus auditor. Si mihi silentium semper vestra charitas sic praeberet, ad omnes tractatus mei sermonis vester perveniret auditus: sed Deus noster et mihi fiduciam dicendi, et vobis audiendi desiderium donare dignetur.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." Having confessed up to here the mystery of the Lord's birth, Passion, resurrection, ascension, coming, we now come to the confession of the Holy Spirit: so that, as one believes in the Father and the Son, so one may believe in the Holy Spirit, in such a way that we proclaim in the Trinity one Godhead, power, glory. "And the holy Church." We believe the Church also, which we believe to have been received by Christ and confirmed, and which we confess for glory. "The remission of sins." He who is to be born into the new man, what will he have of the ancient guilt, of the old sin? He who does not believe that his past debts have been remitted to him doubts that he will receive the things to come.

"The resurrection of the flesh." Believe, man, that you can rise from death, because before you lived you were nothing: or why do you doubt that you will rise, when everything that is in the world rises again for you daily in this way? The sun sets, and rises again: the day is buried, and returns: months, years, seasons, fruits, seeds, when they pass, themselves die, when they return, come to life again by their own death; and so that you may be taught by a constant and homely example that you will rise again, as often as you sleep and wake, so often you die and rise again. "Eternal life." "Amen." It must be that he who rises lives for ever, because if he did not live for ever, he would rise not to life, but to death.

Sign yourselves. This pact of hope, this agreement of salvation, this Creed of life, this security of faith, let the mind hold, let memory preserve, lest cheap paper cheapen the precious gift of divinity, lest black ink darken the mystery of light, lest an unworthy and profane hearer have the secret of God. If your charity always offered me silence like this, your hearing would reach all the expositions of my preaching: but may our God deign to grant both to me confidence in speaking, and to you the desire of hearing.

Sermo LX.

In idem

Si Cananitis mulier clamore subito, repentina fide, juvante Christo, et quod petebat accepit, et quod negabatur extorsit; si Aethiops spado arcanum vitalis lavacri praeteriens invenit in via, rapuit in transitu; si Cornelius centurio antequam intraret baptisma, pervenit ad Christum; si latro in ipso momento mortis paradisum invasit, et vitam vobis, in articulo temporis quam quaeritis, quis negabit? Ex fide ergo accipite fidem, et ut fidei mysterium scire possitis, accessu temporis laborate.

Moyses laturus legem coelum vocat et terram: sacerdos quid invocabit gratiam prolaturus? Ille dixit: Attende ad coelum, et loquar, et audiat terra verba ex ore meo; ego dicam, Attende, Deus, loquar; et audiat homo verba ex ore meo. Ille dixit: Exspectetur sicut pluvia eloquium meum, et descendant sicut ros verba mea; Ego dicam, Veniat sicut ros spiritus tuus, et inundet sicut flumen gratia tua, fiatque nunc coelestis Verbi unda saliens in vitam aeternam. Ille dixit: Quia nomen Domini invocavit, date magnificentiam Deo nostro; ego dicam, Quia fidem invocavi, date credulitatem Deo vestro.

Et quia navigia corporum nostrorum Quadragesimae sunt curata jejunio, necesse est ut placitum fidei, symbolum coelestis commercii jam dicamus, quatenus sub certa spe per tota mundi aequora, per infidos saeculi fluctus lucra mansura saeculis conquiramus. Accipite ergo fidem, exspectate rem: quia cui fides non praecedit in semine, res ei non sequitur in fructu.

Signate vos. Sermo creat auditum, auditus concipit fidem, credulitatem parturit fides, confessionem credulitas nutrit, confessio perpetuam dat salutem. Hinc est quod meo, vestroque ore occurrit; sic sibi fides, credulitas sic amplectitur se; salus se confessionis osculo sic salutat.

Sermon LX.

On the same

If the Canaanite woman, with a sudden cry, a sudden faith, by Christ's help, both received what she asked and wrung out what was refused (Matt 15:22–28); if the Ethiopian eunuch, passing by, found on the way the secret of the life-giving washing, and seized it in passing (Acts 8:36–38); if Cornelius the centurion came to Christ before he entered baptism (Acts 10:44–48); if the thief, at the very moment of death, broke into paradise (Luke 23:43): who will deny you, too, the life which you seek at the last moment of time? From faith, then, receive faith, and that you may be able to know the mystery of faith, labour as the time draws on.

Moses, about to bring the Law, calls heaven and earth: what will the priest call upon, about to bring forth grace? He said: Give heed, heaven, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth (Deut 32:1); I will say: "Give heed, God, I will speak; and let man hear the words of my mouth." He said: Let my speech be awaited like rain, and let my words come down like dew (Deut 32:2); I will say: "Let your spirit come like dew, and your grace flood like a river, and may there now be the water of the heavenly Word springing up into eternal life." He said: Because he has called on the name of the Lord, give magnificence to our God (Deut 32:3); I will say: "Because I have called on faith, give belief to your God."

And because the ships of our bodies have been cared for by the Lenten fast, we must now say the agreement of faith, the Creed of the heavenly commerce, so that under a sure hope, through all the seas of the world, through the faithless waves of the age, we may acquire gains that will last for ages. Receive, then, faith, await the thing itself: because for him in whom faith does not go before in the seed, the thing itself does not follow in the fruit.

Sign yourselves. The word creates hearing, hearing conceives faith, faith gives birth to belief, belief nourishes confession, confession gives perpetual salvation. Hence it is that it comes to meet on my mouth and on yours; thus faith meets itself, belief thus embraces itself; salvation thus salutes itself with the kiss of confession.

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Haec vox totum Trinitatis fatetur et aperit sacramentum. Deum dicit, non deos, quia unum Deum in Trinitate credit Christiana fides: scit Patrem, scit Filium, scit Spiritum sanctum, deos nescit. Divinitas in personis trina est, sed una est in Trinitate divinitas: personis Trinitas distincta est, non est divisa substantiis: Deus unus est, sed trinitate; Deus solus est, sed non solitarius; divinitas nec trinitate dividitur, nec confunditur unitate: haec sentit fides cum dicit, Credo in Deum. Mox addidit, Patrem. Qui credit Patrem esse, Filium confitetur; qui credit Patrem et Filium, aetates non sentiat, gradus non cogitet, non tempora suspicetur, non conceptum quaerat, nesciat partum: qui Deum credit, divina confessus est, non humana.

Sed dicit haereticus: Quomodo Pater, si non praecedit? quomodo Filius, si non sequitur? quomodo non dat initium, qui generat? quomodo quod generatur, principium a generante non sumit? Hoc ratio docet, hoc natura probat. Erras, haeretice, hoc habet humana ratio, non habet hoc divina; hoc accipit natura mundi, deitatis non recipit hoc natura; fragilitas humana concipitur, et concipit, parturitur et parturit, generatur et generat, accipit initium et dat finem, mortem suscipit et refundit, et reservat in sobole quidquid suae conditionis est et naturae. Deus vero Pater non genuit in tempore, quia tempus ignorat; non dedit initium, qui initium nescit; non transfudit finem, qui non habet finem: sed sic genuit ex se Filium, ut totum quod in se erat esset et maneret in Filio. Honor geniti generantis honor est, perfectio geniti generantis forma est, minoratio geniti revelat ad generantis injuriam.

Sed haec audiens, haeretice, non dicas, Quomodo ista sint? dixisti Deum, credidisti Patrem, omnipotentem confessus es; si dubitas, mentitus es; credo si dicis, quomodo non credis, si discutis? si putas impossibile, omnipotentiam quam confessus es sustulisti; sed nos qui Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum sanctum unius majestatis et gloriae confitemur, fidem Dominici corporis jam loquamur.

Et in Jesum Christum Filium ejus unicum Dominum nostrum. Postquam Dei Filius sicut pluvia in vellus toto divinitatis unguento nostram se fudit in carnem, ab unguento nuncupatus est Christus: et hujus nominis exstitit solus auctor, qui sic Deo superfusus est, et infusus, ut homo Deusque esset unus Deus. Hoc ergo unguenti nomen effudit in nos, qui a Christo dicimur Christiani; et impletum est illud quod cantatur in Canticis Canticorum. Unguentum effusum est nomen tuum.

"I believe in God the Father almighty." This utterance acknowledges and opens the whole mystery of the Trinity. It says God, not gods, because the Christian faith believes one God in the Trinity: it knows the Father, knows the Son, knows the Holy Spirit, knows no gods. Divinity is threefold in persons, but divinity is one in the Trinity: the Trinity is distinct in persons, it is not divided in substances: God is one, but in trinity; God is alone, but not solitary; divinity is neither divided by trinity nor confounded by unity: this is what faith perceives when it says, "I believe in God." At once it added: "Father." He who believes that the Father is, confesses the Son; he who believes the Father and the Son, let him not perceive ages, not think of degrees, not suspect times, not seek a conception, not know a birth: he who believes God has confessed divine things, not human.

But the heretic says: "How is he Father, if he does not go before? How is he Son, if he does not follow? How does he who begets not give a beginning? How does what is begotten not take its beginning from the one who begets? Reason teaches this, nature proves this." You are wrong, heretic: human reason has this, divine reason does not have it; the nature of the world accepts this, the nature of the Godhead does not admit it; human frailty is conceived and conceives, is brought forth and brings forth, is begotten and begets, receives a beginning and gives an end, receives death and passes it on, and keeps in its offspring whatever belongs to its condition and nature. But God the Father did not beget in time, because he does not know time; he did not give a beginning, who knows no beginning; he did not pass on an end, who has no end: but he so begot the Son from himself, that all that was in him should be and remain in the Son. The honour of the Begotten is the honour of him who begets, the perfection of the Begotten is the form of him who begets, the lessening of the Begotten is shown to be the injury of him who begets.

But hearing these things, heretic, do not say: "How can these things be?" You have said God, you have believed the Father, you have confessed him almighty; if you doubt, you have lied; if you say "I believe", how do you not believe, if you discuss? If you think it impossible, you have taken away the omnipotence which you confessed; but let us, who confess the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit of one majesty and glory, now speak of the faith of the Lord's body.

"And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." After the Son of God, like rain on a fleece (Ps 72:6), poured himself into our flesh with the whole ointment of divinity, he was named Christ from the ointment: and he alone became the author of this name, who was so poured over God, and poured in, that man and God were one God. This name of the ointment, then, he poured out upon us, who from Christ are called Christians; and that was fulfilled which is sung in the Song of Songs. Your name is ointment poured out (Song 1:3).

Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus. Illud sacramenti nomen est, hoc triumphi: nam sicut a Deo unctus nomen sortitur ex unguine, ita cum salutem perditam mundo reddidit, a salvando nomen salvatoris assumit. Saepe jam diximus, quod Jesus Haebraica lingua dicitur, Salvator dicitur hoc Latina. Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus. Cujus? utique Dei Patris; cum dicis ergo in Jesum Filium ejus, confiteris Jesum qui natus est de Maria Dei esse Filium. Cave ergo ne amplius sentias in Christo quod homo fuit, sed semper quod Deus sit confitere, Apostolo sic dicente: Et si novimus Christum secundum carnem, sed jam non novimus. Unicum Dominum nostrum. Hoc convenit ad utrumque, quia et unicus Patris est, et unicus Dominus noster est: alii filii, alii domini esse per gratiam perceperunt; solus Christus esse filius, esse Dominus habet et possidet per naturam.

Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine. Si juxta evangelistam quod in ea natum est de Spiritu sancto est, quia Deus spiritus est, haereticus jam Deum natum virginea confiteatur ex carne; neque amplius coeleste mysterium, virginitatis partum, trahat ad conceptum mundi, ad terrenae fragilitatis injuriam.

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus. Nomen judicis audis ut tempus passionis agnoscas; audis crucifixum, ut ex mortis ignominia magnitudinem sentias charitatis; mortemque quae per lignum venit, mortificatam scias esse per lignum; et credas majora tibi esse reddita per crucis arborem, quam perdidisse te per paradisi arborem suspirabas. Sepultum dicis, ut veram carnem Christi mortemque non perfunctoriam probet confessio sepulturae, mortem suscepisse et vicisse, intrasse inferos et rediisse, venisse in jura tartari, et tartari jura solvisse, non est fragilitas, sed potestas.

Confiteris die tertia resurrexisse, ut intelligas resurrectionem Christi totius Trinitatis fuisse victoriam. Dicis Ascendisse in coelos, ut coeli Dominum credas, ut unde venerat rediisse fatearis, quia superato diabolo, calcata morte, liberato mundo, super coelos triumphat Christus, qui victus putabatur in terris. Clamas, Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Ut quia Patris et Filii una est deitas, par potestas, in coelesti consessu nulla sit sinistrae sessionis injuria. Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. Quia veniente Christo, resurgent mortui, sistentur vivi, ut pariter causas reddant de suorum ratione factorum.

"And in Christ Jesus, his Son." The former is the name of the mystery, the latter of the triumph: for as, anointed by God, he obtains his name from the unguent, so, when he gave back to the world the salvation it had lost, he took the name of Saviour from saving. We have often said already that what is called Jesus in the Hebrew tongue is called Saviour in Latin. "And in Christ Jesus, his Son." Whose? Surely of God the Father; when you say, then, "in Jesus his Son", you confess that Jesus who was born of Mary is the Son of God. Beware, then, of perceiving any longer in Christ that he was man, but always confess that he is God, as the Apostle says: Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know him (2 Cor 5:16). "Our only Lord." This fits both, because he is both the only one of the Father and our only Lord: others have received by grace to be sons, others to be lords; Christ alone has and possesses by nature to be son, to be Lord.

"Who was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." If, according to the Evangelist, what has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20), because God is spirit (John 4:24), let the heretic now confess God born of virginal flesh; and let him no longer drag the heavenly mystery, the childbearing of virginity, down to the conceiving of the world, to the injury of earthly frailty.

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." You hear the name of the judge, that you may recognise the time of the Passion; you hear "crucified", that from the ignominy of the death you may perceive the greatness of the charity; and may know that the death which came through wood has been put to death through wood; and may believe that greater things have been given back to you through the tree of the cross than you sighed to have lost through the tree of paradise. You say "buried", so that the confession of the burial may prove the true flesh of Christ and a death not perfunctory: to have taken up death and conquered it, to have entered the underworld and returned, to have come under the laws of Tartarus and to have loosed the laws of Tartarus, is not frailty, but power.

You confess that he rose on the third day, so that you may understand that the resurrection of Christ was the victory of the whole Trinity. You say that he ascended into the heavens, so that you may believe him the Lord of heaven, so that you may acknowledge that he has returned whence he had come, because, the devil overcome, death trodden down, the world set free, Christ triumphs above the heavens, he who was thought to have been vanquished on earth. You cry out: "He sits at the right hand of the Father." So that, because the Godhead of the Father and the Son is one, the power equal, in the heavenly sitting together there may be no injury of a seat on the left. "From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." Because when Christ comes, the dead will rise, the living will be made to stand, so that they may alike plead their causes on the account of their deeds.

Et quia Dominici corporis jam diximus sacramentum, ad confitendum deitatem Spiritus perveniamus. Credimus in Spiritum sanctum. Quem Deum nobis inclamat vox divina, cum dicit: Quia Deus spiritus est. Credimus in sanctum Spiritum. Quem propheta cooperatorem Patris et Filii decantat: Verbo Domini coeli firmati sunt, et spiritu oris ejus omnis virtus eorum. Totus Deus, totaque Dei virtus est, qui creator coelestium probatur esse virtutum.

Credimus sanctam Ecclesiam. Quam sic in se suscepit Christus, ut eam divinitatis suae faceret esse consortem. Credimus remissionem peccatorum. Quia qui per Christum et Ecclesiam in novum hominem fuerit natus, veteris delicti nil habebit. Credimus carnis resurrectionem. Ut credamus passionis, mortis, resurrectionis Christi hanc fuisse causam, ut nos resurgeremus ex mortuis. Resurget caro, resurget, ut ipsi sumus, ut agnitio maneat personarum, ut et martyr de persecutoris poena laetitiam sumat, et persecutor sumat de martyris honore supplicium. Credimus vitam aeternam. Quia post resurrectionem nec bonorum finis est, nec malorum.

Signate vos. Fidem quam credimus et docemus, non atramento, sed spiritu, committamus pectori, non chartae; demus memoriae, non libro, ne divinum munus violent res humanae, ne coeleste secretum arbiter profanus assumat, ne quod est credentibus ad vitam, existat perfidis ad ruinam. Sol lippientibus oculis non lucem tribuit, sed tenebras; vinum vires febrientium non reparat, sed enervat; sine medico vitae poculum fit lethale, sic perfidis perniciosum est sine fide fidei sacramentum. Sicut dicit Apostolus, Capiatur fides ex auditu, auditus autem capiatur ex verbo; et vitae placitum, pactum fidei, lex salutis non haereat morituris, sed vivis sensibus affigatur.

And because we have now spoken of the mystery of the Lord's body, let us come to confess the Godhead of the Spirit. "We believe in the Holy Spirit." Whom the divine voice proclaims to us to be God, when it says: For God is spirit. "We believe in the Holy Spirit." Whom the Prophet sings as co-worker of the Father and the Son: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, and by the spirit of his mouth all their power (Ps 33:6). He is wholly God, and the whole power of God, who is proved to be the Creator of the heavenly powers.

"We believe the holy Church." Whom Christ so took up into himself that he made her a sharer of his divinity. "We believe the remission of sins." Because he who through Christ and the Church has been born into the new man will have nothing of the old offence. "We believe the resurrection of the flesh." So that we may believe that this was the cause of the Passion, death and resurrection of Christ: that we might rise from the dead. The flesh will rise, it will rise as we ourselves are, so that the recognition of persons may remain, so that both the martyr may take joy from the persecutor's penalty, and the persecutor take torment from the martyr's honour. "We believe eternal life." Because after the resurrection there is no end either for the good or for the wicked.

Sign yourselves. The faith which we believe and teach let us commit, not with ink, but with the spirit, to the breast, not to paper; let us give it to memory, not to a book, lest human things violate the divine gift, lest a profane arbiter take hold of the heavenly secret, lest what is for life to believers turn out ruin to unbelievers. The sun gives to bleary eyes not light, but darkness; wine does not restore the strength of the feverish, but weakens it; without a physician the cup of life becomes deadly; so for unbelievers the mystery of faith without faith is pernicious. As the Apostle says: Let faith be taken from hearing, and hearing be taken from the word (Rom 10:17); and let the agreement of life, the pact of faith, the law of salvation not cling to the dying, but be fixed in living senses.

Sermo LXI.

In idem

Nisi me solaretur beati Pauli subita et inopinata conversio, vix crederem tam facile vos de terrena labe in coelestem posse gloriam commutari. Illum namque de persecutore mox apostolum praestitit repentina confessio, et Ecclesiae dedit insignem magistrum, quem furentem Christiani nominis invenerat vastatorem. Nec minus animat me illius spadonis exemplum, quem fides ante rapuit ad gratiam, quam currus ad Indiam domumque revocaret. Accedit illud etiam latronis mirabile documentum, qui tunc rapuit paradisum, quando latrocinii sui poenas est appensus, ut solveret.

Unde nos, filioli, quia sic tempus vestrae regenerationis aptastis, ut neque nos possimus dicere quod necesse est, neque vos possitis quod oportet audire, fidem fidei committentes, tradimus breviter quod latius commendare non possumus. Nam quemadmodum exponentibus nobis potestis cognoscere symboli sacramentum, qui ipsum symbolum memoria capere vix valetis? Hoc monemus solum, ne quis committat litteris, quod est cordi mandaturus ut credat, Apostolo sic monente: Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem.

Audituri formam fidei, credulitatis normam, confessionis ordinem, parate simul corporis et cordis auditum. Sicut fons ore angusto manans magnis fluviorum laticibus ampliatur, sic fides symboli breviato sermone credulitatis latissimos dat meatus. Et sicut radix alte fixa in excelsum germen se protendit, fides sic radicata pectoris in profundo in excelsum credulitatis cacumen attollitur. Ergo de cordibus vestris expurgate perfidiae coenum, ut pura per vos fidei fluenta percurrant; incredulitatis fruteta in vobis radicitus amputate, ut excrescant ad alta credulitatis vestrae robusta plantaria. Et quia, auctore Apostolo, corde creditur ad justitiam, ore confessio fit ad salutem, in confessionis vocem modo date quod jam corde creditis.

Sermon LXI.

On the same

Were I not consoled by the sudden and unexpected conversion of blessed Paul (Acts 9), I would scarcely believe that you could be changed so easily from earthly stain into heavenly glory. For a sudden confession at once made him an apostle from a persecutor, and gave to the Church a distinguished teacher, whom it had found a raging devastator of the Christian name. No less does the example of that eunuch encourage me, whom faith carried off to grace before the chariot could bring him back to India and home (Acts 8:27–39). There is added also that wonderful proof of the thief, who carried off paradise at the very time when he was hung up to pay the penalty of his robbery (Luke 23:43).

Hence, little children, since you have so timed your regeneration that neither can we say what is needful, nor can you hear what you ought, entrusting faith to faith, we hand over briefly what we cannot commend more fully. For how could you come to know, as we expound it, the mystery of the Creed, you who are scarcely able to grasp the Creed itself in memory? This alone we warn: let no one commit to letters what he is to entrust to his heart in order to believe, as the Apostle warns: With the heart one believes for justice, and with the mouth confession is made for salvation (Rom 10:10).

About to hear the form of faith, the rule of belief, the order of confession, make ready the hearing of body and heart together. As a spring flowing from a narrow mouth is widened into the great waters of rivers, so the faith of the Creed, in a shortened speech, opens the broadest channels of belief. And as a root fixed deep stretches itself out into a lofty shoot, so faith, rooted in the depth of the breast, is lifted up to the lofty summit of belief. Therefore purge from your hearts the mire of unbelief, so that the pure streams of faith may run through you; cut out by the roots the thickets of disbelief in you, so that the sturdy plantings of your belief may grow up to the heights. And because, on the Apostle's authority, with the heart one believes for justice, with the mouth confession is made for salvation, now give into the voice of confession what you already believe in your heart.

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Qui credit in Deum, Deum discutere non praesumat; Deus quod sit, sufficit scire; qui requirit unde sit, quantus sit Deus, Deus quid sit, hic nescit; sol importunum tenebrat aspectum, ad Deum inconcessus caecatur accessus; Deum qui vult videre, visionis ejus discat tenere mensuram; Deum suum qui vult scire, nesciat gentium deos; qui deos dicit, contradicit Deo. Servire uni libertas est, captivitas multis. Quem Deum confessus es, crede Patrem; ut credens Patrem, esse Filium discas; dicens Filium, genitum cognoscas esse de Patre; cognoscens de Patre genitum, quomodo sit genitus non requiras, quia dixisti, Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Omnipotens potest omnia, et si omnia potest quod in se, ex se, et semper secum habeat Filium quis negabit? Generatio Dei initium non habet, nescit finem, non admittit excessum, quando in Genitore Genitus permanere persistit, dicente ipso Domino. Ego in Patre, et Pater in me est. Ego et Pater unum sumus.

Confessus es Patrem, confessus es Filium, confessus es divinitatis arcanum, confitere incarnationis Dominicae sacramentum. Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus. Christus a superno vocatur unguento, est enim tota plenitudine divinitatis infusus; Jesus nomen est a salute, quod nomen omne quod in coelo, quod in inferno est, tremens, genuflexum, summisso vertice confitetur. Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus unicum Dominum nostrum. Ut Patris et Filii est nobis una deitas, ita dominatio una sit nobis.

Qui natus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine. Spiritus et virgo copula terrena non est, coeleste sed est secretum: hinc est, quod nascitur est divinum. Ergo quod natus est confitendum est, quomodo natus est tacendum est; quia quod secretum est sciri non potest, quod clausum est nescit aperiri, quod singulare est non refertur exemplo.

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus. Judicis nomen audis, ne tempus ignores; crucifixum audis, ut tibi mortis qualitas innotescat; et intelligas quid impenderit tibi, qui propter te poenam tantae mortis excepit. Audis sepultum, ut scias mortem non fuisse perfunctoriam, sed veracem. Mori nolle est timoris humani, divinae virtutis est surrexisse de morte; hic ergo non offendat mortis auditus, ubi resurrectionis gloria abscondit mortis injuriam.

"I believe in God the Father almighty." He who believes in God, let him not presume to discuss God; it is enough to know that God is; he who asks whence God is, how great God is, what God is, does not know him; the sun darkens an importunate gaze, an access to God not granted is blinded; let him who wishes to see God learn to keep the measure of seeing him; let him who wishes to know his God not know the gods of the nations; he who speaks of gods contradicts God. To serve one is liberty; to serve many, captivity. The God whom you have confessed, believe to be Father; so that, believing the Father, you may learn that there is a Son; saying Son, you may recognise that he is begotten of the Father; recognising that he is begotten of the Father, you may not ask how he is begotten, because you have said: "I believe in God the Father almighty." The Almighty can do all things, and if he can do all things, who will deny that he has the Son in himself, from himself, and always with himself? The generation of God has no beginning, knows no end, admits no going out, since the Begotten persists in remaining in the Begetter, as the Lord himself says. I am in the Father, and the Father is in me (John 14:10). I and the Father are one (John 10:30).

You have confessed the Father, you have confessed the Son, you have confessed the secret of divinity: confess the mystery of the Lord's incarnation. "And in Christ Jesus, his Son." Christ is so called from the ointment on high, for he is infused with the whole fullness of divinity; Jesus is a name from salvation, the name which everything that is in heaven, that is in hell, trembling, kneeling, with head bowed, confesses (Phil 2:10–11). "And in Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord." As the Godhead of the Father and the Son is one for us, so let the lordship be one for us.

"Who was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." The Spirit and a virgin are no earthly coupling, but a heavenly secret: hence it is that what is born is divine. Therefore that he was born must be confessed, how he was born must be kept silent; because what is secret cannot be known, what is closed does not know how to be opened, what is singular is not explained by example.

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." You hear the name of the judge, lest you be ignorant of the time; you hear "crucified", so that the manner of the death may become known to you, and that you may understand what he spent for you, who for your sake underwent the penalty of so great a death. You hear "buried", so that you may know that the death was not perfunctory, but true. Not to wish to die belongs to human fear, to have risen from death belongs to divine power; here, then, do not let the hearing of death cause you to stumble, where the glory of the resurrection hides the injury of death.

Tertia die resurrexit. Quia hominis est quod moritur, Trinitatis est quod resurgit. Ascendit in coelos. Hominem ferens illo, ubi semper mansit. Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Ad dexteram sedet, quia habet deitas nil sinistrum. Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. Judicabit vivos et mortuos, quia resurgent ad judicium, qui non putantur esse post mortem, quos gentilitas existimat periisse cum saeculo.

Credo in Spiritum sanctum. Ut in Patre et Filio, et Spiritu sancto unam credas et intelligas esse deitatem. Credo sanctam Ecclesiam. Ut confitearis Ecclesiam Christi sponsam in perpetua Christi societate mansuram. Credo remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem. Qui remissionem peccatorum, qui carnis resurrectionem non credit, aufert veniam sibi, ipse subtrahit vitam.

Quod audistis et credidistis, quod confessi estis, cor habeat, memoria teneat, charta nesciat, scriptor ignoret, ne sacramentum fidei divulgetur in publicum, ne ad infidelem fidei derivetur arcanum. Deus qui vobis sacramentum fidei et audire dedit, et credere, ipse vos aeternam pervenire faciat ad salutem.

"On the third day he rose." Because what dies belongs to man, what rises belongs to the Trinity. "He ascended into the heavens." Carrying man there, where he always remained. "He sits at the right hand of the Father." He sits at the right hand, because the Godhead has nothing on the left. "From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." He will judge the living and the dead, because those will rise for judgement who are thought not to exist after death, whom paganism reckons to have perished with the world.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." So that you may believe and understand that in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit there is one Godhead. "I believe the holy Church." So that you may confess that the Church, the bride of Christ, will remain in the perpetual society of Christ. "I believe the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh." He who does not believe the remission of sins, who does not believe the resurrection of the flesh, takes pardon away from himself, himself withdraws life from himself.

What you have heard and believed, what you have confessed, let the heart have, let memory hold, let paper not know, let the scribe be ignorant of, lest the mystery of faith be spread abroad in public, lest the secret of faith be passed on to the faithless. May God, who has given you both to hear and to believe the mystery of faith, himself bring you to eternal salvation.

Sermo LXII.

In idem

Nutritor pius nisi totus fuerit redactus in parvulum, numquam parvulum perfectum perducit in virum; denique tunc vocem tenuat, verba ponit, agit nutibus, sensus seponit, infirmat viscera, abjicit vires, membra dissolvit, gressum tardat, gestit non ambulare, sed repere: ridere simulat, timere fingit, flere mentitur, quia est in illo mendacium pietas, desipuisse prudentia est, est infirmitas virtus. Hoc reor beatum Paulum fecisse, cum dicit: Factus sum parvulus in medio vestri, tamquam si nutrix foveat filios suos.

Sed forte aliquis stupeat, cum videat nutriculum ista facientem: non irridet si est parens, si pater est non miratur: hoc stultitiam dicere non potest qui scit amare. Unde vos jam patres, jam fortes, jam prudentes deprecor ut me patiamini parvulis Domini mei dependere debitae nutritionis obsequia: et blandimentis hodie magis congrua quam peritiae verba depromere; non quadrare, sed liquare sermones, et eos adhuc teneris faucibus in modum lactis effundere, docente Apostolo, Lac vobis potum dedi, non escam, mutare voces, amare varios affectus, et quid plura? mente, corde, corpore, imbecillis parvulorum mentibus occupari.

Sed jam vos Ecclesiae pia germina prophetico sermone compello. Venite, filii; audite me, immo per me, et per meam vocem, jussa veri genitoris audite, quia vos meo ore Deus vocat. Venite, filii. Quo venite? et ad quid? Timorem Domini, inquit, docebo vos. Et quis veniat ad timorem? ille qui vult vitam, ille qui cupit videre dies bonos; ille qui vult bonum facere, fugere malum; ille qui post carnis et spiritus conflictum quietem divinae pacis desiderat obtinere. Venite, filii; audite me: timorem Domini, inquit, docebo vos. Quis est homo qui vult vitam, et cupit dies videre bonos? Prohibe linguam tuam a malo, et labia tua ne loquantur dolum. Sicut autem vitiant crimina conscientiam, sic dolus labia polluit, linguam maledicta contaminant; ac sic Deo confiteri non potest labiis inquinatus et lingua. Et quia corde creditur ad justitiam, ore confessio fit ad salutem, sanctificate corda, mundate labia, justificate linguam, ut vox fidei bajula de puro pectore toto sanctitatis procedat exemplo.

Sermon LXII.

On the same

A tender nurse, unless he has been wholly reduced to a little child, never brings a little child through to perfect manhood; indeed, then he thins his voice, lays aside words, acts by nods, sets aside his senses, weakens his inward parts, casts off his strength, loosens his limbs, slows his step, longs not to walk, but to creep: he pretends to laugh, feigns to fear, lies that he weeps; because in him a lie is piety, to have played the fool is prudence, weakness is power. This, I think, is what blessed Paul did, when he says: I became a little one in your midst, as if a nurse were cherishing her children (1 Thess 2:7).

But perhaps someone may be astonished when he sees a nurse doing these things: he does not laugh if he is a parent, if he is a father he does not wonder: he cannot call this folly who knows how to love. Hence I beseech you who are already fathers, already strong, already prudent, to allow me to pay to the little ones of my Lord the services of the nursing I owe them: and today to bring out words more suited to caresses than to skill; not to square my sermons, but to liquefy them, and to pour them out like milk for throats still tender, as the Apostle teaches: I gave you milk to drink, not solid food (1 Cor 3:2); to change my voice, to love varied affections, and what more? To be taken up in mind, heart and body with the weak minds of little ones.

But now I call you, the pious shoots of the Church, with the prophetic word. Come, children; hear me (Ps 34:12), or rather, through me and through my voice, hear the commands of the true begetter, for God calls you by my mouth. Come, children. Come where? And for what? The fear of the Lord, he says, I will teach you. And who should come to fear? He who desires life, he who longs to see good days; he who wishes to do good, to flee evil; he who, after the conflict of flesh and spirit, desires to obtain the rest of divine peace. Come, children; hear me: the fear of the Lord, he says, I will teach you. Who is the man who desires life, and longs to see good days? (Ps 34:13) Keep your tongue from evil, and let your lips not speak guile (Ps 34:14). And as crimes vitiate the conscience, so guile defiles the lips, curses contaminate the tongue; and so one defiled in lips and tongue cannot confess to God. And since with the heart one believes for justice, with the mouth confession is made for salvation, sanctify your hearts, cleanse your lips, justify your tongue, so that the voice that bears the faith may come forth from a pure breast with the whole example of holiness.

Signate vos. Placitum vel pactum, quod lucri spem venientis continet, vel futuri, symbolum nuncupari contractu etiam docemur humano: quod tamen symbolum inter duos firmat semper geminata conscriptio, et in stipulatione cautum reddit humana cautela, ne cui surrepat, ne quem decipiat perfidia contractibus semper inimica. Sed hoc inter homines, inter quos fraus, aut a quo facta est, aut cui facta est, semper laedit; inter Deum vero et homines symbolum fidei sola fide firmatur: non litterae, sed spiritui creditur: et mandatur cordi, non chartae: quia divinum creditum humana non indiget cautione. Deus facere fraudem nescit, pati non potest, quia non excluditur tempore, non aetate vincitur, occultatione non fallitur, videt abscondita, furata tenet, negata possidet. Deo salva est ratio sua semper, quia ille, quod credidit, ubi pereat non est; ac si homini, non Deo, neganti perit, non perit feneranti.

Sed dicis: Qui falli non potest, quid est, quod exigit placitum? quid symbolum quaerit? Quaerit ille propter te, non propter se; non quia ille dubitat, sed ut tu credas: quaerit symbolum, quia qui ad tuam sortem venit, ad tuum non dedignatur venire contractum; quaerit symbolum, quia qui cum totum semper ipse commodat, vult deberi; quaerit symbolum, quia te modo non ad rem convocat, sed ad fidem et per placitum praesens futurum pertrahit et invitat ad lucrum.

Hoc Apostolus commemorat, cum dicit: Ex fide in fidem. Et alibi: Justus ex fide vivit. Nemo ergo immemor symboli sit, nemo initi cum Deo placiti sit oblitus; nemo cum fidem modo susceperit, rem requirat; cum ad spem venerit, quare non mox sperata percipiat conqueratur. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Spe salvi facti sumus, spes autem quae videtur non est spes; quod enim videt quis, quid sperat? Si autem quod non videmus speramus, per patientiam exspectamus. Spes ad futura tendit, fides ad promissa transmittit; cum res venerint, advenerint et promissa, spes desinit, fides cessat.

Sign yourselves. An agreement or pact which contains the hope of a gain that is coming, or that is to come, is called a symbol, as we are taught by human contract too: yet this symbol between two parties is always made firm by a written deed made double, and human caution renders it secured in the stipulation, so that bad faith, ever the enemy of contracts, may not creep up on anyone, may not deceive anyone. But this is among men, among whom fraud always does harm, either to the one by whom it is done or to the one to whom it is done; but between God and men the Symbol of faith is made firm by faith alone: credit is given not to the letter, but to the spirit; and it is entrusted to the heart, not to paper: because a divine loan does not need human security. God does not know how to commit fraud, he cannot suffer it, because he is not shut out by time, not overcome by age, not deceived by concealment; he sees hidden things, holds what is stolen, possesses what is denied. With God his account is always safe, because, as for what he has lent, there is no place where it may perish; and if it perishes for the man who denies it, not for God, it does not perish for him who lends at interest.

But you say: "He who cannot be deceived, why is it that he demands an agreement? Why does he seek the Symbol?" He seeks it for your sake, not for his own; not because he doubts, but so that you may believe: he seeks the Symbol, because he who came to your lot does not disdain to come to your contract; he seeks the Symbol, because he who, though he himself always lends everything, wishes to be owed; he seeks the Symbol, because he now calls you not to the thing itself, but to faith, and through the present agreement draws you on to the future and invites you to gain.

The Apostle recalls this when he says: From faith to faith (Rom 1:17). And elsewhere: The just man lives by faith (Gal 3:11). Let no one, then, be unmindful of the Symbol, let no one forget the agreement entered into with God; let no one, when he has only just received faith, require the thing itself; when he has come to hope, let him not complain that he does not at once receive what he hoped for. Hear the Apostle saying: We have been saved in hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what one sees, why does he hope for it? (Rom 8:24) But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Rom 8:25). Hope reaches out to things to come, faith carries across to things promised; when the things themselves have come, and the promises too have arrived, hope ceases, faith comes to an end.

Dulcis est epistola, sed usque dum veniat ipse qui misit; necessarium chirographum, sed usque ad debiti redditionem; grati flores, sed usque dum veniatur ad poma. Sed praesentia epistolam delet, rumpit solutio cautionem, flores consumuntur a pomis: et ideo te superni Patris filium, haeredem Dei, cohaeredem Christi, participem regni coelestis, confessorem divini judicis, coeli incolam, paradisi possessorem modo designatum te fide noveris; modo spe, non re noveris te promotum. Et ideo suscipite fidem, tenete spem, dicite symbolum, ut ad rem et ad illa valeatis bona quae praediximus pervenire.

Signate vos. Hodie, homo, repraesentata est Deo anima tua. Credo in Deum. Quae diu ante dicebat Deum, sed nesciebat; vocabat Deum, sed ignorabat; ignorabat utique, quem taliter per lapides et ligna requirebat. Dicat ergo modo, dicat: Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Quae diu cum videret lapides, cui crederet non videbat: sed est vere Deus, qui te praestitit non videndo videre, quem videndo dii gentium fecerant non videre. Audi dicentem Dominum: In judicium veni in hunc mundum, ut qui non vident, videant, et videntes caeci fiant.

Credo in Deum Patrem. Inest Deo pietas, est in Deo semper affectio, paternitas permanet apud illum; semper ergo Filium fuisse credas, ne Patrem semper non fuisse blasphemes. Sed dicis: Si genuit, quomodo semper habuit? quomodo genuit? Qui sic interrogas, fidem negas, quam fateris. Credo dixisti: si credis, unde venit quomodo? quomodo sermo dubitantis est, non credentis. Credo dixisti in Deum Patrem omnipotentem: si est, quod non potest, omnipotens non est; sed tu illum genuisse ex aliquo Filium putas, quem totum fecisse confiteris ex nihilo; ex aliquo utique, si ex tempore: quod si Pater tempus non capit, Filius initium nescit. Sed quam miserum, ut tu illum facias temporalem, qui te praestitit sempiternum. Non ergo conceptione temporum, non passione viscerum, sed Pater Filium generat, nobis dum revelat.

Et in Christum Jesum Filium ejus unicum Dominum nostrum. Attende, homo, qua reverentia tibi fides insinuatur et traditur: audi Patrem, ut sentias, intelligas, credas, non discutias Filium; et quia est confitearis, non unde, et quando, et quomodo sit, temerarius perscrutator inquiras. Hinc est, quod tibi coelestis sermo ut annuntiet Patrem, mox te ad Christum, ad Jesum, ad Filium, ad unicum Dominum nostrum tota mente transmittit, ut cum videris ejus quae sunt humana, te nec assequi posse, nec aestimare, nec capere, non audeas ejus quae sunt divina contingere.

A letter is sweet, but only until he comes himself who sent it; a bond is necessary, but only until the payment of the debt; flowers are welcome, but only until one comes to the fruit. But presence does away with the letter, payment breaks the security, flowers are consumed by fruits: and therefore know yourself now designated by faith son of the Father on high, heir of God, co-heir of Christ (Rom 8:17), partaker of the heavenly kingdom, confessor of the divine judge, dweller in heaven, possessor of paradise; know yourself advanced now in hope, not in the thing itself. And therefore receive faith, hold hope, say the Symbol, so that you may be able to come to the thing itself and to those good things which we spoke of before.

Sign yourselves. Today, man, your soul has been presented to God. "I believe in God." Long before, it spoke of God, but did not know him; it called on God, but was ignorant of him; ignorant, surely, of him whom it sought in such a way through stones and wood. Let it say, then, now, let it say: "I believe in God the Father almighty." For so long, when it saw stones, it did not see in whom it should believe: but he is truly God, who has granted you to see by not seeing, you whom the gods of the nations, by being seen, had made not to see. Hear the Lord saying: For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind (John 9:39).

"I believe in God the Father." There is loving-kindness in God, there is always affection in God, fatherhood remains with him; believe, then, that the Son always was, lest you blaspheme that the Father was not always. But you say: "If he begot, how did he always have him? How did he beget?" You who ask in this way deny the faith which you acknowledge. You have said "I believe": if you believe, where does "how" come from? "How" is the word of one who doubts, not of one who believes. "I believe", you have said, "in God the Father almighty": if there is anything he cannot do, he is not almighty; but you think that he begot the Son from something, he whom you confess to have made the whole from nothing; from something, surely, if from time: but if the Father does not admit time, the Son knows no beginning. But how wretched, that you should make him temporal, who has made you everlasting! Not, then, by a conception of times, not by a suffering of the womb, but the Father begets the Son, while he reveals him to us.

"And in Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord." Attend, man, with what reverence faith is conveyed and handed over to you: hear the Father, so as to perceive, understand, believe, not discuss the Son; and confess that he is, without inquiring, a rash investigator, whence, and when, and how he is. Hence it is that the heavenly word, as soon as it announces the Father to you, sends you on with your whole mind to Christ, to Jesus, to the Son, to our only Lord, so that when you see that you can neither attain, nor reckon, nor grasp the things of his that are human, you may not dare to touch the things of his that are divine.

Quia natus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine. Age, homo, si tamen homo, progredere corde tuo, consurge mente tua, dilatare sensibus tuis, arrige ingenii tui acumina, excita scientiae tuae vires; quidquid in te rationis est, exsuscita, examina, discute, perscrutare, et nunc stupenti modo solus aperi quid est quod Spiritus generat, Virgo concipit, Virgo parit, permanet Virgo post partum; quemadmodum fit Verbum caro, Deus homo, homo transfertur in Deum; quemadmodum cunabula capiunt quem non capit coelum; quemadmodum portatur humeris orbem qui sustinet totum; quare ipse qui fecit omnia, instituit universa, cuncta moderatur, de te nasci, a te regi voluit, instituit nutriri, ut te parente viveret, cujus ante despexerat servitutem. Et si hoc potueris de reposito divinitatis attingere et proferre de deitatis arcano, tunc interius accede, ascende altius, licentius intuere, et tunc Patris tempora, initia Filii, explorator novus, singularis inventor, proditor divinitatis expone.

Esto major Isaia, qui dixit: Sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est, et sicut agnus coram tondente se sine voce, sic non aperuit os suum; in humilitate judicium ejus ablatum est, generationem ejus quis enarrabit? Cujus? Hujus generationem qui sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est. Si Christi humana generatio exstitit, si divina; et si ut generatur, narrari non potest, quae te, homo, unda, qui te fluctus, ad istud naufragium pertulerunt? qui te spiritus per aera volitare impulit ad ruinam? Pater, Filius et Spiritus sanctus una deitas, una virtus, una sempiternitas, majestas una: quidquid autem Filius minoratur, accipit, crescit, mei est corporis, non substantiae suae. Aut miraris homo quia Patrem vocat in coelo qui matrem habere dignatur in terra?

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est, et sepultus. Quare, homo, qui in se aequalis est Patri, hoc solum, quod in te minor esse voluit, accusas? quem audis sedente Pilato astare, cognoscente Pilato judicari, quare hoc solum accipis addici accusantibus criminosis, reo pronuntiante damnari? Sed ille de carne tua nasci voluit, tuis voluit uberibus occupari, jacere in tuo pectore, tuis voluit humeris bajulari, qui semper a te amari voluit, non timeri. Require quid in lege mandaverit primum, et quid in gratiam quaesierit tunc videbis. Interrogatus Dominus, sicut evangelista dixit, quod esset mandatum in lege primum, ait: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua; hinc est quod ad cor tuum venit, et ad mentem tuam, quia animo, corde, corpore a te ab initio diligi perquisivit.

"That he was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." Come, man, if indeed you are a man, go forth in your heart, rise up in your mind, widen yourself in your senses, raise the sharp points of your wit, rouse the powers of your knowledge; whatever there is of reason in you, rouse it, examine, discuss, search through, and now, astonished as you are, lay open by yourself what it is that the Spirit begets, the Virgin conceives, the Virgin gives birth, the Virgin remains Virgin after childbirth; how the Word becomes flesh, God man, man is carried over into God; how a cradle holds him whom heaven does not hold; how he who sustains the whole world is carried on shoulders; why he himself who made all things, established the universe, governs everything, willed to be born of you, to be ruled by you, appointed to be nursed, so as to live with you for his parent, whose servitude he had before disdained. And if you are able to reach this from the storehouse of divinity and bring it forth from the secret of the Godhead, then go further in, climb higher, gaze more freely, and then, a new explorer, a singular discoverer, a betrayer of divinity, set forth the times of the Father, the beginnings of the Son.

Be greater than Isaiah, who said: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb without voice before its shearer, so he did not open his mouth; in humiliation his judgement was taken away; his generation who will declare? (Isa 53:7–8) Whose? The generation of him who like a sheep was led to the slaughter. If the generation of Christ was human, if divine; and if, as he is begotten, it cannot be told, what wave, man, what billows have carried you to this shipwreck? What spirit has driven you to flit through the air to ruin? Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one Godhead, one power, one everlastingness, one majesty: but whatever the Son is lessened in, receives, grows in, is of my body, not of his substance. Or do you wonder, man, that he who deigns to have a mother on earth calls on a Father in heaven?

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." Why, man, do you accuse him who in himself is equal to the Father for this alone, that in you he willed to be less? Him whom you hear stood while Pilate sat, was judged while Pilate examined the case, why do you take hold of this alone, that he was handed over to criminal accusers, condemned at the pronouncement of an accused man? But he willed to be born of your flesh, he willed to be occupied at your breasts, to lie on your bosom, he willed to be carried on your shoulders, he who willed always to be loved by you, not feared. Seek out what he commanded first in the Law, and then you will see what he sought for grace. The Lord, asked, as the Evangelist said, which was the first commandment in the Law, said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matt 22:37); hence it is that he came to your heart and to your mind, because from the beginning he sought to be loved by you with spirit, heart, body.

Qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus. Hucusque Judaeus, sequitur haereticus; exspectet: ad priora illorum nullus accedat, qui Christi pascuntur, et saginantur injuriis. Sed vos, filioli, audite, ut post passionem mortis, sepulturae moerorem resurrectionis gaudiis effugetis. Tertia die resurrexit. Ut esset nostri corporis resurrectio, virtus, gratia, beneficium Trinitatis. Ascendit in coelis. Per me, qui per se numquam defuit coelo. Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Divinae virtutis ordine, non honoris humani. Diximus, sic Filius a dextris sedet, ut numquam Pater sedeat a sinistris. Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. Et quid debet judici mors? hinc est quod resurgit, ut debeat.

Credo in Spiritum sanctum. Hunc in quem credit, negat, qui Spiritum sanctum negat. In sanctam Ecclesiam. Quia Ecclesia in Christo, et in Ecclesia Christus est; qui ergo Ecclesiam fatetur, in Ecclesiam se confessus est credidisse. Remissionem peccatorum. Da tibi, homo, veniam tu credendo, qui ad omnia peccata dilapsus es desperando. Carnis resurrectionem. Hoc est totum fidei documentum: si carnem, quae corrupta est, quae putrefacta est, quae periit, per Deum resurgere, repaginari, redire posse credas, quem posse omnia, quando omnipotentem confessus es, tunc jurasti.

Vitam aeternam. Bene addidit vitam aeternam, ut se resurrecturum crederet, qui resurget per ipsum, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat, nunc et semper, et per immortalia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

"Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried." Thus far the Jew; the heretic follows; let him wait: let none of those who feed and fatten on injuries to Christ come near to what went before. But you, little children, listen, so that after the passion of death you may put to flight the grief of burial by the joys of the resurrection. "On the third day he rose." So that the resurrection of our body might be the power, the grace, the benefit of the Trinity. "He ascended into the heavens." Through me, he who through himself was never absent from heaven. "He sits at the right hand of the Father." By the order of divine power, not of human honour. We have said it: the Son sits at the right in such a way that the Father never sits on the left. "From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." And what does death owe to the judge? Hence it is that it rises again: so that it may owe.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." He denies him in whom he believes, who denies the Holy Spirit. "In the holy Church." Because the Church is in Christ, and Christ is in the Church; whoever, then, acknowledges the Church has confessed that he has believed in the Church. "The remission of sins." Give yourself pardon, man, by believing, you who have slipped into all sins by despairing. "The resurrection of the flesh." This is the whole lesson of faith: whether you believe that the flesh, which has been corrupted, which has rotted, which has perished, can rise again, be framed together again, return through God, of whom, when you confessed him almighty, you then swore that he can do all things.

"Eternal life." Rightly he added "eternal life", so that he who will rise through him might believe that he will rise: through him who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, now and always, and through the immortal ages of ages. Amen.

Sermo LXIII.

De Lazaro a mortuis suscitato

Post apostolicam lectionem cupientibus nobis ad evangelicas redire virtutes, mox Lazarus ab inferis reversus occurrit apportans vincendae mortis formam, deferens resurrectionis exemplum. Si ergo placet, priusquam ingrediamur pelagus lectionis, priusquam aggrediamur quaestionum fluctus, antequam facti talis altitudinem penetremus, resurrectionis contemplemur aspectum: quia hoc signum videmus esse signorum, virtutum cernimus esse virtutem, mirabilium esse mirificentiam pervidemus Suscitaverat Dominus filiam Jairi principis synagogae, sed adhuc funere calente, sed adhuc mediante morte, corpore adhuc praesente, adhuc inter homines homine morante, adhuc viante spiritu, adhuc anima claustra tartari nesciente, ac ne multis, sic mortuae vitam reddidit, ut jus maneret inferni. Suscitavit et unicum matris; sed sic, ut retineret pheretrum, ut anticiparet sepulcrum, ut corruptionem suspenderet et praeveniret fetorem, ut ante mortuo vitam redderet, quam tota mortuus jura mortis intraret. Circa Lazarum vero quod geritur, totum singulare est, cujus mors, cujus resurrectio commune nil habet cum praedictis; quem circa et vis tota mortis impleta est, et forma resurrectionis plena resplendet. Audeo, et dico totum rapuisse resurrectionis Dominicae sacramentum triduanus ab inferis Lazarus si rediisset: nam Christus rediit triduanus ut Dominus, Lazarus revocatur quatriduanus ut servus.

Sed ad probanda quae diximus, jam praelibemus aliqua lectionis. Miserunt, inquit, sorores ejus ad Dominum dicentes, Domine, ecce quem amas infirmatur. Sic dicentes affectum pulsant, interpellant amorem, conveniunt charitatem, necessitudinem necessitudine gestiunt submovere: sed Christus cui plus est mortem vincere quam removere languorem, cujus amare illud est, non ut dilectum allevet, sed ab inferis ut reducat, dilecto non languoris medicinam, sed resurrectionis gloriam mox paravit.

Sermon LXIII.

On Lazarus raised from the dead

After the reading from the Apostle, as we long to return to the mighty works of the Gospel, at once Lazarus, come back from the underworld, meets us, bringing the pattern of death to be overcome, carrying the example of the resurrection. If it pleases you, then, before we enter the open sea of the reading, before we tackle the waves of its questions, before we penetrate the depth of such a deed, let us contemplate the sight of the resurrection: for we see that this is the sign of signs, we perceive that it is the mighty work of mighty works, we discern that it is the wonder of wonders. The Lord had raised the daughter of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, but while the funeral was still warm, while death was still midway, while the body was still present, while the man still lingered among men, while the spirit was still on its way, while the soul still knew nothing of the bars of Tartarus; and, not to say more, he gave life back to the dead girl in such a way that the right of hell remained. He raised also the only son of his mother; but in such a way as to hold back the bier, to forestall the sepulchre, to suspend corruption and to come before the stench, to give life back to the dead man before he had entered as a dead man into all the rights of death. But what is done concerning Lazarus is wholly singular: his death, his resurrection have nothing in common with those just told; in his case both the whole force of death was fulfilled, and the form of the resurrection shines out in its fullness. I dare to say it: Lazarus would have carried off the whole mystery of the Lord's resurrection if he had come back from the underworld three days dead; for Christ came back three days dead, as Lord; Lazarus is called back four days dead, as a servant.

But to prove what we have said, let us now take a first taste of something of the reading. His sisters sent, he says, to the Lord, saying: Lord, behold, he whom you love is ill (John 11:3). Saying this, they knock at his affection, they appeal to his love, they call upon his charity, they are eager to remove one tie by another tie: but Christ, for whom it is more to conquer death than to remove a sickness, whose way of loving is this, not to relieve the one he loves but to lead him back from the underworld, at once prepared for the one he loved not the medicine of the sickness but the glory of the resurrection.

Denique, Ut audivit infirmari Lazarum,, sicut dicit Evangelista, mansit in eodem loco duobus diebus. Videtis quemadmodum dat locum morti, licentiam dat sepulcro, corruptioni posse permittit, negat nil putredini, nil fetori; atque ut tartarus rapiat, trahat, habeat, admittit; atque agit ut humana spes tota pereat, et tota vis mundanae desperationis accedat, quatenus quod facturus est divinum sit, non humanum. Tantum autem in loco exspectatione mortis residet, ut et mortuum ipse nuntiet, et tunc ad Lazarum denuntiet se venire.

Ait enim, Lazarus mortuus est, et gaudeo. Hoc est amasse? gaudebat Christus, quia moeror mortis vertendus mox erat resurrectionis in gaudium. Et gaudeo propter vos. Quare, propter vos? quia in morte et resurrectione Lazari figura tota mortis et resurrectionis dominicae pingebatur; et quod erat secuturum mox in Domino jam praecedebat in servo. Dicebat semel et iterum discipulis suis: Ecce ascendimus Hierosolymam, et Filius hominis tradetur principibus sacerdotum et scribis: et condemnabunt eum morte, et tradent eum gentibus ad illudendum et flagellandum, et ad crucifigendum. Et ista dicens, videbat eos fieri satis dubios, satis tristes, satis consolationis extorres: et noverat eos ita opprimendos esse ipso pondere passionis, ut nihil in eis ex vita, nihil in eis ex fide, nihil in eis remanere posset ex luce, sed tota pene perfidiae nocte fuscandos. Et ideo mortem Lazari usque ad quatriduanum tempus protendit, usque ad fetorem praevalere permittit, ut discipuli dubium non haberent posse Dominum post triduum adhuc recentem surgere, cum servum vidissent post quatriduum surgere jam fetentem; et crederent illum facile posse sibi vitam reddere, qui alium taliter revocarat ad vitam. Hinc est quod dicit: Gaudeo propter vos, ut credatis. Necesse ergo erat mors Lazari, ut et cum Lazaro jam discipulorum fides consurgeret sepulto.

Quoniam non eram ibi. Et erat locus ubi non erat Christus? et quomodo non erat ibi, unde mortuum Lazarum discipulis nuntiabat? Fratres, erat ibi Christus Deus, sed ibi non erat homo Christus; erat ibi Christus Deus cum moreretur Lazarus, sed nunc ad mortuum venturus erat Christus, quando erat mortem Christus Dominus subiturus: dicebat itaque, Quoniam non eram ibi. Hoc est in morte, in sepulcro, in inferno, ubi per me et meam mortem potestas tota mortis est subruenda.

Indeed, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, as the Evangelist says, he stayed in the same place two days (John 11:6). You see how he gives place to death, gives leave to the sepulchre, lets corruption have its power, denies nothing to putrefaction, nothing to the stench; and he allows Tartarus to seize, to drag, to hold; and he acts so that all human hope may perish and the whole force of the world's despair may come on, so that what he is going to do may be divine, not human. And he remains in the place awaiting death just so long that he himself announces the dead man, and only then declares that he is going to Lazarus.

For he says: Lazarus is dead, and I am glad (John 11:14–15). Is this to have loved? Christ was glad, because the grief of death was soon to be turned into the joy of the resurrection. And I am glad for your sake. Why for your sake? Because in the death and resurrection of Lazarus the whole figure of the Lord's death and resurrection was being painted; and what was soon to follow in the Lord was already going before in the servant. Once and again he said to his disciples: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified (Matt 20:18–19). And as he said this, he saw them grow very doubtful, very sad, very much exiled from consolation; and he knew that they would be so crushed by the very weight of the Passion that nothing of life, nothing of faith, nothing of light could remain in them, but that they would be darkened by an almost total night of unbelief. And so he drew out the death of Lazarus to the fourth day, he let it prevail as far as the stench, so that the disciples might have no doubt that the Lord could rise after three days while still fresh, when they had seen the servant rise after four days already stinking; and might believe that he could easily give life back to himself, who had called another back to life in such a way. Hence it is that he says: I am glad for your sake, that you may believe. The death of Lazarus was necessary, then, so that the faith of the disciples too might rise together with the buried Lazarus.

Because I was not there. And was there a place where Christ was not? And how was he not there, when from there he was announcing to the disciples that Lazarus was dead? Brothers, Christ, God, was there, but the man Christ was not there; Christ, God, was there when Lazarus was dying, but Christ was to come to the dead man now, when Christ the Lord was about to undergo death: and so he said, Because I was not there. That is, in death, in the sepulchre, in hell, where through me and my death the whole power of death is to be overthrown.

Martha, inquit, ut audivit quia Jesus venit, occurrit illi, dicens, Domine, si hic fuisses, frater meus non fuisset mortuus. Mulier, et Deum confiteris et dicis, si hic fuisses? Deum nec absentant loca, nec tempora repraesentant. Non moreretur Lazarus, si Dominus fuisset ibi, qui erat ibi: scilicet, si in paradiso tu, mulier, non fuisses; mulier, tu quaesisti lacrymas, tu invenisti gemitus, tu mortem gulae pretio comparasti, et accusas absentiam Dei, quando causam mortis fuisse tuam praesentiam non recusas? Mors quando a te provisa est, tunc lamentandi materia fuit; nunc vero facta est virtutis occasio, quia tunc ad poenam peccantis data est, nunc permissa est resuscitantis ad gloriam; tunc tartarus invenit hominem, nunc amittit. Sed jam quaere per fidem, mulier, quod per perfidiam perdidisti.

Domine, si fuisses hic, frater meus non fuisset mortuus; sed et nunc scio quia quaecumque petieris a Deo, dabit tibi Deus. Haec mulier non credit, sed credere conatur, cujus credulitatem incredulitas confundit. Quaecumque petieris a Deo, dabit tibi Deus. Deus ex se dat, non a se petit. Quid affers moras, mulier, supplicandi, cum jam praestaturus assistat: Mulier, judex ipse est, quem tu desideras advocatum; in hoc dantis potestas est, non necessitas est rogantis, Scio, inquit, quia quaecumque petieris a Deo, dabit tibi Deus. Mulier, hoc credere, non est credere; hoc scire, nescire est. Probavit hoc Apostolus, quia homo quando se putat aliquid scire, tunc nescit.

Sed jam quid Dominus responderit, audiamus. Resurget frater tuus. Et mulier: Scio quia resurget in resurrectione in novissimo die. Martha, iterum scis quod nescis: scis quia in novissimo die possit resurgere frater tuus, sed quod et hic possit, nescis; aut forte Deus qui tunc potest suscitare omnes, unum modo mortuum non potest suscitare? Potest, potest Deus suscitare ad temporale signum mortuum unum, qui tunc omnes mortuos ad vitam perpetem suscitabit. Scio quaecumque petieris a Deo, dabit tibi Deus, et scio quia resurget in resurrectione in novissimo die. Martha, ante te est resurrectio quam tam longe mittis.

Ego sum, inquit, resurrectio. Et quid est, ego sum resurrectio? et non ego resuscito? quid est? Quia suscepit hominem, suscepit mortem: ut qui resuscitat jubendo unum, resurgendo in se resuscitet omnes; et quibus Adam puteus mortis exstitit, his vitae fons Christus existat; et impleatur illud Apostoli, Sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur.

Martha, he says, when she heard that Jesus was coming, ran to meet him, saying: Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died (John 11:20–21). Woman, you both confess God and say: If you had been here? Places do not make God absent, nor do times make him present. Lazarus would not be dying if the Lord had been there, he who was there: that is, if you, woman, had not been in paradise; woman, you sought out tears, you found groans, you bought death at the price of gluttony, and do you accuse the absence of God, when you do not deny that your presence was the cause of death? When death was procured by you, then it was matter for lamenting; but now it has become the occasion of power, because then it was given for the punishment of the sinner, now it is permitted for the glory of the one who raises again; then Tartarus found man, now it loses him. But now seek through faith, woman, what you lost through unbelief.

Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died; but even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you (John 11:22). This woman does not believe, but tries to believe; her belief is confounded by disbelief. Whatever you ask of God, God will give you. God gives from himself; he does not ask from himself. Why do you bring delays to supplication, woman, when he who is about to grant is already standing by? Woman, he whom you want as advocate is himself the judge; in this there is the power of the giver, not the necessity of one who asks: I know, she says, that whatever you ask of God, God will give you. Woman, to believe this is not to believe; to know this is not to know. The Apostle proved this: that when a man thinks he knows something, then he does not know (1 Cor 8:2).

But now let us hear what the Lord answered. Your brother will rise (John 11:23). And the woman: I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day (John 11:24). Martha, again you know what you do not know: you know that your brother can rise on the last day, but that he can also here, you do not know; or can it be that God, who then can raise all, cannot now raise one dead man? He can, God can raise one dead man for a sign in time, he who then will raise all the dead to perpetual life. I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you, and I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day. Martha, the resurrection that you send so far away is before you.

I am, he says, the resurrection (John 11:25). And what is I am the resurrection? And not "I raise again"? What is it? Because he took up man, he took up death: so that he who raises one by commanding might, by rising in himself, raise all; and that to those for whom Adam was the well of death, Christ might be the fountain of life; and that the word of the Apostle might be fulfilled: As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive (1 Cor 15:22).

Ego sum, inquit, resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, etiamsi mortuus fuerit, vivet, et omnis qui vivit et credit in me, non morietur in aeternum. Credis hoc? Et mulier, Utique, Domine, ego credidi, et credo, quia tu es Christus filius Dei vivi, qui in hunc mundum venisti. Qui ad Lazarum venerat, quid sic occupatur in Martha? quid? Ut ante ista in fide surgeret, quam ille resuscitaretur in carne. Sic facit qui et vivis et mortuis consulturus advenit: nec pertimescit faciendi moras, penes quem facti et effectus permanet et potestas. Fratres, patimini hodie differri verbum, si desideratis audire latius quae sequuntur.

I am, he says, the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me, even if he has died, will live; and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die (John 11:25–26). Do you believe this? And the woman: Yes, Lord, I have believed and I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, who have come into this world (John 11:27). He who had come to Lazarus, why is he so taken up with Martha? Why? So that she might rise in faith before he was raised in the flesh. So acts he who has come to take thought both for the living and for the dead: nor does he fear delays in the doing, he with whom remains the power both of the deed and of its fulfilment. Brothers, bear with the word's being put off today, if you wish to hear more fully what follows.

Sermo LXIV.

De eodem

Singula Scripturae verba si libris singulis mandarentur, nec sic mysteria quae in ipsis sunt audientibus perlucerent; et quid faciet subitus et brevis sermo, qui in modum fulguris, priusquam illustret oculos, jam refugit, nec dat lucem videntibus, sed pavorem? Orate ergo, uti quia in saeculi obscuritate versamur, et in carne positi noctis tempus agimus, non diei, lucernam nobis verbi sui Christus accendat, qua praevia mysterii coelestis ingrediamur obscura, et gradu lento perveniamus ad scientiae divinae quantam possumus claritatem: sicut illi magi, qui mentis suae oculos metientes, non audent splendori solis, aut divinae se committere claritati, sed nocte tenerum stellae lumen tenerioribus oculis assumentes, ad cubile Christi tenerrimum pervenerunt. Sed jam, sicut promisimus, evangelicae lectionis quod superest, exsequamur.

Martha, inquit, ut audivit quia Jesus venit, occurrit illi. Sic servus non fuit, non proximus, non amicus, certe qui aderat consolator, ut mulier sola medias per turbas, per castrum totum, extra civitatem et luctus tempore, venienti occurreret salvatori? Fratres, in his personis non causae currunt, sed sacramenta signantur. Mulier currit pro morte, quae cucurrit ad mortem; festinat ad veniam, quae festinavit ad culpam; ad redemptorem pium pervenit, seductor pessimus quam praevenit; resurrectionem quaerit, quae quaesivit ruinam; et ipsa quae mortem viro attulit, ut vitam viro referat, haec anhelat.

Hinc est quod in loco Christus restitit, exspectavit Christus, quod non intravit turbas, quod non contendit ad domum, quod non ad sepulcrum divertit, quod non ad Lazarum propter quem venerat, festinavit; sed mulierem sustinet, mulierem remoratur, mulierem primam suscepit, quam primam suasor infecit; a muliere perfidiam fugat, ad mulierem revocat fidem, ut quae fuit perditionis obsequium, salutis eadem sit ministra; et sit tandem per Deum viventium mater, quae per diabolum diu mater exstitit mortuorum.

Sermon LXIV.

On the same

If the single words of Scripture were committed each to a single book, not even so would the mysteries that are in them shine through to the hearers; and what will a sudden and short sermon do, which, like lightning, has already fled before it lights up the eyes, and gives those who see not light but fright? Pray, then, that since we live in the darkness of the world, and, placed in the flesh, spend the time of night, not of day, Christ may light for us the lamp of his word, so that with it going before us we may enter the dark places of the heavenly mystery, and with slow step come to as much brightness of divine knowledge as we can: like those Magi who, measuring the eyes of their mind, do not dare to entrust themselves to the splendour of the sun or to the divine brightness, but, taking by night the tender light of a star with eyes more tender still, came to the most tender cradle of Christ. But now, as we promised, let us go through what remains of the Gospel reading.

Martha, he says, when she heard that Jesus was coming, ran to meet him. Was there then no servant, no neighbour, no friend, surely some comforter who was there, that the woman alone, through the midst of the crowds, through the whole village, outside the town and at a time of mourning, should run to meet the Saviour as he came? Brothers, in these persons it is not events that run their course, but mysteries that are signified. The woman runs for death, she who ran to death; she hastens to pardon, who hastened to fault; she comes to the loving Redeemer, she whom the most wicked seducer reached first; she seeks resurrection, who sought ruin; and she herself, who brought death to the man, pants to bring life back to the man.

Hence it is that Christ stood still in the place, that Christ waited, that he did not enter the crowds, did not press on to the house, did not turn aside to the sepulchre, did not hasten to Lazarus, for whose sake he had come; but he waits for the woman, he lingers for the woman, he received the woman first, whom the persuader first infected; from the woman he drives out unbelief, to the woman he calls back faith, so that she who was at the service of perdition may herself be the minister of salvation; and that she may at last be through God the mother of the living, who through the devil was long the mother of the dead.

Et quia mulier fuerat mali caput, causam mortis agit, ut ante crimen diluat quam veniam largiatur, ante causam tollat quam sententiam solvat; et cavet ne vir mulierem, per quam semel deceptus est, participem refugeret ad vitam; ac ne multis periisset mulier, si ante ad virum Christus Dominus pervenisset. Hinc est, fratres, quod per mulierem nascitur Christus; hinc est quod virum mulier semper ventris sui suscitat de sepulcro, ut doloribus revocet, quem depulit blandimentis, ut flendo reparet quem perdidit manducando.

Denique ubi Martha confessa est Christo, et quidquid fuit culpae in persona mulieris pia confessione delevit, mittitur ad Mariam, quia sine Maria nec fugari mors poterat, nec vita poterat reparari. Veniat Maria, veniat materni nominis bajula, ut videat homo Christum virginalis uteri habitasse secretum, quatenus prodeant ab inferis mortui, mortui exeant de sepulcris. Jesus, inquit, videns Mariam plorantem et Judaeos qui cum ea venerant plorantes, fremuit spiritu et turbavit seipsum, et dixit: Ubi posuistis illum? Responderunt, Domine, veni et vide; et lacrymatus est Jesus. Plorat Maria, plorant Judaei, plorat et Christus; putasne simili compassione? Esto quod Maria soror fleret, quia nec fratrem retinere potuit, nec morti potuit obviare: quae licet esset de resurrectione secura, destitutione tamen solatii praesentis, mora absentiae tam longae, tristitia diutinae separationis non potuit non deflere; simul quia tam trux, tam funesta, tam crudelis imago mortis, quamvis fidelem mentem non potuit non tangere, non movere. Flebant Judaei et conditionis suae memores, et futurae vitae desperatione possessi. Mors cum satis viventibus sit amara, satis turbat ipso exitu, plus conturbat exemplo: mortuum quotiens quis viderit, totiens se morti ejulat destinatum. Sic de morte non potest non dolere mortalis.

Quid horum Christus? et si nihil horum, quare flebat? certe ipse qui dixerat, Lazarus mortuus est, et gaudeo, de quo gaudet mortuo, ipsum cum resuscitat tunc lamentatur; qui cum amittit non flet, cum recipit tunc deplorat; tunc fundit mortales lacrymas, vitae spiritum cum refundit. Fratres, habet hoc natura corporis humani, ut producat lacrymas vis gaudii, vis moeroris. Quotiens enim viscera, aut laetitiae, aut tristitiae nimio arctantur impulsu, oculi in lacrymas mox erumpunt.

And because the woman had been the head of evil, he takes up the case of death, so as to wash away the crime before he grants pardon, to remove the cause before he annuls the sentence; and he takes care lest the man should shrink from having as a partaker in life the woman through whom he had once been deceived; and, not to say more, the woman would have perished if Christ the Lord had come first to the man. Hence it is, brothers, that Christ is born through a woman; hence it is that woman always raises man from the sepulchre of her womb, to call back by her pains him whom she drove out by her blandishments, to restore by weeping him whom she lost by eating.

Indeed, when Martha had made her confession to Christ, and by her devout confession had blotted out whatever fault there was in the person of the woman, she is sent to Mary, because without Mary neither could death be put to flight nor could life be restored. Let Mary come, let her come who carries the name of the mother, so that man may see that Christ dwelt in the secret place of a virginal womb, so that the dead may come forth from the underworld, the dead go out of the sepulchres. Jesus, he says, seeing Mary weeping, and the Jews who had come with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and troubled himself, and said: Where have you laid him? (John 11:33–34) They answered: Lord, come and see; and Jesus wept (John 11:34–35). Mary weeps, the Jews weep, Christ too weeps: do you think, with a like compassion? Granted that Mary, his sister, should weep, because she could neither keep her brother nor stand in the way of death: although she was secure about the resurrection, yet she could not but weep for the loss of present comfort, for the delay of so long an absence, for the sadness of a lasting separation; and also because so grim, so deadly, so cruel an image of death could not but touch, could not but move a mind however faithful. The Jews wept, both mindful of their own condition and possessed by despair of the life to come. Since death is very bitter to the living, it disturbs greatly by its very departure, it disturbs more deeply by its example: as often as anyone sees a dead man, so often does he wail that he is destined for death. So a mortal cannot but grieve over death.

Which of these is Christ? And if none of these, why was he weeping? Surely he who had said, Lazarus is dead, and I am glad, laments over the very one in whose death he rejoices, then when he raises him; he who does not weep when he loses him, then bewails him when he receives him back; then he pours out mortal tears, when he pours back the breath of life. Brothers, the nature of the human body has this: that the force of joy, the force of grief, produces tears. For as often as the inward parts are constricted by an excessive impulse either of gladness or of sadness, the eyes at once break out into tears.

Hinc est quod Christus non dolores mortis, sed illius laetitiae recordatione lacrymavit, qui voce sua, voce una, omnes est mortuos perpetuam suscitaturus ad vitam. Fremit spiritu, et tota se viscerum commotione conturbat, quia adhuc solum Lazarum, et non jam omnes mortuos suscitabat. Quis ergo ex humana infirmitate existimet hic flevisse Christum, cum coelestis pater luxuriosum filium non quandiu abiit, sed quando recipit tunc deplorat?

Christus recipiens flevit Lazarum, non amittens, denique non quando plorantes videt, tunc plorat Christus; sed quando interrogat, et in respondentibus videt fidei nil manere, dixerat: Ubi posuistis eum? At illi responderunt, Domine, veni et vide. Putaverunt eum nescire ubi positus esset in terra, qui sciebat ubi illum tartara dira retinerent. Ille sic interrogans exigebat fidem, scientiam porrigebat, ut astantes scirent quod mors, quod sepulcrum, quod corruptio, quod putredo, quod fetor non ex conditione Dei, sed ex delicto hominis hominibus accessisset. Nam cum dicit, Ubi posuistis eum, mulieres increpat, mulieres arguit, hoc est: Quem ego posui in paradiso, in regione vitae, ecce vos ubi posuistis eum.

Sed et Judaei ad ignorantiam requirentis respondebant. Domine, veni et vide. Quid? illum jubere morti? quid? jubere illum inferis crederent, qui credebant eum quod erat in oculis non videre, qui de lacrymis ejus taliter disputabant? Qui potuit aperire caeci oculos quomodo facere non potuit, ut hic non moreretur? Potuit facere ut non moreretur, sed mori permisit is qui mortuum ad suam gloriam voluit suscitare: permisit ad inferna descendere, ut appareret Deus ab inferis hominem cum reducit. Sed, Judaei, apparent corda vestra obstructiora inferis, viscera vestra duriora mortuis, oculi vestri tetriores sepulcris, cum vox quae patefecit tartara vestra non patefecit arcana, cum jussio quae exsuscitat mortuum mentes vestras non suscitat, cum lex quae illustrat sepulcrum vestram non illuminet caecitatem. Sed ista sufficiant, ut cum Christo resurgentis Lazari gloriam patentius videre possimus.

Hence it is that Christ wept not at the pains of death, but at the remembrance of that joy, he who by his voice, by one voice, is to raise all the dead to perpetual life. He groans in spirit and troubles himself with all the stirring of his inward parts, because he was as yet raising Lazarus alone, and not yet all the dead. Who then would think that Christ wept here out of human weakness, when the heavenly father bewails his dissolute son not while he was going away, but when he receives him back (Luke 15)?

Christ wept over Lazarus as he received him back, not as he lost him; indeed, it is not when he sees them weeping that Christ weeps; but when he asks, and sees that nothing of faith remains in those who answer — he had said: Where have you laid him? But they answered: Lord, come and see. They thought that he did not know where he had been laid in the earth, he who knew where dread Tartarus was holding him. By asking in this way he was demanding faith, holding out knowledge, so that the bystanders might know that death, that the sepulchre, that corruption, that putrefaction, that stench had come upon men not from God's making, but from the offence of man. For when he says, Where have you laid him, he rebukes the women, he reproves the women; that is: Him whom I placed in paradise, in the region of life, see where you have laid him.

But the Jews too answered as to the ignorance of the one who asked. Lord, come and see. What? Would they believe that he gives orders to death? What? That he gives orders to the underworld, they who believed that he did not see what was before their eyes, who argued in such a way about his tears? He who could open the eyes of the blind man, how could he not bring it about that this man should not die? (John 11:37) He could have brought it about that he did not die, but he who wished to raise the dead man for his own glory permitted him to die: he permitted him to go down into the underworld, so that God might appear when he leads man back from the underworld. But, Jews, your hearts appear more blocked than the underworld, your inward parts harder than the dead, your eyes darker than sepulchres, since the voice that opened Tartarus did not open your secret places, since the command that rouses the dead man does not rouse your minds, since the law that lights up the sepulchre does not illumine your blindness. But let this suffice, so that with Christ we may see more plainly the glory of Lazarus rising.

Sermo LXV.

De eodem

Quoniam mortem Lazari, Mariae fletus, lacrymas Marthae, Judaeorum planctus jam perstrinximus sermone geminato, nunc exoneremus animos, abjiciamus curas, exoccupemus sensus, ut resurrectionis tantae gaudio totis mentibus et capere et audire possimus. Evangelista venisse ad monumentum sic praedicat Salvatorem. Jesus, inquit, rursus fremens in semetipso, venit ad monumentum: erat autem spelunca et lapis superpositus erat ei. Jesus fremens venit ad monumentum. Fremit Christus, ut caro reviviscat; fremit vita, ut mors fugetur; fremit Deus, ut resurgat homo; fremit indulgentia, ne sententia contradicat: fremit Christus debellans mortem, quia non potest non fremere, qui singularem rapit de hoste victoriam. Quod autem dixit, Rursus fremens, fremit rursum, ut geminata resurrectionis demonstret insignia: quia voce Christi sicut mortui corpore de sepulcris suscitantur ad vitam, perfidia mortui ad vitam fidei sic resurgunt.

Erat, inquit, spelunca. Dixisse suffecerat venisse ad monumentum; quid est quod tantopere speluncam Evangelista commemorat? Spelunca plane, ubi hominem diaboli latrocinium collocavit; spelunca, ubi virum fraus condidit mulieris; spelunca, ubi Dei plasma mortis rapacitas includebat. Et lapis superpositus erat ei. Durae mortis janua durior durissimo lapide claudebatur: sed plorans quid proficit ad sepulcrum, quando sic duros et congestos obices non penetrat vox plorantis? Christiani, ploremus Deo pro peccatis nostris, et, mortuis non audientibus, cum gentibus non ploremus.

Ait Jesus, tollite lapidem. Inter divinas virtutes humanum Christus requirit auxilium? non sufficit amovere lapidem, qui mortem sufficit effugare? sepulcri claustra reserare non valet, qui portas tartari praevalet aperire? Dixerat per prophetam: Auferam cor lapideum de carne eorum, et dabo eis cor carneum; praecipit ergo ut Judaei ex se cor lapideum tollant, evolvant perfidiae saxum, silicem durae incredulitatis excludant, quatenus animae per infidelitatem mortuae de sepulcro pectoris prosilirent: et non tantum surrexisse Lazarum, quantum se Lazaro consurrexisse gauderent. Tollite lapidem.

Sermon LXV.

On the same

Since in a twofold sermon we have already touched on the death of Lazarus, the weeping of Mary, the tears of Martha, the lamentation of the Jews, let us now unburden our hearts, cast away our cares, free our senses of all business, so that with the joy of so great a resurrection we may with our whole minds both grasp and hear. The Evangelist proclaims thus that the Saviour came to the tomb. Jesus, he says, again groaning in himself, came to the tomb: now it was a cave, and a stone had been laid upon it (John 11:38). Jesus, groaning, came to the tomb. Christ groans, that flesh may live again; life groans, that death may be put to flight; God groans, that man may rise; indulgence groans, lest the sentence should gainsay it: Christ groans as he subdues death, because he cannot but groan who snatches a singular victory from the enemy. And as to his saying, again groaning, he groans again to show the twofold tokens of the resurrection: because, as by the voice of Christ those dead in body are raised from the sepulchres to life, so those dead by unbelief rise again to the life of faith.

It was, he says, a cave. It would have been enough to say that he came to the tomb; why is it that the Evangelist makes so much of the cave? A cave indeed, where the devil's banditry stowed man away; a cave, where the fraud of the woman buried the man; a cave, where the rapacity of death shut in God's handiwork. And a stone had been laid upon it. The door of hard death, harder still, was shut with the hardest stone: but what does one who weeps at the sepulchre achieve, when the voice of the weeper does not pierce barriers so hard and so heaped up? Christians, let us weep to God for our sins, and, since the dead do not hear, let us not weep with the Gentiles.

Jesus says: Take away the stone (John 11:39). Amid divine mighty works does Christ need human help? Is he not equal to moving a stone, who is equal to putting death to flight? Has he not the strength to unbar the bars of the sepulchre, who is mighty to open the gates of Tartarus? He had said through the prophet: I will take away the heart of stone from their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh (Ezek 11:19); so he commands the Jews to take away from themselves the heart of stone, to roll away the rock of unbelief, to cast out the flint of hard disbelief, so that souls dead through faithlessness might leap out of the sepulchre of the breast, and rejoice not so much that Lazarus had risen as that they themselves had risen together with Lazarus. Take away the stone.

Tollite miserae humanitatis obsequium, ut divinitatis beatae opera nunc clarescant. Tollite lapidem. Quem posuistis vos, ut hominem quem ego posui, nunc reponam.

Respondit Martha: Jam fetet. Mulier, et quod fetet cujus est? Jam fetet. Modo ad te pertinet, quod a te venit: ad sepulcrum non sentires fetorem, si in paradiso suasorem noluisses audire. Jam fetet. Quod perditori fetet non fetet Creatori. Jam fetet. Quod horret alieni operis eversor, amator sui operis non abhorret. Sed dicendo sic, testaris mortem, quam tu, mulier, intulisti; fetorem clamas, ut plena mors audientibus innotescat, quatenus quod resurget Lazarus, redeuntis sit spiritus, non latentis. Divinae virtutis sit, non sit artis humanae; neque Judaei, qui nos dicunt in principe daemoniorum ejicere daemones iterum dicant nos non imperio Dei, sed humano praesidio mortuos suscitare. Jam fetet, quatriduanus est. Dicit et tempus, ut sciant quia auctor est temporum, cui tempora nulla praescribunt. Jam fetet, quatriduanus est. Dicendo sic, exaggerat desperationem, ut qui adsunt videant quia Deus est, qui sic vitam mortuis desperatis salutem, fetentibus dat vigorem.

Elevatis, inquit, oculis sursum. Elevat oculos sursum, ut nobis formam supplicandi tribuat, non sibi viam praeparet impetrandi: namque sursum respicit, qui semper est sursum cum Patre, semper Pater in ipso est, et ipse est semper in Patre: Ego, inquit, in Patre, et Pater in me est; Pater, inquit, gratias tibi ago, quia audisti me. De praestito agit gratias; et quod Pater audierit, hoc dicitur; quod Filius petierit, hoc tacetur. Fratres, inter Patrem et Filium audiendi est affectio, non est necessitas supplicandi; charitas assensus est, non est austeritas jussionis; ibi amore geruntur omnia, ubi non indigetur obsequio, sicut ex sequentibus elucescit.

Pater, gratias ago tibi, quia audisti me: ego autem sciebam quia semper me audis. Vocat invocandi cura, ubi fiducia certa est audiendi. Aut quid ibi facit petendi labor, ubi praestandi est causa communis? Nemo ergo sic Filium minoret precibus, ne Patrem circa salutem hominum sic minoret. Quare autem sic loquatur Filius, ipse aperit, sic dicendo: Pater, gratias ago tibi, quia audisti me: ego autem sciebam quia semper me audis; sed propter populum dixi, qui circumstat. Videtis quia loquendo talia suum Patrisque affectum tollit, prodit, pandit gratiam, loquitur unitatem.

Take away the homage of wretched humanity, so that the works of blessed divinity may now shine out. Take away the stone. The stone you laid, so that I may now set back in his place the man whom I set there.

Martha answered: He already stinks (John 11:39). Woman, and the stench, whose is it? He already stinks. Now what came from you belongs to you: you would not perceive the stench at the sepulchre, if in paradise you had refused to listen to the persuader. He already stinks. What stinks to the destroyer does not stink to the Creator. He already stinks. What the overthrower of another's work shudders at, the lover of his own work does not abhor. But by speaking thus, you bear witness to the death which you, woman, brought in; you cry out the stench, so that full death may become known to the hearers, so that, when Lazarus rises, it may be the spirit of one returning, not of one in hiding. Let it be of divine power, not of human art; and let the Jews, who say that we cast out demons by the prince of demons (Matt 9:34), not say again that we raise the dead not by the command of God but by human aid. He already stinks, he is four days dead (John 11:39). She states the time too, so that they may know that he is the author of times, to whom no times set bounds. He already stinks, he is four days dead. By speaking thus she heightens the despair, so that those present may see that it is God who thus gives life to the dead, health to the despaired of, vigour to the stinking.

Lifting up, he says, his eyes on high (John 11:41). He lifts up his eyes on high to give us the form of supplication, not to prepare for himself a way of obtaining: for he looks up who is always on high with the Father; the Father is always in him, and he is always in the Father: I, he says, am in the Father, and the Father is in me (John 14:10); Father, he says, I give you thanks, because you have heard me (John 11:41). He gives thanks for what has been granted; and that the Father has heard, this is said; that the Son has asked, this is passed over in silence. Brothers, between the Father and the Son there is the affection of hearing, there is not the necessity of supplicating; there is the charity of assent, not the severity of command; there all things are done by love, where there is no need of homage, as becomes clear from what follows.

Father, I give you thanks, because you have heard me: but I knew that you always hear me (John 11:41–42). The care of calling upon has no place where there is a sure confidence of being heard. Or what does the labour of asking do there, where the cause of granting is common? Let no one, then, so lessen the Son by his prayers, lest he so lessen the Father concerning the salvation of men. Why the Son speaks so, he himself discloses, saying thus: Father, I give you thanks, because you have heard me: but I knew that you always hear me; but I said it for the sake of the people who stand around (John 11:42). You see that by saying such things he lifts up, he reveals his own and the Father's affection, he lays open grace, he speaks unity.

Dixerat: Omnia quae habet Pater, mea sunt; et si sua sunt omnia, quomodo petit? Qui de suo petit, quod petit, non necessitatis est, sed amoris.

Pater, gratias ago tibi, quia audisti me: ego autem sciebam quia semper me audis; sed propter populum dixi, qui circumstat, ut credant quia tu me misisti. Missum se dixit, ut populi sciant de coelo venisse Christum, non recessisse de coelo. Sic ergo mittitur, sic et quod habet accipit, quomodo unde venerat non recessit; sic ergo et Filius quod habet accipit, et Pater quod dederit non amittit. Fratres, et quod auditur, et quod mittitur, et quod venit, et quod accipit, et quod nascitur, et quod patitur, et quod moritur, et quod resurgit, non est hoc divinitatis suae, infirmitatis hoc nostrae est, nostrae est hoc naturae: quod totum causa nostri tulit in nostro corpore, non propter se in sua pertulit majestate.

Sed ad proposita redeamus. Quid est quod dicit, Pater, gratias ago tibi, quia audisti me? Quid est? Ubi Christus coepit inferi pulsare fores, portas tartari submovere, januas aperire mortis, gehennae solvere legem vetustam, deturbare antiquissimum jus poenarum, reposcere Lazari animam, ab inferis viam reditus innovare, occurrit ei tartari tota furens potestas, praeferens edictum superni principis, excelsi regis portans decretum, gestans latam tot saeculis Deo loquente sententiam; et videns hominem sciscitabatur quis iste esset, quid auderet, quid sibi vellet, cur solus, aut sine tremore tremendos mortis lacessat et incessat accessus. Cui dicenti quis esset, responderunt prophetica voce, ministri resurrectionis, angeli. Ipse est rex gloriae, ipse est fortis et potens in praelio. Sed refert tartarus: Ego regem gloriae in coelestibus scio omnibus potestatibus coelicis praesidere, cujus nutum tota sufferre non potest creatura; hunc autem video de terrenis unum, concretum limo, corpore mortali septum, et in ipso habitu hominis, hominibus viliorem, et ad summam cito dandum sepulcro, subdendum meae protinus esse ditioni. Sed persistentibus angelis et repetentibus: Ipse est Dominus virtutum, ipse est rex gloriae; ipse coeli praesul, ipse creator mundi, ipse salvator saeculi, ipse redemptor omnium, et de qua furis tu, lator ipse sententiae, ipse tuum calcaturus caput, ipse tuum contriturus imperium, ipse te suo judicio perditurus; qui reos jussus capere, attrahis innocentes, sanctos diripis, ipsi Dei Filio comminaris. Redde ergo unum, priusquam multos cogaris exsolvere.

He had said: All that the Father has is mine (John 16:15); and if all things are his, how does he ask? He who asks from what is his own, what he asks is not of necessity, but of love.

Father, I give you thanks, because you have heard me: but I knew that you always hear me; but I said it for the sake of the people who stand around, that they may believe that you sent me. He said that he was sent, so that the peoples might know that Christ came from heaven, not that he withdrew from heaven. Thus, then, he is sent, thus too he receives what he has, as he did not withdraw from the place he had come from; thus, then, both the Son receives what he has, and the Father does not lose what he has given. Brothers, that he is heard, and that he is sent, and that he comes, and that he receives, and that he is born, and that he suffers, and that he dies, and that he rises again, this is not of his divinity, this is of our weakness, this is of our nature: all of which he bore for our sake in our body; he did not endure it for his own sake in his own majesty.

But let us return to what we set before us. What is it that he says: Father, I give you thanks, because you have heard me? What is it? When Christ began to knock at the doors of the underworld, to thrust back the gates of Tartarus, to open the portals of death, to annul the ancient law of Gehenna, to overturn the most ancient right of punishments, to demand back the soul of Lazarus, to open anew the way of return from the underworld, the whole raging power of Tartarus met him, displaying the edict of the prince on high, carrying the decree of the most high king, bearing the sentence pronounced so many ages ago by God's own speaking; and seeing a man, it asked who this was, what he dared, what he wanted, why he alone, or without trembling, provokes and assails the dreadful approaches of death. To it, as it asked who he was, the angels, ministers of the resurrection, answered with the prophetic voice: He is the king of glory, he is strong and mighty in battle (Ps 24:8). But Tartarus replies: "I know that the king of glory presides in the heavens over all the heavenly powers, whose nod the whole creation cannot bear; but this one I see to be one of the earthly, compounded of slime, hedged in by a mortal body, and in the very condition of a man more worthless than men, and, in short, soon to be given to the sepulchre, to be put at once under my sway." But as the angels persisted and repeated: "He is the Lord of powers, he is the king of glory (Ps 24:10); he is the ruler of heaven, he the Creator of the world, he the saviour of the age, he the redeemer of all, and he himself the giver of the sentence over which you rage, he who is to tread on your head, he who is to crush your empire, he who is to destroy you by his judgement; you who, ordered to seize the guilty, drag off the innocent, plunder the saints, threaten the very Son of God. Give back one, then, before you are forced to pay out many."

Sed tartarus adhuc ista non credens, per consuetos nuntios recurrit ad coelum, haec invidiosa interpellatione deploratus: Ego, Domine, et si extremus creaturae tuae, et si tristi servitio mancipatus praecepta tua inviolabili lege servo, pervigilo, ne quis sententiae tuae vetustum jus, novus temerator immutet, sed apparuit homo, qui dicitur Christus, tuum se Filium jactans, sacerdotes tuos notat, scribas tuos arguit, sabbata tua violat, legem tuam solvit, et animas exemptas carne, et poenae jam meaeque custodiae deputatas, ad corpora, in quibus scelerate vixerant, redire compellit; et tantis quotidie procedit ausibus, ut Lazarum jam carcere nostro clausum, jam lege nostra vinctum, jam jure nostro manentem, effractis claustris inferi conetur eruere: aut cito subveni, aut si patefecerit semel januas, omnes, quos tot saeculis servavimus, nunc amittis. Ad haec Filius de sinu Patris respondit: Pater, justum est ut carcer non innocentes teneat, sed nocentes; poena non justos cruciet, sed injustos. Quamdiu sub unius hominis culpa, propter Adae solius noxam, patriarchas, prophetas, martyres, confessores, virgines, viduas, in castitate conjugii permanentes, omnes aetates, utrumque sexum, certe parvulos nescientes bonum vel malum, hic carnifex ad se trahere crudeli infestatione non cessat? Pater, ego moriar, ut non moriantur omnes; Pater, ego Adae debitum solvam, ut per me tibi vivant qui per Adam moriuntur inferno; Pater, propter sententiam tuam ego meum sanguinem fundam, tantum est ut ad te tua redeat creatura, pretium chari tibi sanguinis mei redemptio sit omnium mortuorum. Ad haec totius Trinitatis consensus, et Lazarum praecepit exire et tartarus ad reddendos omnes mortuos Christo jussus est obedire: hinc est quod Filius clamat: Pater, gratias tibi ago, quia audisti me.

Testatur Apostolus quod Christus advocatus noster sit apud Patrem; denique quando sedet, conjudicat Patri; quando stat, officio fungitur advocati. Tunc Christus, peracta advocatione, clamat voce magna: Lazare, veni foras. Tunc tartarus, ligatis manibus et pedibus, Lazarum retulit ad superna: timens et tremens, ne dum solvit, ne dum moras facit, ne dum tardius refert unum, omnes cogeretur afferre. Sic factus est vivorum relator, qui raptor esse consueverat mortuorum. Nam quare Christus vincula inferni dirupit, mortis ligamenta dissolvit, nisi ut nobis monstraret inferni tremendam servitutem? Nam si de Moysi corpore diabolus angelo contradixit, quomodo non tartarus Christo de vita et de resurrectione Lazari contradicet? Orate, fratres, ut qui gustum resurrectionis Lazaro propinante suscepimus, redeunte Christo universalis resurrectionis voces mereamur audire.

But Tartarus, still not believing this, runs back to heaven by its usual messengers, lamenting with this invidious appeal: "I, Lord, though the last of your creation, though bound over to a sad servitude, keep your precepts by an inviolable law; I keep watch lest any new violator change the ancient right of your sentence; but there has appeared a man who is called Christ, boasting himself your Son; he censures your priests, reproves your scribes, violates your sabbaths, breaks your law, and forces souls released from the flesh, and already assigned to punishment and to my custody, to return to the bodies in which they had lived wickedly; and every day he goes on with such daring that he is trying to drag out Lazarus, already shut in our prison, already bound by our law, already remaining under our right, by breaking the bars of the underworld: either come to my help quickly, or, if he once opens the gates, you lose now all whom we have kept for so many ages." To this the Son answered from the bosom of the Father: "Father, it is just that the prison should hold not the innocent but the guilty, that punishment should torment not the just but the unjust. How long, under the fault of one man, on account of the trespass of Adam alone, will this executioner not cease to drag to himself with cruel hostility patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, confessors, virgins, widows, those who remain in the chastity of marriage, all ages, both sexes, surely the little ones who know neither good nor evil? Father, I will die, so that all may not die; Father, I will pay Adam's debt, so that through me those who through Adam die to hell may live to you; Father, for the sake of your sentence I will shed my blood, provided only that your creation return to you; let the price of my blood, dear to you, be the redemption of all the dead." To this the consent of the whole Trinity both commanded Lazarus to come out, and Tartarus was ordered to obey Christ by giving back all the dead: hence it is that the Son cries out: Father, I give you thanks, because you have heard me.

The Apostle bears witness that Christ is our advocate with the Father; indeed, when he sits, he judges together with the Father; when he stands, he performs the office of an advocate. Then Christ, his pleading done, cries with a loud voice: Lazarus, come out (John 11:43). Then Tartarus brought Lazarus back to the world above, his hands and feet bound: fearing and trembling lest, while it was loosing him, while it was making delays, while it was bringing back the one too slowly, it should be forced to bring them all. Thus he who had been accustomed to be the robber of the dead was made the restorer of the living. For why did Christ burst the chains of hell, loosen the ties of death, if not to show us the dreadful servitude of hell? For if the devil disputed with the angel over the body of Moses (Jude 9), how would Tartarus not dispute with Christ over the life and the resurrection of Lazarus? Pray, brothers, that we who have received a taste of the resurrection, with Lazarus pouring the cup, may merit, when Christ returns, to hear the voices of the universal resurrection.

Sermo LXVI.

De divite et Lazaro

Duas hodie a duobus evangelistis editas, ita recitari fecimus lectiones, ut sermoni nostro vester intellectus occurreret, paterent abdita. Lazari resurgentis occasio, cur alterius nos Lazari compulerit facere mentionem, ex sequentibus audietis: modo inhumani divitis et Lazari pauperis stupendas vices, pavendas successiones, conditiones admodum lamentandas in medium producere et afferre gestimus, quia dives qui participem pauperem in nobis praesentibus audire contempsit, in futuris malis compatientem pauperem non meruit invenire; nec ardens aquae refrigerium percepit, aestuanti pauperi fame panis refrigerium qui negavit.

Cum esset, inquit, in tormentis, elevavit oculos suos, et vidit Abraham de longe, et Lazarum in sinu ejus. Gratis respicit modo Lazarum sursum, qui ante deorsum Lazarum videre despexit. De talibus dixit propheta: Oculos suos statuerunt declinare in terram. Cum esset in tormentis. Pungit poena, quae non poenitudo compunxit, et vexant tormenta, quem Lazari vulnera non moverunt: nec gratis aculeos percipit poenarum, qui in purpura volutabatur ingratus. Vidit Abraham de longe. Longe illi erat Abraham, cui non fuerat proximus pauper. Vidit Abraham divitiarum consortem, sed inhumanitatis exsortem, et Abraham dives, sed plus humanitate quam censu, tu dives inhumanitate tua major tuis divitiis extitisti; Abraham sibi peregrinus, civis hospitum fuit; tu palatia possidens, tectum pauperi non dedisti; Abraham dum servos suscipit, dominum sic recepit, et cunctis hominibus ponens panes, ipsum Dominum suam suscepit ad mensam; tu dum singulari pauperi negas micas, stillam refrigerii perdidisti.

Et ipse clamans, dixit. Sic clamat ibi, qui hic clamantes contempsit audire, ibi cassa vox est, istic inanis est clamor. Audi prophetam dicentem: In inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi? In inferno quis misericordiae locus? in tormentis quae spes veniae, et in hora sententiae tempus indulgentiae quis requirit? Pater Abraham, miserere mei. Crudelis fili, quam misericordiam petis quam tibi negando pauperi tu negasti? Et mitte Lazarum. Miser fili, si Lazarus ad tuam mensam venisset, tu ad istum discubitum non venisses. Ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam.

Sermon LXVI.

On the rich man and Lazarus

Today we have had two readings, set out by two evangelists, read in such a way that your understanding might come to meet our sermon, and hidden things might lie open. Why the occasion of Lazarus rising has compelled us to make mention of another Lazarus, you will hear from what follows: now we are eager to bring forward and set before you the astonishing reversals, the fearful successions, the conditions much to be lamented of the inhuman rich man and of Lazarus the poor man; because the rich man, who in our present life disdained to hear the poor man as a partaker, did not merit to find the poor man compassionate in the evils to come; nor did he, burning, receive the refreshment of water, who denied the refreshment of bread to the poor man burning with hunger.

When he was, he says, in torments, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom (Luke 16:23). In vain does he now look up at Lazarus above, who before disdained to see Lazarus below. Of such men the Prophet said: They have set their eyes to bow down to the earth (Ps 17:11). When he was in torments. Punishment pricks him whom repentance did not prick to compunction, and torments vex him whom the wounds of Lazarus did not move: nor is it without cause that he feels the goads of punishments, who rolled ungrateful in purple. He saw Abraham far off. Abraham was far from him to whom the poor man had not been near. He saw Abraham, a sharer in riches but no sharer in inhumanity; and Abraham was rich, but more in humanity than in wealth; you, rich man, by your inhumanity proved greater than your riches; Abraham, a stranger for himself, was a citizen for his guests; you, who possessed palaces, did not give a roof to the poor man; Abraham, in welcoming servants, thus received the Lord, and setting bread before all men, welcomed the Lord himself at his table; you, in denying crumbs to a single poor man, have lost a drop of refreshment.

And he, crying out, said (Luke 16:24). So he cries out there, who here disdained to hear those who cried out; there the voice is void, there the cry is empty. Hear the Prophet saying: But in hell who will confess to you? (Ps 6:6) In hell what place is there for mercy? In torments what hope of pardon? And in the hour of the sentence who looks for the time of indulgence? Father Abraham, have mercy on me. Cruel son, what mercy do you ask, which by denying it to the poor man you denied to yourself? And send Lazarus. Wretched son, if Lazarus had come to your table, you would not have come to this place at table. To dip the tip of his finger in water.

Qui claudit manum pauperi, extremi stipem digiti sic deposcit, et sitit aquae guttam, qui vini lacus, ne guttam daret, inclusit. Ut intingat extremum digiti sui. Qui divitias suas non miserando pauperi dedit, sibi misericordiam sic minorat. Et refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma. Quasi reliquum corporis ab incendio haberet immune: sed lingua plus ardet, quae misericordia ut fieret, jubere neglexit; in lingua majus sentit incendium, quae maledixit pauperi, misericordiam contradixit; lingua in tormentis prima est, quae, derogando pauperi, pauperis blasphemavit auctorem.

Sed audiamus jam quid responderit Abraham. Fili, inquit, recordare, quia recepisti bona in vita tua, et Lazarus similiter mala. Nemo putet, audiendo ista, quia dives pro bonis receperit bona, quando hinc magis reus est, quod cum a Deo pro malis receperit bona, bona pro bonis Deo reddere contempsit. Nam de divitiis tantis nec victum dedit pauperi, nec sacrificium Deo minima oblatione dependit. At pauper dives vulnere, censu nudus, exutus corpore, vestitus poenis, animam quam solam non tenebant vulnera, Deo in hostiam jugiter offerebat. Hinc est, quod recipit pro doloribus requiem, pro opprobrio gloriam, pro contumeliis honorem, pro despectu gratiam, pro poenis immortalitatem, pro vulneribus praemia, pro siti refrigerii fontem, pro fame coelestis mensae delicias sempiternas, et quem divitis angulus non cepit, sinus divinae consolationis includit. Tu, dives, fulgens quondam purpura, nunc tegere fimo, pro coccino vestire flammis, pro molli discubitu sustine tormentorum dura, pro lautis ferculis epulare poenas, copias inopia compensa, ebrietates siti digere, pro odoribus aspergere fetore: et cui astiterunt voluptatis obsequia, astent tibi ministeria nunc poenarum, quia ista tibi despiciendo pauperem taliter tu mutasti.

Adjecit autem Abraham, dicens: In his omnibus inter nos et vos chaos magnum firmatum est, ut qui volunt hinc transire ad vos non possint, neque inde huc transmeare. Dicendo sic, tam justos quam injustos ante adventum Domini apud inferos fuisse declarat, et discretos locis tantum, non regionibus aperit fuisse divisos. Postquam vero Dominus resurgens a mortuis, aperuit infernum, patefecit coelos, paradisi claustra reseravit, dedit sanctis paradisi intrare requiem, ad coeli gloriam pervenire. Ista qui sic credit, intelligit quid mortalibus veniens donaverit Christus.

He who closes his hand to the poor man thus begs the alms of a fingertip, and thirsts for a drop of water, who shut up vats of wine so as not to give a drop. To dip the tip of his finger. He who did not give his riches by having pity on the poor man thus lessens mercy for himself. And cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. As though he had the rest of his body free from the burning: but the tongue burns more, which neglected to order that mercy be done; in the tongue he feels the greater burning, the tongue that cursed the poor man, that gainsaid mercy; the tongue is first in torments, which, by disparaging the poor man, blasphemed the poor man's author.

But let us now hear what Abraham answered. Son, he says, remember that you received good things in your life, and Lazarus likewise evil things (Luke 16:25). Let no one, hearing this, think that the rich man received good things for good, when he is the more guilty on this account, that, though he received good things from God for evil, he disdained to render to God good things for good. For out of such great riches he neither gave food to the poor man, nor paid to God the sacrifice of the smallest offering. But the poor man, rich in wounds, naked of wealth, stripped of his body, clothed with punishments, continually offered to God as a victim his soul, which alone the wounds did not hold. Hence it is that he receives rest for pains, glory for reproach, honour for insults, grace for contempt, immortality for punishments, rewards for wounds, a fountain of refreshment for thirst, the everlasting delights of the heavenly table for hunger; and him whom the rich man's corner did not take in, the bosom of divine consolation encloses. You, rich man, once shining in purple, now be covered with dung; instead of scarlet, be clothed with flames; instead of a soft couch, endure the hardness of torments; instead of choice dishes, feast on punishments; make up for plenty with want; sleep off your drunkenness with thirst; instead of perfumes, be sprinkled with stench: and you whom the homage of pleasure attended, let the ministries of punishment now attend you, because by despising the poor man you yourself have changed these things for yourself in this way.

But Abraham added, saying: Besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who wish to pass from here to you cannot, nor cross over from there to here (Luke 16:26). By speaking thus he declares that both the just and the unjust were in the underworld before the coming of the Lord, and makes plain that they were set apart by places only, not divided by regions. But after the Lord, rising from the dead, opened hell, threw open the heavens, unbarred the bars of paradise, he gave the saints to enter the rest of paradise, to come to the glory of heaven. He who believes these things thus understands what Christ, by coming, has given to mortals.

Insipienter ergo dives putat apud inferos mutari loca, quando hic agendo homo bene vel male ibi sibi terminum aut poenae aut quietis indicit. Stultus in vita dives, stultior invenitur in poena; et qui bonorum suorum nescivit tempus, nec malorum suorum tempus miserandus agnoscit.

Rogo te, pater. Modo rogas, modo tibi tempus patiendi est, non rogandi. Rogo te, pater? Quid? Ut mittas Lazarum in domum patris mei. Ante quam bene jacuit Lazarus ad illam januam, in qua fame sua inhumanitatis tuae titulos fixit, ubi postes tuos suis ulceribus laureavit, ubi sanie sua pinxit micas tuas. Patere ergo stare vices, jam depone dolos; lucet quia tu Lazarum non potes sic videre: scitur, scitur, quia plus te felicitas Lazari quam gehennae torquet incendium.

Respondit Abraham: Habent Moysen et prophetas, audiant illos. Hoc est, si Moysen, qui regna Aegypti elementis secum militantibus trivit, qui siccavit mare, qui duravit fluctus, qui lapides in fluenta convertit, qui solem texit nube, qui noctem luce radiavit, qui coelum fecit pluere carnes, rorare panes, non solum non audierunt, sed et occidere sunt moliti, isti Lazarum dignabuntur audire, quem tot vulnera sepiunt, quot Moysen cinxere virtutes? patere et me sentire quod genui, et tu patere quae fecisti.

Non, pater Abraham. Vere, non pater, quia non erat Abrahae filius, sed gehennae. Non, pater Abraham, sed si quis ierit a mortuis ad eos, poenitentiam agent. Hoc dives de corde omnium dicit, hoc de desideriis cunctorum petit, hoc de votis omnium loquitur mundanorum, omnes enim susurrare consuevimus: O si quis veniret a mortuis, et quod ibi agitur hic referret, omnes crederent ei. Certe, ut dubitantes dicerent, Quis inde venit, unde nemo venit? Post mortem quod sit aliquis, quis probabit? Omnes audita loquimur, dictis insinuata sentimus: nam quid veri fides habeat, mersum est in profundum.

Sed perfidiae, non ignorantiae esse quod sic loquimur, cum ita credimus, hodie beati Joannis evangelistae lectio secuta monstravit. Nam sicut dives petit, Deus pro Lazaro Lazarum misit. Sed quid missus, quid desideratus, quid resurgens profecerit, patienter audite. Cogitaverunt, inquit, principes sacerdotum, ut Lazarum interficerent, quia multi propter illum abibant ex Judaeis, et credebant in Jesum. Quasi ad hoc desideratus advenerit, ut iteratae mortis pericula sustineret. Nolunt, nolunt referre visa, qui volunt audita non credi.

Foolishly, then, does the rich man think that places are changed in the underworld, when man, by acting well or badly here, fixes for himself there the term either of punishment or of rest. Foolish in life, the rich man is found more foolish in punishment; and he who did not know the time of his good things does not, poor wretch, recognise the time of his evil things either.

I ask you, Father (Luke 16:27). Now you ask; now it is for you the time of suffering, not of asking. I ask you, Father? For what? That you send Lazarus to my father's house. How well Lazarus lay before at that gate, at which with his hunger he fixed up the inscriptions of your inhumanity, where he wreathed your doorposts with his ulcers, where he painted your crumbs with his matter! Allow the reversals, then, to stand; lay aside your tricks now; it is plain that you cannot bear to see Lazarus so: it is known, it is known, that the happiness of Lazarus tortures you more than the fire of Gehenna.

Abraham answered: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them (Luke 16:29). That is: if they not only did not hear Moses, who wore down the kingdoms of Egypt with the elements fighting on his side (Exod 7), who dried up the sea (Exod 14:21), who made the waves stand firm, who turned rocks into streams (Exod 17:6), who covered the sun with a cloud, who lit up the night with light (Exod 13:21), who made the sky rain meat and drop bread like dew (Exod 16:13–14), but even tried to kill him, will these deign to hear Lazarus, whom as many wounds hedge about as mighty works girded Moses? Bear with me too in feeling what I begot, and you, bear what you have done.

No, father Abraham (Luke 16:30). Truly not father, because he was not Abraham's son, but Gehenna's. No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will do penance. This the rich man says from the heart of all, this he asks from the desires of everyone, this he speaks from the wishes of all worldly men; for we are all accustomed to whisper: "O if someone came from the dead, and reported here what is done there, all would believe him." Indeed, as the doubters would say: "Who has come from there, from where no one comes? That someone exists after death, who will prove it? We all speak what we have heard, we feel what has been instilled by words: for what truth faith holds is sunk in the deep."

But that it is of unbelief, not of ignorance, that we speak so when we do believe thus, the reading from blessed John the Evangelist that followed today has shown. For, just as the rich man asks, God sent Lazarus for Lazarus. But what he achieved by being sent, by being longed for, by rising again, hear patiently. The chief priests, he says, planned to kill Lazarus, because many of the Jews were going away on his account, and believing in Jesus (John 12:10–11). As though, longed for, he had come for this: to bear the perils of a second death. They will not, they will not report what they have seen, who wish what they have heard not to be believed.

Scimus, scimus, et vitam parari bonis, et malis tormenta praeparari: sed dum vitiis capti virtutum tempus nolumus advenire, fingimus nescire quod scimus, et post mortem quid sit nolumus ab inferis venire qui dicat, cum de coelo Christus veniens, et ab inferis ipse rediens, et quid bonos in coelo maneat, et quid malos exspectet in inferno, et verbo docuerit, et firmaverit exemplo. Sed forte ideo nec ista credimus, nec Christum volumus advenire, quia mundum transire nolumus, immo non quia mundum transire nolumus, sed quia dolemus vitia praeterire. Christus venit non vitam fugare, sed mortem; mortem fugare, non vitam; mundum revocare, non tollere; vitia perdere, non suam disperdere creaturam. Sed orate, fratres, ut veniens nos inveniat tales, quales regni sui cupit et praecipit esse consortes.

We know, we know both that life is prepared for the good and that torments are prepared for the wicked: but because, held captive by vices, we do not want the time of virtues to come, we pretend not to know what we know, and we do not want anyone to come from the underworld to tell what there is after death, when Christ, coming from heaven and himself returning from the underworld, has both taught by his word and confirmed by his example what awaits the good in heaven and what awaits the wicked in hell. But perhaps it is for this reason that we neither believe these things nor want Christ to come, that we do not want to pass out of the world; or rather, not because we do not want to pass out of the world, but because we grieve to leave our vices behind. Christ comes not to put life to flight, but death; to put death to flight, not life; to call the world back, not to take it away; to destroy vices, not to destroy utterly his own creation. But pray, brothers, that when he comes he may find us such as he desires and commands the sharers of his kingdom to be.

Sermo LXVII.

In orationem Dominicam

Accepistis auditum fidei, fratres charissimi, formam Dominicae orationis audite. Christus breviter orare docuit, qui cito vult postulata praestare. Aut quid petentibus se non dabit, qui seipsum non petentibus dedit? Aut in respondendo quam facit moram, qui in dictandis precibus vota supplicum sic praevenit? Hodie quod audituri estis stupent angeli, miratur coelum, pavet terra, caro non fert, auditus non capit, non attingit mens, tota sustinere non potest creatura: ego dicere non audeo, tacere non possum. Deus det ut et vos audire possitis, et ego dicere. Quid est magis tremendum, quod se dedit terris Deus, aut quod vos dat coelo; quod societatem carnis intrat ipse, aut quod vos facit consortium divinitatis intrare; quod mortem sumit ipse, aut quod vos resumit ex morte; quod ipse in vestram nascitur servitutem, aut quod vos sibi gignit in liberos; quod suscipit paupertatem vestram, aut quod vos sibi facit haeredes, sui unici cohaeredes? Est utique terribilius quod terra transfertur in coelum, homo deitate mutatur, servitutis sors dominationis jura sortitur. Sed hoc quamvis metuendum sit, tamen quia causa non docentem respicit, sed jubentem, accedamus, filioli, quo vocat charitas, trahit amor, invitat affectio: Deum patrem viscera sentiant, vox personet, loquatur lingua, spiritus clamet, et totum quod est in nobis, respondeat gratiae, non timori; quia qui judicem mutavit in patrem, amari voluit, non timeri.

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Hoc cum dicis, non sic habeas, quasi non sit in terris; non sic accipias, quasi sit loco clausus, qui claudit omnia, sed intellige esse tibi genus e coelo, cujus Pater habetur in coelo; et age ut, vivendo sancte, sancto respondeas Patri. Dei filium ille se probat, qui vitiis non obscuratur humanis, qui divinis virtutibus elucescit.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Cujus genus sumus, ejus censemur et nomine: rogamus ergo ut nomen ejus quod in se et per se sanctum est sanctificetur in nobis; nomen enim Dei aut honoratur ex nostro actu, aut ex nostris actibus blasphematur. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Nomen Dei per vos blasphematur in gentibus.

Sermon LXVII.

On the Lord's Prayer

You have received the hearing of the faith, dearest brothers; hear the form of the Lord's Prayer. Christ taught us to pray briefly, he who wishes to grant quickly what is asked. Or what will he not give to those who ask him, who gave himself to those who did not ask? Or what delay does he make in answering, who in dictating the prayers so forestalls the wishes of the suppliants? What you are going to hear today the angels are astonished at, heaven marvels at, earth trembles at; the flesh does not bear it, the hearing does not grasp it, the mind does not reach it, the whole creation cannot sustain it: I do not dare to say it, I cannot keep silent. May God grant both that you may be able to hear and that I may be able to say. What is more to be trembled at: that God gave himself to the earth, or that he gives you to heaven; that he himself enters into society with the flesh, or that he makes you enter into the fellowship of the divinity; that he himself takes on death, or that he takes you back from death; that he himself is born into your servitude, or that he begets you for himself as free-born children; that he takes up your poverty, or that he makes you his heirs, the co-heirs of his Only One? It is surely the more awesome that earth is carried over into heaven, that man is changed by the Godhead, that the lot of servitude obtains the rights of lordship. But although this is to be feared, yet because the cause looks not to the one who teaches but to the one who commands, let us draw near, little children, where charity calls, love draws, affection invites: let our inward parts feel God as father, let our voice resound, our tongue speak, our spirit cry out, and let all that is in us answer to grace, not to fear; because he who changed the judge into a father wished to be loved, not feared.

Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). When you say this, do not take it as though he were not on earth; do not understand it as though he who encloses all things were enclosed in a place; but understand that you have a race from heaven, since your Father is held to be in heaven; and act so that, by living holily, you may answer to a holy Father. He proves himself a son of God who is not darkened by human vices, who shines with divine virtues.

Hallowed be your name (Matt 6:9). Whose race we are, by his name too we are reckoned: we ask, therefore, that his name, which in itself and through itself is holy, be hallowed in us; for the name of God is either honoured by our action or blasphemed through our actions. Hear the Apostle saying: Through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom 2:24).

Veniat regnum tuum. Et quando non regnavit Deus? Petimus ergo ut qui sibi regnavit semper, modo regnet in nobis, ut et nos in illo regnare possimus. Regnavit diabolus, regnavit peccatum, regnavit mors, et fuit diu captiva mortalitas: petimus ergo ut, regnante Deo, pereat diabolus, deficiat peccatum, moriatur mors, captivitas captivetur, ut nos liberi perpetuam regnemus in vitam.

Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra. Hoc est regnum Dei, quando et in coelo, et in terra Dei voluntas est sola, quando in omnibus hominibus Deus mens est, Deus vivit, Deus agit, Deus regnat, Deus est totum, ut juxta illud Apostoli: Sit Deus omnia in omnibus vobis.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Qui patrem se nobis dedit, qui sibi nos adoptavit in filios, qui rerum nos fecit haeredes, qui nos nomine sublimavit, qui nos suo et honore donavit et regno, ipse nos ut panem quotidianum postulemus addixit. In regno Dei, inter munera divina, quid quaerit paupertas humana? tam bonus, tam pius, tam largus Pater panem filiis non nisi postulatus indulget? Et ubi est illud: Nolite solliciti esse quid manducetis, aut quid bibatis, aut quid vestiamini? Hoc petere jubet quod prohibet cogitare, quatenus coelestis pater coelestem panem, coelestes filii ut postulemus, hortatur. Ipse dixit: Ego sum panis, qui de coelo descendi. Ipse est panis, qui satus in Virgine, fermentatus in carne, in passione confectus, in fornace coctus sepulcri, in Ecclesiis conditus, illatus altaribus, coelestem cibum quotidie fidelibus subministrat.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Homo, si sine peccato esse non potes, et vis semper dimitti tibi totum, dimitte semper; quantum vis dimitti tibi, dimitte tantum; quoties vis dimitti tibi, toties tu dimitte; immo quia vis totum dimitti tibi, totum dimitte: homo, intellige quia remittendo aliis tu tibi veniam dedisti.

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. Quia in saeculo est ipsa vita tentatio. Tentatio, inquit ille, est vita hominis. Rogemus ergo ut nos arbitrio nostro non relinquat, sed in omni actu paterna nos pietate constringat, et in vitae tramite coelesti moderatione confirmet.

Sed libera nos a malo. A quo malo? a diabolo quippe, ex quo est omne malum. Rogamus liberari nos a malo, quia malo qui non caruerit, frui non potest bono.

Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10). And when did God not reign? We ask, then, that he who always reigned for himself may now reign in us, so that we too may be able to reign in him. The devil reigned, sin reigned, death reigned, and mortality was long held captive: we ask, then, that, with God reigning, the devil may perish, sin may fail, death may die, captivity may be taken captive, so that we, set free, may reign into perpetual life.

Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth (Matt 6:10). This is the kingdom of God: when both in heaven and on earth the will of God alone is, when in all men God is the mind, God lives, God acts, God reigns, God is all, so that, according to that word of the Apostle: May God be all in all of you (1 Cor 15:28).

Give us today our daily bread (Matt 6:11). He who gave himself to us as father, who adopted us as sons for himself, who made us heirs of all things, who raised us high by his name, who has endowed us with both his honour and his kingdom, he himself has bound us to ask for daily bread. In the kingdom of God, among divine gifts, what does human poverty seek? Does so good, so loving, so generous a Father grant bread to his children only when he is asked? And where is that saying: Do not be anxious what you will eat, or what you will drink, or what you will wear (Matt 6:25)? He commands us to ask for what he forbids us to think about, inasmuch as the heavenly Father urges us, heavenly children, to ask for heavenly bread. He himself said: I am the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:41). He is the bread which, sown in the Virgin, leavened in the flesh, made ready in the Passion, baked in the furnace of the sepulchre, laid up in the churches, brought to the altars, daily supplies heavenly food to the faithful.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt 6:12). Man, if you cannot be without sin, and you want always to have everything forgiven you, forgive always; as much as you want to be forgiven you, so much forgive; as often as you want to be forgiven, so often do you forgive; or rather, because you want everything forgiven you, forgive everything: man, understand that by remitting to others you have given yourself pardon.

And do not lead us into temptation (Matt 6:13). Because in the world life itself is temptation. Temptation, says that one, is the life of man (Job 7:1). Let us ask, then, that he not leave us to our own choice, but in every act hold us fast with a father's loving-kindness, and make us firm on the path of life with heavenly governance.

But deliver us from evil (Matt 6:13). From what evil? From the devil, of course, from whom is all evil. We ask to be delivered from evil, because he who has not been without evil cannot enjoy good.

Si adhuc non nati, si adhuc in utero constituti, panem petunt, expetunt regnum, quare fit quaestio, quod semper Dei Filius, in Dei patris mansit arcano? Si Ecclesia generat, ratio non est, est coeleste mysterium; quod in Patre Deo, Dei Filius fuerit, quomodo humana ratiocinatione tractetur non est, non est humano modo divinitas aestimanda. Audisti Deum, nil terrenum cogites, nil humanum; audisti Patrem Christi, hoc per substantiam crede; audisti patrem tuum, hoc crede per gratiam: ille ut esset Filius habuit semper, te esse filium dedit modo. Sic ergo te filium scito, ut servum te esse non nescias; sic audi ad Christi similitudinem te reductum, ut semper te Christo cognoscas esse subjectum.

If those not yet born, if those still placed in the womb ask for bread, seek the kingdom, why is it made a question that the Son of God always remained in the secret place of God the Father? If the Church begets, it is not reason, it is a heavenly mystery; that the Son of God was in God the Father, there is no way for it to be handled by human reasoning; not in a human manner is divinity to be reckoned. You have heard "God": think nothing earthly, nothing human; you have heard "Father of Christ": believe this by substance; you have heard "your father": believe this by grace: he always had it that he was the Son; to you he has now given to be a son. So know yourself a son in such a way that you are not ignorant that you are a servant; so hear that you have been brought back to the likeness of Christ, that you may always know that you are subject to Christ.

Sermo LXVIII.

In eamdem

Conditio mortalis, terrena compago, limosa substantia, vitae ac mortis incerta, labore attrita, consumpta poenis, putredini ac pulveri subjecta natura capere non valet, aestimare non sufficit, fugare non audet, credere pertimescit, quod hodie cogitur confiteri. Tantam donorum Dei gratiam, promissorum magnitudinem, munerum largitatem, fragilitas humana unde promereri valeat, non potest invenire. Hoc reor non ambiguum Habacuc prophetam mentis intuitu praevidisse, dum se tanto pavore concussum, hujus auditus taliter exagitatum tremore, dicit: Domine, audivi auditum tuum, et timui; consideravi opera tua, et expavi. Auditum timuit, non quia tunc propheta tantus audierit Dominum, sed quia tunc servus Dominum suum sibi conversum reperit, et audivit in patrem; non quia mundi hujus fabricam elementis ita sibi dissonis consonantem contemplatus expavit, sed quia pietatis erga se tantae considerans tunc opera, admirationis tremore concussus est et pavore. Consideravi, inquit, opera tua et expavi. Adoptatum se tunc stupuit in filium, quando perdiderat ipsius fiduciam servitutis.

Denique ut sciatis hujus orationis, quam vobis hodie Divinitas insinuat et infundit, affectum, propheta tunc audet coelitus percepti hujus muneris quodammodo pavore solutus. Quid iterum dixerit pervidete. Custodivi, inquit, et expavit venter meus a voce orationis labiorum meorum. Posteaquam divini muneris senserat largitatem; custodivit se, ne se hostem, ne inimicum, ne latronem se iterum sicut in paradiso sustineret. Fit vigilantior, fit sollicitior sui custos, qui se post tantae rei jacturam coelestem thesaurum in vasis fictilibus custodivit. Et expavit venter meus. Ventrem cordis interna nominat hic propheta; qui sicut venter cibis, cor sic sensibus pascitur et repletur. Et expavit venter meus a voce orationis labiorum meorum. Si intellectus cordis infuderat ori vocem, labiis dederat verba, cur vota sua, cur desideria sua, cur ex hoc quod est exoraturus, expavit? Quia non suggestione sui cordis, sed divini Spiritus loquebatur affatu. Audi Paulum dicentem: Misit Deus Spiritum Filii sui in corda nostra clamantem: Abba, Pater. Quod auditum cum ad interna transmitteret, tantum se meruisse mirabatur, et interna tota hominis pavebant.

Sermon LXVIII.

On the same

Mortal condition, earthly frame, substance of slime, uncertain of life and of death, worn by toil, consumed by punishments, a nature subject to rot and dust, cannot grasp, is not equal to reckoning, does not dare to drive away, is afraid to believe, what today it is compelled to confess. Such grace of God's gifts, such greatness of his promises, such generosity of his bounties: whence human frailty might be able to merit them, it cannot find. This, I think, the prophet Habakkuk beyond doubt foresaw with the gaze of his mind, when, shaken with such great fright, so agitated by trembling at this report, he says: Lord, I have heard your report, and was afraid; I considered your works, and was dismayed (Hab 3:2). He feared the report, not because the prophet, great as he was, had then heard the Lord, but because the servant then found his Lord turned towards him, and heard him as a father; not because he was dismayed at contemplating the fabric of this world harmonising out of elements so discordant among themselves, but because, considering then the works of such loving-kindness towards himself, he was shaken with the trembling and the fright of wonder. I considered, he says, your works and was dismayed. He was astounded then that he had been adopted as a son, when he had lost even the confidence of servitude.

Indeed, so that you may know the affection of this prayer, which the Divinity today instils and pours into you, the prophet then dares, freed as it were from fright at this gift received from heaven. See what he said next. I kept watch, he says, and my belly was terrified at the voice of the prayer of my lips (Hab 3:16). After he had felt the generosity of the divine gift, he kept watch over himself, lest he should again bear with himself as enemy, as foe, as robber, as in paradise. He becomes more watchful, a more solicitous keeper of himself, who, after the loss of so great a thing, kept himself, a heavenly treasure, in earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7). And my belly was terrified. Here the prophet calls the inner parts of the heart the belly; for as the belly is fed and filled with food, so the heart is with perceptions. And my belly was terrified at the voice of the prayer of my lips. If the understanding of the heart had poured the voice into the mouth, had given the words to the lips, why was he terrified at his own vows, at his own desires, at the very thing he was about to obtain by prayer? Because he was speaking not by the prompting of his own heart, but by the breathing of the divine Spirit. Hear Paul saying: God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: Abba, Father (Gal 4:6). And when he passed what he had heard into his inward parts, he marvelled that he had merited so much, and all the inward parts of the man trembled.

Merito adjecit: Et intravit tremor in ossa mea, quia ipsa prophetae viscera vexabantur.

Et subtus me, inquit, commota est virtus mea. Quid est subtus me? quatenus ipse idemque homo sursum per gratiam jam levatus jacebat subtus pristinam per naturam, nec virtutem coelestem virtus poterat sustinere terrena. Jam fumavit mons Sina, cum daturus legem Deus descendit in montem. Quid caro faceret, cum descendit Deus in carnem, carni gratiam collaturus? Venit pater quia homo Deum, servus dominum non ferebat. Et quia fidelis est in verbis suis quae dixit: Aperi os tuum, et implebo illud; aperite nunc ora vestra, ut ipse ea tali prece, tali repleat et clamore.

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Ubi sunt qui de Dei promissione diffidunt? Ecce quam cito fidei est remunerata confessio: mox ut Deum unici Filii confessus es Patrem, tu ipse es Dei Patris adoptatus in filium, ut esses coeli haeres, qui paradisi exsul habebaris et terrae; et ideo nunc vocas, Pater noster qui es in coelis. Quia fuit tibi quondam pater qui te resolvit in limum, qui te ad claustra duxit et pertraxit inferni: terram nesciat, amorem carnis ignoret, patrem pulveris non requirat, nihil in se vitii licere permittat, qui Deum patrem coelestem repetit ad naturam. Et qui se Dei filium credit, actu, vita, moribus, honestate, tanto generi respondeat, ne iterum ad terrena descendens ad ipsam tanti genitoris tendat injuriam.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Si nomen Christi caecis visum, cursum claudis, defessis vario languore sanitatem, mortuis dat vitam, teque, homo, ipsum, totamque sanctificat creaturam, quemadmodum tu ipsius nominis oras et expostulas sanctitatem? Quia a Christo vocatus es Christianus; et ideo supplicas ut praerogativa tanti nominis meritis in te subsequentibus roboretur.

Adveniat regnum tuum. Devotionem mandat, exigit desideria, vota perquirit ipse, qui adventum suum in sua continet potestate. Fidelis est ille miles, qui regis sui praesentiam sitit, exoptat regnum, expetit et concupiscit triumphos: sed hic petis ut tibi et in te adveniat regnaturus, in quo diabolus arcem, mors imperium, diu infernus gessit et tenuit potestatem. Oremus ergo, charissimi, ut Christus semper suo regnet in milite, et miles semper suo triumphet in rege.

Rightly he added: And trembling entered into my bones (Hab 3:16), because the very inward parts of the prophet were shaken.

And beneath me, he says, my strength was shaken. What is beneath me? Inasmuch as one and the same man, already lifted on high through grace, lay beneath through his former nature, and earthly strength could not bear heavenly strength. Mount Sinai already smoked when God, about to give the Law, came down upon the mountain (Exod 19:18). What would flesh do, when God came down into the flesh, to confer grace on flesh? He came as father, because man could not bear God, the servant could not bear the master. And because he is faithful in his words, which he spoke: Open your mouth, and I will fill it (Ps 81:11); open now your mouths, so that he may fill them with such a prayer, with such a cry.

Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). Where are those who distrust the promise of God? See how quickly the confession of faith has been rewarded: as soon as you confessed God as the Father of his only Son, you yourself have been adopted as a son of God the Father, so that you, who were held an exile from paradise and from the earth, might be the heir of heaven; and therefore you now call: Our Father, who are in heaven. Because you once had a father who dissolved you into slime, who led you to the bars of hell and dragged you there: let him not know the earth, let him not know the love of the flesh, let him not seek the father of dust, let him permit nothing of vice to be allowed in himself, who claims back God, the heavenly Father, by nature. And let him who believes himself a son of God answer to so great a lineage in act, life, manners, honesty, lest, going down again to earthly things, he should tend to the very injury of so great a Begetter.

Hallowed be your name (Matt 6:9). If the name of Christ gives sight to the blind, a gait to the lame, health to those exhausted by various sicknesses, life to the dead, and sanctifies you yourself, man, and the whole creation, how is it that you pray and demand holiness for that very name? Because you have been called a Christian by Christ; and therefore you supplicate that the prerogative of so great a name may be strengthened by the merits that follow in you.

Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10). He commands devotion, demands desires, himself seeks out prayers, he who holds his coming in his own power. That soldier is faithful who thirsts for the presence of his king, longs for the kingdom, seeks and covets triumphs: but here you ask that he may come to you and in you to reign, in whom the devil long held a citadel, death an empire, hell its power. Let us pray, then, my dearest ones, that Christ may always reign in his soldier, and the soldier always triumph in his king.

Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra. Beatus dies ille, qui terrenorum jungit, sociat, exaequat coelestibus voluntates, ut inter dispares substantias una atque eadem sit voluntas. Haec est fida pax, inconcussa concordia, gratia perseverans, quando per unius domini ordinem, familia natura diversa, voluntate fit una, eadem reperitur et sensu.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Post coeleste regnum panem quis postulet temporalem? Sed quotidianum et in diem vult nos in sacramento sui corporis panis viaticum postulare, ut per hoc ad perpetuum diem et ipsam Christi perveniamus ad mensam, ut unde hic gustum sumpsimus, inde ibi plenitudinem totasque satietates capiamus.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Qui sic petit, et debita non relaxat, iste se etiam per quod orat, accusat; qui sibi tantum donari postulat, remitti tantum, quantum ipse remittit et donat, ad placitum Deum, Deum taliter invitat ad pactum. Quisque quantum ipse praestiterit alteri, tantum sibi exigat et ipse praestari. Dimittenda sunt autem, fratres, debita non pecuniae solum, sed omnium causarum, culparum, criminum; quidquid, homo, incurrere poteris, in his tibi cum incurrerit alter, ignosces. Fidens peccatis suis petit veniam, qui peccanti libenter ignoscit.

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. Hoc petere millies multis modis cogimur, fratres, ne fragilitas plus ausa, et de se temere praesumens, nec virium suarum modum colligens, in conflictu male cauta succumbat, deinde offensus Deus tradat tentationibus quos delinquit.

Sed libera nos a malo. Satis de se humiliter sentit, nec salvari per se praesumit, qui ut a malo per Deum liberetur, implorat.

Signate vos. Intelligite, filioli, quanta perfectorum, quanta fortium gloria sit et potestas, quando tanta virtus in ipso conceptu, tanta majestas aperitur in partu. Nondum natus patrem vocat, sanctitatem postulat, regnum petit, dat jura terris, terrenas coelestibus exaequat voluntates, et laboribus profuturis exigit jam devotus annonam. Panem nostrum, inquit, quotidianum da nobis hodie. Beati estis, qui coepistis ante pugnam vincere, ante triumphare quam vivere, ante ad patris promptuaria quam matris ad gremium pervenire, ante pastum gregis, quam succum lactis invadere, toto ante victoriarum sonare jubilo, quam vagitu respondere cunarum. Vere, ut dixit Apostolus, infirmum Dei fortius est hominibus. Aut quis poterit tanti conceptus referre sacramentum? ubi Virgo mater parit orbe quotidie, nec relinquit posteros ad laborem, sed aeternam germina praemittit ad gloriam.

Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth (Matt 6:10). Blessed that day, which joins, associates, makes equal the wills of earthly beings with heavenly ones, so that among unequal substances there may be one and the same will. This is faithful peace, unshaken concord, persevering grace: when through the ordering of one master the household, diverse in nature, becomes one in will, and is found the same in feeling too.

Give us today our daily bread (Matt 6:11). After the heavenly kingdom, who would ask for temporal bread? But he wants us to ask, in the sacrament of his body, for the viaticum of bread, daily and for each day, so that through it we may come to the perpetual day and to the very table of Christ, so that from that of which we have taken a taste here, we may take there fullness and complete satiety.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt 6:12). He who asks thus and does not release debts accuses himself even through what he prays; he who asks that so much be granted him, so much remitted, as he himself remits and grants, invites God to an agreement, invites God in this way to a pact. Let each demand that as much be granted to himself as he himself has granted to another. But, brothers, debts are to be forgiven not of money only, but of all causes, faults, crimes; whatever, man, you may fall into, when another has fallen into it against you, you will pardon. He asks pardon for his sins with confidence who willingly pardons the one who sins.

And do not lead us into temptation (Matt 6:13). We are compelled, brothers, to ask this a thousand times in many ways, lest frailty, daring too much and presuming rashly of itself, and not reckoning the measure of its strength, should succumb in the conflict through ill caution, and then God, offended, should hand over to temptations those whom he forsakes.

But deliver us from evil (Matt 6:13). He thinks very humbly of himself, and does not presume to be saved by himself, who implores that he may be delivered from evil through God.

Sign yourselves. Understand, little children, how great is the glory and the authority of the perfect, how great that of the strong, when such power is revealed in the very conception, such majesty in the birth. Not yet born, he calls a father, asks for holiness, seeks a kingdom, gives laws to the earth, makes earthly wills equal to heavenly ones, and, already devoted, demands his rations for the labours that will profit him. Give us today our daily bread, he says. Blessed are you, who have begun to conquer before the fight, to triumph before you live, to come to the father's storehouses before you come to the mother's lap, to fall upon the pasture of the flock before the juice of milk, to sound with the full jubilation of victories before you answer with the wailing of the cradle. Truly, as the Apostle said, the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Cor 1:25). Or who will be able to tell the mystery of so great a conception? There the virgin mother gives birth every day in the world, and does not leave her offspring behind for toil, but sends her shoots ahead to eternal glory.

Sermo LXIX.

In eamdem

Putasne mortale pectus Dominicae charitatis erga nos magnitudinem capiat? Putasne terreni corporis pondere mens depressa erga nos divinum intelligat ac sentiat affectum? Nam quidquid coeli micat, radiat et splendet ornatus, quidquid in terra fragrat in floribus, sapit in fructibus, in animantibus gaudet, nostro amore factum, nostrae addictum est servituti. Sed quamvis magna, parva tamen sunt ad supernae in nos dilectionis indicium. Nobis principatus coelorum, nobis aetheriae potestates, nobis supernae dominationes, nobis angelorum officia excubiis militant indefessis. Sed ista adhuc asserendae in nos divinae necessitudinis parva sunt, et minora, tantumque infima, quantum creatore suo minor est creatura.

Deus vultu incontemplabilis, visu imperspicabilis, nullo sensu aestimabilis, inaccessus mente, ne ipso quidem ad plenum notus auditu, quoties, qualiter, quam varie, quam diverse se humanis aptavit obtutibus? Quam se communioni, quam se familiaritati praestitit et concessit humanae, cum Noe consilii sui facit esse participem, et expiando mundo diluvium praemonet imminere, et totum saeculum ipso custode parvo arcae designat in semine; cum ad Abraham velut hospes adventat, invitatus tota dignatione succedit, oblata non respuit, apposita velut esuriens et lassus assumit, et divina collatione velut egens suscipit et acceptat humana? Hinc est, quod emortua mox senis membra reviviscunt, sterilis vetulae jam viscera suscitantur exstincta, et natura in vivo cadavere persepulta proditura suum resurgit auctorem, et generat plurimos transacto jam tempore, per unum quem crediderat conditorem. Ad Moysen igneus Deus glomeratur in rubo, deinde confert facienda cum servo, exercetur variis in Aegypto virtutibus, et patefit ad nutum famuli; irrogat flagella, vel tollit; et in mari quantus sit,

Sermon LXIX.

On the same

Do you think that a mortal breast can grasp the greatness of the Lord's charity towards us? Do you think that a mind weighed down by the weight of an earthly body can understand and feel the divine affection towards us? For whatever glitters, beams and shines as the adornment of heaven, whatever on earth is fragrant in flowers, tastes sweet in fruits, rejoices in living creatures, has been made for love of us, has been made over to our service. But great as they are, they are yet small as a token of the love from on high towards us. For us the principalities of the heavens, for us the ethereal powers, for us the supernal dominions, for us the offices of the angels do their service in unwearied watches. But these things are still small for asserting the divine tie with us, and lesser, and lowest by as much as the creature is less than its Creator.

God, uncontemplable in countenance, impenetrable to sight, to be reckoned by no sense, inaccessible to the mind, not fully known even by hearing itself: how often, in what ways, how variously, how diversely has he fitted himself to human gaze? How he lent and granted himself to human communion, to human familiarity, when he makes Noah a partaker of his counsel, and forewarns him that the flood is at hand to cleanse the world, and marks out the whole age in the small seed of the ark, with Noah himself as its keeper (Gen 6); when he comes to Abraham as a guest, and, invited, enters with all graciousness, does not refuse what is offered, takes what is set before him as though hungry and weary, and in a divine exchange, as though in need, receives and accepts human things (Gen 18)! Hence it is that the old man's limbs, already dead, at once come to life again, the extinct womb of the barren old woman is raised up, and nature, buried deep in a living corpse, rises again to reveal its author, and, when its time is already past, begets very many through the one Maker whom he had believed (Gen 21). To Moses God gathers himself as fire in the bush (Exod 3:2); then he confers with his servant on what is to be done, is busied with various mighty works in Egypt, and lays himself open to the nod of his household servant; he inflicts the plagues, or takes them away (Exod 8:8); and how great he is in the sea, and how

quantumve homini dederit, ultricis undae demonstrant obsequia, cum siccato gurgite cedit unda piis, et liquore durato murum praestat, munimen exhibet liberandis, ac tota naturae suae virtute de hoste saevissimo triumphatura decurrit. Miro contubernio Israeliticis Deus conversatus in castris, numerosas gentes nunc ferit fulmine, nunc tangit grandine; nunc solo tubarum clangore prosternit; ut sine conflictu, sine vulnere Deus ducat victrices acies quas praecedit. Affuit desideriis, votis annuit singulorum, mox ad interrogata respondit, occulta prodidit, praedixit futura, quaesita patefecit, regnum contulit, donavit opes, temperavit pluvias, fecundas praestitit terras, conjugia ipsa filiorum copia et honore decoravit.

Sed adhuc parum esse credidit, si affectum suum erga nos praestando prospera tantum, et non etiam adversa sustinendo monstraret. Post omnia, mundum suum pauper ingreditur: jacet in cunabilis ut homo, vagitu suo implorat, inquirit, exigit quam tibi praestitit ipse pietatem. Parens omnium usus est te parente, subjectus tibi exstitit cui omnis subjacet altitudo, timuit quem timenda metuunt, fugit ad quem cuncta confugiunt; coelorum arbiter est hospes in domibus peccatorum; pane pascitur qui pascet omnes. Et quid plura? Παντοκράτωρ tenetur saeculorum, sistitur terrae fundator, judicatur humanae largitor veniae, discutitur cordis scrutator, punitur vitae dator et redditor, cunctorum resurrectio sepelitur, ut tarda mens hominis, et intelligentia satis pigra, vel morte in se Dei probaret affectum, quae praedictis et innumeris Dei beneficiis, Dei erga se non intellexerat, non senserat charitatem. Qui ergo esse fecit, dedit vivere, docuit et orare, quia totum voluit praestare, qui sua sibi prece voluit supplicari.

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Ecce, homo, tua te voce Christus hodie, ut sibi faceret cohaeredem Dei Patris, adoptat in filium, dum ait, Pater noster. Quod suae dignationis est, tuae esse voluit potestatis, juxta illud: Quotquot receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri; et tamen jubet dicere, ut dignatio donantis sit, non temeritas praesumentis, Qui es in coelis. Non quod non sit in terris, sed te qui coelestem Patrem jam vocas, ad coelestem vult tendere et repetere jam naturam, ut generi tanto vita nostra respondeat, ne terreni mores degenerent, quos coelestis donavit et contulit jam natura.

much he has given to man, the homage of the avenging wave shows, when, the deep dried up, the wave yields to the godly, and, its water made solid, provides a wall, offers a rampart to those who are to be set free, and with the whole power of its nature runs down to triumph over the most savage enemy (Exod 14). Dwelling in wondrous comradeship in the camp of Israel (Deut 23:14), God now strikes numerous nations with lightning, now touches them with hail (Josh 10:11); now lays them low by the mere blare of trumpets (Josh 6:20); so that without conflict, without a wound, God leads the victorious ranks before which he goes. He was at hand to desires, nodded assent to the prayers of each, answered at once what was asked, revealed hidden things, foretold the future, laid open what was sought, conferred a kingdom, bestowed riches, tempered the rains, made the lands fruitful, adorned marriages themselves with the abundance and the honour of children.

But he believed it still too little, if he showed his affection towards us only by granting prosperity, and not also by enduring adversity. After all this, he enters his world as a poor man: he lies in a cradle as a man; by his wailing he implores, seeks, demands the loving-kindness which he himself showed you. The parent of all has had you as parent; he became subject to you, to whom every height is subject; he feared, whom things to be feared dread; he fled, to whom all things flee for refuge; the arbiter of the heavens is a guest in the houses of sinners; he is fed with bread who will feed all. And what more? The Pantokrator of the ages is held, the founder of the earth is made to stand trial, the bestower of pardon on mankind is judged, the searcher of the heart is examined, the giver and restorer of life is punished, the resurrection of all is buried, so that the slow mind of man, and his intelligence, very sluggish, might at least by death prove in itself the affection of God, the mind which through the benefits of God already told, and innumerable others, had not understood, had not felt the charity of God towards it. He, then, who made us to be, gave us to live, taught us also to pray, because he wished to grant everything, he who wished to be supplicated with his own prayer.

Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). Behold, man, today Christ by your own voice adopts you as a son, to make you his co-heir of God the Father, in saying: Our Father. What is of his condescension, he wished to be of your power, according to that saying: As many as received him, he gave them power to become sons of God (John 1:12); and yet he bids you say, so that it may be the condescension of the giver, not the rashness of one who presumes: Who are in heaven. Not that he is not on earth, but he wants you, who now call upon the heavenly Father, to strive towards the heavenly nature and seek it back, so that our life may answer to so great a lineage, lest earthly manners debase those whom a heavenly nature has already endowed and enriched.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Non quod tua sit prece sanctificandum, quod te sanctificat nomen; sed quia Christi nomine vocatus es Christianus, petendum tibi est ut actu tuo nomen hoc sanctificetur et honoretur in te. Quia sicut virtutum fama, nominis tantum respondet ad gloriam, ita male conversantis infamia ad ejusdem nominis redundat injuriam, dicente Apostolo: Nomen Dei per vos blasphematur in gentibus. Et revera, filii, tunc gentilis nomini derogat Christiano, quando aliter quam profitetur, et dicitur vivere, viderit Christianum.

Veniat regnum tuum. Non ut Deo veniat regnum habenti semper, sed postulas ut tibi veniat non habenti, et percipias illud quod tibi affectu suo Dominus pollicetur, cum dicit: Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum, quod vobis paratum est a constitutione mundi. Venite, benedicti, non dixit, veniamus; percipite, non dixit, percipiamus. Nemo miretur quia patrem vocat qui nondum natus est; nam si Joannes exsultat, et Jacob colluctatur in utero, prudens aestimet quid possit natura divina, si tantum potest per Deum humana conceptio.

Hallowed be your name (Matt 6:9). Not that the name that hallows you is to be hallowed by your prayer; but because you have been called a Christian by the name of Christ, you must ask that by your action this name be hallowed and honoured in you. Because, as the fame of virtues answers so greatly to the glory of the name, so the infamy of one who lives badly redounds to the injury of the same name, as the Apostle says: Through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom 2:24). And in truth, children, the Gentile disparages the Christian name when he sees a Christian live otherwise than he professes and is said to.

Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10). Not that the kingdom may come to God, who always has it; but you ask that it may come to you, who do not have it, and that you may receive what the Lord in his affection promises you when he says: Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt 25:34). Come, you blessed: he did not say, "Let us come"; receive: he did not say, "Let us receive". Let no one wonder that one who is not yet born calls a father; for if John leaps (Luke 1:41) and Jacob wrestles in the womb (Gen 25:22), let the prudent man reckon what the divine nature can do, if human conception can do so much through God.

Sermo LXX.

In eamdem

Omnia quae divinitus dicta factaque referuntur, sunt miraculo, sunt stupori, sunt pavenda mortalibus, ipsis etiam coelestibus sunt tremenda: sed nihil tam stupet coelum, pavet terra, expavescit universa creatura, quam quod vos estis hodie, nobis dicentibus, audituri. Servus Dominum patrem vocare audet, judicem suum reus nuncupat genitorem, conditio terrena sua se voce Dei adoptat in filium: qui terrena perdidit, aestimat se divinitatis haeredem. Sed audemus, quia praesumptio dicentis non est, ubi auctoritas est jubentis; ipse enim nos hodie dicere sic voluit, qui nos docuit sic orare. Et quid mirum si homines Dei consecravit in filios, quando se hominis dedit et aptavit in filium? Carnis tunc naturam transtulit in divinam, deitatem quando humanam detulit ad naturam: tunc hominem sibi in coelestibus praestitit cohaeredem, quando se participem reddidit terrenorum. Aut homini negare quid amoris potuit, quid muneris, qui totum quod erat hominis, etiam peccatum, suscepit et mortem? Aut quomodo hominem in suis prosperis socium non habebit, qui in adversis hominis se fecit esse consortem? Homo, redi ad Deum, sic amatus a Deo; et ad illius gloriam da totum te, qui se totum propter te ad suam deduxit injuriam; et voca patrem fidens, quem tanto amore tuum probas, sentis, intelligis esse genitorem.

Pater noster. Quod nondum natus patrem vocat, nemo miretur: Deo nata sunt nascitura, futura facta sunt Deo. Quae futura sunt, inquit, jam fuerunt. Hinc est quod in utero suum Joannes sentit auctorem; et exstat nuntius matri, qui erat suae nescius vitae. Hinc est quod Jacob ante legitur bellare quam nasci, ante triumphare quam vivere. Hinc est quod jam sunt Deo qui sibi adhuc non sunt, qui electi sunt ante constitutionem mundi. Qui es in coelis. Non quod ille non sit in terra, sed ut tu per hoc germen esse noveris te coeleste: et si te Dei Filium esse fateris, vive quasi Dei Filius, ut actu, vita, virtutibus, tanto possis respondere genitori.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Quia a Christo vocatus es Christianus, petis ut praerogativa tanti nominis sanctificetur in te; quia nomen Dei quod per se et sibi sanctum est, aut sanctificatur in nobis nostro actu, aut nostro actu blasphematur in gentibus.

Sermon LXX.

On the same

All that is related as said and done by God is matter for wonder, for astonishment, is to be dreaded by mortals, to be trembled at even by the heavenly ones themselves: but nothing so astonishes heaven, so frightens the earth, so terrifies the whole creation, as what you are going to hear today, as we say it. The servant dares to call the Lord father, the accused names his judge his begetter, the earthly condition by its own voice adopts itself as son of God: he who lost earthly things reckons himself heir of the divinity. But we dare, because there is no presumption in the one who speaks where there is the authority of the one who commands; for he himself who taught us to pray thus wished us to speak thus today. And what wonder if he consecrated men as sons of God, when he gave himself and fitted himself to be the son of man? Then he carried the nature of the flesh over into the divine, when he brought the Godhead down to human nature: then he made man his co-heir in the heavens, when he made himself a partaker in earthly things. Or what of love, what of gift could he deny to man, who took up all that was man's, even sin, and death? Or how will he not have man as a companion in his prosperity, who in man's adversity made himself his sharer? Man, return to God, so loved by God; and give your whole self to his glory, who for your sake brought his whole self down to his own injury; and call him father with confidence, whom by so great a love you prove, feel, understand to be your begetter.

Our Father (Matt 6:9). Let no one wonder that one not yet born calls a father: for God the things that are to be born have been born, the things to come have been done for God. What is to be, he says, has already been (Eccl 3:15). Hence it is that John in the womb perceives his author (Luke 1:41); and he stands forth as messenger to his mother, he who was unaware of his own life. Hence it is that Jacob is read to have fought before he was born, to have triumphed before he lived (Gen 25:22). Hence it is that they already are for God who are not yet for themselves, who were chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). Who are in heaven. Not that he is not on earth, but so that through this you may know that you are a heavenly offspring: and if you acknowledge that you are a son of God, live as a son of God, so that in act, in life, in virtues you may be able to answer to so great a begetter.

Hallowed be your name (Matt 6:9). Because you have been called a Christian by Christ, you ask that the prerogative of so great a name be hallowed in you; because the name of God, which through itself and for itself is holy, is either hallowed in us by our action, or by our action is blasphemed among the Gentiles.

Veniat regnum tuum. Ipse dicit: Regnum Dei intra vos est: si intra nos est, veniat ut quid oramus? Est in fide, est in spe, est in exspectatione, sed ut in re veniat, jam precamur. Veniat autem nobis, non illi qui semper conregnat Patri suo, semper regnat in Patre; sed veniat nobis. Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi. Dicimus, Veniat regnum tuum. Ut sic Deus regnet in nobis, quatenus in nobis desinat mors regnare, desinat regnare peccatum. Regnavit, inquit, mors ab Adam usque ad Moysen. Et alibi: Non regnet peccatum in vestro mortali corpore.

Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra. Nunc in terra multa fiunt pro diaboli voluntate, pro saeculi nequitia, pro desiderio carnis; in coelo vero fit nihil praeter Domini voluntatem. Petimus ergo, ut interempto diabolo, ut novo saeculo, ut mutato corpore, ut destructo mortis imperio, ut abolita dominatione peccati, in coelo et in terra, in Deo et hominibus, una Dei sit, eademque voluntas.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Post regnum coeleste, terrenum panem petere non jubemur, prohibente ipso cum dicit: Nolite solliciti esse animae vestrae quid manducetis aut quid bibatis. Sed quia ipse est panis qui de coelo descendit, petimus et precamur ut ipsum panem quo quotidie, id est, jugiter, sumus in aeternitate victuri: hodie, id est, in praesenti vita, de convivio altaris sancti ad virtutem corporis mentisque capiamus.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Sic dicendo, homo, indulgentiae modum, mensuramque veniae tu tibi dedisti, qui a Domino tantum tibi petis dimitti, quantum dimiseris ipse conservo. Dimitte ergo delinquenti in te totum, si vis ipse de tuis nihil Domino debere delictis: in altero dimitte tibi, si vis ipse vindicem vitare sententiam.

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. Deus, sicut scriptum est, neminem tentat: sed tentare dicitur, cum contumaciter euntes ad tentationum laqueos derelinquit. Sic Adam tentatoris incurrit insidias, dum sui praecepta deserit conditoris.

Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10). He himself says: The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21): if it is within us, why do we pray that it may come? It is in faith, it is in hope, it is in expectation; but we are praying now that it may come in the thing itself. But may it come to us, not to him who always reigns together with his Father, always reigns in the Father; but may it come to us. Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the origin of the world (Matt 25:34). We say: Your kingdom come. That God may so reign in us that in us death may cease to reign, sin may cease to reign. Death reigned, he says, from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14). And elsewhere: Let sin not reign in your mortal body (Rom 6:12).

Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth (Matt 6:10). Now on earth many things are done according to the will of the devil, the wickedness of the world, the desire of the flesh; but in heaven nothing is done except the will of the Lord. We ask, then, that, with the devil slain, with the world made new, with the body changed, with the empire of death destroyed, with the dominion of sin abolished, in heaven and on earth, in God and in men, there may be one and the same will of God.

Give us today our daily bread (Matt 6:11). After the heavenly kingdom we are not bidden to ask for earthly bread, since he himself forbids it when he says: Do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat or what you will drink (Matt 6:25). But because he himself is the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:41), we ask and pray that this very bread, by which daily, that is, perpetually, we are to live in eternity, we may receive today, that is, in the present life, from the banquet of the holy altar, for the strength of body and mind.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt 6:12). By saying this, man, you have given yourself the limit of indulgence and the measure of pardon, you who ask the Lord that as much be forgiven you as you yourself have forgiven your fellow servant. Forgive, then, the one who offends against you everything, if you yourself wish to owe the Lord nothing for your own offences: in another forgive yourself, if you yourself wish to escape the avenging sentence.

And do not lead us into temptation (Matt 6:13). God, as it is written, tempts no one (Jas 1:13); but he is said to tempt when he abandons those who go stubbornly to the snares of temptations. So Adam fell into the ambush of the tempter, in deserting the precepts of his Maker.

Unde autem et a quo tentaretur homo, prodit sic dicendo: Sed libera nos a malo. Hoc est, a diabolo, qui totius mali et auctor est, et origo: diabolus natura coelestis fuit; nunc est nequitia spiritualis, aetate major saeculo, nocendi usu tritus, laedendi arte peritissimus; unde non jam malus, sed malum dicitur, a quo est omne quod malum est. Hinc est quod propriis viribus liberari homo non potest, carnalibus vinculis illigatus. Petendum nobis est ergo ut Deus nos a diabolo liberet, qui Christum terris ut diabolum vinceret, commodavit. Clamet homo, clamet ad Deum, clamet, Libera nos a malo, ut a tanto malo, solo Christo vincente, liberemur.

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Orandi thema, materiam petendi, supplicandi normam paucissimis in verbis ipse tibi qui tibi est exorandus indulsit, ut ex hoc tu petendi sumas sensum, intellectum postulandi capias, mensuram colligas impetrandi, et brevissimo magisterio orandi, latissimam capias disciplinam; simul quia ad amoris indicium rex ipse officio functus est advocati, ut preces quibus responsurus erat ipse dictaret. Cunctatio ablata est impetrandi omnis, immo fiducia collata est tota promerendi, quando ipsum se legit in precibus qui rogatur. Metus locum non habet, ubi a Patre filius pietate interprete desiderat quae sancta sunt impetrare.

But whence and by whom man would be tempted he reveals by saying: But deliver us from evil (Matt 6:13). That is, from the devil, who is both the author and the origin of all evil: the devil was heavenly by nature; now he is spiritual wickedness, older in age than the world, worn by the practice of harming, most skilled in the art of injuring; whence he is no longer called evil, but Evil, from whom is all that is evil. Hence it is that man cannot be freed by his own strength, bound up in fleshly chains. We must ask, then, that God free us from the devil, he who lent Christ to the earth to conquer the devil. Let man cry out, let him cry out to God, let him cry: Deliver us from evil, so that from so great an evil we may be delivered, with Christ alone conquering.

Our Father, who are in heaven. The theme of praying, the matter of asking, the rule of supplicating, in very few words, he himself who is to be entreated by you has granted you, so that from this you may take the sense of asking, grasp the understanding of requesting, gather the measure of obtaining, and from a very brief teaching on praying take a very broad discipline; and at the same time because, as a token of love, the king himself performed the office of an advocate, so as himself to dictate the prayers to which he was going to answer. All hesitation in obtaining has been taken away, or rather, all confidence of meriting has been conferred, when he who is asked reads himself in the prayers. Dread has no place where the son, with piety as interpreter, desires to obtain from the Father the things that are holy.

Sermo LXXI.

In eamdem

Fratres charissimi, qui vos donavit credere, ipse vos docuit et orare, et totam petendi formam paucis aptavit in verbis: quia cum patrem postulat, multa prece filius non laborat; sicut enim petere cogit necessitas genitum, ita urget charitas dare genitorem. Pater ergo qui sponte praestat, non tam ut petatur, quam quid petatur ostendit, ut filius petendo justa placeat, qui potest stulta postulans displicere. Audite Patrem, et vos filios esse jam credite, ut quae petieritis incunctanter impetrare possitis.

Quid valeat fides, credulitas quid possit, quanti sit confessio, hodie monstratur in vobis. Ecce Trinitatis trina confessio in coelestem sobolem de terrena vos sustulit servitute; ecce fides quae Deum locuta est patrem, patrem vobis Deum hodie conquisivit; ecce vox quae confessa est Deum Filium, vos Dei adoptavit in filios; ecce credulitas quae Deum Spiritum proclamavit, de carnis substantia mortali in vitalem Spiritus substantiam vos mutavit. Quis pietatis tantae dignus invenietur assertor? Deus Pater homines dignatur haeredes, Deus Filius non dedignatur servulos cohaeredes, Deus Spiritus carnem consortem divinitatis assumit, fit coelum possessio terrenorum, et inferis addicti jurisdictione suscipiuntur in supernis, Apostolo probante, cum dicit: An nescitis quia angelos judicabimus? Vocate ergo Deum patrem, vosque si nondum natos, jam tamen designatos filios esse jam credite, et date operam quatenus sit vobis coelestis vita, sint vobis divini mores, et forma deitatis tota vestra praeferatur in forma; quia coelestis Pater respondentes generi filios muneribus ditat divinis, degenerantes ad poenalem revocat servitutem.

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Succumberet conscientia servilis, terrena conditio solveretur, nisi nos ad hunc clamorem ipsius Patris auctoritas, ipsius Filii Spiritus excitaret. Misit, ait, Deus Spiritum Filii sui in corda nostra clamantem Abba Pater. Lassescit mens, caro nostra deficit ad divina, nisi Deus quae fieri jubet impleat ipse qui jubet. Quando ausa mortalitas Deum vocare patrem nisi modo, quando superna virtute hominis animantur interna? Pater noster qui es in coelis. Homo, quid commune cum terris tibi, qui confiteris tibi genus esse de coelis?

Sermon LXXI.

On the same

Dearest brothers, he who has granted you to believe has himself taught you also to pray, and has fitted the whole form of asking into a few words: because when a son asks his father, he does not toil with much prayer; for as necessity compels the begotten to ask, so charity urges the begetter to give. The Father, then, who grants of his own accord, shows not so much that he is to be asked as what is to be asked, so that the son may please by asking just things, who can displease by requesting foolish ones. Hear the Father, and believe now that you are sons, so that you may be able to obtain without hesitation what you ask.

What faith avails, what belief can do, how much confession is worth, is shown today in you. Behold, the threefold confession of the Trinity has lifted you from earthly servitude into heavenly offspring; behold, the faith which has spoken God as Father has today won God as Father for you; behold, the voice which confessed God the Son has adopted you as sons of God; behold, the belief which proclaimed God the Spirit has changed you from the mortal substance of the flesh into the life-giving substance of the Spirit. Who will be found worthy to proclaim such loving-kindness? God the Father deigns to make men heirs, God the Son does not disdain little servants as co-heirs, God the Spirit takes flesh as a sharer of the divinity, heaven becomes the possession of earthly beings, and those made over to the jurisdiction of the underworld are received in the regions on high, as the Apostle proves when he says: Do you not know that we shall judge angels? (1 Cor 6:3) Call God, then, father, and believe now that you, though not yet born, are nevertheless already designated sons, and take pains that heavenly life may be yours, divine manners yours, and that the whole form of the Godhead may shine forth in your form; because the heavenly Father enriches with divine gifts the sons who answer to their lineage, and calls back those who degenerate to penal servitude.

Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). The servile conscience would sink, the earthly condition would be dissolved, if the authority of the Father himself, the Spirit of the Son himself, did not rouse us to this cry. God has sent, he says, the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: Abba, Father (Gal 4:6). The mind grows weary, our flesh fails before divine things, unless God, who commands, himself fulfils what he commands to be done. When did mortality dare to call God father, except now, when the inner parts of man are animated by power from on high? Our Father, who are in heaven. Man, what have you in common with the earth, you who confess that your race is from heaven?

Ergo coelestem vitam monstra in habitatione terrena: quia si quid in te gesserit terrena cogitatio, coelo maculam, coelesti generi injuriam intulisti.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Nos petimus ut sanctificet nomen suum Deus, quod sanctitate sua totam salvat et sanctificat creaturam. Fratres, hoc nomen est quod supernae potestates pavent, quod tremenda suscipiunt servitute: hoc nomen est quod mundo perdito dat salutem: sed petimus ut nomen Dei actu nostro sanctificetur in nobis; nobis enim bene agentibus benedicitur nomen Dei, nobis male agentibus blasphematur. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Nomen Dei per vos blasphematur in gentibus. Petimus ergo, petimus ut quantum nomen Dei sanctum est, tantum nos ejus mereamur in nostris mentibus sanctitatem.

Veniat regnum tuum. Quasi non semper fuerit, ac sit, sic regnum Christi ut veniat nunc rogamus. Et ubi est illud? Regnum Dei intra vos est. Inter nos est fide, sed ut re veniat supplicamus. Fratres, quamdiu diabolus vario nequitiarum genere, multimoda arte fallendi rerum aciem turbat, sensus hominum, moresque confundit, saevit idolis, sacrilegiis furit, fallit auguriis, divinatione mentitur, signis decipit, illudit astris, spectaculis occupat, obsidet vitiis, peccatis vulnerat, criminibus sauciat, desperatione prosternit, Christi regnum prolongat et absentiat a nobis. Petimus ergo ut veniat tempus quo, mali tanti auctore pereunte, mundus totus, creatura tota, totam solius Christi regnet et triumphet ad gloriam; et fiat quod sequitur, ut sicut in coelo, ita et in terra una Domini sit voluntas. Sit terra coelum, vita Deus, tempus aeternitas, patria requies, census innocentia, honor immortalitas, gloria castitas, Deus totum.

Addidit, Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Post paternitatem Dei, post divini nominis sanctitatem, post coeli regnum, quotidianum panem jubemur exposcere. Christus oblivioni non subjacet, Christus mandatis suis contraria non demandat; ipse dixit: Nolite solliciti esse animae vestrae quid manducetis aut quid bibatis. Sed quia ipse est panis qui de coelo descendit, qui legis et gratiae mola aptatus est in farinam, qui crucis confectus est passione, qui magnae pietatis fermentatus est sacramento, qui conspersionis levis levamentum sustulit de sepulcro, qui ut divinitatis suae calore coqueretur, ipse clibanum decoxit inferni, qui ad coelestem cibum quotidianus Ecclesiae defertur ad mensam, qui in remissionem frangitur peccatorum, qui edentes se perpetuam pascit et enutrit ad vitam, hunc panem quotidie nobis dari petimus, donec illo in die perpetuo perfruamur.

So show a heavenly life in an earthly dwelling: because if an earthly thought has done anything in you, you have brought a stain upon heaven, an injury upon a heavenly lineage.

Hallowed be your name (Matt 6:9). We ask that God hallow his name, the name which by its holiness saves and hallows the whole creation. Brothers, this is the name that the powers on high dread, that they receive with trembling servitude: this is the name that gives salvation to a lost world: but we ask that the name of God be hallowed in us by our action; for when we act well the name of God is blessed, when we act badly it is blasphemed. Hear the Apostle saying: Through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom 2:24). We ask, then, we ask that, as holy as the name of God is, so much of its holiness we may merit in our minds.

Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10). As though the kingdom of Christ had not always been and were not, so we ask that it come now. And where is that saying? The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21). It is among us by faith, but we pray that it may come in the thing itself. Brothers, as long as the devil, by various kinds of wickedness, by manifold arts of deceiving, troubles the sight of things, confounds the senses and the manners of men, rages with idols, raves with sacrileges, deceives with auguries, lies with divination, cheats with signs, mocks with the stars, occupies with spectacles, besieges with vices, wounds with sins, injures with crimes, lays low with despair, he puts off the kingdom of Christ and keeps it absent from us. We ask, then, that the time may come when, the author of so great an evil perishing, the whole world, the whole creation, may reign and triumph to the whole glory of Christ alone; and that what follows may be done: that as in heaven, so also on earth there may be one will of the Lord. Let earth be heaven, life be God, time be eternity, our homeland be rest, our wealth be innocence, our honour be immortality, our glory be chastity, God be all.

He added: Give us today our daily bread (Matt 6:11). After the fatherhood of God, after the holiness of the divine name, after the kingdom of heaven, we are bidden to ask for daily bread. Christ is not subject to forgetfulness, Christ does not command things contrary to his own commands; he himself said: Do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat or what you will drink (Matt 6:25). But because he himself is the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:41), who was fitted into flour by the millstone of the Law and of grace, who was made ready by the Passion of the cross, who was leavened by the mystery of great godliness, who raised up from the sepulchre the leavening of a light kneading, who, to be baked by the heat of his divinity, himself baked the oven of hell, who is brought daily to the table of the Church as heavenly food, who is broken for the remission of sins, who feeds and nourishes to perpetual life those who eat him, this bread we ask to be given us daily, until we enjoy it fully in that perpetual day.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Homo, penes te est potestas veniae, in te est indulgentiae, tu tibi remissionis auctor es constitutus. Gratis petis veniam, qui tibi in alio indulgere contemnis. Homo, tu tibi misericordiae factus es ipse mensura; quantum quaeris misericordiae, fac tantum.

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. Tentatio est, fratres, species fallens, quae prospera in adversis, adversa occultat in prosperis, humanamque ignorantiam dolosos educit in lapsus; petimus ergo ne peccatis impellentibus in tentationum foveas incidamus. Inducere autem Deus dicitur, currentes ad crimina cum relinquit.

Sed libera nos a malo. Hic mali malum designat auctorem, hoc est, diabolum. Petimus ergo ut munere hoc uno malis omnibus cum mali careamus auctore.

Pater noster, qui es in coelis. Nemo cum se filium clamat, manere se miretur in habitu servitutis: ad divinum germen hodie designatus es, non promotus; spem, non rem, te noveris consecutum. Audi Apostolum: Spe salvi facti sumus: spes autem quae videtur non est spes, quod enim videt quis, quid sperat? si autem quod non videmus speramus, per patientiam exspectamus. Hodie adoptionis est dies, hodie promissionis tempus est: audi, crede, exspecta, crede creditori tuo, qui tibi credidit debitori; exspecta parumper ut veniat, qui te diu sustinuit ut venires; da illi inducias de promisso, qui tibi quidquid erat debiti jam donavit. Aut quare tu fatigaris spe Dei, cum genus omne hominum subsistat spe, fide vivat? Agricola numquam sereret anhelus, si fructum laboris sui de tempore non speraret; viator laborem prolixi itineris non subiret, nisi se ad destinata crederet pervenire; nauta mare non intraret incertus, si se lucris sequentibus compensaturum viarum discrimina non speraret; miles tota juventutis tempora non ageret in periculis, si senectutis honores copiosissimos non speraret; filius paternae dominationis tempora non duraret, si se substantiae paternae non speraret haeredem.

Et tu si te jam filium Dei credis, juxta prophetam: Exspecta Dominum, viriliter age, et confortetur cor tuum; et exspecta, ut haereditatem Dei de exspectationis fide, et de virtute patientiae consequaris. Audi Apostolum: Filii Dei sumus, et nondum apparuit quid erimus; scimus quoniam cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus. Et iterum: Vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo: cum autem apparuerit Christus vita vestra, tunc et vos apparebitis cum ipso in gloria. Fratres, beati sunt filii Dei, quia et haereditatem rerum omnium possidebunt, et de excessu patris luctus temporum non videbunt.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt 6:12). Man, in your hands is the power of pardon, in you that of indulgence; you have been appointed the author of your own remission. In vain do you ask for pardon, you who disdain to be lenient with yourself in another. Man, you yourself have been made the measure of your own mercy; as much mercy as you seek, so much do.

And do not lead us into temptation (Matt 6:13). Temptation, brothers, is a deceiving appearance, which hides prosperity in adversity, adversity in prosperity, and leads human ignorance out into treacherous falls; we ask, then, that we may not, with sins driving us on, fall into the pits of temptations. But God is said to lead in when he leaves those who run to crimes.

But deliver us from evil (Matt 6:13). Here "evil" designates the author of evil, that is, the devil. We ask, then, that by this one gift we may be free of all evils, in being free of the author of evil.

Our Father, who are in heaven. Let no one, when he cries himself a son, wonder that he remains in the condition of servitude: today you have been designated for divine offspring, not promoted; know that you have obtained the hope, not the thing itself. Hear the Apostle: In hope we have been saved: but hope that is seen is not hope, for what one sees, why does he hope for it? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Rom 8:24–25). Today is the day of adoption, today is the time of promise: hear, believe, wait; believe your creditor, who gave credit to you, his debtor; wait a little for him to come, who has long borne with you so that you might come; grant him a respite on his promise, who has already remitted to you whatever there was of debt. Or why are you wearied by hope in God, when the whole human race subsists by hope, lives by faith? The farmer would never sow, panting, if he did not hope in due time for the fruit of his labour; the traveller would not undertake the toil of a long journey, unless he believed that he would reach his destination; the sailor would not enter the sea, uncertain, if he did not hope to make up for the dangers of the routes with the gains that follow; the soldier would not spend all the time of his youth in perils, if he did not hope for the most abundant honours of old age; the son would not endure the times of his father's dominion, if he did not hope to be heir of his father's substance.

And you, if you now believe yourself a son of God, in the words of the Prophet: Wait for the Lord, act manfully, and let your heart be strengthened; and wait (Ps 27:14), that you may obtain the inheritance of God by the faith of waiting and by the virtue of patience. Hear the Apostle: We are sons of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be; we know that when he appears, we shall be like him (1 John 3:2). And again: 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). Brothers, blessed are the sons of God, because they will both possess the inheritance of all things, and will not see the mourning of the times over the passing of a father.

Sermo LXXII.

In eamdem

Quod ego modo cum magno tremore dicturus sum, quod vos estis nunc terribiliter audituri, immo terribiliter vocaturi, stupent angeli, pavescunt virtutes, supernum coelum non capit, sol non videt, terra non sustinet, tota non assequitur creatura. Quid ad haec mortale pectus? Quid ad haec mens hominis imbecilla? Quid ad haec humani sensus angustia? Quid ad haec humanae vocis aura? Quid ad istud humana lingua cito tacitura? Hoc Paulus invisibiliter cum vidisset, prodidit non prodendo, dicens: Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se. Hoc Isaias cum suo mox coepisset auditu, ad hoc hominum pervenire posse dubitat vel fidem, dicens: Domine, quis credidit auditui nostro? Hoc Jeremias cum divino concepisset auditu, partus supernorum sensuum non sustinebat, clamans: Ventrem meum, ventrem meum doleo, et sensus cordis mei perturbati sunt. Hoc Habacuc divini spiritus perorabat afflatu, cum dicit: Custodivi, et expavit venter meus a voce orationis labiorum meorum; et intravit tremor in ossa mea; et subtus me commota est virtus mea. Elevatus virtute Dei sensit suam sub se succubuisse virtutem. Longum est super hoc sacramentum pavoris prosequi, et dinumerare sanctorum exempla: tempus non sinit diu me in hoc timore demorari, coelestis partus impetus non potest tardare nascentium.

Dico ergo, et vos in utero adhuc penetrali voce compello, provida exhortatione praemoneo; ut antequam videatis matrem, vocetis et patrem, ante blandimenta matris, patris tendatis et festinetis ad regnum, ante patris praeveniatis ad panem quam matris ad ubera pendeatis. Nec in vos quidquam sibi, aut matris necessitas, aut aetatis tempora vindicent: sed in vobis totum divino patri, totum coelesti respondeat et occurrat auctori.

Sermon LXXII.

On the same

What I am now about to say with great trembling, what you are now about to hear with awe, or rather to call out with awe, the angels are astonished at, the powers take fright at, the highest heaven does not contain, the sun does not see, the earth does not sustain, the whole creation does not attain. What is a mortal breast before these things? What is the feeble mind of man before these things? What is the narrowness of human sense before these things? What is the breath of the human voice before these things? What is the human tongue, soon to fall silent, before this? When Paul had seen this invisibly, he revealed it by not revealing it, saying: 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). As soon as Isaiah had received this by his hearing, he doubts that even the faith of men could reach to it, saying: Lord, who has believed our report? (Isa 53:1) When Jeremiah had conceived this by divine hearing, he could not bear the birth of thoughts from on high, crying out: My belly, my belly, I feel pain, and the senses of my heart are troubled (Jer 4:19). This Habakkuk was declaring by the breath of the divine Spirit, when he says: I kept watch, and my belly was terrified at the voice of the prayer of my lips; and trembling entered into my bones; and beneath me my strength was shaken (Hab 3:16). Lifted up by the power of God, he felt his own strength succumb beneath him. It would be long to pursue this mystery of fright, and to count up the examples of the saints: time does not allow me to linger long in this fear; the impulse of a heavenly birth cannot hold back those who are being born.

I say, then, and I address you, still in the womb, with a penetrating voice, I forewarn you with provident exhortation: that before you see your mother, you may call upon your father too; before your mother's caresses, you may strive and hasten to your father's kingdom; you may come first to your father's bread before you hang at your mother's breasts. And let neither your mother's necessity nor the seasons of age claim anything in you for themselves: but let everything in you answer and run to meet the divine Father, everything the heavenly author.

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Hoc est quod pavebam dicere, hoc est quod trepidabam proferre, hoc est quod neque coelestium, neque terrestrium quemquam sinebat servitutis propriae conditio suspicari: coeli et terrae, carnis et Dei repente tantum posse provenire commercium, ut Deus in hominem, homo in Deum; Dominus in servum, servus verteretur in filium, fieretque divinitatis et humanitatis ineffabili modo una et sempiterna cognatio. Et quidem deitatis erga nos dignatio tanta est, ut scire nequeat quid potissimum mirari debeat creatura: utrum quod se Deus ad nostram deposuit servitutem, an quod nos ad suae divinitatis rapuit dignitatem. Hinc est, homo, quod te divinitus adhortatur, qui tanto nunc tuo amore flammatur; quod adhuc in utero voce tua te Deus adoptat in filium; quod te non fieri solum liberum vult ille, sed nasci; quod ipsam propter te manumittit naturam, ne quem naevum, ne quam maculam imponat ortus pristinae servitutis. O vos beatos, quibus dominari datum est ante quam nasci, ante regnare quam vivere, ante ad Dei Patris gloriam pervenire quam prosapiam propriae vilitatis agnoscere. Ecclesia felix mater, quae vos tales respicit, quae cum virgo permaneat, genuisse tales, et tantos vos taliter se miratur.

Olim partus iste praecedentibus designabatur exemplis. Hinc est quod Jacob in utero matris cum fratre luctatur, praeripit et triumphos. Hinc est quod in utero Thamar gemini de primatus honore praeliantur, retardant partus, nec ante lucem cupiunt videre quam vincere. Hinc est quod Joannes exsultat ante, et ante suo occurrit auctori genitricis ex utero quam procedat. Et si humana pignora sic ante Deo militant, quam nascantur parentibus, quam vivant saeculo; quid mirum si Ecclesiae divina germina, si Deo sua soboles in utero adhuc, quod sit superni germinis jam fatetur?

Pater noster qui es in coelis. Stupor insurgit, Christus de Dei patris pectore matrem vocat, et fatetur in terra; et homo de matris utero patrem vocat, et confitetur in coelis, Pater noster qui es in coelis. Quo te homo repente provexit gratia? quo te rapuit coelestis natura? ut in carne et in terra positus adhuc, et carnem jam nescias et terram, dicendo: Pater noster qui es in coelis. Qui ergo se tanti Patris filium confitetur et credit, respondeat vita generi, moribus patri, et mente atque actu asserat quod coelestem consecutus est per naturam.

Our Father, who are in heaven (Matt 6:9). This is what I was afraid to say, this is what I trembled to utter, this is what the condition of its own servitude allowed no one, either of the heavenly or of the earthly, to suspect: that such a commerce of heaven and earth, of flesh and God, could suddenly come about, that God should be turned into man, man into God, the Lord into a servant, the servant into a son, and that there should come to be, in an ineffable manner, one and everlasting kinship of divinity and manhood. And indeed the condescension of the Godhead towards us is so great that the creature cannot know what it ought most to wonder at: whether that God lowered himself to our servitude, or that he carried us off to the dignity of his divinity. Hence it is, man, that he exhorts you divinely, he who is now inflamed with so great a love for you; that while you are still in the womb God adopts you as a son by your own voice; that he wishes you not only to become free, but to be born free; that for your sake he sets nature itself free, lest the birth of the former servitude should lay on you any blemish, any stain. O you blessed ones, to whom it has been given to rule before being born, to reign before living, to come to the glory of God the Father before recognising the stock of your own lowliness. Happy mother the Church, who looks upon you such as you are, who, though she remains a virgin, marvels that she has borne you such, so great, and in such a way.

Of old this birth was signified by preceding examples. Hence it is that Jacob wrestles with his brother in his mother's womb, and snatches even the triumphs beforehand (Gen 25:22). Hence it is that in Tamar's womb the twins battle over the honour of the first place, hold back the birth, and do not desire to see the light before they conquer (Gen 38:27–30). Hence it is that John leaps beforehand, and runs to meet his author before he comes forth from his bearer's womb (Luke 1:41). And if human offspring thus do service for God before they are born to their parents, before they live for the world, what wonder if the divine shoots of the Church, if God's own progeny, while still in the womb, already acknowledges that it is of seed from on high?

Our Father, who are in heaven. Astonishment rises up: Christ, from the bosom of God the Father, calls a mother and acknowledges her on earth; and man, from his mother's womb, calls a father and confesses him in heaven: Our Father, who are in heaven. Where has grace suddenly carried you forward, man? Where has the heavenly nature swept you away? So that, still placed in the flesh and on earth, you already know neither flesh nor earth, in saying: Our Father, who are in heaven. He, then, who confesses and believes himself a son of so great a Father, let him answer to his lineage by his life, to his father by his manners, and by mind and act let him assert that he has obtained the heavenly one by nature.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Cujus utique genus esse coepimus, ejus utique censemur et nomine: et ideo petimus ut in nobis illius nominis sanctificatio perseveret, honor et praerogativa nominis, quod sublimavit sic tanti Genitoris celsitudo.

Adveniat regnum tuum. Non illi petimus cui numquam defuit regnum, immo qui est ipse regnum, totamque in se regni continet potestatem; sed qui nos vult ad promissam regni gloriam pervenire, monet nos expetere omnibus hoc votis, in hoc vult nos totis mentibus inhiare. Quantum namque est temerarius qui discutit de genere, ignavus est tantum qui non gaudet, aestuat, anhelat, cum promissum intendit et pertendit ad regnum.

Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra. Sicut in coelo, sic et in terra: tunc jam totum coelum est, tunc agit Dei mens una omnes, tunc in Christo omnes et in omnibus Christus, quando omnes solius Dei sapiunt, et faciunt voluntates; tunc omnes unum, immo unus omnes quando Dei spiritus in omnibus vivit unus.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Sicut in psalmo: Benedictus Dominus de die quotidie; ita hic: Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Quotidianum jugem dicimus; jugis panis ille est, qui de coelo descendit: Ego sum panis qui de coelo descendit. Perfectae ergo beatitudinis est iste panis; hodie, hoc est in praesenti, illius panis cibo jam vivere incipimus, cujus perpetuitate, quod est quotidie, saginabimur in futurum.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. De supplicantis pectore veniae fons emanat, et ad veniam refluet: quidquid pietatis exuberat, et effundit in alterum, quando indulget sibi tantum quantum alteri condonaverit. Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Satis potest homo misericors, qui cum Deo de pietate confligit, cum tantum sibi dari quantum dederit, quantum donaverit tantum desiderat et donari. Homo, sit semper in pectore tuo venia, si vis crimina non timere.

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. Haec interpretatione indigent, quia tentatio diaboli praevia et amara est ministra ejus: quamdiu vero hoc fragili continemur in corpore, necessario precamur ut in nos nec tentationi pateat aditus, nec diabolo tribuatur accessus.

Sed libera nos a malo. Ipse autem Dominus Deus noster liberet nos a malo, et perducat ad omne bonum, qui vivit et regnat Deus modo et semper, et per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Hallowed be your name (Matt 6:9). Whose race we have certainly begun to be, by his name too we are certainly reckoned: and therefore we ask that in us the hallowing of that name may persevere, the honour and prerogative of the name which the loftiness of so great a Begetter has thus exalted.

Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10). We do not ask it for him to whom the kingdom has never been lacking, or rather, who is himself the kingdom and contains in himself the whole power of the kingdom; but he who wishes us to come to the promised glory of the kingdom warns us to seek this with all our prayers, wishes us to long for this with our whole minds. For as rash as he is who disputes about the generation, so slothful is he who does not rejoice, burn, pant, when he strives and presses on to the promised kingdom.

Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth (Matt 6:10). As in heaven, so also on earth: then all is already heaven, then the one mind of God moves all, then all are in Christ and Christ in all, when all savour and do the will of God alone; then all are one thing, or rather, all are one man, when the one Spirit of God lives in all.

Give us today our daily bread (Matt 6:11). As in the psalm: Blessed be the Lord from day to day, daily (Ps 68:20); so here: Give us today our daily bread. We call "daily" what is perpetual; perpetual is that bread which came down from heaven: I am the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:41). This bread, then, belongs to perfect beatitude; today, that is, in the present, we already begin to live by the food of that bread by whose perpetuity, which is the "daily", we shall be filled in the future.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt 6:12). From the breast of the suppliant the fountain of pardon flows out, and will flow back to pardon: whatever of piety overflows and pours itself out on another, when he grants himself as much as he has forgiven another. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. The merciful man can do much indeed, who contends with God in piety, when he desires that as much be given him as he has given, that as much be forgiven him as he has forgiven. Man, let pardon be always in your breast, if you wish not to fear your crimes.

And do not lead us into temptation (Matt 6:13). These words need interpretation, because temptation is the devil's forerunner and his bitter minister: but as long as we are held in this frail body, we necessarily pray that neither may an entrance lie open to temptation against us, nor access be given to the devil.

But deliver us from evil (Matt 6:13). May the Lord our God himself deliver us from evil, and lead us to every good, he who lives and reigns, God, now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo LXXIII.

De paschali solemnitate

Hodierna festivitas, fratres charissimi, nobis vetera non connectit, nec carnes agni servat in crastinum: sed dum praeterita praesentibus solemni devotione participat, et Pascha nostrum, Pascha redeunte conjungit, novae regenerationis ablactat infantiam, quia juxta Apostolum, Vetera transierunt, et ecce facta sunt omnia nova. Annus Domini perficitur temporibus, non senescit, qui tamdiu suo recurrit in circulo, quamdiu nos ad diem retributionis adducat. Paschalis hodierna solemnitas a lacte, quos ante genuit, nunc repellit, ut solidioris cibi pastu, perfectum Christi roborentur in virum.

Fecisse Abraham epulum magnum, totiusque domus suae laetitiam suscitasse ablactato Isaac, historia divina referente cognovimus. Et si senectutis soboles, si sterilis unicus, choris tripudiantibus, cithara et tympano, et toto psalterii resonante concentu, universae familiae corda traxit et commovit in gaudium, quanto magis nos hodie in hymnis spiritualibus convenit exsultare, vel canticis, quando Virginis in germine ablactatur universa fecunditas? Si Anna Sarae consterilis, quae lacrymis orationum suarum tamdiu madefecit ariditatem sui corporis et naturae, quamdiu fuerat longo vitae tempore negata posteritas, Samuelem divino munere susceptum, ablactatum mox divinum refundit in munus, et laetitiam suam sacrificiorum victimis ad plenitudinem liberationis accumulat; multo magis nos oportet laudis immolare sacrificium, vota solvere, suavitatis incensum adolere, et tota holocaustorum pinguedine Deo Patri victimas immolare, quando Virgo mater enutrita et ablactata tot numero pignora quot stellas coeli, Patri toto orbe repraesentat, ut impleatur illud propheticum: Benedices coronam anni benignitatis, et campi tui replebuntur ubertate.

Nemo ergo otiosum esse credat istud festivitatis nostrae salutare mysterium, nec existimet pannum novum veteri nos assuere vestimento, ubi nihil Judaicae vetustatis, novitati conjungimus Christianae: scientes, Apostolo dicente, novam totam in Christo nobis emersisse creaturam; sed agnitionem divinam supernae virtutis evehimus ad profectum, ut dum simul nuper nati

Sermon LXXIII.

On the paschal solemnity

Today's festival, dearest brothers, does not bind old things to us, nor does it keep the flesh of the lamb until the morrow: but in giving the past a share in the present with solemn devotion, and in joining our Easter to Easter returning, it weans the infancy of the new regeneration, because, according to the Apostle, The old things have passed away, and behold, all things have been made new (2 Cor 5:17). The Lord's year is completed in its seasons, it does not grow old; it keeps returning in its circle until it brings us to the day of retribution. Today's paschal solemnity now drives away from the milk those whom it begot before, so that with the food of more solid nourishment they may be strengthened into the perfect man of Christ.

That Abraham made a great feast, and stirred up the gladness of his whole house when Isaac was weaned, we know from the account of the divine history (Gen 21:8). And if the offspring of old age, if the only son of a barren woman, with dancing choirs, with lyre and drum and the whole concert of the psaltery resounding, drew the hearts of the whole household and moved them to joy, how much more is it fitting that we today exult in spiritual hymns, or in canticles, when in the Virgin's offspring the whole of fruitfulness is weaned? If Hannah, Sarah's fellow in barrenness, who with the tears of her prayers moistened the dryness of her body and of her nature for as long as posterity had been denied her through a long span of life, gave Samuel, received as a divine gift, back again as a divine gift as soon as he was weaned, and heaped up her gladness with the victims of sacrifices to the fullness of deliverance (1 Sam 1); much more ought we to offer the sacrifice of praise, to pay our vows, to burn the incense of sweetness, and with all the fatness of holocausts to offer victims to God the Father, when the virgin mother presents to the Father from the whole world pledges nourished and weaned, as many in number as the stars of heaven, that the prophetic word may be fulfilled: You will bless the crown of the year of kindness, and your fields will be filled with plenty (Ps 65:12).

Let no one, then, think this saving mystery of our festival idle, nor suppose that we are sewing new cloth on an old garment, where we join nothing of Jewish oldness to Christian newness: knowing, as the Apostle says, that a whole new creation has come forth for us in Christ (2 Cor 5:17); but we raise divine knowledge to the advancement of heavenly virtue, so that, while those lately born are taught

quid facere debeant imbuuntur, et ante geniti quantam Deo gratiam de perfectione sua debeant instruuntur, appendantur collo ii qui modo nati sunt, et pietate tota sub Ecclesiae matris uberibus occupentur, trahant teneris faucibus innocentiae pastum, in opere sancto brachia meditentur extendere, nitantur in cursu fidei tremula firmare vestigia. Numquid sic relinquendi sunt jam nutriti, ut non patris cura, patris manu, patris regantur arbitrio? et ita matris consilio, matris fide muniantur, ut non humana solum, sed etiam divina prudentia percipiant et praeripiant salutaria? Sic Jacob suo nimis timidus, matris consilio satis audax, patris ut praeriperet benedictionem, plus mysticus quam dolosus incessit; nam primogenitum se mentitus non est, quia ille primus est quem coelestis gratia generat, non natura mortalis; ille nos sub hircorum pellibus figurabat, qui ut moriamur peccato, hortatu matris Ecclesiae mortificati corporis induimur vestimento, et odore agri continuis confessionum fructibus et ubertate redolemus, donec caecitati Israeliticae salutariter illudentes, paternam benedictionem toto fidei praeripiamus arcano, dicente Apostolo: Caecitas Israel facta est, donec plenitudo gentium introiret ex parte.

together what they ought to do, and those begotten before are instructed how much gratitude they owe God for their perfection, those who have just been born may hang upon the neck, and with all piety be busied at the breasts of mother Church, draw with tender throats the food of innocence, practise stretching out their arms in holy work, strive to make firm their trembling steps in the course of faith. Are those who are already nourished to be so abandoned that they are not ruled by a father's care, a father's hand, a father's choice? and not so fortified by a mother's counsel, a mother's faith, that by a prudence not human only, but divine as well, they may perceive and seize beforehand the things that save? So Jacob, very timid by his own counsel, very bold by his mother's counsel, went in to seize his father's blessing beforehand, more mystical than deceitful (Gen 27); for he did not lie in calling himself the firstborn, because he is first whom heavenly grace begets, not mortal nature; under the skins of the goats he prefigured us, who, that we may die to sin, at the urging of mother Church put on the garment of the mortified body, and are fragrant with the smell of the field through the continual fruits and the abundance of our confessions, until, playing a saving trick on the blindness of Israel, we seize the paternal blessing beforehand by the whole secret of faith, as the Apostle says: Blindness has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should enter, in part (Rom 11:25).

Sermo LXXIV.

De Resurrectione Christi

Aliquantulum nos tacere, fratres charissimi, et vigiliarum labor fecit, et coegit jejunii lassitudo; et ideo hodie reddimus de Dominica Resurrectione sermonem, in qua si divinum est quod ex Virgine nascitur Christus, quantum divinius est Christus a mortuis quod resurgit? Quod ergo divinum est, humano non accipiatur auditu.

Vespere, inquit, sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati. Vespera sabbati, hoc nescit dies saeculi, hoc non habet mundi usus. Vesper finit, non inchoat diem; tenebrescit vesper, non lucescit; non in auroram vertitur, quia lucis ortum ignorat. Vespera mater noctis parturit diem; mutat ordinem, dum agnoscit auctorem; radiat de novitate mysterium, anhelat Creatori servire, non tempori.

Vespere, inquit, sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati, venit Maria Magdalene et altera Maria videre sepulcrum. Sero mulier currit ad veniam, quae mature cucurrit ad culpam. Vespere quaerit Christum, quae in matutinis Adam se noverat perdidisse. Venit Maria et altera Maria videre sepulcrum. Quae de paradiso perfidiam sumpserat, festinat fidem sumere de sepulcro; contendit rapere de morte vitam, quae de vita rapuerat mortem. Venit Maria. Hoc nomen matris est Christi, venit ergo mater in nomine, venit mulier, ut fieret mater viventium, quae facta fuerat morientium mater, ut quod scriptum est impleretur: Hoc est mater omnium viventium. Venit Maria et altera Maria. Non dixit venerunt, sed venit; sub uno nomine venerunt duae mysterio, non casu. Venit Maria et altera Maria. Venit ipsa sed altera, altera sed ipsa, ut mulier mutaretur vita, non nomine; virtute, non sexu; et fieret resurrectionis nuntia, quae internuntia et lapsus exstiterat et ruinae. Venit Maria videre sepulcrum. Ut quam deceperat arboris visus, visus repararet sepulcri; et quam prostraverat illecebrosus aspectus, aspectus salutaris attolleret.

Sermon LXXIV.

On the Resurrection of Christ

The labour of the vigils made us, and the weariness of the fast compelled us, to keep silent for a little while, dearest brothers; and therefore today we pay the sermon on the Lord's Resurrection, in which, if it is divine that Christ is born of the Virgin, how much more divine is it that Christ rises from the dead? What is divine, then, must not be received with human hearing.

On the evening, he says, of the sabbath, which dawns into the first day of the week (Matt 28:1). The evening of the sabbath: the day of the world does not know this, the custom of the world does not have it. Evening ends the day, it does not begin it; evening grows dark, it does not dawn; it is not turned into daybreak, because it does not know the rising of light. Evening, the mother of night, gives birth to the day; it changes its order in acknowledging its author; it makes a mystery shine out of newness; it longs to serve the Creator, not time.

On the evening, he says, of the sabbath, which dawns into the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. Late the woman runs to pardon, who ran early to fault. In the evening she seeks Christ, she who knew that in the morning hours she had lost Adam. Mary came, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. She who had taken unbelief from paradise hastens to take faith from the sepulchre; she strives to snatch life from death, she who had snatched death from life. Mary came. This name is the name of Christ's mother; so a mother came in the name, a woman came, that she might become the mother of the living who had become the mother of the dying, that what is written might be fulfilled: This is the mother of all the living (Gen 3:20). Mary came, and the other Mary. He did not say "they came", but "she came"; under one name two came, by mystery, not by chance. Mary came, and the other Mary. She came, the same yet another, another yet the same, that the woman might be changed in life, not in name; in virtue, not in sex; and might become the messenger of the resurrection who had been the go-between of the fall and of ruin. Mary came to see the sepulchre. So that her whom the sight of the tree had deceived, the sight of the sepulchre might restore; and her whom an enticing look had laid low, a saving look might raise up.

Ecce, inquit, terraemotus factus est magnus, angelus enim Domini descendit de coelo. Tremuit terra, non quia angelus descendit de coelo, sed quia ab inferis Dominator ascendit. Ecce terraemotus factus est magnus. Movetur chaos, dissiliunt ima terrarum, timet terra, montium tremunt pondera, orbis fundamenta quatiuntur, corripitur tartarus, sistuntur inferna: addicitur mors quae in reos tendens incurrit in judicem, dominata servis exarsit in Dominum, saeviens in homines prosilivit in Deum. Merito ergo perit lex tartari, remota sunt inferni jura, potestas mortis ablata est, et in poenam temeritatis suscitavit mortuos cognitoris injuria: denique redduntur corpora, redintegratur homo, vita reparatur, et constat de venia jam totum, quia in auctorem vitae mox est transgressa sententia. Ecce terraemotus factus est magnus. Modo terraemotus magnus: O si tunc vel levis turbo arborem mortiferam dejecisset! O si nebulae fumus illius mulieris tenebrasset aspectum! O si tetra nubes lethalis pomi speciem caligasset! O si manus tangens inconcessa tremuisset! O si peccati diem tenebrasset nox injusta, et lamenta mundi, et incrementa mortis, et Creatoris injuriam tunc tulisset! Sed vitiis semper serviunt blandimenta, lenocinantur dulcia delictis, virtutibus vero austera et fortia sunt amica.

Angelus enim Domini descendit de coelo. Resurgente Christo, morte pereunte, terrenis redditur coeleste commercium; et mulieri cui fuerat cum diabolo lethale consilium, cum angelo colloquium fit vitale. Angelus enim Domini descendit de coelo, et revolvit lapidem. Non dixit volvit, sed revolvit lapidem, qui advolutus probavit mortem, et revolutus exstitit resurrectionis assertor. Beatus lapis qui Christum et revelare meruit et velare; beatus qui non minus corda aperit quam sepulcrum; beatus qui dat resurrectionis fidem, fideique resurrectionem, qui divinam carnem resurrexisse testatur. Mutatur hic ordo rerum; mortem, non mortuum, devorat hic sepulcrum, domus mortis mansio fit vitalis; uteri nova forma mortuum concipit, parit vivum.

Behold, he says, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven (Matt 28:2). The earth trembled, not because an angel came down from heaven, but because the Ruler came up from the underworld. Behold, there was a great earthquake. The chasm is moved, the depths of the earth leap apart, the earth fears, the masses of the mountains tremble, the foundations of the world are shaken, Tartarus is arrested, the underworld is summoned to court: death is sentenced, which, aiming at the guilty, ran into the judge; having lorded it over servants, it blazed out against the Lord; raging against men, it leapt out against God. Rightly, then, the law of Tartarus perishes, the rights of hell are removed, the power of death is taken away, and as the penalty of its rashness the wrong done to the examining judge raised the dead: indeed, bodies are given back, man is made whole again, life is restored, and all is now settled by pardon, because the sentence at once passed over onto the author of life. Behold, there was a great earthquake. Now a great earthquake: O if only then even a light whirlwind had thrown down the deadly tree! O if only the smoke of a cloud had darkened that woman's sight! O if only a black cloud had dimmed the look of the lethal fruit! O if only the hand that touched forbidden things had trembled! O if only an unjust night had darkened the day of sin, and had carried off then the laments of the world, and the increase of death, and the wrong done to the Creator! But blandishments always serve the vices, sweet things pander to offences, while austere and strong things are friends to the virtues.

For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. As Christ rises, as death perishes, heavenly commerce is given back to the earthly; and the woman who had held a deadly counsel with the devil holds a life-giving converse with an angel. For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and rolled back the stone. He did not say "rolled", but "rolled back" the stone, which, rolled against the tomb, proved the death, and, rolled back, stood forth as the upholder of the resurrection. Blessed the stone, which merited both to reveal Christ and to veil him; blessed, which opens hearts no less than the sepulchre; blessed, which gives faith in the resurrection, and resurrection to faith, which testifies that the divine flesh has risen. Here the order of things is changed; this sepulchre devours death, not a dead man; the house of death becomes a dwelling of life; the new form of a womb conceives a dead man, gives birth to a living one.

Angelus enim Domini descendit de coelo, et accedens revolvit lapidem, et sedebat super eum. Et angelo quae causa sedendi erat, cui nulla inerat lassitudo? Sed sedebat ut fidei doctor, ut resurrectionis magister: sedebat super petram, ut soliditas sedis daret credentibus firmitatem. Ponebat angelus super petram fundamenta fidei, super quam Christus erat Ecclesiam fundaturus, qui dixit: Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam. Erat, inquit, aspectus ejus sicut fulgur, et vestimenta ejus sicut nix. Ad angeli gloriam non sufficit fulgor, ad coelestem naturam quid fecit vestimentum? Sed splendore tali referebat speciem nostrae resurrectionis et formam, quia resurgentes per Christum, Christi mutantur in gloriam.

Prae timore autem ejus exterriti sunt custodes, et facti sunt veluti mortui. Miseri quos tunc percutit pavor mortis, quando securitas redditur vitae: sed crudelitatis ministri, perfidiae exsecutores alienae, fiduciam sumere quomodo poterant de supernis? Obsidebant sepulcrum, resurrectioni januas obstruebant, et ne qua posset intrare vita, mors perire, servabant: merito eos angeli perculit et prostravit adventus. Misera, et sibi semper inimica mortalitas dolet se mori, ne resurgere possit, oppugnat: sepulcrum aperire convenerat, et ad resurgendum quidquid erat facilitatis afferre ut esset miraculum de facto, de exemplo spes, de reverso res, credulitas de vivendo. Grandis dementia est hoc, hominem nolle credere, quod sibi desiderat evenire.

Hoc de his custodibus hodie dixisse sufficiat: quid autem nostra fides habeat, ne hodie longum sit, post dicemus, praestante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and coming up rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And what cause for sitting had the angel, in whom there was no weariness? But he sat as a teacher of faith, as a master of the resurrection: he sat upon the rock, so that the solidity of the seat might give firmness to believers. The angel was laying upon the rock the foundations of faith, upon which Christ was to found the Church, he who said: You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church (Matt 16:18). His appearance, he says, was like lightning, and his clothing like snow (Matt 28:3). Does brightness not suffice for the angel's glory? what did clothing do for a heavenly nature? But by such splendour he showed forth the appearance and the form of our resurrection, because those who rise through Christ are changed into the glory of Christ.

But for fear of him the guards were terrified, and became as dead men (Matt 28:4). Wretched men, whom the fright of death strikes at the very time when the security of life is given back: but the ministers of cruelty, the executors of another's unbelief, how could they take confidence from things above? They were besieging the sepulchre, they were barring the doors against the resurrection, and they kept watch lest life should be able to enter in any way, and death perish: rightly did the angel's coming strike them and lay them low. Wretched mortality, always its own enemy, grieves that it dies, and fights so that it may not be able to rise: it ought to have opened the sepulchre, and brought every facility it had for the rising, so that there might be a miracle from the deed, hope from the example, the thing itself from the one who returned, belief from his living. It is great madness, this: that a man should be unwilling to believe what he desires to happen to himself.

Let it suffice to have said this much today about these guards: what our faith holds, so that today may not run long, we shall say later, by the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo LXXV.

De eadem

Quantum a vobis ego, a me tantum peregrinatus est sermo: sed orate, fratres, ut sicut me vobis Deus reddidit, ita mihi dignetur reddere et redonare sermonem. Audistis evangelistam dicentem: Vespera, inquit, sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati. Quid hic intelligit humanus sensus? Quid hic humana sapit sapientia? Vespera quae lucescit. Vesper finit, non inchoat diem, nec lucem parturit, sed tenebras; sed hic elementorum auctor elementorum vices mutat, ut in resurrectione Domini totum divinum sentias, nil humanum. Denique resurgente Christo fidelibus lucescit vesper, dies infidelibus tenebrescit; discipulis nox mutatur in diem, Judaeis dies vertitur et mutatur in noctem. Ab hora, inquit, sexta, tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram usque ad horam nonam. Ut ipsa quae tota est meridiana claritas obscuraretur, et illud quod scriptum est impleretur: Occidet illi sol meridie; occidet illis, id est, Judaeis; nostris autem: Nox sicut dies illuminabitur. Quia vesper, qui in profundam semper caliginem vergit, totam tunc Christi tetendit et erexit in lucem, ac splendore toto tota mortalium pectora ab inferis Christo resurgente complevit. Vespera sabbati. Quia illuminatur per Christum sabbatum, non deletur. Non enim venit solvere legem, sed adimplere. Illuminatur, ut in die dominico luceat, clarescat in Ecclesia, quod in synagoga Judaeis obscurantibus fuscabatur.

Venit Maria Magdalena et altera Maria videre sepulcrum. Praecedunt apostolos ad ministerium feminae, quae sexu viros, quae ordine discipulos sequuntur: sed non hinc faciunt apostolos segniores, quae non foeminarum formas, sed Ecclesiarum typum deferunt Dominicum ad sepulcrum: Maria, et Maria, sic altera, ut ipsa: ipsa ut altera: altera ipsa Maria, Maria mater Christi: unum nomen duas geminatur in feminas, quia hic Ecclesia ex duobus populis veniens, una figuratur ex duobus populis, id est, ex gentibus et Judaeis, quia primi novissimi et novissimi primi.

Sermon LXXV.

On the same

As far as I have travelled from you, so far has speech travelled from me: but pray, brothers, that as God has given me back to you, so he may deign to give back and restore speech to me. You have heard the Evangelist saying: On the evening, he says, of the sabbath, which dawns into the first day of the week (Matt 28:1). What does human sense understand here? What does human wisdom savour here? Evening, which dawns. Evening ends the day, it does not begin it, nor does it give birth to light, but to darkness; but here the author of the elements changes the courses of the elements, so that in the Lord's resurrection you may perceive all divine, nothing human. Indeed, as Christ rises, evening dawns for the faithful, the day grows dark for the faithless; for the disciples night is changed into day, for the Jews day is turned and changed into night. From the sixth hour, he says, darkness came over the whole earth until the ninth hour (Matt 27:45). So that the very brightness of noon, which is entire, might be darkened, and what is written might be fulfilled: The sun will set for him at noon (Amos 8:9); it will set for them, that is, for the Jews; but for ours: Night will be lit up like the day (Ps 139:12). For the evening, which always sinks into deep darkness, then stretched itself and rose up into the whole light of Christ, and with its whole splendour filled all the hearts of mortals as Christ rose from the underworld. The evening of the sabbath. Because the sabbath is lit up through Christ, not destroyed. For he did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfil it (Matt 5:17). It is lit up so that it may shine on Sunday, so that what was obscured in the Synagogue, as the Jews darkened it, may grow bright in the Church.

Mary Magdalene came, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. The women go before the apostles to the service, they who follow men in sex, the disciples in order: but they do not on that account make the apostles more sluggish, for they bring to the Lord's sepulchre not the shapes of women, but the type of the churches: Mary, and Mary, the other so as to be the same: the same as the other: the other the same Mary, Mary the mother of Christ: one name is doubled into two women, because here the Church coming from two peoples is figured as one from two peoples, that is, from the Gentiles and the Jews, because the first are last and the last first (Matt 20:16).

Venit Maria ad sepulcrum, venit ad resurrectionis uterum, venit ad vitae partum, ut iterum Christus ex sepulcro nasceretur fidei, qui carnis fuerat generatus ex ventre; et eum quem clausa virginitas vitam protulerat ad praesentem, clausum sepulcrum ad vitam redderet sempiternam. Divinitatis insigne est clausam virginem reliquisse post partum, de sepulcro clauso exisse cum corpore est divinitatis insigne. Maria et Maria venerunt, ut viderent sepulcrum; vides quia venerunt, non ut Dominum cernerent, sed sepulcrum; nec quaerebant cum mortuis jam viventem, quae Dominum jam resurrexisse credebant.

Angelus enim Domini descendit de coelo, et accedens revolvit lapidem. Revolvit lapidem, non ut egredienti Domino praeberet aditum, sed ut Dominum mundo jam resurrexisse monstraret; conservis ad credendum daret fidem, non ad resurgendum Domino praestaret auxilium. Revolvit lapidem. Revolvitur ad fidem, qui ad perfidiam fuerat advolutus. Revolvit lapidem, ut idem esset vitae titulus, qui acceperat mortis tenere custodem.

Orate, fratres, ut nunc descendat angelus, et totam duritiem nostri cordis evolvat, aperiat sensuum clausa nostrorum, resurrexisse Christum nostris etiam testetur ex mentibus, quia sicut illud cor coelum est, in quo vivit et regnat Christus, ita illud pectus sepulcrum, in quo Christus adhuc habetur mortuus et sepultus. Christi mors sicut fuisse, ita pertransisse credatur: Christus homo passus, mortuus et sepultus fuit; est, vivit, regnat, manet, permanet Deus. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Etsi novimus Christum secundum carnem, sed jam nunc non novimus. Et: Quod mortuus est peccato, semel mortuus est, quod autem vivit, vivit Deo; hoc est, vivit Deus.

Et accedens revolvit lapidem, et sedebat super eum. Sedebat ad docendam resurrectionem, non ad lassitudinem sublevandam. Coelestis natura ignorat lassitudinem, nescit laborem: sed factus est lapis vas angelicae sessionis, doctrinae coelestis cathedra, schola vitae, quia Judaeis ad mortis januam, ad cineris servitium, ad triste silentium fuerat constitutus. Erat, inquit, aspectus ejus sicut fulgur, vestimenta autem ejus sicut nix. Vultus claritas a vestium candore separatur, et facies fulguri, nivi vestis angeli comparatur, quia fulgur de coelo, nix de terra. Audi prophetam dicentem: Laudate Dominum de terra, ignis, grando, nix. In facie ergo angeli claritas coelestis servatur naturae; in veste vero figuratur gratia communionis humanae, et temperatur species angeli colloquentis, ut carnales oculi, et vestium ferant placidam claritatem, et ex fulgore vultus nuntium sui tremerent, et revererentur auctoris.

Mary comes to the sepulchre, she comes to the womb of the resurrection, she comes to the birth of life, that Christ might be born again to faith from the sepulchre, he who had been begotten from the womb of the flesh; and that him whom closed virginity had brought forth to the present life, a closed sepulchre might give back to life everlasting. It is a mark of divinity to have left the Virgin closed after the birth; to have come out from the closed sepulchre with a body is a mark of divinity. Mary and Mary came to see the sepulchre; you see that they came, not to behold the Lord, but the sepulchre; nor were they seeking among the dead one already living, they who believed that the Lord had already risen.

For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and coming up rolled back the stone (Matt 28:2). He rolled back the stone, not to offer a way out to the Lord as he came forth, but to show the world that the Lord had already risen; to give his fellow servants faith for believing, not to lend the Lord help for rising. He rolled back the stone. It is rolled back for faith, the stone that had been rolled up for unbelief. He rolled back the stone, so that the same stone which had received the office of keeping guard for death might be the title of life.

Pray, brothers, that now the angel may come down, and roll away the whole hardness of our heart, open the closed places of our senses, testify from our minds too that Christ has risen, because, as that heart is heaven in which Christ lives and reigns, so that breast is a sepulchre in which Christ is still held dead and buried. Let the death of Christ be believed to have passed away, as it is believed to have been: Christ the man suffered, died and was buried; he is, he lives, he reigns, he remains, he endures, God. Hear the Apostle saying: Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know him (2 Cor 5:16). And: In that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he lives, he lives to God (Rom 6:10); that is, he lives, God.

And coming up he rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. He sat to teach the resurrection, not to relieve weariness. A heavenly nature does not know weariness, knows no toil: but the stone became the vessel of an angel's sitting, the chair of heavenly doctrine, the school of life, because it had been set up by the Jews as the door of death, for the service of the ashes, for a sad silence. His appearance, he says, was like lightning, but his clothing like snow (Matt 28:3). The brightness of the face is set apart from the whiteness of the clothes, and the face is compared to lightning, the angel's garment to snow, because lightning is from heaven, snow from the earth. Hear the Prophet saying: Praise the Lord from the earth, fire, hail, snow (Ps 148:7–8). In the angel's face, then, the brightness of the heavenly nature is kept; but in the garment the grace of human communion is figured, and the appearance of the angel who speaks with them is tempered, so that carnal eyes might both bear the gentle brightness of the clothes, and from the lightning of the face tremble at the messenger of their author, and revere him.

Prae timore autem ejus exterriti sunt custodes. Quare territi? Quia custodiebant crudelitatis studio, non pietatis obsequio. Ruit, destruitur, stare non potest, quem conscientia destituit, impellit reatus. Hinc est quod angelus percellit impios, pios alloquitur et solatur. Nolite timere vos. Hoc est, illi timeant: quaerentes non timeant, timeant persequentes. Nolite timere vos, scio enim quod Jesum qui crucifixus est, quaeritis, non est hic. Hoc est: Ego veni ut instruerem vos, non ut illum eximerem, qui et rerum factor est, et est sui suscitator.

Non est hic, surrexit enim sicut dixit. Vides quia venit angelus, ut factis assereret servus, quae Dominus praedixerat verbis; et doceret moriendi et vivendi penes illum potestatem fuisse, qui ante suam mortem praedixerat resurrectionem: nam utique qui scire potuit, potuit et cavere, sed quia vincere potuit, declinare contempsit, quia resurgentis gloria sepelivit morientis injuriam. De sequentibus, fratres, sequenti sermone tractabimus, quia protrahere nos et dilatare sermonem adhuc recens itineris prohibuit lassitudo.

But for fear of him the guards were terrified (Matt 28:4). Why terrified? Because they were keeping guard with a zeal of cruelty, not with the homage of piety. He falls, he is destroyed, he cannot stand, whom conscience abandons and guilt drives on. Hence it is that the angel strikes down the ungodly, and speaks to the godly and consoles them. As for you, do not be afraid. That is, let those men be afraid: those who seek, let them not be afraid; let those who persecute be afraid. As for you, do not be afraid, for I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified; he is not here (Matt 28:5–6). That is: "I have come to instruct you, not to bring him out, who is both the Maker of things and the one who raises himself."

He is not here, for he has risen as he said. You see that the angel came so that the servant might assert by deeds what the Lord had foretold in words; and might teach that the power of dying and of living lay with him who before his death had foretold his resurrection: for surely he who could know it could also have avoided it, but because he could conquer, he disdained to turn aside, because the glory of the one rising buried the wrong done to the one dying. Of what follows, brothers, we shall treat in the following sermon, because the weariness of the journey, still fresh, has kept us from drawing out and lengthening the sermon.

Sermo LXXVI.

De eadem, deque secunda Christi manifestatione facta mulieribus a monumento regredientibus

Superiori sermone Mariam et alteram Mariam Ecclesiae ex duobus populis venientis figuram diximus habuisse: hoc ex sequentibus hodie cupimus approbare, si modo nobis vester benignus praebeatur auditus. Respondens, inquit, angelus dixit: Nolite timere vos, scio enim quia Jesum qui crucifixus est, quaeritis: non est hic, surrexit enim sicut dixit. Venite, videte locum ubi positus erat Dominus. Angelus praedicat nomen, crucem dicit, loquitur passionem, fatetur mortem, sed resurrectionem mox, mox Dominum confitetur. Et si angelus post tanta supplicia, post sepulcrum agnoscit Dominum, suam loquitur servitutem, et injuriam passionis totam transisse sentit resurrectionis in gloriam; cur homo aut minoratum Deum in carne judicat, aut in passione existimat ejus defecisse virtutem, aut consumptam dominationem credit servitute? Digne itaque dicit crucifixum, ostendit locum ubi positus erat Dominus, ne alter et non ipse idem resurrexisse crederetur ex mortuis. Et si Dominus eadem redit in carne, vulnera reportat, ipsa clavorum foramina resumit, et ipsa facit testimonia sui corporis, suae resurrectionis indicia, quae suae fuerant contumelia passionis; quare homo se in alia putat, aut in sua non putat carne rediturum, aut carnem servus forte dedignatur suam, cum nostram Dominus non mutarit? Acquiesce homo ipsum te futurum esse in carne tua, ne tu ipse non sis, si in carne surrexeris aliena.

Adjecit angelus, dicens: Et cito euntes dicite discipulis, quia surrexit, et praecedet vos in Galilaeam, ibi eum videbitis. Angelus hic non feminas, sed Ecclesiam duabus in feminis mittit, unam mittit, ut eam mittendo sic longe lateque diffundat. Angelus hic sponsam mittit ad sponsum; denique euntibus illis occurrit Dominus, et salutat eas, dicens: Avete. Occurrit, et non potestate terret, sed praevenit charitatis ardore; non auctoritate turbat, sed salutat lege sponsi; non dominantis jure onerat, sed honorat dilectione consortis: salutat: Avete.

Sermon LXXVI.

On the same, and on the second manifestation of Christ, made to the women returning from the tomb

In the previous sermon we said that Mary and the other Mary bore the figure of the Church coming from two peoples: today we wish to prove this from what follows, if only your kind hearing is granted us. The angel answering, he says, said: Do not be afraid, for I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified: he is not here, for he has risen as he said (Matt 28:5–6). Come, see the place where the Lord had been laid. The angel proclaims the name, speaks of the cross, tells of the Passion, acknowledges the death, but at once the resurrection, at once he confesses the Lord. And if the angel, after such great torments, after the sepulchre, acknowledges the Lord, speaks of his own servitude, and perceives that the whole wrong of the Passion has passed into the glory of the resurrection; why does man either judge God lessened in the flesh, or think that his power failed in the Passion, or believe his lordship consumed by servitude? Fittingly, therefore, he says "crucified", and shows the place where the Lord had been laid, lest another, and not the very same, should be believed to have risen from the dead. And if the Lord returns in the same flesh, brings back the wounds, takes up again the very holes of the nails, and makes testimonies of his body, tokens of his resurrection, of the very things that had been the outrage of his Passion; why does man think that he will return in another flesh, or not think he will return in his own, or does the servant perhaps disdain his own flesh, when the Lord did not change ours? Be content, man, that you yourself will be in your own flesh, lest you yourself should not be, if you rise in another's flesh.

The angel added, saying: And going quickly, tell the disciples that he has risen, and he will go before you into Galilee; there you will see him (Matt 28:7). Here the angel sends not women, but the Church in two women; he sends her as one, so that by sending her he may spread her far and wide. Here the angel sends the bride to the bridegroom; indeed, as they went, the Lord met them, and greeted them, saying: Hail (Matt 28:9). He meets them, and does not terrify them with power, but comes before them with the ardour of charity; he does not alarm them with authority, but greets them by the law of a bridegroom; he does not burden them by the right of one who rules, but honours them with the love of a sharer: he greets them: Hail.

Dixerat discipulis suis ipse: Neminem salutaveritis in via, et quid est quod hic in via tam festivus salutator occurrit? Non exspectat cognosci, intelligi non requirit, non ut interrogetur admittit, sed in salutationem vadit totus, vadit fervens, et suum solvit ipse salutatione mandatum? Fecit, fecit, quia totum vincit, et exsuperat vis amoris: simul, quia Christus in Ecclesia se salutat, quam suam fecit esse, et sic viscera sua, suum sic recepit in corpus, dicente Apostolo: Et ipse est caput corporis Ecclesiae.

In istis vero feminis Ecclesiae figuram manere plenam res ipsa ostendit evidenter, quia discipulos suos Christus de resurrectione nutantes arguit, trepidantes firmat, ostensione lateris, clavorum cavernis, sumptione cibi, vix revocat ad fidem. Unde et merito in fide parvulos sic pueros appellat, dicendo: Pueri, numquid habetis pulmentarium? ipsamque alibi Mariam flentem quasi de mortuo, mulierem vocat, atque tangendi se licentiam negat: istas autem sic perfectas invenit, sic credentes, sic non de sexu trepidantes, sic mysterio currentes, sic Dominum toto fidei ardore requirentes, ut habendum se tradat eis salutatione tali, dicens, Avete. Angelus dixerat: Scio enim quia Jesum crucifixum quaeritis; et requirentibus Christus, avete respondit; alibi autem Mariae nec tangendi datur facultas, hic non solum tangendi, sed et tenendi copia tota conceditur. Illae autem, inquit, accesserunt, et tenuerunt pedes ejus. Istae tenent pedes Christi, quae in Ecclesia typum evangelicae praedicationis tenent, et merentur ex cursu: ac sic fide tangunt sui vestigia salvatoris, ut ad totius deitatis pertingant gloriam, perveniant ad honorem.

Illa autem merito audit: Noli me tangere, quae in terris deflet Dominum, et sic in sepulcro quaerit mortuum, ut eum in coelis nesciat regnare cum Patre. Noli me tangere, id est, obsequi tactu carnis, quem fidei tactu deberes attingere; nec quasi hominem tantum tangere te praesumas in terra, quem Deum nondum sapis in coelestibus adorare; feminea cura desinat, muliebris sollicitudo desistat, virilis credulitas tuam conscendat in mentem, ascensum meum cordis tui capiat latitudo, ut in coelestibus aeterna tactus mei beatitudine perfruaris.

He himself had told his disciples: Greet no one on the way (Luke 10:4); and why is it that here on the way he comes running to meet them as so festive a greeter? He does not wait to be recognised, does not ask to be understood, does not allow himself to be questioned, but goes wholly into the greeting, goes fervent, and himself undoes his own command by the greeting? He did it, he did it, because the force of love conquers and overcomes everything: and at the same time, because Christ greets himself in the Church, which he has made his own, and so has received her as his own inward parts, so into his own body, as the Apostle says: And he is the head of the body of the Church (Col 1:18).

But that the figure of the Church remains complete in these women the matter itself plainly shows, because Christ rebukes his disciples as they waver about the resurrection, strengthens them as they tremble, and by the showing of his side, by the hollows of the nails, by the taking of food, barely calls them back to faith. Hence too he rightly calls those who are little ones in faith lads, saying: Lads, have you anything to eat? (John 21:5) and elsewhere he calls Mary herself, weeping as though for a dead man, "woman", and denies her leave to touch him (John 20:15–17): but these he finds so perfect, so believing, so untroubled by their sex, so running in the mystery, so seeking the Lord with the whole ardour of faith, that he gives himself to them to be held with such a greeting, saying: Hail. The angel had said: For I know that you are seeking Jesus crucified; and to those who sought him Christ answered: Hail; elsewhere, however, Mary is not given even the leave to touch, here not only to touch, but also to hold, full freedom is granted. But they, he says, came up and held his feet (Matt 28:9). These hold the feet of Christ, because they hold in the Church the type of the preaching of the Gospel, and merit it by their running: and so they touch by faith the footprints of their Saviour, that they may reach the glory of the whole Godhead, may come to honour.

But that other woman rightly hears: Do not touch me (John 20:17), she who on earth weeps for the Lord, and so seeks him dead in the sepulchre that she does not know that he reigns in heaven with the Father. Do not touch me, that is, do not do homage with the touch of the flesh to him whom you ought to reach with the touch of faith; and do not presume to touch on earth as only a man him whom you do not yet know how to adore as God in heaven; let a woman's care cease, let womanly solicitude desist, let a manly belief climb into your mind, let the breadth of your heart take in my ascension, so that in heaven you may enjoy the eternal blessedness of my touch.

Juxta illud prophetae: Beatus vir cujus est auxilium abs te, Domine; ascensus in corde ejus disposuit. In terra non tangit Christum, qui fide in coelo non conscendit ad Christum. Quod ergo eadem Maria nunc in fidei vertice constituta, nunc in Ecclesiae sublimata fastigio, et tangit Christum, et tenet toto sanctitatis affectu, nunc imbecillitate carnis et feminea infirmitate dejecta dubitat, et tactum sui non meretur auctoris, non facit quaestionem: si quidem illud de figura est, hoc de sexu; illud est de divina gratia, hoc de humana natura. Quia nos idem ipsi cum divina scimus, Dei munus est; cum humana sapimus, caecamur ex nobis. Sic beatus Petrus Christum, dum Dei Filium confitetur, Patre revelante, cognoscit; cum negat Christum, carnis sentit et patitur caecitatem.

Inter haec Judaei crimina, aut male emunt sua, aut distrahunt pejus aliena, dum peccata taxant pretio, dum pecunia pensant et compensant delicta, dum in sceleribus suis fundunt, quod toto scelere congregaverunt. Sic Judam comparant traditorem Domini sui, et pretio Redemptoris mundi sanguinem pensant; sic aperti sepulcri fidem claudunt sacculo, ut negandae resurrectionis crimen nummis criminum mercarentur. Pecuniam, inquit, copiosam dederunt militibus, dicentes: Dicite quia discipuli ejus venerunt nocte, et furati sunt eum, nobis dormientibus, et si hoc praeses audierit, nos suadebimus ei, et securos vos faciemus. At illi accepta pecunia fecerunt sicut erant edocti; et diffamatum est verbum istud apud Judaeos usque in hodiernum diem. Apud Judaeos, numquid apud Christianos? Judaee, quod tu in Judaea obscurabas auro, fide toto claruit et eluxit in mundo: discipuli receperunt, non furati sunt Christum; tu perfidiam comparasti, sed non furatus es veritatem; Judaee, resurrexit Christus, tu pecuniam perdidisti. Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros. Judaee, Christus vivit, tu et te et tuos posteros occidisti.

According to that word of the Prophet: Blessed is the man whose help is from you, O Lord; he has set ascents in his heart (Ps 84:6). He does not touch Christ on earth who does not climb up to Christ in heaven by faith. That the same Mary, then, now set on the summit of faith, now raised to the pinnacle of the Church, both touches Christ and holds him with the whole affection of holiness, now, cast down by the feebleness of the flesh and by womanly weakness, doubts and does not merit the touch of her author, raises no question: since the one is of the figure, the other of the sex; the one is of divine grace, the other of human nature. For when we, the very same people, know divine things, it is God's gift; when we savour human things, we are blinded of ourselves. So blessed Peter, in confessing the Son of God, knows Christ by the Father's revealing; when he denies Christ, he feels and suffers the blindness of the flesh.

Meanwhile the Jews, as for crimes, either buy their own badly, or sell off others' worse, in putting a price on sins, in weighing and offsetting offences with money, in squandering on their own wickednesses what they gathered with every wickedness. So they buy Judas, the betrayer of his Lord, and weigh with a price the blood of the Redeemer of the world; so they shut up the faith of the opened sepulchre in a purse, that with the coins of crimes they might purchase the crime of denying the resurrection. Money, he says, in plenty they gave to the soldiers, saying: Say that his disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep; and if the governor hears of this, we will persuade him, and make you secure (Matt 28:12–14). And they took the money and did as they had been taught; and this word has been spread abroad among the Jews to this very day (Matt 28:15). Among the Jews: can it be among the Christians? Jew, what you darkened with gold in Judaea has shone out and blazed forth by faith in the whole world: the disciples received Christ, they did not steal him; you bought unbelief, but you did not steal the truth; Jew, Christ has risen, you have lost your money. His blood be upon us and upon our children (Matt 27:25). Jew, Christ lives; you have slain both yourself and your posterity.

Sermo LXXVII.

De Resurrectione Christi

Plenum satis et perfectae devotionis indicium, quod tempore passionis tota creatori suo compatitur creatura. Quae caro terra tremente non tremuit, quae mens non torpuit, quod ingenium non defecit cum sol ante tempus occidit, lux refugit? Denique, fratres, et nostra occubuere tunc viscera, sensus est commortuus, sermo noster suo est consepultus auctori, ut ejus totam nunc suscitaretur ad gloriam. Ista exstitit silentii mei causa, ista debiti mei devota dilatio fuit. Nec mirum, fratres, si provide sermo meus toto affectionis obsequio ad inferos etiam suum secutus est largitorem, quia sine ipso vobis talibus ac tantis creditoribus quod redderem non habebam. Quod si cupidus aliquis et avidus exactor de solutionis tarditate conqueritur, calumniam temporis nobis desistat inferre, quia dives Dominus meus multiplicem fenoris ipsius auget et repensat usuram. Absolvat ergo nos jam evangelicae larga lectionis humanitas, quos officii necessitas hoc tantum deduxit et addixit ad debitum.

Vespera, inquit, sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati. In Domino resurgente non humanae solum conversum est jus naturae, sed etiam ipse creaturae ordo insigniter est mutatus. Vespera sabbati quae lucescit. Ecce Domino resurgente, non tenebrescit vespera, sed lucescit; et fit lucis exordium, quod principium noctis esse consueverat. Vespera sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati. Sicut mortalitas in immortalitatem, corruptio in incorruptionem, caro in Deum, ita tenebrae transferuntur in lucem; ut se nox ipsa taliter non periisse gaudeat, sed esse mutatam, quae obscuritate magis quam tempore sic defecit, quae intervalla, quae vicem suae felicius perdidit servitutis, ut in perpetuae lucis proflueret et erumperet libertatem, dicente propheta: Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis. Vespera quae lucescit in prima sabbati.

Sermon LXXVII.

On the Resurrection of Christ

It is a very full token of perfect devotion, that in the time of the Passion the whole creation suffers with its Creator. What flesh did not tremble when the earth trembled, what mind did not grow numb, what understanding did not fail, when the sun set before its time, when the light fled back? Indeed, brothers, our inmost parts too sank down then, our sense died with him, our speech was buried with its author, that it might now be raised up to his whole glory. This was the cause of my silence, this was the devoted delay of my debt. Nor is it any wonder, brothers, if my speech, with foresight and with the whole homage of affection, followed its giver even into the underworld, because without him I had nothing to pay to you, creditors such and so great. But if some greedy and eager collector complains of the slowness of the payment, let him cease to bring against us a charge about the time, because my Lord, who is rich, increases and repays manifold the interest on the loan itself. Let the generous humanity of the Gospel reading, then, now release us, whom the necessity of our office has brought down and bound over to a debt so great as this.

On the evening, he says, of the sabbath, which dawns into the first day of the week (Matt 28:1). In the Lord's rising not only was the law of human nature turned about, but the very order of creation was also strikingly changed. The evening of the sabbath, which dawns. Behold, as the Lord rises, evening does not grow dark, but dawns; and what had been wont to be the beginning of night becomes the opening of light. The evening of the sabbath, which dawns into the first day of the week. As mortality into immortality, corruption into incorruption, flesh into God, so darkness is transferred into light; so that night itself may rejoice that it has not perished in this way, but has been changed, the night which thus failed by obscurity rather than by time, which more happily lost its intervals, lost the turn of its servitude, so as to flow forth and burst out into the freedom of perpetual light, as the Prophet says: And night is my illumination in my delights (Ps 139:11). Evening, which dawns into the first day of the week.

Sabbatum secundarium se laetatur effectum, quod jussione legis torpebat in otio; et per diei Dominici primatum in divinae virtutis opera mirabiliter excitatur, quod Judaicae observationis inertia a virtute salutari reddebat extraneum, dicente Domino: Non licet sabbatis aegris curam, afflictis opem, caecis visum, vitam mortuis condonare? et interpretando taliter a Deo diem sabbati sanctae legis studiis deputatum, misere tantum ventris addixerat servituti.

Vespera sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati, venit Maria Magdalena, et altera Maria. Una venit nomine, quae nunc alia legitur in diversa persona. Venit Maria et alia Maria. Quo et unam in duabus nominis unitas figuraret, et mutatam feminam diversitas panderet personarum. Venit enim, non venerunt, et cum dicit alia, in utraque eamdem mystico designat affatu, ut aliam venisse ante fidem, aliam post fidem redituram esse monstraret. Venit mulier, sed redit Maria; venit quae intulit mortem, redit quae genuit vitam; venit Adam quae deduxit ad inferos, redit quae ab inferis Christum recepit. Venit Maria et alia Maria. Quare? Videre sepulcrum, et non Christum quaerere: tantum videre sepulcrum, reatus sui titulum, facinoris sui triste documentum, suae cum diabolo praesumptionis, sui quaestus ferale commercium, ut inde recuperaret fidem, unde perpetuum suae praevaricationis sustinebat opprobrium.

Et ecce terraemotus factus est magnus. Si sic terra tremuit cum suorum Dominus resurgit ad veniam; quemadmodum contremiscet, cum noxiorum consurget ad poenam, dicente propheta: Terra tremuit, et quievit, cum resurgeret in judicium Deus? Et quae conservi, hoc est angeli, praesentiam sustinere non valuit, quemadmodum Deum judicem sustinebit? Ecce iisdem lineis, quibus perierat salus humana, reparatur. Prima ad perfidiam mulier, prima procuratur ad fidem; prima currit ad interemptorem mortis, quae prima cucurrerat ad mortis auctorem; prima audit ab angelo, quae prima cum diabolo fuerat collocuta.

Angelus Domini descendit de coelo, et accedens revolvit lapidem, et sedebat super eum. Non ut conferret resurrectionem tali operatione, sed ut proderet, dicente Domino: Potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam. Nobis clausa aperit, nobis occulta reserat, nec auctorem suum, qui jam non erat in sepulcro, educit ad lucem; sed conservos suos, qui positi erant in dubitationis obscuro, ad fidem resurrectionis adducit; ipso attestante, cum dicit: Non est hic, surrexit: Revolvit lapidem, et sedebat super eum. Quare non volvit, sed revolvit?

The sabbath rejoices that it has been made second, the day that by the command of the Law lay numb in idleness; and through the primacy of Sunday it is wonderfully roused to the works of divine power, the sabbath that the inertia of Jewish observance made a stranger to saving power, as the Lord says: Is it not lawful on the sabbath to grant a cure to the sick, help to the afflicted, sight to the blind, life to the dead? (Luke 6:9) and by interpreting it so, that observance had wretchedly bound over to the servitude of the belly alone the day of the sabbath, which God had assigned to the studies of the holy Law.

On the evening of the sabbath, which dawns into the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came, and the other Mary. One came by name, who is now read as another in a different person. Mary came, and another Mary. So that the unity of the name might figure one woman in two, and the diversity of persons might show the woman changed. For it is "she came", not "they came", and when he says "another", he designates the same woman in each by a mystical utterance, to show that one came before faith, another would return after faith. The woman comes, but Mary returns; she comes who brought in death, she returns who bore life; Adam comes, she who led down to the underworld, she returns who received Christ back from the underworld. Mary came, and another Mary. Why? To see the sepulchre, and not to seek Christ: only to see the sepulchre, the title of her guilt, the sad record of her misdeed, the deadly commerce of her presumption with the devil, of her gain, that she might recover faith from the place where she bore the perpetual reproach of her transgression.

And behold, there was a great earthquake (Matt 28:2). If the earth trembled so when the Lord of his own rises for pardon, how will it shake when the Lord of the guilty rises for punishment, as the Prophet says: The earth trembled, and was still, when God arose in judgement (Ps 76:9–10)? And the earth, which could not bear the presence of a fellow servant, that is, of an angel, how will it bear God as judge? Behold, human salvation is restored along the same lines by which it had perished. The woman, first to unbelief, is first brought to faith; she runs first to the slayer of death, who had run first to the author of death; she first hears from an angel, who had first spoken with the devil.

An angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and coming up rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. Not to bestow the resurrection by such an operation, but to make it known, as the Lord says: I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again (John 10:18). He opens closed things to us, he unbars hidden things to us, and does not bring out to the light his author, who was no longer in the sepulchre; but he leads his fellow servants, who were set in the darkness of doubt, to faith in the resurrection; he himself bears witness, when he says: He is not here, he has risen (Matt 28:6): He rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. Why did he not roll it, but roll it back?

Ut quem perfidia Pharisaeorum ad offensam voluerat et scandalum, angelus ad fidem revolveret et salutem, dicente propheta: Ecce pono in Sion lapidem offensionis et petram scandali. Revolvitur ergo lapis, ut evolveret mortem, qui vitam clauserat advolutus, dicente Scriptura: Videbitis vitam vestram pendentem coram oculis vestris, et non credetis. Et sedebat super eum. Non lassitudinem recreans, sed sacri et vitalis sepulcri se esse praesidem sic demonstrans; et destructam esse mortem coelestis minister officii, tali sessionis suae declarabat indicio; et esse Deum qui passus est, Deum qui intra nostri corporis est receptus angustias, Deum quem habitu superno sic residens testabatur assertor. Et quid plura, fratres? sedet, quia ab illo tam venerabili sepulcro numquam angelus recedit.

Prae timore autem ejus exterriti sunt custodes, et facti sunt sicut mortui. Quos prosternit terror noxios, ad conscios mox recurrit. Sic, sic innocui cum resurgent, terror et mors injustos et impios possidebit. Erat autem aspectus ejus, sicut fulgur et vestimenta ejus sicut nix. Quid facit vestis, ubi nulla est nuditas? quid indumentum, ubi tegendi necessitas non habetur? Sed angelus, fratres, nostrum habitum, nostram formam, nostram similitudinem, in resurrectione taliter praefigurat, ubi homo ipsa corporis sui claritate restituitur, dicente Domino: Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol in regno patris eorum.

Respondens autem angelus, dixit mulieribus: Nolite timere vos, scio enim quod Jesum, qui crucifixus est, quaeritis. Adhuc crucifixum et mortuum requirebant, quarum fidem saeva passionis procella turbaverat, et tentationis eas ita pondus incurvaverat, ut coeli Dominum adhuc quaererent in sepulcro.

Non est hic. Secundum id quod in loco exstitit; hic est autem, per hoc quod ubique est, et loci capacitate non clauditur. Venite, videte locum ubi positus erat Dominus. Mulieres vocat angelus ad videndum, ut sacri corporis locus mundaret oculos, quos diabolo claudente vetitae arboris macularat aspectus. Ingrediuntur sepulcrum, ut consepultae Domino totam fidei resurgerent in salutem. Si complantati sumus similitudini mortis ejus, simul et resurrectionis erimus.

Euntes dicite discipulis ejus. Revertere ad virum, mulier jam sanata, et suade fidem, quae perfidiam suasisti; refer homini Dominicae resurrectionis indicium, cui ante tentationis et ruinae consilium detulisti.

So that the stone which the unbelief of the Pharisees had rolled for stumbling and for offence, the angel might roll back for faith and salvation, as the prophet says: Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Isa 8:14; 28:16; Rom 9:33). The stone, then, is rolled back, so that it might roll away death, the stone that, rolled up against him, had shut in life, as Scripture says: You will see your life hanging before your eyes, and you will not believe (Deut 28:66). And sat upon it. Not refreshing weariness, but showing thus that he was the guardian of a sacred and life-giving sepulchre; and by such a sign of his sitting, as the minister of a heavenly office, he declared that death had been destroyed; and that he who suffered is God, God who was received within the narrow confines of our body, God to whom he, sitting thus in heavenly dress, bore witness as his upholder. And what more, brothers? He sits, because the angel never withdraws from that so venerable sepulchre.

But for fear of him the guards were terrified, and became like dead men (Matt 28:4). The terror that lays low the guilty at once runs back upon their accomplices. So, so, when the innocent rise, terror and death will possess the unjust and the ungodly. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing like snow (Matt 28:3). What does clothing do where there is no nakedness? what is a garment for where there is no necessity of covering? But the angel, brothers, prefigures thus our garb, our form, our likeness in the resurrection, where man is restored in the very brightness of his body, as the Lord says: Then the just will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt 13:43).

And the angel answering said to the women: Do not be afraid, for I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified (Matt 28:5). They were still seeking him crucified and dead, they whose faith the savage storm of the Passion had troubled, and whom the weight of temptation had so bowed down that they were still seeking the Lord of heaven in a sepulchre.

He is not here (Matt 28:6). According to what stood in a place; but he is here, in that he is everywhere, and is not enclosed by the capacity of a place. Come, see the place where the Lord had been laid. The angel calls the women to see, so that the place of the sacred body might cleanse the eyes which the sight of the forbidden tree had stained, as the devil closed them. They enter the sepulchre, so that, buried with the Lord, they might rise to the whole salvation of faith. If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be together also in that of his resurrection (Rom 6:5).

Going, tell his disciples (Matt 28:7). Return to the man, woman, now healed, and persuade him to faith, you who persuaded him to unbelief; bring to man the token of the Lord's resurrection, you who once brought him the counsel of temptation and ruin.

Sermo LXXVIII.

De septima Christi manifestatione facta discipulis ad mare Tiberiadis

Post illam terris inexpertem, tremendam coelis, inauditam saeculis, inferis non ferendam tempestatem Dominicae passionis, venit ad mare Dominus, et discipulos suos nocturnis in tenebris reperit fluctuantes. Fugiente enim sole quid de splendore lunari? quid de stellis ad noctis potuit solatium remanere? Erat enim una terra et confusa caligo, quod non solum visum corporis, sed ipsum mentis caecabat obtutum: nec sinebat littus fidei, portum salutis petere, vel repetere navigantes.

Mane, inquit evangelista, jam facto, stetit Jesus in littore, non tamen cognoverunt discipuli quia Jesus est. Creatoris injuriam tota fugerat creatura: necem Domini sui mundus evitare contendit, sciens ad totam domum vindictam pertendere, in qua fuerit servorum scelere Dominator occisus. Hinc est quod suis se deserentibus fundamentis terra tremuit, sol ne videret aufugit, dies ne interesset abscessit, petrae, quia non valebant discedere per naturam, novum scinduntur per vulnus, facinus tantum sono, quia voce non poterant accusantes; infernus ubi ad se penetrare ipsum Judicem vidit victus, et ejulans, quos tenebat amisit: hinc est quod redditae corporibus suis animae resurrecturos mortuos, quos mundus putaverat deperiisse, viventibus nuntiarunt. Ergo taliter cum mundi compago tota confuso ordine fluctuaret, et ad primordiales tenebras atque antiquum chaos crederet se auctoris sui morte devolutam, subito resurrectionis suae lumine Dominus diem reducit, et orbem totum pristinum reformat in corpus, ut quem sibi taliter viderat esse compassum, suam secum suscitaret ad gloriam, dicente evangelista: Mane jam facto; id est, transacta noctae Dominicae Passionis, Stetit Jesus in littore. Ut in antiquum terminum revocaret universa, firmaret dubia, jactata compesceret, turbata componeret, et statione sua ipsa fundamenta orbis, quae sic commota fuerant, stabiliret, quo mox mundus ad sui recurreret auctoris obsequium, qui ad sui diffugerat auctoris injuriam.

Sermon LXXVIII.

On the seventh manifestation of Christ, made to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias

After that storm of the Lord's Passion, unknown to the earth, fearful to the heavens, unheard of in the ages, unbearable to the underworld, the Lord came to the sea, and found his disciples tossing in the darkness of night. For when the sun fled, what could remain from the splendour of the moon? what from the stars for the comfort of the night? For the earth was one confused gloom, which blinded not only the sight of the body, but the very gaze of the mind: nor did it allow those sailing to seek or regain the shore of faith, the harbour of salvation.

When it was already morning, says the Evangelist, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus (John 21:4). The whole creation had fled from the wrong done to the Creator: the world strove to escape the slaying of its Lord, knowing that vengeance reaches to the whole house in which the Ruler has been slain by the wickedness of servants. Hence it is that the earth trembled as its foundations deserted it, the sun fled so as not to see, the day withdrew so as not to be present, the rocks, because they could not depart by nature, were split by a new wound, accusing so great a misdeed by a sound, since they could not by a voice; hell, when it saw the Judge himself penetrate to it, overcome and wailing, lost those it held: hence it is that souls given back to their bodies announced to the living that the dead, whom the world had thought perished, would rise. So, when the whole frame of the world was tossing thus in confused order, and believed that it had been rolled back by the death of its author into the primordial darkness and the ancient chaos, suddenly the Lord brings back the day by the light of his resurrection, and reshapes the whole world into its former body, so that the world which he had seen suffer with him so might be raised up with him to his glory, as the Evangelist says: When it was already morning; that is, when the night of the Lord's Passion had passed, Jesus stood on the shore. That he might call back all things to their ancient bound, make firm what wavered, calm what was tossed, set in order what was disturbed, and by his anchorage make stable the very foundations of the world, which had been so shaken, so that the world might at once run back to the homage of its author, the world that had fled away from the wrong done to its author.

Mane autem facto, stetit Jesus in littore. Ut Ecclesiam praecipue, in qua discipuli amaris tunc fluctibus jactabantur, ad fidam fidei suae reduceret stationem: denique quia eos fidei virtute repererat destitutos, et a virili robore invenerat perdejectos, arguit tales pueros nuncupando, cum dicit: Pueri, numquid pulmentarium habetis? Ibi enim erat Petrus, qui negaverat. Thomas, qui dubitaverat; Joannes, qui fugerat; non ergo ut fortissimos milites, sed pueros compellat ut timidos; et quos idoneos necdum deprehendit ad praelium, ut teneros invitat ad mensam, dicendo: Pueri, numquid habetis pulmentarium? Ut humanitas ad gratiam, panis ad fiduciam, pulmentum revocaret ad fidem; corpus enim resurrexisse non crederent, nisi eum toto hominis ordine cernerent manducantem. Hinc est quod petit escas saturitas tota rerum: panis ipse manducat, quia non ille cibum, sed suorum semper esurit charitatem.

Pueri, numquid habetis pulmentarium? Responderunt ei, Non. Et quid habebant, qui Christum jam secum positum non habebant, qui coram stantem Dominum suis adhuc oculis non videbant? Non enim cognoverunt discipuli quod Jesus est. Dicit eis, Mittite in dexteram partem navis rete, et invenietis. Revocat ad dexteram, quos turbo passionis egerat et redegerat ad sinistram. Miserunt, inquit, et non poterant illud trahere a multitudine piscium. Miserant in dexteram, miserant in virilem partem, sed ut pueri adhuc trahere non valebant: senserunt tamen ex ipso pondere, senserunt pisces venisse ad jubentis imperium, non humanae artis incurrisse capturam.

Discipulus autem ille qui diligebatur a Jesu, ait: Dominus est. Primus qui diligitur videt, quia semper amoris oculus acutius intuetur, et semper vivacius qui diligit sentit. Petrus ut audivit. Quae res illam Petri sic tardaverat mentem, ut ab alio audiret Dominum, qui caeteris consueverat nuntiare? Ubi est illud ipsius singulare? Tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi, ubi est? In domo aufugerat Caiphae principis Judaeorum, tardius suum Dominum videbat, qui vocem facile ancillae susurrantis audivit.

But when it was morning, Jesus stood on the shore. That he might bring back above all the Church, in which the disciples were then being tossed by bitter waves, to the safe anchorage of his faith: indeed, because he had found them destitute of the virtue of faith, and had come upon them utterly cast down from manly vigour, he rebukes them by calling them such lads, when he says: Lads, have you anything to eat? (John 21:5) For Peter was there, who had denied. Thomas, who had doubted; John, who had fled; so he addresses them not as the bravest soldiers, but as lads, as fearful; and those whom he does not yet find fit for battle, he invites to table as tender ones, saying: Lads, have you anything to eat? That humanity might call them back to grace, bread to confidence, the dish to faith; for they would not have believed that the body had risen unless they saw him eating in the whole manner of a man. Hence it is that the whole fullness of things asks for food: the bread himself eats, because he hungers not for food, but always for the charity of his own.

Lads, have you anything to eat? They answered him: No (John 21:5). And what did they have, who did not have Christ, already set with them, who did not yet see with their own eyes the Lord standing before them? For the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. He says to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you will find (John 21:6). He calls back to the right those whom the whirlwind of the Passion had driven and forced back to the left. They cast it, he says, and they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. They had cast it to the right, they had cast it on the manly side, but as lads they still could not draw it: yet they felt from the very weight, they felt that the fishes had come at the command of the one who ordered, not fallen into the catch of human skill.

But that disciple whom Jesus loved said: It is the Lord (John 21:7). The one who is loved sees first, because the eye of love always looks more keenly, and he who loves always perceives more vividly. Peter, when he heard. What had so slowed that mind of Peter, that he heard of the Lord from another, he who had been accustomed to announce him to the rest? Where is that singular word of his? You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt 16:16): where is it? It had fled away in the house of Caiaphas, the chief of the Jews; he was slower to see his Lord, who had so easily heard the voice of a whispering maidservant (Matt 26:69–70).

Ut audivit, inquit, quia Dominus est, tunica se praecinxit, erat enim nudus. Mirum! fratres, cum comprehenderetur Dominus, Joannes abjecit sindonem, et Petrus inventus est nudus: quia Joannem texit fuga, Petrum negatio sic nudavit. Mirum, fratres, et vere mirum, quia qui in navi nudatus est, in mare se demergit indutus: quia innocentia numquam nuda est, et reatus semper refugit ad velamen. Denique sicut Adam, ita et nunc Petrus post culpam suam gestit tegere nuditatem, qui fuerant ambo utique ante culpam sancta nuditate vestiti. Tunica se praecinxit, et misit se in mare. Ut mare dilueret quod negatio taliter sordidaverat. Misit se in mare. Ut esset primus in reditu, qui acceperat in ordine principatum. Et tunica se praecinxit. Qui praecingendus erat martyrii passione, dicente Domino: Alius te praecinget, et ducet quo tu non vis.

Alii autem discipuli navigio venerunt, non enim longe erant a terra, sed quasi cubitis ducentis, trahentes rete piscium. Alii navigio perveniunt, et capturam piscium trahunt, ut Ecclesiam saeculi jactatam procellis, et eos quos evangelico reti ad supernam lucem rapiunt, et elevant de profundo, ad Dominum secum fideli labore perducant. Non, inquit, longe erant a terra. Non erant longe a terra viventium, quos praesentium finis proximos esse fecerat jam futuris. Sed quasi cubitis ducentis. Ex Judaeis et gentibus centenarium numerum duplicat, qui duorum vitam salutemque jungit populorum. Reliquam partem lectionis sequenti sermone, Domino juvante, tractabimus.

When he heard, he says, that it was the Lord, he girded his tunic about him, for he was naked (John 21:7). A wonder, brothers! When the Lord was being seized, John threw off the linen cloth, and Peter was found naked: because flight covered John, denial so stripped Peter (Mark 14:51–52). A wonder, brothers, and truly a wonder, that he who was stripped in the ship plunges into the sea clothed: because innocence is never naked, and guilt always flees back to a covering. Indeed, as Adam, so now too Peter after his fault is eager to cover his nakedness, both of whom had surely been clothed before the fault with a holy nakedness. He girded his tunic about him, and cast himself into the sea. That the sea might wash away what denial had so soiled. He cast himself into the sea. That he might be first in returning, who had received the principate in order. And he girded his tunic about him. He who was to be girded by the passion of martyrdom, as the Lord says: Another will gird you, and lead you where you do not wish (John 21:18).

But the other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits off, dragging the net of fishes (John 21:8). The others arrive by boat, and drag the catch of fishes, so that by faithful labour they may bring with them to the Lord the Church tossed by the storms of the world, and those whom they snatch up by the net of the Gospel to the light above and lift from the deep. They were not, he says, far from land. They were not far from the land of the living, those whom the end of things present had already made near to things to come. But about two hundred cubits. From the Jews and the Gentiles he doubles the number of a hundred, he who joins the life and salvation of two peoples. The remaining part of the reading we shall treat in the following sermon, with the Lord's help.

Sermo LXXIX.

De Resurrectione Christi

Quoniam Matthaei et Marci super Dominicam Resurrectionem jam cucurrimus lectiones, modo qui hinc intonuerit Lucas beatissimus exquiramus. Una, inquit, sabbati valde diluculo venerunt ad monumentum mulieres, portantes quae paraverant aromata. Saepe diximus quae circa resurrectionem Christi gesta sunt, gesta esse resurrectionis nostrae in formam: hinc est quod evangelistae sermone plus mystico quam novo factorum Christi seriem proloquuntur. Una, inquit, sabbati. Bene una, quia resurrectionis dies alteram nescit; lucis aeternae mater, noctis tempus ignorat; perpetuus dies perpetuo illucescit; resurgentium lux mori non potest; lux quae noctem delet, nescit exstingui.

Venerunt, inquit, ad monumentum portantes quae paraverant aromata: et invenerunt lapidem revolutum a monumento, et intrantes non invenerunt corpus Domini Jesu. Quid est, quod quae ante de monumento fugerant, nunc audaces redeunt ad sepulcrum: intrepidae pavidum redeunt ad funus, sepulcri tristitiam confidenter invadunt; et non invenientes Dominum, constanter quaerunt, constantius immorantur; nec illud pavescunt, quod monumento nox addita, dum tenebras generat, addit timorem? Fratres, mulier mali causa, peccati auctor, via mortis, sepulcri titulus, inferni janua, lamenti necessitas tota: ob hoc nascuntur lacrymis, mancipantur moeroribus, gemitibus addicuntur, et in lamentis tantum fortes sunt, quantum viribus inveniuntur infirmae: et quantum imparatae sunt ad labores, tantum ad lacrymas sunt paratae: hinc est quod lacrymis arma vincunt, regna fletibus inclinant, lamentis totam fortitudinem virorum frangunt. Non est ergo mirum, si ad lacrymas, ad funus, ad sepulcrum, ad obsequium Dominici corporis feminae ardentiores apostolis hic videntur; ubi mulier prima currit ad lacrymas, quae prima cucurrit ad lapsum; praecedit ad sepulcrum, quae praecessit ad mortem; fit resurrectionis nuntia, quae fuit mortis interpres; et quae viro porrexerat interitus tanti nuntium, viris ipsa porrigit magnae salutis auditum, ut compenset fidei nuntio quod perfidiae ademit auditu.

Sermon LXXIX.

On the Resurrection of Christ

Since we have already run through the readings of Matthew and of Mark on the Lord's Resurrection, let us now search out how the most blessed Luke has thundered on it. On the first day of the week, he says, very early in the morning, the women came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared (Luke 24:1). We have often said that the things done concerning the resurrection of Christ were done after the form of our resurrection: hence it is that the evangelists set forth the series of Christ's deeds in language more mystical than new. On the first, he says, day of the week. Rightly "one", because the day of the resurrection knows no second; the mother of eternal light, it does not know the time of night; a perpetual day dawns perpetually; the light of those who rise cannot die; the light that blots out night does not know how to be extinguished.

They came, he says, to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared: and they found the stone rolled back from the tomb, and going in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:1–3). What does it mean, that those who had earlier fled from the tomb now return boldly to the sepulchre: fearless, they return to the fearful corpse, confidently invade the gloom of the sepulchre; and not finding the Lord, they seek him steadfastly, they linger more steadfastly; nor do they take fright that the night added to the tomb, in breeding darkness, adds fear? Brothers, woman is the cause of evil, the author of sin, the way of death, the title of the sepulchre, the gate of hell, the whole necessity of lament: for this reason they are born to tears, are made over to sorrows, are bound over to groans, and they are as strong in laments as they are found weak in strength: and as unready as they are for labours, so ready are they for tears: hence it is that by tears they overcome arms, by weeping they bow kingdoms, by laments they break the whole fortitude of men. It is no wonder, then, if for tears, for the burial, for the sepulchre, for the homage of the Lord's body, women seem here more ardent than the apostles; where the woman runs first to tears who ran first to the fall; goes before to the sepulchre, who went before to death; becomes the messenger of the resurrection, who was the interpreter of death; and she who had held out to the man the message of so great a destruction herself holds out to men the hearing of a great salvation, that by the message of faith she may make up for what she took away by the hearing of unbelief.

Non est hic praeposterus ordo, sed mysticus; non postponuntur apostoli feminis, sed ad majora servantur; feminae obsequium Christi suscipiunt, apostoli Christi suscipiunt passiones; illae portant aromata, isti flagella; illae intrant sepulcrum, isti carcerem; illae ad obsequium festinant, isti pervolant ad catenas; infundunt illae oleum, isti sanguinem fundunt: mortem stupent illae, suscipiunt hi mortes. Et quid multa? Resident illae domi, ad acies isti tendunt, ut devoti milites probent adversis fidem, virtutem laboribus, injuriis patientiam, periculis mortem, vulneribus tolerantiam, devotionem poenis, viscerum laceratione constantiam. Mulieres ergo ferunt pro Christo lacrymas; apostoli, diabolo superato et victis hostibus, Christo et victoriam referunt, et triumphum.

Verum quod apostoli resurrexisse Dominum mulieribus nuntiantibus, aut non credidisse, aut deliramentum judicasse referuntur, graviter nemo arguat: alte dubitat, qui altius credit; decipi non potest, qui non est facilis auditui; ignavus nimis est, qui post exemplum invenitur incautus; rudis miles ad aciem concurrit, qui causam belli nescit, vim bellatoris ignorat; peritia est, non est segnities, cum sensim miles veteranus incedit. Sic Adam novus cito cecidit, dum cito credidit; et dum facile dat aures ad mulieris auditum, se suosque posteros pessimo addixit inimico: at veteranus Petrus feminam non facile audit, feminis nuntiantibus credit tarde, et ut veteranus deliberat, ne ut puer incurrat. Denique ubi duo ex discipulis, qui post resurrectionem Christum meruerunt itineris habere collegam, reversi, nuntiabant Dominum se vidisse, apostoli quod audiunt non delirium judicant, sed virile: dant aures, ora figunt, aperiunt oculos, corda pandunt, et quae dicuntur sic commendant sensibus, ut post cunctationis aestus sitienter bibant auditum fidei de flumine, quod collegarum lingua fundebat. Sicut ardorem sitis frigida pocula restinguunt et refrigerant, ita mentis auditus laetior fit post moerorem.

Fratres, quis causas capere Dominicae nativitatis potest? Dominicae resurrectionis negotium existimare quis meretur? Ista cogitare, capere, existimare nisi qui ab ipso Deo acceperit, non valebit: quod Creator rerum femineo creatur partu, quod mundi Dominus in servitute videtur humana, quod pastor omnium pastu indiget; reis quod addicitur, qui absolvit universos; quod punitur vita saeculi, quod mortuorum moritur suscitator, quod claudens omnia sepulcro clauditur, quod supernorum Dominus apud inferos invenitur.

Here the order is not inverted, but mystical; the apostles are not set behind the women, but are kept for greater things; the women take on the homage of Christ, the apostles take on the passions of Christ; they carry spices, these scourges; they enter a sepulchre, these a prison; they hasten to homage, these fly to chains; they pour in oil, these pour out blood: they are aghast at death, these take on deaths. And why say more? They stay at home, these march to the battle lines, so that as devoted soldiers they may prove their faith in adversity, their virtue in labours, their patience in wrongs, their death in dangers, their endurance in wounds, their devotion in punishments, their constancy in the tearing of their inward parts. The women, then, bring tears for Christ; the apostles, the devil overcome and the enemies conquered, bring back to Christ both victory and triumph.

But that the apostles are reported either not to have believed the women when they announced that the Lord had risen, or to have judged it raving, let no one gravely reproach: he doubts deeply who believes more deeply; he cannot be deceived who is not easy of hearing; he is very slothful who after an example is found unwary; the raw soldier rushes to the battle line, who does not know the cause of the war and is ignorant of the warrior's force; it is skill, not sluggishness, when the veteran soldier advances slowly. So Adam, new as he was, fell quickly in believing quickly; and in readily giving his ears to the woman's report, he bound over himself and his posterity to the worst enemy: but the veteran Peter does not readily hear a woman, believes the women slowly when they announce, and deliberates like a veteran, lest he rush in like a boy. Indeed, when two of the disciples, who after the resurrection merited to have Christ as the companion of their journey, returned and announced that they had seen the Lord, the apostles judge what they hear to be not raving, but manly: they lend their ears, they fix their faces, they open their eyes, they unfold their hearts, and they so commit to their senses what is said, that after the heat of hesitation they thirstily drink the hearing of faith from the river which the tongue of their colleagues poured out. As cold cups quench and cool the burning of thirst, so the hearing of the mind becomes gladder after grief.

Brothers, who can grasp the causes of the Lord's birth? Who merits to weigh the work of the Lord's resurrection? No one will be able to think these things, to grasp them, to weigh them, unless he has received it from God himself: that the Creator of things is created by a woman's child-bearing, that the Lord of the world is seen in human servitude, that the shepherd of all needs pasture; that he who acquits all is made over to the guilty; that the life of the world is punished, that the raiser of the dead dies, that he who encloses all things is enclosed in a sepulchre, that the Lord of those above is found in the underworld.

Qui ergo ista capere potest, apostolorum cunctationes, trepidationes, timores, fugas, latebras profunde judicans non miratur. Ergo, fratres, quod apostoli dubitant, quod ista tam tarde tanta credulitate suscipiunt, non miremur nos, qui hucusque non credimus, sed oremus ut de his tantum sentire mereamus quantum dederit ille qui divina hominem sentire largitur. Quod remansit de serie lectionis, Deo juvante, proximo sermone perscrutabimur.

Whoever, then, can grasp these things, judging deeply, does not wonder at the hesitations, the tremblings, the fears, the flights, the hiding-places of the apostles. So, brothers, that the apostles doubt, that they receive these things so slowly with so great a belief, let us not wonder, we who up to now do not believe, but let us pray that we may merit to perceive as much about these things as he gives who grants man to perceive divine things. What remains of the course of the reading we shall examine in the next sermon, with God's help.

Sermo LXXX.

De Christi Resurrectione et secunda manifestatione facta mulieribus a monumento regredientibus

Sermone proximo, quia primam partem perstrinximus lectionis, hodie quae sunt in sequentibus audiamus. Respondens, inquit, angelus dixit mulieribus: Nolite timere vos, scio enim quia Jesum, qui crucifixus est, quaeritis, non est hic; surrexit enim sicut dixit; venite, videte locum ubi positus erat Dominus. Putasne Petri, Joannis, discipulorum omnium absentia objurgatur, castigatur ignavia, quod resurgenti Christo mulieres primae solae pervigiles ardenter occurrant; ipsa etiam virilis portio sic notatur, ut ad resurrectionis gloriam muliebris praecurrat infirmitas? Absit, fratres, est istud causa, non casus; mysterium, non eventus; ordo, non culpa: nam mulier hic virum sequitur, non praecedit, ubi vir resurgit in Christo. Sentias ergo Petrum non mulieribus cessisse, sed Christo; non ancillae, sed domino; sacramento, non somno; ordini, non timori: denique jam vir erat in Christo quando ad mulieres angelus venit, ut quantum praecellit Dominus angelum, tantum vir mulierem praecederet in honore.

Nolite timere vos. Quia bonos amor possidet, malos pavor; et impios timor terret, pios solatur affectio. Nolite timere vos. Hoc est dicere: Timeat Judaeus qui tradidit, Pilatus qui addixit, qui illusit miles, quae crucifixit impietas, crudelitas amara pocula quae propinavit, saevitia quae obsedit sepultum, perfidia quae emit mendacium, fidem quae vendidit, inhumanitas quae Dominum suum resurrexisse dolet, non dolet occidisse: vos autem gaudere convenit, non timere, quia resurrexit quem quaerebatis mortuum, vivit quem lugebatis occisum.

Scio enim, quia Jesum, qui crucifixus est, quaeritis. Hoc est, quid quaeritis viventem cum mortuis? vitam quid quaeritis in sepulcro? Ite potius ad occursum viventis: et jam nolite concurrere ad morientis obsequium. Scio quia Jesum, qui crucifixus est, quaeritis: non est hic. Sic dixit angelus, quia aperuit ob hoc sepulcrum, non ut inde exiret Christus, qui ibi jam non erat, sed ut ibi Christum jam non esse monstraret.

Sermon LXXX.

On the Resurrection of Christ and the second manifestation, made to the women returning from the tomb

Since in the last sermon we touched on the first part of the reading, today let us hear what is in what follows. The angel answering, he says, said to the women: As for you, do not be afraid, for I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified; he is not here; for he has risen as he said; come, see the place where the Lord had been laid (Matt 28:5–6). Do you think that the absence of Peter, of John, of all the disciples is being reproached, their sloth chastised, because the women, first, alone, watchful, run ardently to meet the rising Christ; and that the manly portion itself is so marked down that womanly weakness runs ahead to the glory of the resurrection? Far from it, brothers; this is a cause, not chance; a mystery, not a happening; order, not fault: for here the woman follows the man, she does not go before him, where the man rises in Christ. Understand, then, that Peter gave way not to the women, but to Christ; not to the maidservant, but to the lord; to a mystery, not to sleep; to order, not to fear: indeed, the man was already in Christ when the angel came to the women, so that as far as the Lord excels the angel, so far the man might go before the woman in honour.

As for you, do not be afraid. Because love possesses the good, fright the wicked; and fear terrifies the ungodly, affection consoles the godly. As for you, do not be afraid. That is to say: Let the Jew be afraid who betrayed him, Pilate who sentenced him, the soldier who mocked him, the ungodliness that crucified him, the cruelty that offered him bitter cups, the savagery that besieged him in the tomb, the unbelief that bought a lie, that sold faith, the inhumanity that grieves that its Lord has risen, and does not grieve that it killed him: but it is fitting for you to rejoice, not to fear, because he whom you were seeking dead has risen, he lives whom you were mourning as slain.

For I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified. That is: Why do you seek the living among the dead? (Luke 24:5) why do you seek life in a sepulchre? Go rather to meet the one who lives: and no longer run together to the homage of one who is dying. I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified: he is not here. So the angel spoke, because he opened the sepulchre for this purpose, not that Christ might come out from there, who was no longer there, but to show that Christ was no longer there.

Surrexit sicut dixit. Gemina virtus est: et redire a mortuis, et futura praescire. Venite, videte locum ubi positus erat Dominus. Venite, mulieres, venite, videte ubi Adam posuistis vos: ubi sepelistis hominem, ubi virum vestro consilio contrusistis, per quod fecistis pro servis ipsis Dominum sic jacere, et intelligite erga vos tantam magnitudinem veniae, quanta fuit Domino injuriae magnitudo. Venite, videte locum ubi positus erat Dominus. Virtus angelica esse Dominum qui crucifixus est, confitetur: et infirmitas humana discutit, utrum sit Dominus qui resurgit? Christus sic humanas suscepit passiones, ut totum quod divinitatis est, non amittat.

Et euntes cito, dicite discipulis ejus, quia surrexit, et ecce praecedet vos in Galilaeam: ibi eum videbitis. Neque hic mulieribus apostoli postponuntur, sed mulier absolvitur a reatu, dum portat vitae, portat resurrectionis auditum, quae auditum mortis portaverat et ruinae.

Et euntes, inquit, cito de monumento cum timore et gaudio magno. Mulieres intrant sepulcrum, ut fierent sepulturae participes, sociae passionis; exeunt de sepulcro, ut ante fide surgerent quam resurgerent carne. Exeuntes cum timore et gaudio magno. Et ubi est, nolite timere. Quia timor non ablatus est, sed mutatus; timor abscesserat de reatu, sed de servitio manebat; malus timor culpae, bonus reverentiae timor: Adam datum perdiderant, ne perderent ipsum redditum pertimescebant. Cum timore et gaudio magno. Scriptum est: Servite Domino cum timore et exsultate ei cum tremore. Cum timore et gaudio magno. Quia timor Domini sanctus permanet in saeculum saeculi. In sanctitate ergo manet, qui Dei permanet in timore.

Currebant nuntiare discipulis ejus, et ecce occurrit eis Jesus dicens, Avete. Fideliter currentibus occurrit Christus, ut quod fide crediderant, agnoscerent visu: et firmaret praesentia, quas adhuc trepidas habebat auditus. Occurrit eis Jesus, dicens, Avete. Occurrit ut Dominus, salutat ut parens; affectu animat, servat timore; salutat, ut per amorem serviant, non fugiant per timorem. At illae accesserunt, et tenuerunt pedes ejus. Haberi se voluit, qui passus est se teneri. Accesserunt, et tenuerunt pedes ejus. Ut scirent in capite Christi virum esse, se esse in pedibus Christi: et datum sibi virum sequi, non praeire per Christum.

He has risen as he said. Twofold is the power: both to return from the dead, and to foreknow things to come. Come, see the place where the Lord had been laid. Come, women, come, see where you laid Adam: where you buried man, where by your counsel you thrust down the man, by which you made the Lord lie so for the very servants; and understand that the greatness of the pardon towards you is as great as was the greatness of the wrong done to the Lord. Come, see the place where the Lord had been laid. Angelic power confesses that he who was crucified is the Lord: and does human weakness discuss whether he who rises is the Lord? Christ so took up human passions, that all that belongs to divinity he does not lose.

And going quickly, tell his disciples that he has risen, and behold, he will go before you into Galilee: there you will see him (Matt 28:7). Nor here are the apostles set behind the women, but the woman is acquitted of guilt in that she carries the report of life, carries the report of the resurrection, she who had carried the report of death and of ruin.

And going, he says, quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy (Matt 28:8). The women enter the sepulchre, that they might become partakers of the burial, companions of the Passion; they go out of the sepulchre, that they might rise by faith before they rose again in the flesh. Going out with fear and great joy. And where is Do not be afraid? Because fear was not taken away, but changed; fear had departed from guilt, but remained from service; bad is the fear of fault, good the fear of reverence: they had lost Adam when he was given, they were in great fear lest they should lose him when he was given back. With fear and great joy. It is written: Serve the Lord with fear, and exult in him with trembling (Ps 2:11). With fear and great joy. Because the fear of the Lord is holy, it endures for ever and ever (Ps 19:10). He remains in holiness, then, who endures in the fear of God.

They were running to tell his disciples, and behold, Jesus met them, saying: Hail (Matt 28:8–9). Christ meets those who run faithfully, that what they had believed by faith they might recognise by sight: and that by his presence he might make firm those whom hearing still kept trembling. Jesus met them, saying: Hail. He meets them as Lord, he greets them as a parent; he enlivens by affection, he keeps by fear; he greets them, so that they may serve through love, not flee through fear. But they came up and held his feet. He who endured being seized willed to be held. They came up and held his feet. That they might know that the man is in the head of Christ, that they are in the feet of Christ: and that it is given them through Christ to follow the man, not to go before him.

Dicit eis, Nolite timere. Quod dixerat angelus, dicit et Dominus, ut quas firmaverat angelus, Christus redderet firmiores. Sed ite, dicite fratribus meis, ut eant in Galilaeam, ibi me videbunt. Resurgens a mortuis, Christus resumpsit hominem, non reliquit: vocat ergo fratres, quos corporis sui fecit esse germanos; vocat fratres, quos Patris sui adoptavit in filios; vocat fratres, quos benignus haeres sibi praestitit cohaeredes.

Sed resurgente Christo impietas qualiter resurgat audite: Ecce venerunt quidam de custodibus in civitatem, et nuntiaverunt principibus sacerdotum omnia quae facta fuerant. At illi congregati cum senioribus consilio accepto, pecuniam copiosam dederunt militibus dicentes, dicite, quia venerunt nocte discipuli ejus, et furati sunt eum dormientibus nobis. Qui dant pecuniam, non perdenda comparant, sed servanda; Judaei, vendente Juda, emerunt, ut perderent Christum; nunc pecuniam copiosam, ut se legem, templum, patriam perderent, effuderunt. Viri sanguinum, et dolosi, statuunt pretium falsitatis, perfidiae conficiunt instrumentum, commercio crudeli fraudem fidei, veritatis latrocinium nundinantur: corrumpunt milites, ut furtum vocent quod erat resurrectionis arcanum: Venerunt discipuli ejus nocte, et furati sunt eum. Non contenti interfecisse magistrum, quomodo discipulos possent perdere moliuntur, discipulorum crimen esse faciunt virtutem magistri. Venerunt nocte discipuli ejus, et furati sunt eum. Plane amiserunt milites, perdiderunt Judaei; sed discipuli magistrum suum, non furto, sed fide; virtute, non fraude; sanctitate, non crimine; vivum, non mortuum sustulerunt: hinc est, quod in Galilaeam, ut eum possint videre, mittuntur, quia Deus in loco perfidiae non videtur.

Quod autem dixit: Data est mihi omnis potestas in coelo et in terra. Qui ipse in se sibi dederit, hoc declarat, probante Apostolo, cum dicit: Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi. Filius Dei Virginis filio, Deus homini, divinitas carni contulit, quod semper cum Patre possedit, et Spiritu. Et ideo ait: Ite, baptizate omnes gentes in nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus sancti. Ut omnes gentes potestas una, eademque recrearet ad salutem, quas crearat ad vitam. Et ecce, inquit, ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi. Est semper nobiscum, qui cum Patre est semper, et veniet nobis per hoc quod assumpsit ex nobis. Et quid plura, fratres? Quod nascitur, quod patitur, quod resurgit, quod accipit, non est, non est necessitatis suae, nostrae est hoc salutis.

He says to them: Do not be afraid (Matt 28:10). What the angel had said, the Lord says too, so that those whom the angel had made firm Christ might make firmer. But go, tell my brothers to go into Galilee; there they will see me. Rising from the dead, Christ took up again the man, he did not leave him: so he calls them brothers, whom he made kinsmen of his own body; he calls them brothers, whom he adopted as sons of his Father; he calls them brothers, whom as a kindly heir he made his co-heirs.

But hear how, as Christ rises, ungodliness rises: Behold, some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all that had happened (Matt 28:11). And they, assembled with the elders and having taken counsel, gave money in plenty to the soldiers, saying: Say that his disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep (Matt 28:12–13). Those who give money buy things not to be lost, but to be kept; the Jews, as Judas sold, bought in order to lose Christ; now they poured out money in plenty in order to lose themselves, the Law, the temple, their country. Men of blood and of deceit, they fix the price of falsehood, they draw up the deed of unbelief, by a cruel commerce they traffic in the cheating of faith, the robbery of truth: they corrupt the soldiers, so that they call a theft what was the secret of the resurrection: His disciples came by night, and stole him. Not content with having killed the master, they contrive how they might destroy the disciples; they make the power of the master the crime of the disciples. His disciples came by night, and stole him. Plainly the soldiers let him go, the Jews lost him; but the disciples took up their master, not by theft, but by faith; by virtue, not by fraud; by holiness, not by crime; living, not dead: hence it is that they are sent into Galilee, that they may be able to see him, because God is not seen in the place of unbelief.

But as to his saying: All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18). He declares this: that he himself gave it to himself in himself, as the Apostle proves when he says: God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). The Son of God to the Virgin's son, God to man, divinity to the flesh, conferred what he always possessed with the Father, and the Spirit. And therefore he says: Go, baptise all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). That one and the same power might re-create for salvation all the nations which it had created for life. And behold, he says, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt 28:20). He is always with us, who is always with the Father, and he will come to us through that which he assumed from us. And what more, brothers? That he is born, that he suffers, that he rises, that he receives, is not, is not of his own necessity: this is of our salvation.

Sermo LXXXI.

De quinta Christi manifestatione facta discipulis, cum Thomas abesset

Dum rebellis Judaea Creatorem suum debellare contendit, et in auctoris sui necem levat impias manus, terris abstulit pacem, concordiam rerum solvit, elementorum sic foedus rupit, ut mundum totum ad chaos revocaret antiquum: denique diem fugat, noctem invadit, lucem tenebris, coelum rebus aufert, facit tremere terram, miscet mortuos vivis, inferos, superosque confundit, et dissipato ordine in creatoris injuriam pacificum nil penitus, amicum penitus nil reliquit. Hinc est quod reversus ab inferis Christus, ut rebus pacem reddat, exclamat: Pax vobis.

Dum haec loquuntur, inquit, discipuli, Jesus stetit in medio eorum, et dicit eis: Pax vobis. Bene addit vobis, quia jam terra steterat, dies redierat, sol recurrerat, et ordinem suum compago mundi redditum jam tenebat. Discipulis autem manebat adhuc bellum, et collidebat eos acriter fidei perfidiaeque conflictus. Non sic terram, sicut discipulorum cordi turbo concusserat passionis: et ideo animos eorum credulitatis et incredulitatis acies pertinaci dimicatione vastabat: insistebant mentibus eorum cogitationum catervae, et excursibus desperationis ac spei, robusta licet pectora, rumpebantur. Inter miracula innumerosa signorum Christi, et multimoda passionis ejus genera, inter deitatis insignia, et imbecilla carnis, inter mortis damna, et dona vitae, discipulorum sensus, mentesque ferebantur: nunc spiritus eorum tollebatur ad coelum, nunc eorum animae collidebantur in terram; et in intimis eorum tali procella saeviente, portum quietis nullum, nullam stationem pacis poterant invenire. Hoc videns scrutator pectorum Christus, qui jubet ventis, procellis imperat et solo nutu tempestates tranquillitate commutat, mox eos sua pace confirmat, dicens: Pax vobis, ego sum, nolite timere.

Ego sum crucifixus ille, mortuus, sepultus. Ego sum. Per me Deus, per vos homo. Ego sum. Non spiritus in figura carnis, sed ipsa veritas in carne. Ego sum. Ego ex mortuis sum vivus, ex inferis sum supernus. Ego sum, quem mors fugit, inferna tremuerunt: tartarus Deum confessus est, cum pavescit. Nolite timere, Petre, quod negaveris, quod fugeris tu, Joannes, quod deseruistis omnes, quod infidelibus de me totis cogitationibus judicastis, quod adhuc non creditis, me videntes. Nolite timere, ego sum.

Sermon LXXXI.

On the fifth manifestation of Christ, made to the disciples when Thomas was absent

While rebellious Judaea strives to war down its Creator, and raises impious hands to the slaying of its author, it took peace from the lands, loosed the concord of things, so broke the covenant of the elements as to call the whole world back to the ancient chaos: indeed, it puts the day to flight, invades the night, takes away light by darkness, heaven from things, makes the earth tremble, mingles the dead with the living, confounds the underworld and those above, and, the order scattered to the wrong of the Creator, left nothing at all peaceful, nothing at all friendly. Hence it is that Christ, returned from the underworld, to give peace back to things, cries out: Peace be with you (Luke 24:36).

While the disciples, he says, were speaking of these things, Jesus stood in their midst, and says to them: Peace be with you. Rightly he adds "with you", because the earth had already stood still, the day had returned, the sun had run back, and the frame of the world already held its order restored. But for the disciples war still remained, and the conflict of faith and unbelief dashed them fiercely together. The whirlwind of the Passion had not so shaken the earth as the heart of the disciples: and therefore the battle lines of belief and disbelief laid waste their spirits with stubborn fighting: troops of thoughts pressed upon their minds, and by the sallies of despair and of hope their breasts, sturdy though they were, were broken. Amid the countless miracles of Christ's signs, and the manifold kinds of his Passion, amid the marks of the Godhead and the feeblenesses of the flesh, amid the losses of death and the gifts of life, the senses and the minds of the disciples were carried to and fro: now their spirit was lifted to heaven, now their souls were dashed to the earth; and with such a storm raging in their inmost parts, they could find no harbour of rest, no anchorage of peace. Seeing this, Christ, the searcher of hearts, who commands the winds, gives orders to storms, and by a mere nod changes tempests into calm, at once strengthens them with his peace, saying: Peace be with you, it is I, do not be afraid.

"I am that crucified one, dead, buried. It is I. Through me God, through you man. It is I. Not a spirit in the figure of flesh, but truth itself in the flesh. It is I. I from the dead am the living one, from the underworld I am the one above. It is I, whom death fled, at whom the underworld trembled: Tartarus confessed God when it took fright. Do not be afraid, Peter, for having denied; you, John, for having fled; all of you, for having deserted; for having judged of me with thoughts wholly faithless; for still not believing, though you see me. Do not be afraid, it is I.

Qui vos per gratiam vocavi, elegi per veniam, pietate sustinui, charitate portavi, et modo vos sola bonitate suscipio, quia culpas videre nescit Pater cum Filium recipit, suos affectio cum resumit.

Conturbati, inquit, et conterriti existimabant se spiritum videre. Quare? quia clausis ostiis intraverat Dominus. Discipuli ergo consternati moeroris somno, dabant Christo non quod potest divina virtus, sed quod natura recipit humana. Putabant se spiritum videre. Namque spiritus hominis in utero septa transit, penetrat muros, ut clauso corpore intret corpus inclusum: sic anima quando dat vitae finem, a corporis dulci contubernio cum recedit, domorum claustris, mundanis obstaculis non tenetur: substantia coelestis terrenis ergastulis nescit includi, juxta illud: Spiritus nescis unde veniat, aut quo vadat. Discipuli ergo post resurrectionem clausis ostiis Domino ingresso reportasse eum soliditatem corporis non credebant, in imaginem carnis solam rediisse animam suspicantes, ut dormientibus solent corporeae imagines apparere. Existimabant se, inquit, spiritum videre. Ergo, sicut diximus, in discipulis non sedabantur cogitationum bella, sed magis magisque cogitationum bella crescebant, et tumultus mentium ipsis etiam visionibus augebatur; et unde resurrectionis asserebatur fides, inde totius cunctationis scrupulus nascebatur. Quod venerat, erat res; quod clausis ostiis intraverat, fides non erat: non erat fides, sed virtus erat; humanum non erat, sed homo erat, ut esset verum corpus in deitatis potentia, non inanis carnis species in resurrectionis injuriam.

Ergo ad comprimendos ex hoc nascentes conflictus cogitationum, respondit Christus: Quid turbati estis? et cogitationes ascendunt in corda vestra? Bene ascendunt, non descendunt: quia depressae carnis pondere cogitationes humanae ad altum Dei mysterium conantur ascendere, et conatibus in ipsis franguntur, ruunt, deponuntur ad terram, nisi ille juverit, qui donat homini cogitare divina. Quid turbati estis? et cogitationes ascendunt in corda vestra?

Videte manus meas et pedes. Videte, hoc est dicere, Vigilate. Quare? Quia non est somnium quod videtis. Videte manus meas et pedes. Quia gravatis oculis caput adhuc respicere non potestis; videte carnis vulnera, quia Dei opera non videtis, considerate inimicorum titulos, quia Dei adhuc non considerastis insignia, palpate, ut vel manus fidem faciat, quia videns oculus, sic caecatur: oculus non videt, videat tactus; digiti vestri intrent vestigia clavorum, manus vestrae

I who called you by grace, chose you by pardon, bore with you by loving-kindness, carried you by charity, and now welcome you by goodness alone, because a father does not know how to see faults when he receives his son, when affection takes up again its own."

Troubled, he says, and terrified, they thought they saw a spirit (Luke 24:37). Why? because the Lord had entered when the doors were shut. The disciples, then, stunned by the sleep of grief, attributed to Christ not what divine power can do, but what human nature admits. They thought they saw a spirit. For the spirit of a man passes through barriers in the womb, penetrates walls, so that, the body being closed, it enters the body enclosed: so the soul, when it brings life to an end, when it withdraws from the sweet companionship of the body, is not held by the bars of houses, by worldly obstacles: a heavenly substance does not know how to be shut in by earthly prisons, according to that word: The spirit: you do not know where it comes from, or where it goes (John 3:8). So the disciples did not believe that the Lord, having entered after the resurrection with the doors closed, had brought back the solidity of a body, suspecting that the soul alone had returned in the image of flesh, as bodily images are wont to appear to those asleep. They thought, he says, they saw a spirit. So, as we have said, in the disciples the wars of thoughts were not calmed, but the wars of thoughts grew more and more, and the tumult of minds was increased by the very visions; and from the source from which faith in the resurrection was asserted, from there the scruple of all hesitation was born. That he had come was a fact; that he had entered with the doors shut was not faith: it was not faith, but power; it was not human, but he was man; so that there might be a true body in the might of the Godhead, not an empty appearance of flesh, to the wrong of the resurrection.

So, to suppress the conflicts of thoughts arising from this, Christ answered: Why are you troubled? and do thoughts ascend into your hearts? (Luke 24:38) Rightly they ascend, they do not descend: because human thoughts, weighed down by the weight of the flesh, try to ascend to the lofty mystery of God, and in their very efforts are broken, collapse, are set down to the earth, unless he helps who grants man to think divine things. Why are you troubled? and do thoughts ascend into your hearts?

See my hands and feet (Luke 24:39). See: that is to say, "Keep awake". Why? Because what you see is not a dream. See my hands and feet. "Because with heavy eyes you cannot yet look up to the head, see the wounds of the flesh, since you do not see the works of God; consider the titles of the enemies, since you have not yet considered the insignia of God; handle me, so that at least the hand may give faith, since the seeing eye is so blinded: the eye does not see, let touch see; let your fingers enter the prints of the nails,

alta vulneris exquirant, aperite manuum foramina, sulcate latus, renovate vulnera, quia negare non possum discipulis ad fidem, quod inimicis in poenam saevientibus non negavi; palpate, palpate, et usque ad ossa inquisitores ardui pervenite, ut vel ossa carnis astruant veritatem, et me esse ipsum vel vulnera servata testentur. Rogo quare me resurrexisse non creditis, qui innumeros mortuos sub vestris oculis suscitavi? Nisi forte virtus quae aliis adfuit, mihi defuit, juxta illam vocem quae mihi pendenti insultavit in cruce, dicens: Alios salvos fecit, seipsum salvum facere non potest: si rex Israel est, descendat de cruce, et credemus ei. Et quid est majus, excussis clavis descendere de cruce, aut ab inferis calcata morte conscendere? Ecce et meipsum salvum feci, et ruptis inferni vinculis ad superna conscendi, et tamen neque apud vos fidem meae deitatis inveni. Aut forte triduana mors abnegat fidem credendi? Nonne quatriduanum Lazarum jam fetentem vobis coram vocavit ab inferis vox mea, mea jussio revocavit ad vitam? Et si servus quatriduanus surgit, cur triduanus Dominus non resurget?

Adhuc autem illis non credentibus prae gaudio et mirantibus. Votiva gaudia et cum data fuerint, vix creduntur; optata cum perveniant, dant stuporem: hinc est quod apostoli resurrectionem Christi celeriorem quam speraverant admirantur; et quod credunt tardius, non est perfidiae, sed amoris, scrutantes enim taliter fidem non abnegant, sed requirunt; et dum intendunt altius, verum esse quod intuentur exoptant.

Fratres, discipulos ad ista tardos, stupidos ad tanta, non perfidiae timor, sed causae praestitit magnitudo; visa non videre, nescire scita, credita non credere, non incredulitas facit, sed miraculum singulare. Fratres, ad virtutes natura est nimis infans, quae nisi per Deum creverit, capere matura non potest, non valet perfecta sentire. Deus ergo quod per nos non possumus, ipse nos capere per se, et sentire concedat.

let your hands search out the depths of the wound, open the holes of the hands, furrow the side, renew the wounds, because I cannot deny to disciples for faith what I did not deny to enemies raging for punishment; handle me, handle me, and come, as eager searchers, even to the bones, so that at least the bones may maintain the truth of the flesh, and the wounds kept may testify that I am the very one. I ask, why do you not believe that I have risen, I who raised countless dead before your eyes? Unless perhaps the power that was present for others failed me, according to that voice which insulted me as I hung on the cross, saying: He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he is the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him (Matt 27:42). And which is greater: to shake off the nails and come down from the cross, or to trample death and climb up from the underworld? Behold, I have both saved myself, and, the chains of hell broken, climbed up to the heights, and yet not even among you have I found faith in my Godhead. Or does a death of three days perhaps deny the faith of believing? Did not my voice call Lazarus from the underworld, four days dead and already stinking, before your eyes, did not my command call him back to life? And if a servant four days dead rises, why should the Lord three days dead not rise again?"

But while they still did not believe for joy, and were wondering (Luke 24:41). Joys we have prayed for, even when they have been given, are scarcely believed; things longed for, when they arrive, bring astonishment: hence it is that the apostles marvel at a resurrection of Christ swifter than they had hoped; and that they believe more slowly is not of unbelief, but of love; for, searching faith in this way, they do not deny it, but seek it; and while they look more deeply, they long for what they behold to be true.

Brothers, it was not the fear of unbelief, but the greatness of the cause, that made the disciples slow to these things, dazed at things so great; not to see what is seen, not to know what is known, not to believe what is believed, is the work not of disbelief, but of a singular miracle. Brothers, for mighty works our nature is very much an infant: unless it has grown through God, it cannot grasp what is mature, it is not able to perceive what is perfect. May God himself, then, grant that what we cannot through ourselves we may grasp through him, and perceive.

Sermo LXXXII.

De Christi resurrectione, et quarta manifestatione facta duobus euntibus in castellum

Quoniam Matthaeus sanctus jam nobis quae de resurrectione Domini cognoverat salutariter indicavit, hodie quid etiam beatus referat Marcus audiamus. Et cum transisset, inquit, sabbatum, Maria Magdalena, et Maria Jacobi et Salome, emerunt aromata, ut venientes ungerent Jesum. Mulieres hoc loco feminea devotione discurrunt, quae non ut viventi fidem, sed ut mortuo unguenta deferunt ad sepulcrum, et ut sepulto parant moeroris obsequia, non ut resurgenti divinorum gaudia triumphorum. Mortem Christus, ut mors moreretur, accepit; Christus dum occiditur, illud quod omnes occidebat occidit, sepulcrum Christus infernum patefacturus intravit. Soluta ergo lege tartari, et inferni carcere destructo, et ipso mortis imperio perempto, jam Christus non est ungendus ut mortuus, sed adorandus ut victor. Mulieres pernoctant, vigilant, insomnes agunt, obscura penetrant erumpentis aurorae: unde etiam lucem dubiam non minus cordis videntur sustinere quam corporis.

Et valde mane, inquit, una sabbatorum, veniunt ad monumentum orto jam sole. Si valde mane, quomodo orto jam sole? Sic nescit evangelista quid dicat? Evangelista quid dicat scit, sed quid audiat, qui non didicerit nescit, non est erroris ista relatio, veritatis est: nec lapsum patitur sermonis humani, sed rei gestae coelitus aperit veritatem. Dixerat: Ab hora sexta, usque ad horam nonam tenebrae factae sunt; ergo sol qui praeter horam ut Domino compateretur abscesserat, claritate cum resurgeret Dominus ante tempus occurrit: et qui ut suo commoreretur auctori, ipsam meridianam suam mortificaverat claritatem, ut consurgeret auctori suo, evictis tenebris, antelucanus erupit. Valde mane. Quia tunc sol ut mane faceret manicavit; et qui ante noctem fugerat, nunc ipse noctem praevenit fugaturus, ut reddat luci nox horas quas terror Dominicae passionis invaserat.

Sermon LXXXII.

On the resurrection of Christ, and the fourth manifestation, made to the two going to the village

Since Saint Matthew has already told us, for our salvation, what he had learned of the Lord's resurrection, today let us hear what blessed Mark also relates. And when the sabbath was past, he says, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Jesus (Mark 16:1). The women in this place hurry about with womanly devotion, they who bring to the sepulchre not faith, as to one living, but ointments, as to one dead, and prepare for him, as for one buried, the homage of grief, not, as for one rising, the joys of divine triumphs. Christ accepted death, that death might die; Christ, in being slain, slew that which slew all; Christ entered the sepulchre to lay open hell. So, the law of Tartarus loosed, the prison of hell destroyed, and the very rule of death slain, Christ is no longer to be anointed as one dead, but to be adored as victor. The women spend the night, keep watch, stay sleepless, penetrate the darkness of the bursting dawn: whence they seem to bear a doubtful light no less of the heart than of the body.

And very early, he says, on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb, the sun having already risen (Mark 16:2). If very early, how the sun having already risen? Does the Evangelist, then, not know what he is saying? The Evangelist knows what he says, but what he hears, he who has not learned does not know; this account is not of error, it is of truth: it does not admit the slip of human speech, but lays open the truth of a thing done from heaven. He had said: From the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness (Mark 15:33); so the sun, which out of its hour had withdrawn to suffer with the Lord, when the Lord was rising ran to meet him with its brightness before its time: and the sun which, to die with its author, had mortified its very noonday brightness, burst forth before dawn, the darkness overcome, to rise with its author. Very early. Because then the sun rose early to make the morning; and it, which earlier had fled ahead of the night, now itself forestalls the night to put it to flight, that the night may give back to the light the hours which the terror of the Lord's Passion had invaded.

Dicebant, inquit, ad invicem: Quis revolvet nobis lapidem ab ostio monumenti? Ab ostio monumenti, an cordis? a sepulcro, an ab oculis? Mulieres, obseratum est pectus, oculi sunt clausi: et ideo patefacti sepulcri gloriam non videtis, oleum non corpori Dominico, sed lucernae cordis vestri, si videre desideratis, infundite, ut luce fidei pateat quod clauditur incredulitatis obscuro. Et respicientes, inquit, viderunt lapidem revolutum, erat quippe magnus valde. Plane magnus, et magnus valde, et plus jam magnus merito quam forma, qui creatoris mundi corpus et claudere et operire suffecit.

Et introeuntes monumentum, viderunt juvenem sedentem a dextris, coopertum stola candida. Introierunt sepulcrum, ut consepultae Christo, Christo consurgerent de sepulcro, et impleretur illud Apostoli: Consepulti estis ei in baptismo, in quo et resurrexistis. Vident juvenem, ut cernerent nostrae resurrectionis aetatem; vident juvenem, quia nescit resurrectio senectutem, neque aetates recipit aeterna perfectio. Homo ubi nescit nasci, mori nescit; et ubi nasci morique nescit, ibi aetatum nec admittit detrimentum, nec indiget incrementis. Vident juvenem sedentem a dextris, quia resurrectio recipit nil sinistrum. Vias, inquit, quae a dextris sunt, novit Dominus. Et, Tunc statuet justos ad dexteram suam. Orate, fratres, ut et nos moriamur vitiis, sepeliamur temporalibus pompis, ut aeternitati resurgamus in Christo, et a dextris positi mereamur audire: Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi.

Coopertum stola candida. Stola ista non ex mortali vellere, sed ex virtute vitali; splendens coelesti lumine, non colore terreno; et clara Creatoris munere, non arte fullonis, dicente Propheta: Amictus lumen sicut vestimentum, et de justis: Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol. Terreni terrenis velati sunt vestimentis; et ideo sicut novitate splendent, ita vetustate sordescunt: coelestes vero amictu coelestis luminis ambiuntur, et a terreno squalore suspensi, nec foedantur vetustate umquam, nec ullis sordibus obscurantur; sed vestes quas semel dederit resurrectio, perpetuo lumine vestiuntur.

They were saying, he says, to one another: Who will roll back the stone for us from the door of the tomb? (Mark 16:3) From the door of the tomb, or of the heart? from the sepulchre, or from the eyes? Women, the breast is bolted, the eyes are closed: and therefore you do not see the glory of the opened sepulchre; pour oil not on the Lord's body, but on the lamp of your heart, if you desire to see, so that by the light of faith what is shut in by the darkness of disbelief may lie open. And looking up, he says, they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great (Mark 16:4). Great indeed, and very great, and now great more in merit than in form, which sufficed both to enclose and to cover the body of the Creator of the world.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe (Mark 16:5). They entered the sepulchre, so that, buried with Christ, they might rise with Christ from the sepulchre, and that word of the Apostle might be fulfilled: You were buried with him in baptism, in which you have also risen (Col 2:12). They see a young man, that they might discern the age of our resurrection; they see a young man, because resurrection knows no old age, nor does eternal perfection admit ages. Where man does not know how to be born, he does not know how to die; and where he does not know how to be born and to die, there he neither admits the loss of ages nor needs their increase. They see a young man sitting on the right side, because the resurrection admits nothing sinister. The ways, he says, that are on the right the Lord knows (Prov 4:27). And: Then he will set the just at his right hand (Matt 25:33). Pray, brothers, that we too may die to vices, be buried to temporal pomps, that we may rise to eternity in Christ, and, set at the right, may merit 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).

Clothed in a white robe. That robe is not from mortal fleece, but from living power; shining with heavenly light, not with earthly colour; and bright by the Creator's gift, not by the fuller's art, as the Prophet says: Clothed with light as with a garment (Ps 104:2), and of the just: Then the just will shine like the sun (Matt 13:43). Earthly beings are veiled in earthly garments; and therefore, as they shine with newness, so they grow dingy with oldness: but heavenly beings are wrapped in a mantle of heavenly light, and, raised above earthly squalor, they are neither ever fouled by oldness nor darkened by any stains; but the garments which resurrection has once given are clothed in perpetual light.

At illae exeuntes de monumento, fugerunt; invaserat enim illas tremor et pavor. Angelus sedet in monumento, de monumento fugiunt mulieres; quia ille de coelesti substantia confidit, turbantur istae de conditione terrena. Sepulcrum qui mori non potest timere nescit; mulieres autem et de facto tremunt, et sepulcrum sicut mortales adhuc mortaliter expavescunt: hinc est quod nemini quidquam dicunt. Et nemini quidquam dixerunt. Quia mulieribus audire, non loqui datum est; discere datum est, non docere, dicente Apostolo: Mulieres in Ecclesia taceant. Denique eadem Maria postea et vadit, et nuntiat, sed jam non feminam, sed Ecclesiam gestans, ut ibi sicut femina taceat, hic ut Ecclesia enuntiet et loquatur.

Post haec, inquit, duobus ex his ambulantibus ostensus est. Quare non tribus, quare non quatuor, sed duobus? Quia duobus populis, id est, gentibus et Judaeis, resurrectionis fides hic praedicanda monstratur: unde, sicut diximus, probatur in duabus feminis, ut in discipulis duobus Ecclesiam unam figurari. Ostensus est in alia effigie. Nemo putet Christum sua resurrectione sui vultus effigiem commutasse, ut qui in vulnere erat ipse, alter esset in vultu; sed mutatur effigies, dum efficitur ex mortali immortalis, et ex corruptibili incorruptibilis, ut hoc sit mutasse substantiam, non mutasse personam, et acquisivisse vultus gloriam, non vultus notitiam perdidisse. Et ne festinus sermo aut fugiat, aut transvolet quaestiones, quod sequitur proximo sermone, Domino revelante, innotescamus.

But they, going out of the tomb, fled; for trembling and fright had seized them (Mark 16:8). The angel sits in the tomb, the women flee from the tomb; because he is confident of his heavenly substance, they are troubled by their earthly condition. He who cannot die does not know how to fear a sepulchre; but the women both tremble at what has happened, and, as mortals still, mortally dread the sepulchre: hence it is that they say nothing to anyone. And they said nothing to anyone (Mark 16:8). Because to women it has been given to hear, not to speak; it has been given to learn, not to teach, as the Apostle says: Let women be silent in the church (1 Cor 14:34). Indeed, the same Mary afterwards both goes and announces, but now carrying not the woman, but the Church, so that there as a woman she may be silent, here as the Church she may proclaim and speak.

After these things, he says, he was shown to two of them as they walked (Mark 16:12). Why not to three, why not to four, but to two? Because here faith in the resurrection is shown to be preached to two peoples, that is, to the Gentiles and the Jews: whence, as we have said, it is proved in the two women, as in the two disciples, that one Church is figured. He was shown in another aspect. Let no one think that Christ by his resurrection changed the aspect of his face, so that he who was himself in the wound was another in the face; but the aspect is changed in that from mortal he is made immortal, and from corruptible incorruptible, so that this is to have changed substance, not to have changed person, and to have acquired the glory of the face, not to have lost the recognition of the face. And lest a hurried sermon should either flee from the questions or fly past them, let us make known in the next sermon what follows, as the Lord reveals it.

Sermo LXXXIII.

De nona Christi manifestatione facta recumbentibus undecim discipulis

Hodie beatus evangelista sic retulit apostolos in ipso crucis tempore mensis deditos inhiantes epulis, conviviis occupatos, Dominicae passionis oblitos. Recumbentibus, inquit, illis undecim, apparuit Dominus. Recumbentibus, ubi? ad sepulcrum Domini, mox ad mensam servi? Haec est servorum fides? haec discipulorum charitas? hic Petri ardor? haec est Joannis de ipso Christi pectore assumpti dilectio? haec est tanto tempore, tantis donis, virtutibus tantis, affectio conquisita, ut in ipso articulo passionis, calente adhuc morte, recenti adhuc funere, exsultantibus inimicis, insultante Judaea tota, discipuli toto tori cultu, totaque discumbentium voluptate pranderent? Moysi mortuo assistunt angeli, agit sepulcri curam Deus ipse: Judaica castra sistuntur, dissimulatur iter, horrida eremi statio duratur, indicitur triginta dierum planctus, et longo lamentationis obsequio servile funus honoratur; et Christus verus unus Dominus, creator rerum, redemptor omnium, post illam tragicam passionem, post mortem, et mortem crucis, triduanus a discipulis lacrymas non meretur? Terra tremit, turbatur tartarus, scinduntur saxa, monumenta dissiliunt, sol fugit, dies sepelitur, fit nox totum, et soli discipuli alto sigmate, choro uno, toto otio, deliciis securi epulantur; et hoc, fratres, reversus ab infernis ipse sic magister invenit: Recumbentibus ergo illis undecim, apparuit Dominus et exprobravit incredulitatem eorum, et duritiam cordis, quia his qui viderant eum resurrexisse non crediderant? Ad haec, Petre fidelis, Petre devotissime, quid dicemus? Recumbentibus illis. Numquid prandentibus? Fratres, hoc non erat discumbere, sed jacere; nec convivii erat chorus ille, doloris erat ille conventus; ibi panis non erat gaudii, sed moeroris; ibi crucis felle, non vini dulcedine pocula miscebantur.

Erant, inquit, clausi propter metum Judaeorum. Si metuentes, si clausi, certe non prandentes; et si non prandentes, non erat domus illa, sed carcer; illud sigma non erat, sed sepulcrum: tunc tota ad discipulos poena Dominicae transierat passionis; et non solum lateribus eorum, sed et cordibus doloris lancea tota figebatur; tunc tristitiae clavis affixae manus eorum, pedesque tenebantur;

Sermon LXXXIII.

On the ninth manifestation of Christ, made to the eleven disciples at table

Today the blessed Evangelist has so related the apostles, at the very time of the cross, as given to their tables, gaping after feasts, busy with banquets, forgetful of the Lord's Passion. As those eleven, he says, were reclining at table, the Lord appeared (Mark 16:14). Reclining at table: where? At the sepulchre of the Lord, and then at once at the table of the servant? Is this the faith of servants? this the charity of disciples? this the ardour of Peter? is this the love of John, taken from the very breast of Christ? is this the affection won over so long a time, by such gifts, by such mighty works, that at the very moment of the Passion, with death still warm, the burial still fresh, the enemies exulting, all Judaea insulting, the disciples should dine with all the finery of the couch and all the pleasure of those at table? When Moses died, angels stood by, God himself took care of his sepulchre: the camp of the Jews halts, the journey is put aside, the dreadful station in the desert is endured, a mourning of thirty days is proclaimed, and a servant's funeral is honoured with a long homage of lamentation (Deut 34:5–8); and does Christ, the true and only Lord, the Creator of things, the redeemer of all, after that tragic Passion, after death, and the death of the cross, three days dead, not merit tears from his disciples? The earth trembles, Tartarus is troubled, the rocks are split, the tombs burst open, the sun flees, the day is buried, all becomes night, and the disciples alone, on a high couch, in one company, at full leisure, feast secure in their delights; and is this, brothers, how the master himself, returned from the underworld, found them: So, as those eleven were reclining at table, the Lord appeared and reproached their disbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen him risen? To this, faithful Peter, most devoted Peter, what shall we say? As they were reclining at table. Can it be, as they dined? Brothers, this was not reclining at table, but lying prostrate; nor was that the company of a banquet, that was a gathering of pain; there the bread was not of joy, but of mourning; there the cups were mixed with the gall of the cross, not with the sweetness of wine.

They were shut in, he says, for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). If fearing, if shut in, surely not dining; and if not dining, that was not a house, but a prison; that was not a couch, but a sepulchre: then the whole penalty of the Lord's Passion had passed over to the disciples; and not only in their sides, but in their hearts too the whole lance of pain was being fixed; then their hands, pierced with the nails of sorrow, and

tunc illis acetum, tunc fel amaritudo Judaica propinabat; tunc illis sol occidit, dies fugit; tunc illorum mentes animasque nox profundissima possidebat; tunc illos in perfidiae scopulos, in naufragium fidei cogitationum tentatio saevissima collidebat; tunc desperatio, quae est inter omnia mala pejor, et in adversis venit semper extrema, funereis illos sternebat sepulcris. Unde, sicut diximus, non discumbentes, non epulantes eos Dominus, sed jacentes invenit, sed sepultos: et ideo exprobrat incredulitatem eorum, quia tantum crediderant desperationi, ut resurrectioni praedictae a Domino nil crederent, a servis non crederent nuntiatae; atque in se nihil fidei relinquerent et salutis, sed saeculo mortui, sepulti mundo, unam domum illam, unum sibi esse omnes crederent jam sepulcrum.

Hinc est quod eos Dominus videns exemisse se mundo, ad mundum revocat, remittit in mundum, dicens: Ite in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium universae creaturae. Venite in mundum, ut qui putatis vos in uno omnes domicilio jam jacere, subjacere vobis omnem mundum repente videatis. Venite in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium universae creaturae. Hoc est dicere, estote vos spes omnibus, qui vobis ipsis desperationis causa fuistis; et incredulitas vestra quanta sit tunc probate, cum videritis auditui vestro mundum credere, qui credere vestro visui non potuistis; et cordis vestri quanta sit duritia tunc scitote, cum senseritis, non viso me, orbe toto gentes ferocissimas me fateri, quem positum vestris in oculis vos negastis. Videbitis in terra divisos, clausos insulis, pendentes rupibus, solitudine remotos, magorum sciolos, Graecorum querulos, Romanorum peritos fidem fide sola quaerere, quam manu, digito, sulcatis meis vulneribus vos quaesistis. Sed quia meae Passionis, meae mortis, meae resurrectionis vos mitto testes, altius vos ista perscrutatos esse concedo, dummodo cunctatio vestra fiat eis qui vobis crediturі sunt firmamentum.

Qui crediderit, inquit, et baptizatus fuerit, salvus erit. Fratres, quod est anima corpori, hoc est baptismati fides: hinc est, quod qui generatur ex fonte, ex fide vivit: Justus, inquit, ex fide vivit. Moritur ergo omnis quicumque fuerit sine fide. Qui crediderit. Quia Trinitas Deus unus est, quia in Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto una est tota aequalitate majestas, quia Deitas Trinitate distincta est, non est unitate confusa, sed Deitate una est, est trina personis; quia Deus Trinitatis nomen est; quia Pater et Filius non censendi sunt ordine, sed aestimandi sunt charitate; quod Spiritus sanctus non est habendus inferior, plus, minusve, non ut exterior habendus est plus, minusve, quia nescit exteriora Divinitas; quia

their feet were held fast; then Jewish bitterness offered them vinegar, then gall; then for them the sun set, the day fled; then the deepest night possessed their minds and souls; then the most savage temptation of thoughts dashed them on the rocks of unbelief, into the shipwreck of faith; then despair, which among all evils is the worst, and in adversity always comes last, laid them low in funereal sepulchres. Hence, as we have said, the Lord found them not reclining at table, not feasting, but lying prostrate, but buried: and therefore he reproaches their disbelief, because they had so believed despair that they believed nothing of the resurrection foretold by the Lord, did not believe it when it was announced by servants; and left in themselves nothing of faith and salvation, but, dead to the age, buried to the world, all believed that one house to be already one sepulchre for them.

Hence it is that the Lord, seeing that they had taken themselves out of the world, calls them back to the world, sends them back into the world, saying: Go into the whole world, preach the Gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15). Come into the world, so that you who think that you all lie now in one abode may suddenly see the whole world lie beneath you. Come into the whole world, preach the Gospel to the whole creation. That is to say: be a hope for all, you who were a cause of despair to yourselves; and prove then how great your disbelief is, when you see the world believe what it hears from you, you who could not believe what you saw; and know then how great the hardness of your heart is, when you perceive that, without having seen me, the fiercest nations in the whole world acknowledge me, whom, set before your eyes, you denied. You will see those divided on the earth, those shut in on islands, those hanging on cliffs, those removed in solitude, the smatterers of the magi, the wranglers of the Greeks, the learned of the Romans, seek by faith alone the faith which you sought with hand, with finger, with my wounds furrowed. But since I send you as witnesses of my Passion, of my death, of my resurrection, I grant that you have searched these things out more deeply, provided that your hesitation becomes a support for those who are going to believe you.

He who believes, he says, and is baptised, will be saved (Mark 16:16). Brothers, what the soul is to the body, faith is to baptism: hence it is that he who is begotten from the font lives by faith: The just man, he says, lives by faith (Rom 1:17). Everyone, then, dies, whoever has been without faith. He who believes. That the Trinity is one God; that in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit there is one majesty in entire equality; that the Godhead is distinct in Trinity, is not confused in unity, but is one in Godhead, is threefold in persons; that God is the name of the Trinity; that the Father and the Son are not to be reckoned by order, but to be valued by charity; that the Holy Spirit is not to be held inferior, more or less; not as outside is he to be held, more or less, because divinity knows nothing outside; that Christ was

Christus sic homo factus est ut quod Deus est permanet, sic est mortuus ut mortuos totis saeculis sua resuscitaret ex morte; quod non sibi resurrexit ille, sed nobis; quod nos coelo intulit, dum se sustulit coelo; quod sedet ad auctoritatem Judicis, non ad requiem fatigati; quod veniet non loco, qui ubique est ad movendum, neque ut mundum suum teneat, qui totum possidet mundum, sed ut mundus jam semper visionem sui mereatur auctoris. Credat homo etiam peccatorum remissionem, quia coelestis regio cum sit latissima, non capit peccatorem; neque de suorum desperet homo magnitudine peccatorum, quia si est, quod Deus donare non potest, omnipotens non est. Credat et carnis resurrectionem, ut sit homo ipse qui resurgit, ut accipiat ipse qui peccat poenam, ipse praemium qui laborat. Credat aeternam vitam, ne locum habeat mors secunda.

Quod autem de humanis corporibus daemones, id est, hostes effugantur antiqui; quod ex uno ore varius effunditur sermo linguarum; quod tacti per Christum nesciunt sua venena serpentes; quod venenata pocula bibentes non valent nocere per Christum; quod morbi corporum fugantur Christum praedicantis ad tactum, est, fratres, summum credulitatis indicium. Signa, inquit, credentes haec sequentur: In nomine meo daemonia ejicient, linguis loquentur novis, serpentes tollent, et si quod mortiferum biberint, non nocebit eis; super aegros manus imponent, et bene habebunt. Homo ergo, esto tibi per fidem medicus, ne cogaris extraneis medicis tuo dispendio subjacere, et chare quod gratis possides comparare. Orate, fratres, ut et in praesenti medicinam semper fidei sentiamus, et in exspectatione Christi positi in adventu ejus securi de nostra conscientia gloriemur.

so made man that he remains what God is, so died as to raise from his own death the dead of all ages; that he rose not for himself, but for us; that he brought us into heaven when he lifted himself up to heaven; that he sits for the authority of a Judge, not for the rest of one wearied; that he will come, not in place, as though to move, he who is everywhere, nor to take hold of his world, he who possesses the whole world, but that the world may now for ever merit the sight of its author. Let man believe also the remission of sins, because the heavenly realm, though it is most broad, does not hold the sinner; nor let man despair because of the greatness of his sins, because if there is anything that God cannot forgive, he is not almighty. Let him believe also the resurrection of the flesh, that the man himself may be the one who rises, that he himself who sins may receive the penalty, he himself who labours the reward. Let him believe eternal life, that the second death may have no place.

But that demons, that is, the ancient enemies, are driven out of human bodies; that from one mouth the varied speech of tongues is poured out; that serpents touched through Christ do not know their own venom; that poisoned cups cannot harm those who drink them, through Christ; that the diseases of bodies are put to flight at the touch of one who preaches Christ, is, brothers, the highest token of belief. These signs, he says, will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will be well (Mark 16:17–18). Man, then, be a physician to yourself through faith, lest you be forced to submit to strange physicians at your own loss, and to buy dearly what you possess freely. Pray, brothers, that even in the present we may always feel the medicine of faith, and, set in the expectation of Christ, may glory at his coming, secure in our conscience.

Sermo LXXXIV.

De quinta Christi manifestatione facta discipulis, cum abesset Thomas, deque sexta, cum adesset

Diebus quadraginta, quibus post resurrectionem suam Dominus diverso modo refertur, et creditur suis apparuisse discipulis, haud immerito sermone ipsis lectionibus, ipsis deservit, et nititur sacramentis, ut Dominicae Passionis moerorem multiplici resurrectionis indicio perfectum vestrae charitatis convertat in gaudium; et qui ante per virtutem suam nostro resurrexit in corpore, nunc etiam per fidem nostris resurgat in cordibus. Et cum esset sero die illa una sabbatorum, et fores essent clausae, ubi erant discipuli congregati propter metum Judaeorum, venit Jesus, et stetit in medio eorum. Cum esset sero: erat plus moerore quam tempore, sero est moeroris et tristitiae nubilo mentibus obscuratis. Sero erat. Quia etsi crepusculum dederat aliquod resurrectionis indicium, necdum tamen eis Dominus refulserat plena sui luminis claritate.

Et cum fores essent clausae, ubi erant discipuli congregati propter metum Judaeorum. Magnitudo terroris et facinoris tanto turbine discipulorum domum simul et corda concluserat, et ita totum luminis abdicarat ingressum, ut magis magisque moerore sensibus occupatis caeca noctis augeretur offusio. Nullae noctis tenebrae caligini moeroris et formidinis comparantur, quia nullo possunt aut consolationis aut consilii lumine temperari. Audi prophetam: Timor et tremor venerunt super me, et operuerunt me tenebrae. Et cum fores essent clausae, ubi erant discipuli congregati propter metum Judaeorum, venit Jesus, et stetit in medio eorum. Rogo, cur dubitatur clausi corporis arcanum, et obseratum tota integritate domicilium virginale absoluta Divinitas potuisse penetrare, quae post resurrectionem corporis nostri crassata mysterio, foribus ingreditur et egreditur clausis, talique indicio se totius creaturae demonstrat auctorem, cui non obsistit, cui deservit ad omnia creatura? Sed si conceptum partumque virginitas excusare suo nescit creatori, si ingressum egressumque clausa janua creatori suo non potest denegare, quemadmodum lapis monumenti, quamvis magnus, quamvis Judaica malitia obsignatus, resurgenti poterat obsistere Salvatori? Sed sicut virginitas et janua claustris suis fidem faciunt deitatis, ita revolutus lapis fidem resurrectionis affirmat, qui nullum revolutus Domino suo praeparavit egressum, sed nocte fidei praestat et admittit ingressum.

Sermon LXXXIV.

On the fifth manifestation of Christ, made to the disciples when Thomas was absent, and on the sixth, when he was present

In the forty days in which, after his resurrection, the Lord is related, and is believed, to have appeared to his disciples in various ways, not without reason does the sermon serve these very readings, these very mysteries, and rest upon them, so that by the manifold token of the resurrection it may turn the grief of the Lord's Passion into the perfect joy of your charity; and that he who before rose in our body by his power may now also rise in our hearts by faith. And when it was evening on that first day of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in their midst (John 20:19). When it was evening: it was so more by grief than by time; it is evening when minds are darkened by the cloud of grief and sadness. It was evening. Because, although the twilight had given some token of the resurrection, the Lord had not yet shone upon them with the full brightness of his light.

And when the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered for fear of the Jews. The greatness of the terror and of the misdeed had shut up by so great a whirlwind both the house and the hearts of the disciples together, and had so barred every entrance of light, that, as their senses were more and more taken up by grief, the blind outpouring of night was increased. No darkness of night can be compared with the gloom of grief and of terror, because they cannot be tempered by any light either of consolation or of counsel. Hear the Prophet: Fear and trembling came upon me, and darkness covered me (Ps 55:6). And when the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in their midst. I ask, why is it doubted that the absolute divinity could penetrate the secret of a closed body, and the virginal abode bolted in entire integrity, the divinity which, after the resurrection, made dense by the mystery of our body, goes in and goes out through closed doors, and by such a token shows itself the author of the whole creation, which does not resist it, which serves it in all things? But if virginity does not know how to refuse conception and childbirth to its Creator, if a closed door cannot deny entrance and exit to its Creator, how could the stone of the tomb, however great, however sealed by Jewish malice, resist the Saviour as he rose? But as virginity and the door by their bars give faith in the Godhead, so the stone rolled back affirms faith in the resurrection, the stone which, rolled back, prepared no exit for its Lord, but by night offers and admits an entrance to faith.

Venit Jesus, et stetit in medio eorum: et dicit eis, Pax vobis. Discipulorum corda fidei et dubitationis, desperationis et spei, defectus et magnanimitatis, continui conflictus praelia sustinebant; talium ergo cogitationum bella inspector praevidens, secretorum pacem primitus se videntibus reddit, ut qui taliter ablatus materiam reliquerat confligendi, redditus oculis eorum causam totam certaminis amputaret. Gavisi sunt, inquit, discipuli viso Domino. Gavisi sunt: quantum post tenebras gratior lux est, serenitas post tempestatis obscura, tantum est acceptius gaudium post moerorem.

Dicit eis iterum, Pax vobis. Quid repetitae pacis largitas ista manifestat, nisi quia quietem, quam sensibus indixerat singulorum, vult etiam inter eos repetitae pacis donatione servari: quos utique non modica habituros esse noverat in posterum de sua cunctatione certamina, dum unus se in fide perstitisse jactaret, dubitasse alter moereret. Ut ergo et arrogantis jactantiam tumoremque resecaret, et ejus qui infirmatus fuerat sanaret et excluderet passiones, causae, non discipulis, quidquid acciderat pius moderator ascribens, imperio pacis suae bella nascitura compressit: ne alter alteri improperaret, quod ipse cui totum debebatur, donaverat in futuro. Petrus negat, Joannes fugit, Thomas dubitat, cuncti relinquunt: quibus nisi pacem suam Christus dedisset, et Petrus qui primus erat omnium putaretur inferior, et sequens indebite forsitan tolleretur adversus primum.

Sicut misit me Pater, sic et ego mitto vos. Missi sermo non minorat Filium, sed declarat, quia non mittentis potestatem hic, sed missi voluit intelligi charitatem, cum dicit: Sicut misit me Pater. Non Dominus, sed Pater. Sic et ego mitto vos. Non auctoritate adhuc jubentis, sed toto diligentis affectu: mitto vos ad tolerantiam famis, ad onera vinculorum, ad squalorem carceris, ad perferenda omnia genera poenarum, ad sublevandum cunctis exsecrabile mortis jugum, quae omnia charitas utique humanis mentibus imperat, non potestas.

Quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt. Dedit potestatem remittendi peccata, qui insufflatione sua infudit ipsum cordibus eorum et largitus est Remissorem. Haec cum dixisset, insufflavit eis, dicens: Accipite Spiritum sanctum: quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis. Ubi sunt qui per homines hominibus remitti peccata non posse praescribunt; qui semel diabolica impulsione collapsos opprimunt, ne se erigant, qui languoribus curam vulneribus crudeli spiritu subtrahunt negantque medicinam; qui peccatoribus redeundi desperationem impie insultant?

Jesus came, and stood in their midst: and says to them: Peace be with you. The hearts of the disciples were enduring the battles of a continual conflict of faith and doubt, of despair and hope, of failing and greatness of soul; foreseeing, then, the wars of such thoughts, the inspector of secrets first gives peace back to those who see him, so that he who, taken away thus, had left matter for conflict, given back to their eyes, might cut off the whole cause of the struggle. The disciples, he says, were glad when they saw the Lord (John 20:20). They were glad: as light is more welcome after darkness, fair weather after the gloom of a storm, so joy is more acceptable after grief.

He says to them again: Peace be with you (John 20:21). What does this bounty of repeated peace show, except that the quiet which he had enjoined on the senses of each, he wishes also to be kept among them by the gift of repeated peace: for he knew that in the future they would have no small struggles about their hesitation, while one boasted that he had stood firm in faith, another grieved that he had doubted. So, to cut back the boasting and the swelling of the arrogant, and to heal and shut out the passions of him who had been weakened, the loving moderator, ascribing whatever had happened to the cause, not to the disciples, checked by the command of his peace the wars about to be born: lest one should reproach another with what he himself, to whom all was owed, had forgiven for the future. Peter denies, John flees, Thomas doubts, all forsake: if Christ had not given them his peace, Peter, who was first of all, would be thought inferior, and the one following might perhaps undeservedly be raised up against the first.

As the Father has sent me, so I also send you. The word "sent" does not lessen the Son, but declares him, because here he wished to be understood not the power of the one who sends, but the charity of the one sent, when he says: As the Father has sent me. Not "the Lord", but "the Father". So I also send you. Not yet with the authority of one who commands, but with the whole affection of one who loves: I send you to the endurance of hunger, to the burdens of chains, to the squalor of prison, to bearing every kind of punishment, to lifting from all the accursed yoke of death; all of which, surely, charity commands of human minds, not power.

Whose sins you remit, they are remitted to them; and whose you retain, they are retained (John 20:23). He gave the power of remitting sins who by his breathing poured into their hearts, and bestowed on them, the Remitter himself. When he had said this, he breathed on them, saying: Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you remit, they are remitted to them (John 20:22–23). Where are those who lay it down that sins cannot be remitted to men through men; who crush those who have once fallen by the devil's impulse, lest they rise; who with cruel spirit withdraw cure from sicknesses and deny medicine to wounds; who impiously taunt sinners with despair of returning?

Remittit Petrus peccata, et toto cum gaudio suscipit poenitentes, atque omnibus sacerdotibus hanc a Deo concessam amplectitur potestatem, qui post negationem nisi poenitentiam repetisset, apostolatus gloriam et vitam pariter perdidisset. Et si Petrus per poenitentiam rediit, quis sine poenitentia subsistit?

Thomas autem cum audisset a condiscipulis suis, quod vidissent Dominum, respondit: Nisi videro fixuram clavorum, et misero manum meam in latus ejus, non credam. Cur Thomas vestigia fidei sic requirit? cur tam pie patientem, tam dure discutit resurgentem? cur ea vulnera, quae manus infixit impia, devota dextera sic resulcat? cur latus, quod impii militis lancea patefecit, refodere manus nititur obsequentis? cur dolores persecutorum furoribus irrogatos, famulantis curiositas renovat immitis? cur tormentis Dominum, cur poenis Deum, cur coelestem medicum probaturus de vulnere discipulus sic requirit? Cecidit potestas diaboli, patefactus est carcer inferni, disrupta sunt vincula mortuorum, moriente Domino sunt evulsa monumenta, et resurgente Domino tota mortis est mutata conditio. Ab ipso Domini sacratissimo sepulcro lapis revolutus est, linteamina resoluta sunt, et resurgentis ad gloriam mors fugit, vita rediit, caro amplius casum nescitura surrexit: et cur tibi soli, Thoma, sola vulnera praesentari ad indicium fidei, nimis callidus explorator, expostulas? quid si ista cum aliis abolita fuissent, quod periculum fidei tuae curiositas ista peperisset? Nulla pietatis monumenta, nulla Dominicae resurrectionis inveniri aestimas potuisse documenta, nisi manibus tuis sulcares Judaica crudelitate exarata sic viscera? Quaesivit, fratres, pietas ista, exegit ista devotio, ut resurrexisse Dominum nec ipsa in posterum dubitaret impietas. Sed Thomas non solum cordis sui, sed omnium hominum curabat incertum: et praedicaturus haec in gentibus, quemadmodum tantae fidei astrueret sacramentum exsecutor strenuus perquirebat. Certe prophetia magis quam cunctatio fuit. Nam cur talia peteret, nisi a Domino ad indicium resurrectionis suae servata sola vulnera prophetali spiritu cognovisset? Denique sponte praestitit caeteris, quod iste tardius implorat.

Peter remits sins, and with all joy receives the penitent, and embraces this power, granted by God to all priests, he who after his denial, had he not sought penance again, would have lost both the glory of the apostolate and his life alike. And if Peter returned through penance, who stands without penance?

But Thomas, when he had heard from his fellow disciples that they had seen the Lord, answered: Unless I see the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe (John 20:24–25). Why does Thomas so search for the traces of faith? why does he so harshly examine, as he rises, one who suffered so lovingly? why does a devoted right hand so furrow again the wounds which an impious hand drove in? why does the hand of one who does homage strive to dig open again the side which the lance of an impious soldier laid open? why does the unkind curiosity of one who serves renew the pains inflicted by the fury of persecutors? why does a disciple, about to test the Lord by torments, God by punishments, the heavenly physician by a wound, so search? The power of the devil fell, the prison of hell was laid open, the chains of the dead were burst, as the Lord died the tombs were torn open, and as the Lord rose the whole condition of death was changed. From the Lord's most holy sepulchre itself the stone was rolled back, the linen cloths were loosed, and as he rose to glory death fled, life returned, flesh that would know no further fall arose: and why, Thomas, you very cunning scout, do you demand that to you alone the wounds alone be presented as a token of faith? what if these had been abolished with the rest, what danger to your faith would that curiosity have brought forth? Do you think that no monuments of loving-kindness, no proofs of the Lord's resurrection, could have been found, unless with your hands you furrowed the inward parts so ploughed by Jewish cruelty? This piety, brothers, sought, this devotion demanded, that not even ungodliness itself should doubt hereafter that the Lord had risen. But Thomas was concerned for the uncertainty not only of his own heart, but of all men: and, being about to preach these things among the nations, he searched out, as a vigorous executor, how he might maintain the mystery of so great a faith. Surely it was prophecy rather than hesitation. For why would he ask such things, unless he had known by a prophetic spirit that the wounds alone had been kept by the Lord as a token of his resurrection? Indeed, of his own accord he granted to the others what this man implores more slowly.

Venit, inquit, Jesus et stetit in medio et ostendit eis manus et latus. Nam qui ingressus fuerat clausis ostiis, et merito a discipulis spiritus esse putabatur, non aliter ipsum se, nisi ipsa corporis passione, ipsis vulnerum notis, taliter dubitantibus poterat approbare. Denique venit et dicit Thomae: Infer digitum tuum huc, et vide manus meas, et affer manum tuam, et mitte in latus meum, et noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis. Ut effundant toto orbe, iterum te aperiente, haec vulnera fidem, quae aquam in lavacrum, sanguinem in omnium pretium jam fuderunt.

Respondit Thomas et dixit: Dominus meus et Deus meus! Veniant et audiant haeretici: et, sicut dixit Dominus, non sint increduli, sed fideles. Ecce non solum corpus humanum, sed per poenalis corporis passiones, Deum et Dominum esse Christum, Thoma vociferante, manifestat. Et vere Deus est, qui vivit ex morte, resurgit ex vulnere: quia talia et tanta cum susceperit, vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Jesus came, he says, and stood in their midst, and showed them his hands and side (John 20:19–20). For he who had entered with the doors shut, and was rightly thought by the disciples to be a spirit, could not prove himself to those so doubting otherwise than by the very passion of the body, by the very marks of the wounds. Indeed, he comes and says to Thomas: Bring your finger here, and see my hands, and bring your hand, and put it into my side, and do not be disbelieving, but faithful (John 20:26–27). So that, as you open them again, these wounds may pour out faith over the whole world, they which have already poured out water for the washing, blood for the price of all.

Thomas answered and said: My Lord and my God! (John 20:28) Let the heretics come and hear: and, as the Lord said, let them not be disbelieving, but faithful. Behold, he shows not only a human body, but, through the passions of a body under penalty, that Christ is God and Lord, as Thomas cries aloud. And truly he is God, who lives out of death, rises out of a wound: because, though he took up such things and so great, he lives and reigns, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo LXXXV.

De ingressu Christi in templum, et Judaeorum admiratione

Etsi aliqua videntur occulta sui profunditate mysterii, nulla tamen est Ecclesiastici cultus infructuosa solemnitas: divina festivitas non pro nostris est voluntatibus consecranda, sed pro suis est percolenda virtutibus. Christianus animus quae sunt traditione Patrum, et ipsis roborata temporibus, nescit in desperationem deducere, sed venerari ea toto desiderat devotionis eloquio.

Jam die festo, ait, mediante, ascendit Dominus in templum. Quod templum? Nescitis quia templum Dei estis, et Spiritus Dei habitat in vobis? Ascendit hodie Dominus nostri pectoris in templum, qui tam clementer nostri corporis descendit in formam: quod autem ascensus Dei fit in humani cordis excelso, beatus propheta asserit, cum decantat: Beatus vir cujus est auxilium abs te, Domine, ascensus tui in corde ejus. Jam die festo mediante, ascendit Dominus in templum. Merito die festo mediante ascendit Dominus in templum, quia nobis erat perfectum diem festum praestaturus e coelo: quidquid sublime, quidquid ad coelum tendens in cordibus habebatur humanis, usque ad infernum Dominicae pondus incurvaverat Passionis. Id namque est quod Christus quadraginta diebus residet et remoratur in terris: et, si dici fas est, Patris occursum differt, Patris suspendit amplexum, donec totum se revelet, et reformet suae ascensionis in gloriam. In cujus ergo templo hic non ascenderit Christus, coelum non ascendet ille cum Christo.

Ascendit in templum, et docebat, et mirabantur Judaei, dicentes: Quomodo hic litteras scit, cum non didicerit? Bene mirantur Christum, quod non didicerit scire, quando ipsi probantur quae didicerint et doceant legis praecepta nescire, dicente Domino: Tu es doctor in Israel, et haec ignoras? Mirantur Judaei jam rebelles, nolunt credere: mirari norunt, detrectant sapere, nescire possunt. Mirabantur Judaei, dicentes: Quomodo hic litteras scit, cum non didicerit?

Sermon LXXXV.

On Christ's entry into the temple, and the wonder of the Jews

Even if some things seem hidden by the depth of their mystery, yet no solemnity of the Church's worship is fruitless: a divine festival is not to be consecrated according to our wishes, but to be celebrated for its own virtues. A Christian mind does not know how to give over to despair the things that come from the tradition of the Fathers and have been strengthened by time itself, but desires to venerate them with the whole eloquence of devotion.

Now when the feast was half over, he says, the Lord went up into the temple (John 7:14). What temple? Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Cor 3:16) Today the Lord went up into the temple of our breast, he who so mercifully came down into the form of our body: and that the ascent of God takes place in the height of the human heart, the blessed Prophet affirms when he sings: Blessed is the man whose help is from you, O Lord; your ascents are in his heart (Ps 84:6). Now when the feast was half over, the Lord went up into the temple. Rightly, when the feast was half over, the Lord went up into the temple, because he was going to grant us the perfect feast day from heaven: whatever was lofty, whatever in human hearts tended towards heaven, the weight of the Lord's Passion had bowed down even to hell. For this is why Christ for forty days stays and lingers on earth: and, if it is lawful to say so, defers meeting the Father, holds back the Father's embrace, until he reveals himself wholly, and reshapes himself into the glory of his ascension. He, then, in whose temple Christ has not gone up here, will not go up to heaven with Christ.

He went up into the temple, and was teaching, and the Jews marvelled, saying: How does this man know letters, when he has not learned? (John 7:14–15) Well do they marvel at Christ, that he knows without having learned, when they themselves are proved not to know the precepts of the Law which they have learned and teach, as the Lord says: You are a teacher in Israel, and you do not know these things? (John 3:10) The Jews, now rebellious, marvel, they will not believe: they know how to marvel, they refuse to understand, they are able not to know. The Jews marvelled, saying: How does this man know letters, when he has not learned?

Quid virgo peperit derogas, non miraris; quod Deus nostro sentit et operatur in corpore abrogas, non fateris; quod caecus videt, surdus audit, claudus currit, surgit mortuus, et tota Christus arcana Dei loquitur, non miraris? hoc solum quod sciat cum non didicerit, hoc miraris? Hic est ipse qui non didicit litteras, sed donavit; hic est qui sensum condidit, per quem litterae finguntur; peritus legis, auctor omnium cur litteras non didicerit, admiratur? Deus utique adest origo cunctorum, qui facit esse quod non fuit; cum non didicerit, docet.

...

That a virgin gave birth you disparage, you do not marvel at it; that God feels and works in our body you discredit, you do not acknowledge it; that the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame run, the dead rise, and Christ speaks all the secrets of God, you do not marvel at it? this alone, that he knows when he has not learned, this you marvel at? This is he who did not learn letters, but gave them; this is he who founded understanding, through whom letters are shaped; does the expert in the Law marvel why the author of all things has not learned letters? God, surely, is present, the origin of all things, who makes to be what was not; though he has not learned, he teaches.

...

Sermo LXXXVI.

De annuntiatione et conceptione D. Joannis Baptistae

Mundanus sermo, ut humano profertur ex sensu, humanis servit et obsecundat ingeniis; divinus vero sermo in potestate dantis est, non dicentis. Audistis quemadmodum Zacharias ille summi sacerdotii splendor dum exorat, obmutuit; tacuit pater vocis, Ego, inquit, vox clamantis in deserto; genitor clamoris obmutuit; et egressus silentium retulit, qui responsa relaturus intraverat. Videtis ergo quia silentium meum, quod antea contristavit vos, venit de antiquo pontificali usu, non de novitatis incursu. Ille ubi sensit linguae suae vincula sui januam clausisse sermonis, imperavit nutu ne quis causas taciturnitatis inquireret, quia coeleste mysterium dicere non didicerat, qui didicerat scire: sed hoc ad tempus, quia sacerdotis differtur sermo, non aufertur; reconditur, non negatur; mysterio suspenditur, non fugatur. Denique Zacharias ipse quod tacet, non est poena, sed signum; non est terrena debilitas, sed coeleste secretum; Deus qui loqui dat, tacere facit; et imperat silentium, qui inserit verbum; dominatur divinus sermo, non servit, quia Deus verbum; et ideo non cum jubetur loquitur, sed cum jubet; non cum exigitur, sed cum donat; non cum cogitur, sed cum venit. Unde, fratres, et cum venit audite, et cum non venit sustinete, et cum se donat accipite, et cum se negat orate; quia hoc doctor accipit, quod meretur auditor.

Ergo tam vobis quam mihi praeteritus suspensus est sermo, ut profluvium mulieris, et verecundi vulneris causam, et illius pudorem sic nostra verecundia celaret, ut quod illa tacuit, etiam nostro silentio clauderetur: sed coeptum revertamur ad verbum. Hierosolymitanus fons abundat, cum impellit angelus, non cum sitit auditor; sic sacerdotis sermo exuberat, quando dat Deus, non cum perorat sacerdos. Hinc est quod Zacharias ipse, qui prophetias loquebatur populis, tacet sibi, ut nos ingrati Deo non simus, si nos semel tacere voluit quibus semper inoffensum largitus est verbum.

Sermon LXXXVI.

On the annunciation and conception of Saint John the Baptist

Worldly speech, since it is uttered from human sense, serves human wits and humours them; but divine speech is in the power of the giver, not of the speaker. You have heard how that Zechariah, the splendour of the high priesthood, fell dumb while he prayed; the father of the voice was silent (I, he says, am the voice of one crying in the desert (John 1:23)); the begetter of the cry fell dumb; and he who had gone in to bring back answers came out and brought back silence. You see, then, that my silence, which saddened you before, came from an ancient usage of pontiffs, not from the onset of anything new. When he felt that the fetters of his tongue had shut the door of his speech, he commanded by a nod that no one should ask the causes of his silence, because he who had learned to know the heavenly mystery had not learned to speak it: but this only for a time, because the priest's speech is put off, not taken away; laid by, not denied; held in suspense by a mystery, not driven out. Indeed, that Zechariah himself is silent is not a penalty but a sign; not an earthly infirmity but a heavenly secret; God, who gives speech, makes silent, and he who puts in the word commands silence; divine speech rules, it does not serve, because the word is God; and therefore it speaks not when it is bidden but when it bids; not when it is demanded but when it bestows; not when it is forced but when it comes. So, brothers, when it comes, listen; when it does not come, be patient; when it gives itself, receive it; and when it withholds itself, pray: for the teacher receives what the hearer deserves.

So, for you as for me, the previous sermon was held in suspense, so that our modesty might hide the woman's flow, and the cause of her shameful wound, and her shame, in such a way that what she kept silent might be closed in our silence too (Matt 9:20): but let us return to the word we had begun. The fountain of Jerusalem overflows when the angel stirs it, not when the hearer is thirsty (John 5:4); so the priest's speech abounds when God gives it, not when the priest declaims. Hence it is that Zechariah himself, who used to speak prophecies to the peoples, is silent for himself, so that we may not be ungrateful to God if he willed us to be silent once, us to whom he has always granted an unhindered word.

Ille non dedignatur a Filio verbum recipere, cui dederat lucem: et vos, filii, orate nobis vocem, ut possitis audire sermonem. Reparate gaudium meum, ut assuetam possitis laetitiam possidere, et implere illud Apostoli: Quis est qui me laetificet, nisi qui contristatur ex me. Veniat ergo, veniat in medium beatus Zacharias, qui nos tacens pio consolatur exemplo: et silentio suo nos de nostro non sinit tristes esse silentio. Veniat, veniat praecursor verbi, sacerdotii speculum, sanctitatis exemplum, evangelistarum princeps, clausula prophetarum.

Fuit, inquit, in diebus Herodis, regis Judaeae, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias. Dum dicitur sub quo rege quis sacerdos sit, temperantur mala: adest semper in moerore solatium, nec consolator deest, cui imminet persecutor. Fuit in diebus Herodis, regis Judaeae, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias. Usque ad Herodem Judaicae genti sacerdotalis sanctitas, senum gravitas, patrum pietas praesidebat: jus erat lex divina, ambitio nil ibi, nil temeritas, praesumptio nil valebat, quia gerebatur totum divino ordine, non humano; sed Herodes veniens ex gente aliena invasit regnum, violavit sacerdotium, confudit ordinem, mutavit mores, sprevit senes, interfecit juvenes, tribus miscuit, delevit stemmata, corrupit genus, tulit quidquid erat et divinae et humanae funditus disciplinae. Sed hoc quid ad Zachariam sanctum? Ne quid ergo tale et in ipso Zacharia crederetur admissum, evangelista cogitur sic referre: Fuit in diebus Herodis, regis Judaeae, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias, de vice Abia. Quia usque ad ipsum ab atavis, avis, patribus, transfusum genus mansit sacerdotii, tempus legis, sacrificii omnis servata est disciplina, eo quod impietatem regis, iniquitatem temporis, ambitionis rabiem, temeritatis furorem, sacerdotis meritum, et vita compesceret.

Sed quid sequatur, audiamus. Factum est ut incensum poneret, ingressum in templum Domini, et omnis multitudo populi orabat foris in hora incensi. In hora incensi, fratres, jam sol Judaico occumbebat in templo, ut in Ecclesia matutinus exsurgeret, et Judaicae doctrinae instabat vesper, quia Evangelii imminebat aurora; legis obscurabatur dies, ut totus reluceret in gratia.

He does not disdain to receive back the word from his son, to whom he had given light: and you, children, pray for a voice for us, so that you may be able to hear the sermon. Restore my joy, so that you may possess your accustomed gladness and fulfil that saying of the Apostle: Who is it that gladdens me, but he who is saddened by me? (2 Cor 2:2) Let him come, then, let blessed Zechariah come into our midst, who, silent, consoles us by a loving example, and by his silence does not let us be sad over our own silence. Let him come, let him come, the forerunner of the word, the mirror of the priesthood, the pattern of holiness, the first of the evangelists, the close of the prophets.

There was, he says, in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zechariah (Luke 1:5). When it is said under what king someone is priest, evils are tempered: there is always consolation at hand in grief, and a consoler is not lacking to the man over whom a persecutor hangs. There was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zechariah. Down to Herod, the holiness of the priests, the gravity of the elders, the piety of the fathers presided over the Jewish nation: right was the divine Law; ambition counted for nothing there, nor rashness, nor presumption, because everything was done by divine ordering, not human; but Herod, coming from a foreign nation, invaded the kingdom, violated the priesthood, confounded the order, changed the customs, spurned the old, killed the young, mingled the tribes, blotted out the lineages, corrupted the race, and swept away utterly whatever there was of discipline both divine and human. But what has this to do with holy Zechariah? So, lest anything of the kind be believed to have been admitted in Zechariah himself too, the Evangelist is compelled to report it thus: There was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah. Because down to him the priestly race, handed down from forefathers, grandfathers and fathers, remained; the age of the Law, the whole discipline of sacrifice, was kept, in that the priest's merit and life held in check the king's impiety, the iniquity of the time, the rage of ambition, the fury of rashness.

But let us hear what follows. It came to pass that he should lay the incense, having entered into the temple of the Lord, and the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense (Luke 1:9–10). At the hour of incense, brothers, the sun was already setting in the Jewish temple, so that it might rise as the morning sun in the Church; and evening was coming on the Jewish teaching, because the dawn of the Gospel was at hand; the day of the Law was darkening, so that it might shine again wholly in grace.

Hinc est quod Zacharias in hora incensi, hoc est, in extremo tempore legalium caeremoniarum prophetali Spiritu incensum infert: offert preces, desideria ingerit, vota commendat, tempus admonet, promissa repetit, exigit Christum. Et omnis multitudo orabat foris. Ut ergo populus, qui stabat foris, intromitteretur exorat; quia quos lex adducit ad januam, gratia intromittit in templum.

Apparuit, inquit, et angelus Domini, stans a dextris altaris incensi; et videns Zacharias, turbatus est et pavor occidit super eum. Ergo non est mirum si turbatur sacerdos, si stupet doctor, si pavescit antistes, si tacet minima cum videt maxima, si deserit verba cum signa conspicit. Et ne solus Zacharias timuisse videatur, audi alium prophetam dicentem: Domine, audivi auditum tuum et timui, consideravi opera tua et expavi, Qui cum Deo loquitur expavescit; unde loquatur angelus ignorat; et quid tenemus?

Unde sacerdos taceat, jam dicamus. Et respondens ei angelus, dixit: Ego sum Gabriel, qui asto ante conspectum Dei, et missus sum ad te haec loqui, et haec tibi evangelizare: et ecce eris tacens, nec poteris loqui. Quae tacentis culpa, si imperat silentium vis jubentis?

Ergo et nos tantilli qui tacuimus, quod tacuimus habetote non oblivionis fuisse, sed temporis; divini negotii, non rationis humanae. Ergo tristes non simus, quia, donante Deo, silentium momenti continuato sermone pensabitur, et modicum quid tristitiae nostrae magnum vertetur in gaudium. Gratias ago Deo meo, qui mihi in amoris lucrum vertit damnum sermonis: nam quanta sit in me charitas vestra, pallor prodidit, testatus est clamor, ostenderunt lacrymae, oratio effusa monstravit.

Hence it is that Zechariah, at the hour of incense, that is, in the last time of the ceremonies of the Law, brings in the incense by the prophetic Spirit: he offers prayers, presses his longings, commends his vows, recalls the time, repeats the promises, demands Christ. And the whole multitude was praying outside. So he prays that the people who stood outside may be brought in; for those whom the Law leads to the door, grace brings into the temple.

There appeared also, he says, an angel of the Lord, standing on the right of the altar of incense; and Zechariah, seeing him, was troubled, and fright fell upon him (Luke 1:11–12). So it is no wonder if the priest is troubled, if the teacher is astounded, if the prelate takes fright, if he is silent on the least things when he sees the greatest, if he forsakes words when he beholds signs. And lest Zechariah alone seem to have feared, hear another prophet saying: Lord, I have heard your report and was afraid; I considered your works and was dismayed (Hab 3:2). He who speaks with God is dismayed; he does not know why the angel speaks; and why do we hold back?

Let us now say why the priest is silent. And the angel answering said to him: I am Gabriel, who stand before the sight of God, and I have been sent to you to speak these things and to bring you the good news of these things: and behold, you shall be silent and shall not be able to speak (Luke 1:19–20). What fault is there in the one who is silent, if the might of the one who commands imposes silence?

So we too, little as we are, who have been silent, take it that our silence was a matter not of forgetfulness but of the time; of a divine business, not of human reckoning. So let us not be sad, because, by God's gift, the silence of a moment will be made good by a continued sermon, and the little of our sadness will be turned into great joy. I give thanks to my God, who has turned for me the loss of speech into a gain of love: for how great your charity towards me is, the pallor betrayed, the outcry testified, the tears showed, the outpoured prayer made plain.

Sermo LXXXVII.

De eisdem

Sicut nimio dolore et infirmitate longa luminibus obscuratis, nisi sensim refusa fuerit, fit inimica lux, certe cum solis sit condita lux oculis, solis sit oculis lux amica, per quos utique reliquo corpori vel traditur, vel negatur; ita diuturno perfidiae morbo contenebratis mentibus, nisi paulatim fuerit fidei claritas restituta, subito ipso fidei splendore magis perfidiae crassescit caligo, longo usu aut producitur, aut obtunditur semper natura. Hinc est quod Dominus tetro infidelitatis nubilo cordibus jam caecatis, ut irradiaret partus virginei sacramentum, desperatae et annosae sterilitatis ante praemisit conceptum: ut qui videbat post senectutem longam arida membra reviviscere, et transacto curriculo jam vitae veteranae in primam reflorescere pubertatem, atque ipsam naturam in occidua aetate ad nascentis servi insignia suscitari, pudicitiae florem, pudoris titulum, castitatis insigne, virginitatis claustra manere post partum crederet posse, auctore ipso ex utero procedente, servari.

Et ut praefationi nostrae ac similitudini, quam de oculis sumpsimus vetusto languore defessis, ipsa de qua loquimur modo adsit et astipuletur auctoritas, ac probet oculos hominum nocti male assuetos, obscuratos, promotos sensim revocatos ad lucem, in Joanne Dominus accendit sui luminis et praemisit lucernam, ut degustato lumine in se jam divini Solis jubar ipsum perferrent, ipsam deitatis caperent claritatem. Juxta illud quod dictum est de Joanne: Ille erat lucerna ardens et lucens: ut ille densas noctis placido lumine aperiret tenebras, ipse noctis nescium diem jam desiderantibus ad lucem perpetem redonaret. Hinc est quod et magos adhuc noctis incolas, et totis obstupescentes oculis, tenuiter micans stella assuefacit ad lucem et gradatim pertrahit ad ipsum fontem luminis et dierum.

Sermon LXXXVII.

On the same

As, when the eyes have been darkened by excessive pain and long illness, light becomes hostile unless it is poured back gradually (although light was surely made for the eyes alone and is friendly to the eyes alone, through which indeed it is either given or denied to the rest of the body), so, when minds have been darkened by the long sickness of unbelief, unless the brightness of faith is restored little by little, the gloom of unbelief only thickens at the sudden splendour of faith itself: by long use nature is always either drawn out or dulled. Hence it is that the Lord, when hearts were already blinded by the black cloud of faithlessness, in order to make the mystery of the virgin birth shine out, first sent before it the conception of a hopeless and aged barrenness: so that whoever saw dry limbs come back to life after a long old age, and, the course of a life grown veteran being run, bloom again into first youth, and nature itself, in its setting age, roused to the insignia of a servant being born, might believe that the flower of purity, the title of modesty, the badge of chastity, the bars of virginity could remain after the birth, could be kept, when the author himself went forth from the womb.

And so that the very authority of which we speak may now be present to our preface and to the likeness we took from eyes worn out by an old sickness, and bear them out, and show the eyes of men, ill accustomed to the night, darkened, led forward gradually, called back to the light: in John the Lord kindled a lamp of his own light and sent it ahead, so that, having tasted the light in him, they might bear the very radiance of the divine Sun, might take in the very brightness of the Godhead. According to what was said of John: He was a lamp, burning and shining (John 5:35): so that the one might open the dense darkness of night with a gentle light, and the other himself give back to those who now longed for the light the day that knows no night, perpetual. Hence it is that a faintly twinkling star accustoms the Magi too, still dwellers in the night and dazzled in all their eyes, to the light, and draws them step by step to the very fountain of light and of days (Matt 2:9).

Et re vera, fratres, congruit, quia totius anni metas temporum quadriga percurrit, ac nobis Domini nostri natalitia festa revocat, et gaudia jam reducit. Nunc de Joannis ortu, de partu sterilis jam loquamur, ut compendio credulitatis isto, ad illud ubi partus est sine partu, ubi creatur auctor ipse procreantis, ubi nascitur ipsa origo generantis, inter hiemales ac nubibus et nebulis dubias luces, lucerna praevia, stella duce pervenire possimus.

Fuit, inquit evangelista, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias, et uxor ejus Elisabeth: et non erat illis filius, eo quod esset Elisabeth sterilis, et processissent ambo in diebus suis. Sterilitas senectute exaggeratur extrema, et a spe generandi totum subducitur quidquid est corporis et naturae; et ne vel cogitatio sobolis ulla remaneret, ad id perventum est temporis et aetatis, quo transacto calore vitali mortale frigus sterilis jam viscera possidebat, ut genitor ipse cognosceret inde jam per hominem non posse nasci hominem, unde abscesserant res humanae. Sic, sic, fratres, duris hominum praecordiis credulitas asseritur, et inseritur fides; et tunc totum divinum creditur, cum fuerit nil humanum.

Sorte exiit ut incensum poneret Zacharias ingressus in templum Domini. Bene dixit ingressus in templum: non ingressus templum: quia ipse erat Dei familiarius templum, portans in sui pectoris puritate tota legis arcana et apponens non tam thuris quam purae supplicationis incensum. Gratius namque Deus in suo, quam in hominis opere requiescit et non tam libenter odoratur Arabicae arboris guttam quam sinceri cordis et pectoris sanctitatem.

Apparuit ei angelus Domini, inquit, stans a dextris altaris incensi. Dicere suffecerat, apparuit ei angelus, quid magnopere a dextris altaris? Ut esse in sanctis angelis auditor intelligas nil sinistrum, dicente Scriptura. Vias quae a dextris sunt novit Dominus. Apparuit ei angelus. Cum jam defecerat totus homo, ut ante Joannes nasceretur ex sterili, quam Christus nasceretur ex Virgine, dictum est de Joanne: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum.

And in truth, brothers, it is fitting, because the four-horse chariot of the times runs through the bounds of the whole year, and brings back to us the feast of the birth of our Lord, and already leads its joys back again. Now let us speak of John's birth, of the barren woman's childbearing, so that by this short way of belief we may arrive, among winter lights made doubtful by clouds and mists, with a lamp going before and a star for guide, at that place where there is childbearing without childbearing, where the very author of the one who procreates is created, where the very origin of the one who begets is born.

There was, says the Evangelist, a certain priest named Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth: and they had no son, because Elizabeth was barren, and both had advanced in their days (Luke 1:5, 7). Barrenness is heaped up by extreme old age, and all there is of body and of nature is withdrawn from the hope of begetting; and, so that not even any thought of offspring might remain, it had come to such a point of time and age that, the warmth of life being spent, a deathly cold now possessed the barren woman's womb, so that the father himself recognised that a man could no longer be born through man from where human things had departed. Thus, thus, brothers, belief is planted in men's hard hearts and faith is grafted in; and then the whole is believed to be divine when nothing has been human.

It fell to Zechariah by lot to lay the incense, entering into the temple of the Lord (Luke 1:9). He rightly said "entering into the temple", not "entering the temple": because he himself was God's more familiar temple, carrying in the purity of his breast all the secrets of the Law, and setting forth an incense not so much of frankincense as of pure supplication. For God rests more gladly in his own work than in man's, and does not so willingly smell the drop of the Arabian tree as the holiness of a sincere heart and breast.

There appeared to him an angel of the Lord, he says, standing on the right of the altar of incense (Luke 1:11). It would have been enough to say, "There appeared to him an angel"; why so much insistence on "on the right of the altar"? So that you, the hearer, may understand that in the holy angels there is nothing sinister, as Scripture says: The Lord knows the ways that are on the right (Prov 4:27). There appeared to him an angel. When the whole man had already failed, so that John might be born of a barren woman before Christ was born of the Virgin, it was said of John: Behold, I send my angel (Matt 11:10).

Felix, quae ut in Deum cresceret, in senibus sic defecit natura; felix, quae sterilitatis damna virginea fecunditate mutavit; felix, quae uno concepit in partu quidquid in toto orbe confundere deplorabat; felix, quae facta est vitalium germinans mater, quae erat ante origo miseranda mortalium, ad dolores pariens cum dolore, ad gemitus edens cum gemitu, ad pericula producens hominem cum periculo generantis, et in ipso ortu occasum nuntians per lamenta et lacrymas; semper devorans partus suos, sciens se tantis moeroribus generare morituros. Pascebatur ergo sterilitate magis natura, ne ipsa fecunditate gravius desaeviret, fletus potius editura quam pignora: quae utique lacrymis, moerore, gemitu, tanto tempore suum quaerebat et interpellabat auctorem, intelligens hoc sibi accidisse per culpam, non esse ab auctore piissimo institutum, cum crearetur. Hinc est quod Dominus conditor ipse naturae viam virginei conceptus, virginei partus, invisibili vestigio et ignoto calle pertransit, et iter humani ortus divino gressu ambulat, non humano, ut nascendo ipsam naturam a servitute mortis, cui taliter addicta fuerat, primitus liberaret, et fonte purgato supernam rivulis redderet puritatem. Merito Joannes in utero exsultat, qui originis suae libertatem ante nosse quam esse meruit, ante meruit sentire quam vivere.

In hora incensi per angelum aperitur sterilitas, conceptus jubetur, promittitur partus, et inter sacraria nativitas sacra procuratur: hinc est quod adhuc in utero cum membrorum compage pene concepta in Joanne est prophetia ante nutu Dei loquitur quam perveniat ad vocis officium. Verum ne dum profunda et mira latissimae lectionis breviato cupimus sermone concludere, quae maxime dicenda sunt, transeam, proxime, si Deo placuerit, de sequentibus disseremus.

Happy the nature which, in order to grow into God, so failed in the old; happy, which exchanged the losses of barrenness for a virgin fruitfulness; happy, which conceived in one childbearing whatever, throughout the world, it lamented to bring to confusion; happy, which has become the mother who buds forth the living, she who before was the pitiable origin of mortals, bearing to pains with pain, bringing forth to groans with groaning, producing man to dangers with the danger of the one who begets, and at the very rising announcing the setting with laments and tears; ever devouring her offspring, knowing that with such griefs she was begetting those who would die. So nature fed rather on barrenness, lest she rage more grievously by fruitfulness itself, since she would bring forth tears rather than children: she who indeed, with tears, grief and groaning, for so long a time sought her author and appealed to him, understanding that this had befallen her through fault, and had not been established by her most loving author when she was created. Hence it is that the Lord, himself the Maker of nature, passes along the way of a virgin conception, of a virgin childbearing, with an invisible footstep and by an unknown path, and walks the road of human birth with a divine step, not a human one, so that by being born he might first set nature itself free from the servitude of death, to which it had been so bound over, and, the fountain being cleansed, give back heavenly purity to the streams. Rightly does John leap in the womb, he who merited to know the freedom of his origin before he existed, merited to feel before he lived.

At the hour of incense barrenness is opened through an angel, conception is commanded, childbearing is promised, and among the sanctuaries a sacred birth is brought about: hence it is that, while still in the womb, the frame of his limbs scarcely conceived, there is prophecy in John: at God's nod he speaks before he reaches the office of the voice. But lest, while we desire to conclude in a shortened sermon the deep and wonderful things of so broad a reading, I pass over what most needs to be said, we shall discuss what follows next time, if it pleases God.

Sermo LXXXVIII.

De eisdem

Semper debere anxium est, fratres, semper triste fenoris vinculis alligari; sed me, quem vobis mea saepe facit promissio debitorem, satis ipsa de talis debiti natura et obligatione blanditur, quia dat, non accipit, qui promittit; et qui dando debet, sibi magis ipsum facit obnoxium creditorem; atque ubi qui credidit debet, et qui debet credidit, ibi necessitudinis, non necessitatis probatur esse contractus; et in tali fenore animae non oneris, sed honoris praedulcis currit usura. Posteaquam Zachariae sacerdoti apparuisse angelum Domini evangelicus sermo descripsit, adjecit dicens: Et turbatus est Zacharias videns, et timor irruit super eum. Si de judicis potestate sollicitus est, qui semper de apparitoris turbatur et contremiscit adventu, et mandati meritum de persona venientis aestimat et metitur; et quamvis bene conscius pavet, donec causas venientis agnoscat et intelligat qualitatem; quid faciet, quo pavore trepidabit, cum potestatem supernam senserit hominis imbecilla natura, cum respexerit homo angelum, et divinae sedis ministrum viderit? Caro numquam de sua conscientia est secura: sicut Zacharias ipse, de quo loquimur nunc, comprobavit, qui in ipso tempore placationis offendit; qui dum credit, dubitat, dicente angelo, Quia non credidisti verbis meis: dum postulata promeretur, incurrit; condemnatur, munera ipsa cum suscepit; qui vocem, cum vocem percipit, tunc amittit. Hinc est quod angelus antequam mandata pandat, dona tradat, referat impetrata, metum discutit, fugat timorem, confortat animos ancipiti cogitatione turbatos, ut mens quae migraverat a se nimio pavoris excessu, in semetipsam reversa beneficiorum tantam sentiret et caperet largitatem, dicens: Ne timeas Zacharia, quoniam exaudita est deprecatio tua: et uxor tua Elisabeth pariet tibi filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Joannem.

Sermon LXXXVIII.

On the same

Always to be in debt is a source of anxiety, brothers; always to be bound by the chains of a loan is sad; but as for me, whom my promise often makes your debtor, the very nature and obligation of such a debt flatter me greatly, because he who promises gives, he does not receive; and he who owes by giving makes the creditor rather bound to himself; and where he who has lent owes, and he who owes has lent, there the contract is proved to be one of close kinship, not of necessity; and in such a loan of the soul there runs an interest not of burden but of most sweet honour. After the Gospel's word had described how an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah the priest, it added, saying: And Zechariah was troubled, seeing him, and fear rushed upon him (Luke 1:12). If he who is concerned about a judge's power is always troubled and trembles at the coming of an officer, and reckons and measures the weight of the order by the person of the one who comes; and, though of a good conscience, takes fright until he learns the causes of the one coming and understands what they are: what will he do, with what fright will he tremble, when the weak nature of man has felt a power from on high, when a man has looked upon an angel and seen a minister of the divine throne? The flesh is never secure about its own conscience: as Zechariah himself, of whom we are now speaking, proved, who gave offence at the very time of propitiation; who, while he believes, doubts, as the angel says: Because you did not believe my words (Luke 1:20); while he merits what he asked for, he incurs punishment; he is condemned when he has received the very gifts; he loses his voice at the very moment he receives the voice. Hence it is that the angel, before he sets out his commands, hands over his gifts, reports what has been obtained, dispels the dread, puts fear to flight, strengthens hearts troubled by wavering thought, so that the mind, which had gone out of itself through an excess of fright, might return to itself and feel and grasp so great a bounty of benefits, saying: Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John (Luke 1:13).

Putasne sacerdos tantus sic est populi, sic universitatis oblitus, ut de conceptu veteranae conjugis, de partu desperatae sterilis rogaret, ut sibi soli legatus omnium tunc adesset, ut advocatus omnium pro se singulariter oraret, ut tantum pontificatus officium intra domesticas arctaret curas, inter familiares clauderet et occuparet angustias, et incensum totius plebis in solum desiderium proprii pignoris addiceret veteranus antistes, ac tali desiderio grandaevus, et ipsum tempus jam respiciens, ad partum succenderetur intempestivum? Absit, fratres, absit, ut hoc de sancto Zacharia fidelis anima suspicetur. At quidem angelus in hoc fuisse refert totius supplicationis effectum, dicens: Exaudita est deprecatio tua, et uxor tua Elisabeth pariet tibi filium. Si angelus ad petita respondit, sacerdos pro solo pignore supplicavit, si pro omnibus egit supplicatio sacerdotis, cur angelus de solo pignore retulit impetrata? Quid tenemus, quid diu suspendimus animos auditorum? quam non sibi soli, sed omnibus adfuerit iste venerandus antistes; quam responderit angelus universis; quam Deus prospexerit in uno isto germine sacerdotis, quem genitoribus utique et ipsi ob hoc delegerat naturae, ut eum daret universitati, largiretur saeculis, populis condonaret, et fieret sacramenti filius inter sacraria delatus, inter sacramenta concessus, esset antistes de venerando generatus antistite, esset angelus ore angeli sancta conceptus in viscera, esset vox Christi: Ego vox clamantis in deserto; esset vox Christi ad Christum sua reservatus ad tempora, esset praeco Judicis praesentiam clamaturus, esset poenitentia populos Christi vocaturus ad veniam.

Quam sacerdos ergo iste jam sui nescius, jam sibi mortuus, extraneus conjugi, soboli jam negatus egerit omnibus, omnibus impetrarit, mox angelo referente discamus. Et multi, inquit, in nativitate ejus gaudebunt. Non est unigenitus qui est cunctorum creatus ad gaudium. Erit enim magnus coram Domino. Qui coram Deo magnus est, quantus sit penes homines quis probabit? Et vinum et siceram non bibet. Qui natus est sancto de corpore sacerdotis, et summa senectute, ab omnibus vitiis defaecato, atque exempto juventutis incendiis, vinum nescit, ignorat siceram, quae pariunt luxus ebrietatis et vitia, et tota dissipant morum decora, ornamenta virtutum. Et vinum et siceram non bibet, sed Spiritu sancto replebitur adhuc in utero matris suae. Juxta illud Apostoli: Fratres, nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria, sed repleamini Spiritu sancto. Et Spiritu sancto replebitur adhuc in utero matris suae.

Do you think that so great a priest was so forgetful of the people, so forgetful of all, that he would pray about the conception of an aged wife, about the childbearing of a hopeless barren woman; that the envoy of all would then be present for himself alone; that the advocate of all would pray for himself apart; that he would narrow so great an office of the pontificate within household cares, shut it up and fill it with the straits of the family; that the aged prelate would make over the incense of the whole people to the sole desire for a child of his own, and that, so advanced in years and already looking at the very time, he would be inflamed with such a desire for an untimely childbearing? Far from it, brothers, far from it, that a faithful soul should suspect this of holy Zechariah. And yet the angel reports that the effect of the whole supplication lay in this, saying: Your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. If the angel answered what was asked, the priest prayed for his child alone; if the priest's supplication was made for all, why did the angel report the child alone as obtained? Why do we hold back, why do we keep the minds of the hearers long in suspense? How this venerable prelate stood by not himself alone but all; how the angel answered all; how God provided in this one offspring of the priest, whom indeed he had chosen out for his parents and for nature itself for this purpose, that he might give him to the whole world, bestow him on the ages, grant him to the peoples, and that he might become the son of a mystery, brought among the sanctuaries, granted among the mysteries; that he might be a prelate begotten of a venerable prelate; that he might be an angel conceived in a holy womb at an angel's word; that he might be the voice of Christ: I am the voice of one crying in the desert (John 1:23); that he might be the voice of Christ, kept for Christ, for his times; that he might be the herald of the Judge, who would cry out his presence; that he might be the one who would call the peoples of Christ to pardon by penance!

How much, then, this priest, now unaware of himself, now dead to himself, a stranger to his wife, now denied offspring, did for all, obtained for all, let us learn straight away as the angel tells it. And many, he says, will rejoice at his birth (Luke 1:14). He is not an only son who has been created for the joy of all. For he will be great before the Lord (Luke 1:15). He who is great before God, who will prove how great he is among men? And he shall drink no wine or strong drink. He who was born of the holy body of a priest, and that in extreme old age, a body purged of all vices and exempt from the fires of youth, does not know wine, is ignorant of strong drink, which bring forth the excesses and vices of drunkenness and squander all the beauties of conduct, the ornaments of the virtues. And he shall drink no wine or strong drink, but he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb. According to that saying of the Apostle: Brothers, do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb.

Beatus Joannes, qui ante Dei Spiritu meruit intonare quam hominis vagiret in fletu; beatus, qui ante divina possidere meruit quam sortiretur humana; beatus, qui ante meruit coelum scire quam terram; beatus, qui, antequam videret praesentia, futura meruit nuntiare; beatus, qui ante Deum capere potuit quam suo ipse caperetur a corpore; beatus et singulariter est beatus, qui, antequam saperet quaerere, meritum conquisivit; beatus, qui non pervenit ad gratiam per laborem, sed ad labores ipsius gratiae dignatione descendit.

Et multos, inquit, filiorum convertet. Ad quem? Dicat angelus, ut quia blasphemat, quia negat haereticus, commutescat; dicat angelus, ut audiat fidelis, et gaudeat; credat haereticus, et recurrat. Convertet. Ad quem? Ad Dominum Deum, inquit, ipsorum. Quis est hic Deus? De quo propheta dicit: Hic est Deus noster, et non est alius absque eo qui invenit omnem viam disciplinae, et dedit eam Jacob puero suo, et Israel dilecto suo. Quando dedit? Tunc utique quando legalibus in tabulis totius vitae regulam, totam disciplinae descripsit et normam.

Attentus esto auditor, ut scias quis est hic Deus noster, absque quo alius non est. Quis est? Post haec in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est. Quis est alius visus in terra nisi Christus, qui nostra est conversatus in carne? Et quis est alius conversatus cum hominibus, nisi ille qui cum hominibus humano est commoratus in corpore? Et si hic est Deus noster, et non alius absque eo, haeretice, cum hunc non habueris, quem habebis? Non est alius, inquit, absque eo; et nunc non dicis, Ergo ubi est Pater? Propheta dicit: Non est alius absque eo; et ubi est? In Filio utique, quia praeter Filium non est Pater. Ego in Patre, dicit, et Pater in me est. Unde et propheta non dixit, Non est alius, sed Non est alius absque eo: hoc est dicere, Est; sed in ipso est. Sed dicis, Et si in ipso est, quomodo est alius? Haeretice, sic est alius persona, ut sit ipse substantia; sic est ipse substantia, ut nulla sit confusio Trinitatis; sic est unitas Trinitatis, ut nulla sit in Deitate distantia; sic in se est, et sine se tota Trinitas non est, ut insit in Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu sancto personalitas definita, non separata divinitas.

Blessed John, who merited to thunder by the Spirit of God before he wailed in the weeping of man; blessed, who merited to possess divine things before he received human things as his lot; blessed, who merited to know heaven before earth; blessed, who, before he saw the things present, merited to announce the things to come; blessed, who was able to contain God before he himself was contained by his own body; blessed, and singularly blessed, who won merit before he knew how to seek; blessed, who did not come to grace through labour, but came down to labours by the condescension of grace itself.

And many, he says, of the sons he will turn (Luke 1:16). To whom? Let the angel say, so that the heretic, because he blasphemes, because he denies, may be struck dumb; let the angel say, so that the faithful may hear and rejoice; let the heretic believe, and hasten back. He will turn. To whom? To the Lord their God, he says. Who is this God? He of whom the prophet says: This is our God, and there is no other beside him, who found out every way of discipline, and gave it to Jacob his servant, and to Israel his beloved (Bar 3:36–37). When did he give it? Then, surely, when on the tablets of the Law he wrote out the rule of the whole of life, the whole norm of discipline.

Be attentive, hearer, so that you may know who this our God is, beside whom there is no other. Who is he? Afterwards he was seen on earth, and lived among men (Bar 3:38). Who else was seen on earth, if not Christ, who lived in our flesh? And who else lived among men, if not he who dwelt with men in a human body? And if this is our God, and there is no other beside him, heretic, when you have not had him, whom will you have? There is no other, he says, beside him; and now do you not say, "Where, then, is the Father?" The prophet says: There is no other beside him; and where is he? In the Son, surely, because outside the Son there is no Father. I am in the Father, he says, and the Father is in me (John 14:10). Hence the prophet too did not say "There is no other", but "There is no other beside him": that is to say, there is; but he is in him. But you say: "And if he is in him, how is he another?" Heretic, he is another in person in such a way that he is the same in substance; he is the same in substance in such a way that there is no confusion of the Trinity; the unity of the Trinity is such that there is no distance in the Godhead; he is so in himself, and without him the whole Trinity is not, that there is in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit personhood defined, not divinity separated.

Et ipse praecedet ante illum. Ante quem? Ante Christum, qui est Deus ipsorum. Deus noster, Deus omnium, Deus absque quo alius non est: In virtute Eliae. Nemo cum hoc audit, μετεμψύχωσιν imputet: hic spiritum dicit illum, quem per divinam gratiam meruit, non quem carnis est consecutus ad vitam; et virtutem dicit illam quam de supernis habuit, non illam quam propter corporis adeptus est firmitatem. Joannes ergo Eliae venit in spiritu, et in ejus virtute graditur, qui totum victu, vestitu, honore, castitate, abstinentia, et omnibus Eliam virtutibus repraesentat et Christum. Praeparet Domino plebem perfectam. Quam in vobis Deus et Dominus noster praeparare et confirmare dignetur in gloriam nominis sui.

And he will go before him (Luke 1:17). Before whom? Before Christ, who is their God. Our God, the God of all, the God beside whom there is no other: In the power of Elijah. Let no one, on hearing this, bring in metempsychosis: here he means that spirit which he merited through divine grace, not the one which he received from the flesh for life; and he means that power which he had from on high, not the one which he obtained for the strength of the body. John, then, came in the spirit of Elijah, and walks in his power, he who in everything, in food, clothing, honour, chastity, abstinence and all the virtues, represents Elijah and Christ. Let him make ready for the Lord a perfect people. May our God and Lord deign to make it ready in you and to confirm it, to the glory of his name.

Sermo LXXXIX.

De eisdem

Omnia quae a Deo creata sunt nobis bona sunt, et bona valde, dicente Scriptura: Et vidit Deus omnia quaecumque fecit, et ecce valde bona. Ergo omnia quae a Deo creata sunt, bona sunt, et valde bona: sed inter vitia virtutesque media sic habentur, ut ex ipsis, et periti doctrinae materiam sumant, et erroris causam inveniant imperiti. Sapientes namque Creatorem creaturae contemplatione cognoscunt; stulti vero dum creaturas ipsas deos existimant, sapere nequeunt Creatorem. Hinc est quod solem, lunam, stellas, aurum, lapides, ligna, deos sibi fecerunt gentiles, quae Christiani addicta suae sapiunt servituti. Nec mirum sic esse mediam creaturam, quando ipse creator omnium Christus est fidelibus in salutem, infidelibus in ruinam, evangelista dicente: Hic positus est in ruinam et resurrectionem multorum. Apostoli etiam aliis habentur in mortem, aliis habentur in vitam, Paulo probante, cum dicit: Quibusdam sumus odor mortis in mortem, quibusdam autem odor vitae in vitam. Ergo et evangelicae lectiones fiunt bonis intelligentiae salutaris, malis vero erroris occasio.

Antehac evangelista beatissimus, cum referret Joannem Baptistam Herodis astrictum vinculis, adulteriis Herodiadis exstinctum, truncatum in praemium saltatricis, sensimus aliquos fuisse permotos, cur Deus sacrilegae sanctum, adulterae virginem, angelum addixerit saltatrici. Fratres, virtutes Joannis, Herodis crimina abundanter alio sermone tractabimus: nunc eloquamur quae vinculorum causa, carceris quae necessitas, quae mortis utilitas fuerit in Joanne. Joannes non potuit mori communi sorte, qui natus est privilegio singulari: cum Christus Deus nasceretur in carne, Joannes angelus est generatus in terris, ut ita officia terrena officiis se coelestibus miscerent, sicut humanis se divina miscebant, et in terra Deo angelus, Domino ordo coelestis obsequii non deesset.

Sermon LXXXIX.

On the same

All things that were created by God are good for us, and very good, as Scripture says: And God saw all things whatever he had made, and behold, very good (Gen 1:31). So all things that were created by God are good, and very good: but between vices and virtues they are held to be in the middle, in such a way that from them both the skilled take matter for teaching and the unskilled find a cause of error. For the wise know the Creator by the contemplation of the creature; but the foolish, in reckoning the creatures themselves to be gods, cannot know the Creator. Hence it is that the Gentiles made gods for themselves of the sun, the moon, the stars, gold, stones, wood, things which Christians know to be bound over to their servitude. Nor is it a wonder that the creature is thus in the middle, when Christ himself, the Creator of all things, is for salvation to the faithful, for ruin to the faithless, as the Evangelist says: This one is set for the ruin and resurrection of many (Luke 2:34). The apostles too are taken by some for death, by others for life, as Paul proves when he says: To some we are an odour of death for death, but to others an odour of life for life (2 Cor 2:16). So the Gospel readings too become for the good a matter of saving understanding, but for the wicked an occasion of error.

Before this, when the most blessed Evangelist related that John the Baptist was bound in Herod's chains, put to death through Herodias's adulteries, beheaded as the prize of a dancing girl, we perceived that some had been disturbed: why God should have given over the saint to a sacrilegious woman, the virgin to an adulteress, the angel to a dancing girl. Brothers, John's virtues and Herod's crimes we shall treat abundantly in another sermon: now let us tell what the cause of the chains, what the necessity of the prison, what the usefulness of the death was in John. John could not die by the common lot, he who was born by a singular privilege: when Christ, God, was being born in the flesh, John, an angel, was begotten on earth, so that earthly offices might mingle with heavenly ones just as divine things were mingling with human, and on earth an angel might not be lacking to God, nor the order of heavenly homage to the Lord.

Sed audiamus ordinem nascentis Joannis, ut causas mortis ejus invenire possimus. Fuit, inquit, in diebus Herodis, regis Judaeae, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias, de vice Abia, et uxor ejus de filiabus Aaron, et nomen ejus Elisabeth. Erant autem ambo justi ante Deum, incedentes in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus Domini sine querela. Oratores magni et excellentes ingenio, quoties illustrium virorum parant narrare virtutes, avos atavosque commemorant, ut ad honorem praesentium accedat dignitas antiquorum, et laus patrum filiorum redundet ad gloriam. Major est innata gloria quam quaesita; praecedit quod venit ab origine quod sequitur ex labore, gloriam beatius est habere quam quaerere: hinc est quod evangelista ut extollat Joannis gloriam, Zachariae patris, Elisabeth matris genus dicit, avos memorat, scribit merita, loquitur titulos, gradus digerit, vitam pandit, dilatat insignia, praedicat sanctitatem.

Fuit, inquit, in diebus Herodis, regis Judaeae. Tempus memorat regis nefandi, qui sacrum sacerdotii violavit moerorem, confudit ordinem, statutum solvit, abstulit institutum. Et hoc accedit ad meritum Zachariae: quia cum in omnes pene Herodes ausus suae temeritatis extenderit, ausus sit nihil in isto, virtutibus sit hujus oppressus, ut sacerdotis immaculata successio ad gloriam germinis servaretur. Et uxor ejus de filiabus Aaron. Aaron primus pontifex in lege fuit sacerdotii origo: propterea, merito praetermissis omnibus, ejus filia dicitur, cujus in se memoria praetulit sanctitatem, quam tanti generis pia custos gloriosissime transfudit in filium.

Sed hujus matris laudes evangelista describit: Erant, inquit, ambo justi ante Deum. Est nova felicitas, est conjugium singulare, quando manet in duobus mens una, una sanctitas in duobus: constabat mente quod distabat in sexu; et in moribus erat unum, quod geminabat aspectus; et virtutibus reddebat pares, impares dederat quos natura. Erant, inquit, justi ambo ante Deum. Placere judiciis humanis, coram hominibus esse justum, est virtutis humanae, maximi est et laboris: ante Deum qui scrutatur corda, cogitationes discutit, videt mentium motus, esse justum humani laboris non est, muneris est divini. Si magnus est qui non peccat in carne, quantus est qui corde non peccat? Joannes ergo supra carnem est natus de istis, qui ante Deum nec corde, nec corpore peccaverunt.

But let us hear the order of John's birth, so that we may be able to find the causes of his death. There was, he says, in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth (Luke 1:5). And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without complaint (Luke 1:6). Great orators, excellent in talent, whenever they set out to tell the virtues of illustrious men, recall their grandfathers and forefathers, so that the dignity of the ancients may be added to the honour of the present, and the praise of the fathers may overflow into the glory of the sons. Glory inborn is greater than glory sought; what comes from one's origin goes before what follows from labour; it is more blessed to have glory than to seek it: hence it is that the Evangelist, in order to exalt John's glory, tells the lineage of Zechariah his father and of Elizabeth his mother, records their forebears, writes their merits, speaks their titles, sets out their ranks, unfolds their life, spreads out their insignia, proclaims their holiness.

There was, he says, in the days of Herod, king of Judaea. He records the time of an abominable king, who violated the sacred custom of the priesthood, confounded the order, undid what was established, took away what was instituted. And this adds to Zechariah's merit: that, although Herod stretched the daring of his rashness over almost everyone, he dared nothing against this man, he was overborne by his virtues, so that the priest's spotless succession might be kept for the glory of his offspring. And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron. Aaron, the first pontiff in the Law, was the origin of the priesthood: therefore, rightly passing over all the rest, she is called the daughter of him whose holiness she displayed in herself as a memorial, a holiness which she, the devout guardian of so great a lineage, poured most gloriously into her son.

But the Evangelist describes the praises of this mother: They were, he says, both just before God. It is a new happiness, it is a singular marriage, when one mind remains in two, one holiness in two: what stood apart in sex stood together in mind; and in conduct that was one which sight made two; and by the virtues it rendered equal those whom nature had made unequal. They were, he says, just, both of them, before God. To please human judgements, to be just in the sight of men, belongs to human virtue, and is of the greatest labour too: but to be just before God, who searches hearts, sifts thoughts, sees the movements of minds, is not of human labour; it is of divine gift. If he is great who does not sin in the flesh, how great is he who does not sin in heart? John, then, was born above the flesh, of these who before God sinned neither in heart nor in body.

Adjecit evangelista, dicens: Incedentes in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus Domini sine querela. Incedentes: incedit qui non stat in triviis peccatorum, qui peregrinum se hoc sentit in saeculo, qui asperas virtutum intrat intrepidus mansiones, qui montes justificationum, mandatorum colles indefessus viator ascendit, ut praesentia parentis Dei, patriae coelestis beatitudine perfruatur. Incedentes in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus. Hi in omnibus, in quibus nemo vel pauci. In omnibus mandatis et justificationibus. Quis fumi nescius cupiditatum transit incendia? quis vitae lubricum numquam lapsus evadit? per vitiorum gurgites quis impollutus incedit? carnis negotia, vitae causas, actus mundi quis peragit, et non erit in querela, cum nasci ipsum plenum sit et lacrymis et querelis? Namque parturiens queritur ex dolore, et natus in lacrymas queritur ex natura. Sed in Zacharia et Elisabeth reatus occidit, periit querela, omnis est amputata causatio, quia in illis parabatur unde tota sanctitas nasceretur: sed hoc ex ipsa jam lectione luceat.

Et non erat eis, inquit, filius, eo quod esset Elisabeth sterilis. Sterilitas ista non erat maledicta, sed mystica, in qua partus non ablatus est, sed dilatus; neque erat pignori clausa, sed tempori: colebatur tempore, virtute serebatur, maturabatur aetate, senectute crescebat, ut in filio singulari tota fecunditas pensaretur, quando in uno nascebatur numerositas congesta virtutum. Beata sterilitas quae unum servabatur ad partum, et exspectabat Joannem, cui quia prima omnia debebantur, primogeniti dignitas non periret. Et ambo processerant in diebus suis. Processerant, non decesserant: vixit in sanctis aetas, non defecit, sed processit. Aut quid illis deficit, quibus accedunt semper incrementa virtutum? Ergo in Zacharia et Elisabeth stupet sexus, frigescit caro, membra sopiuntur, tempus praeterit, aetas transit, abolescit totum quidquid est et humani ordinis et negotii conjugalis, ut divino munere, non partu ex hominibus angelus nasceretur.

Promiseramus de ortu Joannis causas mortis ejus expromere, sed quia nos hodie longius sermo protraxit, et ad probationem rei satis nobis necessaria sunt quae sequuntur, quae modo dicta sunt ortus ejus deputentur ad gloriam; nosque ingrati non simus vobis, qui differimus debitum, non negamus: nam debitoribus dilatio crescit ad gratiam creditoris. Exspectate ergo quod promittit debitor, et exspectate securi, quia promissa negari nequeunt, quando sterili tam largiter negata solvuntur.

The Evangelist added, saying: walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without complaint. Walking: he walks who does not stand in the crossroads of sinners, who feels himself a pilgrim in this world, who fearlessly enters the rough lodgings of the virtues, who as an untiring traveller climbs the mountains of the justifications, the hills of the commandments, so as to enjoy the presence of God his parent, the blessedness of the heavenly fatherland. Walking in all the commandments and justifications. These, in all: in which no one, or few. In all the commandments and justifications. Who passes through the fires of the cravings without knowing their smoke? who escapes the slipperiness of life without ever falling? who walks undefiled through the whirlpools of the vices? who carries on the business of the flesh, the affairs of life, the acts of the world, and will not be in complaint, when being born itself is full of tears and complaints? For the woman in labour complains from pain, and he who is born into tears complains from nature. But in Zechariah and Elizabeth guilt fell, complaint perished, every charge was cut away, because in them was being prepared that from which all holiness would be born: but let this now shine out from the reading itself.

And they had no son, he says, because Elizabeth was barren (Luke 1:7). This barrenness was not accursed but mystical, in which childbearing was not taken away but delayed; nor was it closed to offspring, but to time: it was tilled by time, sown by virtue, ripened by age, grew with old age, so that the whole of fruitfulness might be made good in a singular son, when in one was born a gathered multitude of virtues. Blessed barrenness, which was kept for one birth and waited for John, so that, because all first things were owed to him, the dignity of the firstborn might not perish. And both had advanced in their days. They had advanced, not departed: age lived on in the saints; it did not fail, but advanced. Or what is lacking to those to whom increases of virtues are always being added? So in Zechariah and Elizabeth sex is numbed, the flesh grows cold, the limbs fall asleep, time passes, age goes by, all that belongs to the human order and to the business of marriage dies away, so that an angel might be born by divine gift, not by childbearing from human beings.

We had promised to set out, from John's birth, the causes of his death; but because today the sermon has drawn us on further, and what follows is very necessary to us for the proof of the matter, let what has just been said be set down to the glory of his birth; and let us not be ungrateful to you, we who defer the debt, we do not deny it: for with debtors, delay grows into the creditor's favour. Wait, then, for what the debtor promises, and wait free from care, because promises cannot be denied when things denied are so generously paid to a barren woman.

Sermo XC.

De eisdem

Erigi nos sanctorum lapsibus, sanctorum trepidatione fundari, cunctatio nos hodie Zachariae docuit sacerdotis: qui cum non credit Dei promissa, sed discutit; et opera divina, non fide percipit, sed humana ratione disquirit, infidelitatis culpam longa silentii condemnatione persolvit. Audierat ab angelo: Exaudita est deprecatio tua: et uxor tua Elisabeth pariet tibi filium. Qui tunc respondit: Unde hoc sciam? Ego enim sum senex, et uxor mea processit in diebus suis. Nonne quantum senectute longa spem posteritatis amiserat, tantum longo vitae usu fuerat edoctus quod Deus impossibile nil haberet? Legerat tanti temporis sacerdos, sciebat veteranus pontifex lege naturam, non auctorem naturae posse constringi; et tempus homini posse, suo non posse praescribere conditori. Noverat de Abrahae et Sarae emortuis extrema senectute corporibus, et a patris matrisque nomine famosissima sterilitate summotis; Isaac ad totam fecunditatem Israelitici germinis erupisse, cui non obfuit tantum defuisse naturam, quantum nasci profuit auctoris beneficio, non naturae. Didicerat Rebeccae et Annae effetis diu, diu naturae suffragio destitutis, dedisse Deum quod sterilitas abnegaverat.

Edoctus ergo tantis, quid est quod dicit: Unde hoc sciam? Ego enim senex sum, et uxor mea processit in diebus suis? Fratres, satis ad Deum trepida, satis ad divinas virtutes hominis est imbecilla natura, nec talem se in causa invenit qualem se aestimat ante causam; et satis se ignorat antequam se rebus probet, et experiatur exemplis. Petit coelum, petit alta, scrutatur superna, movet coelum, pulsat coelum; sed cum coelum moverit, coeli pondera non poterit sustinere. Ambit fidei subire verticem, ardet coelum sua penetrare virtute; sed aethereas in vias ubi incedere humanis gressibus inchoat, et cum suam deorsum respicit ad naturam, non tantum fidit de praeteritis, quantum trepidat de ruina. Sic B. Petrus cum per aequora divinos imitatur incessus, et novus viator molle iter duris gressibus calcat, ante de lapsu supplicat quam gaudeat de donato.

Sermon XC.

On the same

That we are raised up by the falls of the saints, grounded by the trembling of the saints, the hesitation of Zechariah the priest has taught us today: who, since he does not believe God's promises but examines them, and does not perceive the divine works by faith but searches them out by human reasoning, pays for the fault of faithlessness with a long sentence of silence. He had heard from the angel: Your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. And he then answered: How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife has advanced in her days (Luke 1:18). Had he not, as much as he had lost the hope of posterity through long old age, so much been taught by long experience of life that nothing would be impossible to God? The priest of so long a time had read, the veteran pontiff knew, that nature can be bound by law, not the author of nature; and that time can set bounds for man, cannot set them for its own Maker. He knew that from the bodies of Abraham and Sarah, dead with extreme old age and removed from the name of father and mother by a most famous barrenness, Isaac broke forth into the whole fruitfulness of the Israelite stock (Gen 21:2); to whom it was not so much a hindrance that nature had failed as it was a help to be born by the author's kindness, not by nature's. He had learned that to Rebekah (Gen 25:21) and to Hannah (1 Sam 1:20), long exhausted, long deprived of nature's support, God gave what barrenness had refused.

Taught, then, by things so great, why is it that he says: How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife has advanced in her days? Brothers, man's nature is very fearful towards God, very weak towards the divine powers, and does not find itself in the trial such as it reckons itself before the trial; and it is quite ignorant of itself before it proves itself by deeds and tests itself by examples. It seeks heaven, seeks the heights, searches out the things above, moves heaven, knocks at heaven; but when it has moved heaven, it will not be able to bear heaven's weight. It aspires to climb the summit of faith, it burns to penetrate heaven by its own strength; but where it begins to walk with human steps into the ethereal ways, and when it looks down to its own nature, it does not so much trust in what is past as it trembles at the fall. So blessed Peter, when across the waters he imitates the divine gait, and as a new traveller treads the soft road with hard steps, prays about his fall before he rejoices in what he was given (Matt 14:30).

Sic nunc Zacharias, qui cum diu fleret diabolum posse, regnare mortem culpa hominis unius, nasci homines ad labores, ad gemitus, ad pericula, optare licet aerumnosa; moritura, nec tamen posse pignora promereri; stare inter acies criminum, obsideri vitiorum catervis, infirmitatum quati et quassari semper impulsu; videre eminus vexilla virtutum, spem legis, gratiae libertatem, nec tamen illuc quemquam propriis posse viribus pervenire; velle bona, et non facere; crimina odisse, nec vincere; debere jam misereri Deum, debere jam taliter subvenire captivis; pontifex ergo iste cum Dei aures continua et tali querela, tali lamentatione pulsaret, Deus sic pia, sic justa poscenti, ex germine ipsius responsionis suae sumpsit et instituit mirabile documentum, quo crederet posse Deum dare vitam mortuis, salutem reddere desperatis, si senectuti mortuae sobolem, si sterilitati dedisset filium desperatae, sicut evangelicus aperit sermo, cum dicit: Exaudita est deprecatio tua, et uxor tua Elisabeth pariet tibi filium, redemptionis hujus nuntium, hujus salutis praevium; qui Deum non, sicut tu, voce audiat, non gemitibus flectat. Non ad impetrandum nostra ille, sicut tu, suffragia requirat, sed ipse in nostro ordine constitutus, et angelico honore fultus, Deum satis ab omnibus desideratum, nec ulli umquam cognitum, etiam ipsis angelis invisum, manu teneat, amplectatur gremio, et jam conspicuum mundo ulnis felicibus tradat, palmis beatissimis assignet, humanis oculis pervidendum, Deum cognitum faciat universis, perducat Dominum ad consortia servulorum, misceat reis Judicem, censorem in se testetur noxiorum suscepisse personam, ac si probet condemnationis humanae sententiam cessaturam, quando ipse agitur, ipse currit per veniam, qui reos erat daturus ad poenam.

Ut luceat hoc mysterium pietatis immensae, Zacharia, tuus filius suum Dominum poenitentiae demergit in baptisma, in remissionem diluit peccatorum: quia voluit fons dilui, cognitor suscipere veniam, Judex ipse suam subire sententiam, ne damnaret reos, ne vindictam proferret in noxios; ascendit crucem, degustat mortem, sepulturam patitur, intrat infernum, qui puniri voluit, ne puniret, qui amari magis voluit quam timeri.

So now Zechariah, who had long wept that the devil had power, that death reigned through the fault of one man, that men were born to labours, to groans, to dangers; that it was allowed to wish for children, full of hardship though they be and doomed to die, and yet not to be able to obtain them; to stand among the battle lines of crimes, to be besieged by troops of vices, to be shaken and shattered by the ceaseless assault of weaknesses; to see from afar the banners of the virtues, the hope of the Law, the freedom of grace, and yet that no one could reach there by his own strength; to will good things and not to do them; to hate crimes and not to overcome them; that God ought now to have mercy, ought now to help the captives in such a way: this pontiff, then, when he was knocking at God's ears with such continual complaint, such lamentation, God, to one who asked things so holy, so just, took from the very offspring of his answer and set up a wonderful proof, by which he might believe that God could give life to the dead and give back salvation to the hopeless, if he had given offspring to dead old age, a son to hopeless barrenness; as the Gospel's word discloses when it says: Your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son: the messenger of this redemption, the forerunner of this salvation; one who will hear God not, as you did, by a voice, nor bend him with groans. He will not, as you do, seek our intercessions in order to obtain; but, himself set in our rank and upheld by angelic honour, he will hold in his hand the God so greatly longed for by all, never known to anyone, unseen even by the angels themselves; he will embrace him in his lap, and, now visible to the world, hand him over with happy arms, point him out with most blessed palms, to be looked upon by human eyes; he will make God known to all, lead the Lord to the fellowship of his little servants, mingle the Judge with the guilty, testify that the censor has taken up in himself the person of the offenders, as though proving that the sentence of human condemnation will cease, when he himself is put on trial, he himself runs his course through pardon, he who was to give the guilty over to punishment.

So that this mystery of immense loving-kindness may shine out, Zechariah, your son plunges his Lord into the baptism of penance, washes him for the remission of sins: because the fountain willed to be washed, the examining judge to receive pardon, the Judge himself to undergo his own sentence, so as not to condemn the guilty, not to bring vengeance on the offenders; he climbs the cross, tastes death, suffers burial, enters hell, he who willed to be punished so as not to punish, who willed to be loved rather than feared.

Quod ubi Zacharias, fratres, audivit, tantum se meruisse suis precibus sacramentum, rei ipsius consideratione territus, sacramenti ipsius aestimatione turbatus, nec se mereri tantum credidit, et Deum dubitavit ad haec talia et tanta descendere. Hinc est quod dicit: Unde hoc sciam? Ego enim senex sum, et uxor mea processit in diebus suis. Hoc est dicere, Quomodo me habere filium ratio non permittit humana, ita nasci et mori Deum majestas non sinit sempiterna. Cui angelus veniabiliter non credenti poenam signi tantum dedit, non perfidiae: cautelae est tarde de Deo humilia credere, de Deo tardius contumeliosa sentire.

Adjecit Angelus, dicens: Ego sum Gabriel. Ut ex nomine tanto, et ex merito ministri tanti, pontifex promissionis fidem pensaret, et crederet qualitatem. Ego sum Gabriel, qui asto ante Deum, et missus sum loqui ad te. Dum dicit nomen, designat meritum; cum se refert astare, se missum refert; servitutem fatetur, ne praerogativa nominis debitum celaret obsequium. Ego sum, inquit, Gabriel, qui asto ante Deum, et missus sum loqui ad te, et haec tibi nuntiare.

Vere magnus Dominus, et sapientiae ejus non est numerus. Infirmantem curat de vulnere, nutantem de ultione confirmat, de supplicio fidei perficit argumentum, dicendo: Et ecce eris tacens et non poteris loqui. Ut ex te et in te credendi regulam consequaris, et vernaculo exemplo Deum posse credas facere quod promittit: nam cum vult, tuae vocis organum claudit; et cum vult, tui aperire oris officium profecto potest; et cum vult fecundam ex sterili facere, ex fecunda sterilem cum promittit, potest; cum vult largiri partus officia, obsequia naturae cum vult, praevalet denegare. Egit ergo angelus ut tali documento pontifex eruditus non dicat amplius: Unde hoc sciam? Qui totius creaturae indicio potuit approbare quod Deus omnia possit; et qui coelum, terram, mare, et omnia quae in eis sunt, ex nihilo legerat substitisse, credere debuit quod potuit ex aliquo facere quod vult, et desperato reddere quod promittit; et qui totum fecit ex eo quod non erat, ex eo quod est quidquid vult facere non laborat.

When Zechariah, brothers, heard that he had merited by his prayers so great a mystery, terrified at the consideration of the thing itself, troubled at the estimation of the mystery itself, he did not believe that he merited so much, and he doubted that God would come down to things such and so great. Hence it is that he says: How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife has advanced in her days. That is to say: "As human reason does not allow me to have a son, so the eternal majesty does not permit God to be born and to die." To him, who disbelieved pardonably, the angel gave the penalty of a sign only, not of unbelief: it is a mark of caution to be slow to believe lowly things of God, slower still to think insulting things of God.

The angel added, saying: I am Gabriel. So that from so great a name, and from the merit of so great a minister, the pontiff might weigh the trustworthiness of the promise, and believe its quality. I am Gabriel, who stand before God, and I have been sent to speak to you (Luke 1:19). While he says his name, he designates his merit; when he reports that he stands by, he reports that he is sent; he acknowledges servitude, lest the prerogative of his name hide the homage he owes. I am, he says, Gabriel, who stand before God, and I have been sent to speak to you, and to announce these things to you.

Truly, great is the Lord, and of his wisdom there is no number (Ps 147:5). He cures the sick man of his wound, he strengthens the wavering man by punishment, by the penalty he completes the proof of faith, saying: And behold, you shall be silent and shall not be able to speak (Luke 1:20). So that from yourself and in yourself you may attain the rule of believing, and by a home-born example believe that God can do what he promises: for when he wills, he shuts the organ of your voice; and when he wills, he can surely open the office of your mouth; and when he wills to make a fruitful woman out of a barren one, a barren one out of a fruitful, when he promises, he can; when he wills, he bestows the offices of childbearing; when he wills, he has power to deny the services of nature. So the angel acted in such a way that the pontiff, instructed by such a proof, should no longer say: How shall I know this? He who could ascertain from the evidence of the whole creation that God can do all things, and who had read that heaven, earth, the sea and all that is in them came to be out of nothing, ought to have believed that he could make what he wills out of something, and give back to one without hope what he promises; and he who made the whole out of what was not does not labour to make whatever he wills out of what is.

Et erat plebs exspectans Zachariam, et mirabantur quod tardaret in templo. Egressus autem Zacharias non poterat loqui ad illos, et cognoverunt quod visionem vidisset in templo. Ille autem erat innuens illis, et permansit mutus. Egreditur pontifex gestans in ore sterilitatis indicium, portans in pectore conceptionis figuram, ut cum mater pareret filium, daret filius vocem, tunc verbi pater ederet sacramentum, et ante natus daret patri veniam, quam dilueret crimina vetusta populorum. Et quia qui non credidit, tacuit, merito propheta, quia credidit, gloriatur, dicendo: Credidi, propter quod locutus sum.

Fratres, dat verbum fides, negat infidelitas verbum. Si nos ergo, fratres, sicut dixi, sanctorum lapsus erigit, firmat trepidatio beatorum, nihil umquam Deo esse impossibile judicemus, neque inquiramus quemadmodum facturus sit, quod promittit, cujus voluisse fecisse est, cujus dedisse est promisisse.

And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered that he was delaying in the temple (Luke 1:21). But when Zechariah came out he could not speak to them, and they knew that he had seen a vision in the temple (Luke 1:22). And he kept making signs to them, and remained dumb. The pontiff comes out bearing in his mouth the sign of barrenness, carrying in his breast the figure of the conception, so that when the mother bore a son, the son might give back the voice, then the father of the word might utter the mystery, and the one born might give pardon to his father before he washed away the ancient crimes of the peoples. And because he who did not believe was silent, rightly does the Prophet, because he believed, glory, saying: I believed, therefore I have spoken (Ps 116:10).

Brothers, faith gives the word, faithlessness denies the word. If, then, brothers, as I said, the fall of the saints raises us up, the trembling of the blessed makes us firm, let us judge that nothing is ever impossible to God, and let us not inquire how he will do what he promises, with whom to have willed is to have done, to have given is to have promised.

Sermo XCI.

De eisdem

Aurum de terra legere qui noverunt, ubi divitem senserint venam, ibi quidquid artis est, quidquid laboris impendunt: et nos quia in sancto Zacharia coelestem novimus latere thesaurum, in ipso totum quod sermonis est nostri, quod vestri auditus est, occupemus, quatenus commune lucrum fit, quod fuerit communi labore quaesitum. Fuit, inquit, in diebus Herodis regis Judaeae sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias, ex vice Abia. Hoc jam diximus. Et uxor ejus de filiabus Aaron. Sic coepit evangelista, ut in conjuge sacerdotis servata sacerdotalis stemmatis generositas monstraretur.

Erant, inquit, ambo justi ante Deum. Ambo justi, quia in ambobus erat una justitia. Ambo justi, quia constabat inter eos non de diligentia, sed de sanctitate conjugium. Ambo justi, quia sexu dispares, pares meritis habebantur. Ambo justi, quia ut erat in duobus una caro, sic erat in duobus unus spiritus. Imitentur conjuges, ut quos conjungit affectio, jungat et virtus. Erant, inquit, justi ambo ante Deum. Ambo justi ante Deum. Et ubi est illud: Non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens? Ante homines forte quis putetur justus, quia homines ut culpas corporum norunt, sic vitia mentis ignorant: ante Deum vero, cui pectoris claustra patent, quem cogitationum secreta non latent, quis innocens habetur et justus? Estne homo qui corde non peccet, non cogitatione delinquat, non offendat dubitatione, non lapsum trepidationis incurrat? Moyses dubitat, Aaron deviat, Petrus negat, et quis justus? Et quomodo ambo justi ante Deum? Ante Deum, sed per Deum. Ambo justi ante Deum. Non labore, sed gratia. Audi Apostolum: Justificati gratis per gratiam ipsius. Et iterum: Non ex vobis, Dei donum est; non ex operibus, ne quis glorietur. Et iterum: Quid habes quod non accepisti? si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis? Evangelista ergo sic refert, non quid non habuerit, sed quid acceperit; non quid quaesitum sit, sed quid donatum.

Sermon XCI.

On the same

Those who know how to gather gold from the earth, where they have sensed a rich vein, there spend whatever there is of skill, whatever of labour: and we too, because we know that a heavenly treasure lies hidden in holy Zechariah, let us occupy in him all that belongs to our sermon, all that belongs to your hearing, so that what has been sought by common labour may become common gain. There was, he says, in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). This we have already said. And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron. So the Evangelist began, so that in the priest's wife the nobility of the priestly lineage might be shown preserved.

They were, he says, both just before God (Luke 1:6). Both just, because in both there was one justice. Both just, because the marriage between them rested not on fondness but on holiness. Both just, because, unequal in sex, they were held equal in merits. Both just, because, as there was one flesh in the two, so there was one spirit in the two. Let married people imitate them, so that those whom affection joins, virtue may join too. They were, he says, just, both of them, before God. Both just before God. And where is that saying: No one living will be justified in your sight (Ps 143:2)? Before men, perhaps, someone may be thought just, because men, as they know the faults of bodies, so are ignorant of the vices of the mind: but before God, to whom the bars of the breast lie open, from whom the secrets of the thoughts are not hidden, who is held innocent and just? Is there a man who does not sin in heart, does not do wrong in thought, does not stumble through doubt, does not incur the fall of trembling? Moses doubts (Num 20:12), Aaron goes astray (Exod 32:4), Peter denies (Matt 26:70), and who is just? And how are both just before God? Before God, but through God. Both just before God. Not by labour, but by grace. Hear the Apostle: Justified freely by his grace (Rom 3:24). And again: Not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; not from works, lest anyone should boast (Eph 2:8–9). And again: What have you that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you glory as if you had not received it? (1 Cor 4:7) So the Evangelist reports not what they did not have, but what they received; not what was sought, but what was given.

Erant, inquit, ambo justi ante Deum, incedentes in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus Dei sine querela. Incedentes dixit, ut eos ostenderet cucurrisse virtutibus, non stetisse; et ambulasse in via justitiae, non sedisse; nec remansisse in itinere mandatorum, sed ad mandatorum plenitudinem pervenisse. Incedentes in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus Dei sine querela. Beati, fratres, quos culpa non percutit, non vulnerat crimen; sed beatiores isti quos tetigit nec querela. Sine querela. Si pueritia, si adolescentia, si juventus sine querela exstitit, ubi tota querela est, qualis horum senectus? Si tale initium, qualis finis? Ascendisse justificationum vertices, colles mandatorum, nec in aliquo titubasse, est gratiae singularis, est unicae felicitatis insigne.

Et non erat, inquit, illis filius, eo quod esset Elisabeth sterilis. Non dixit, Non erant illis filii, sed Non erat illis filius, quia singularis futurus erat, qui erat de talibus nasciturus. Audi Dominum dicentem: Non surrexit major in natis mulierum Joanne Baptista. Eo quod esset Elisabeth sterilis. Sterilis corpore, sed fecunda virtutibus; tarda soboli, sed non tarda Deo; non germini clausa, sed tempori; non negata pignori, sed servata mysterio.

Et ambo, inquit, processerant in diebus suis. Processerant: sic describitur sacramentum senectutis, quae nondum decidit meritis, non aetate deficit, sed procedit; nec sentit detrimenta corporis, quae sumit augmenta virtutis. Fratres, Elisabeth sanctae partus non ablatus est, sed dilatus, donec transiret tempus carnis, passio corporis, conjugii necessitas, voluptatis causa, cupiditatis sensus, et totum quod humanum confundit, gravat, onerat conscientiam. Mundabatur enim longo tempore sacrificii domus, sanctitatis hospitium, metatus metatoris Christi, angeli domicilium, aula Spiritus sancti, Dei templum. Nescitis, inquit Apostolus, quia templum Dei estis, et Spiritus Dei habitat in vobis? Denique ubi tota corporis sedata querela est, et in totum facti sunt sine querela, mox sterilitas fugit, reviviscit senectus, fides concipit, parit castitas, nascitur major homine, par angelis, tuba coeli, praeco

They were, he says, both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of God without complaint. He said "walking" to show that they ran in the virtues, did not stand still; that they walked in the way of justice, did not sit; that they did not remain on the road of the commandments, but reached the fullness of the commandments. Walking in all the commandments and justifications of God without complaint. Blessed, brothers, are those whom fault does not strike, crime does not wound; but more blessed these, whom not even complaint has touched. Without complaint. If childhood, if adolescence, if youth was without complaint, where all is complaint, what must their old age have been? If such the beginning, what the end? To have climbed the summits of the justifications, the hills of the commandments, and not to have stumbled in anything, belongs to a singular grace; it is the mark of a unique happiness.

And they had no son, he says, because Elizabeth was barren (Luke 1:7). He did not say "They had no sons", but "They had no son", because he who was to be born of such parents was to be singular. Hear the Lord saying: There has not arisen a greater among those born of women than John the Baptist (Matt 11:11). Because Elizabeth was barren. Barren in body, but fruitful in virtues; slow to offspring, but not slow to God; not closed to progeny, but to time; not denied a child, but kept for a mystery.

And both, he says, had advanced in their days. Had advanced: so is described the mystery of an old age which has not yet fallen away in merits, does not fail in age, but advances; nor does that which takes on the increases of virtue feel the losses of the body. Brothers, holy Elizabeth's childbearing was not taken away but delayed, until there had passed the time of the flesh, the passion of the body, the necessity of marriage, the cause of pleasure, the feeling of desire, and all that confounds, weighs down, burdens the human conscience. For a long time the house of sacrifice was being cleansed, the guest-house of holiness, the lodging of Christ's harbinger, the abode of an angel, the hall of the Holy Spirit, the temple of God. Do you not know, says the Apostle, that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Cor 3:16) Indeed, when all the complaint of the body had been quieted, and they had become wholly without complaint, at once barrenness flees, old age revives, faith conceives, chastity gives birth; there is born one greater than man, equal to the angels, the trumpet of heaven, the herald of Christ, the secret of the Father,

Christi, arcanum Patris, Filii nuntius, signifer superni Regis, peccatorum venia, Judaeorum correctio, vocatio gentium, et ut proprie dicam, legis et gratiae fibula, quae diploidem summi sacerdotis sancto patri jungebat in pectore. Evangelista ergo virtutes patris matrisque describit, ut ex generatorum tantis meritis dignitas germinis nosceretur; et probaretur major homine, qui in ortu suo excedebat legem nativitatis humanae.

Sed si processurus est, jam nascatur Joannes, quia instat nativitas Christi; surgat novus Lucifer, quia jubar jam veri Solis erumpit; det vocem praeco, quia adest judex; clamet tuba, quia venit Rex; et quia processurus est Deus, angelus jam praecedat. Verum, quia quod supra homines est, homo referre non sufficit virtutes nascentis angeli, angelus jam loquatur. Dixit angelus ad Zachariam, Ne timeas Zacharia: exaudita est deprecatio tua, ecce Elisabeth uxor tua pariet tibi filium; et vocabis nomen ejus Joannem; et erit tibi gaudium et exsultatio; et multi in nativitate ejus gaudebunt. Erit enim magnus coram Domino; et vinum et siceram non bibet; et Spiritu sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris suae; et multos filiorum Israel convertet ad Dominum Deum ipsorum; et ipse praecedet ante illum in Spiritu et virtute Eliae, ut convertat corda patrum in filios, et incredulos ad prudentiam justorum, parare Domino plebem perfectam. Vacat humanus sermo, silet praedicatio tractatoris, quando angelico praeconio Joannis profertur gloria; virtus insonat, laus collaudatur; nec est quod illi adjiciat homo, cui Deus contulit totum.

Spiritu sancto, inquit, replebitur adhuc ex utero matris suae. Videtis quemadmodum Joannes ante pervenit ad coelum quam tangeret terram, ante accepit divinum Spiritum quam haberet humanum, ante suscepit divina munera quam corporis membra, ante coepit vivere Deo quam sibi, immo ante vixit ille Deo quam Deus viveret illi, juxta illud Apostoli: Vivo autem jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus. Sexto mense suae matris exsultat in utero, et in uterum Virginis venisse nuntiat Christum. Fervens nuntius, qui ante gestivit nuntiare quam vivere; impatiens dux, qui antequam perveniret ad corpus pervenit ad Regem; ante rapuit arma quam membra; ante aciem petiit quam lucem; et ut vinceret mundum, vicit ante naturam, ipse sine visceribus viscera matris exsuscitat; et quia tardabat corpus, solo spiritu implet evangelizantis officium. Quid dicam? Joannes antequam Christum praecederet, se praecessit. Patris, matris, filii corda unus atque idem implet Spiritus sanctus: ut uno sanctitatis organo resonet nativitatis Dominicae cantilena.

the messenger of the Son, the standard-bearer of the King on high, the pardon of sins, the correction of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and, to speak properly, the clasp of the Law and of grace, which fastened the double cloak of the high priest on the breast of his holy father. So the Evangelist describes the virtues of the father and the mother, so that the dignity of the offspring might be known from the great merits of those who begot him, and he might be proved greater than man, who in his birth went beyond the law of human birth.

But if he is to go forth, let John now be born, because the birth of Christ is at hand; let the new morning star rise, because the radiance of the true Sun is already breaking out; let the herald give voice, because the judge is present; let the trumpet sound, because the King is coming; and because God is to go forth, let the angel now go before. But because what is above men, the virtues of the angel being born, man is not able to relate, let the angel now speak. The angel said to Zechariah: Do not be afraid, Zechariah: your prayer has been heard; behold, Elizabeth your wife will bear you a son; and you shall call his name John; and you shall have joy and gladness; and many will rejoice at his birth (Luke 1:13–14). For he will be great before the Lord; and he shall drink no wine or strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb; and he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God; and he will go before him in the Spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the unbelieving to the prudence of the just, to make ready for the Lord a perfect people (Luke 1:15–17). Human speech is idle, the preaching of the preacher falls silent, when John's glory is brought forth by the angelic proclamation; his virtue resounds, his praise is praised together; nor is there anything man could add to him on whom God has conferred everything.

He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, he says, even from his mother's womb. You see how John reached heaven before he touched earth, received the divine Spirit before he had the human, took on divine gifts before the limbs of the body, began to live for God before for himself; or rather, he lived for God before God lived for him, according to that saying of the Apostle: But I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me (Gal 2:20). In the sixth month he leaps in his mother's womb, and announces that Christ has come into the Virgin's womb. An ardent messenger, who longed to announce before he lived; an impatient captain, who reached the King before he reached a body; he seized his arms before his limbs; he sought the battle line before the light; and, to conquer the world, he first conquered nature; without innards himself, he rouses his mother's innards; and because the body was slow, by the spirit alone he fulfils the office of one who brings the good news. What shall I say? John, before he went before Christ, went before himself. The hearts of father, mother and son one and the same Holy Spirit fills, so that the song of the Lord's birth may resound from one organ of holiness.

Nec mirum, fratres, semper ortus regios honorat festivitas, dulcis gratificat symphonia. Et nos, fratres, nativitatem Christi glorificemus canticis, honoremus muneribus: quia mentitur fidei, si quod facit magus, non facit Christianus.

Nor is it a wonder, brothers: festivity always honours royal births, sweet harmony graces them. And let us, brothers, glorify Christ's birth with songs, honour it with gifts: because the Christian is false to the faith if he does not do what the magus does (Matt 2:11).

Sermo XCII.

De eisdem

Sensim nos sermo evangelicus ad altiora promovet, ad superna extollit. Nec mirum, fratres, si Eliam currus aetherius evexit ad coelum, cum quotidie ista Evangeliorum quadriga, hominum genus coeli perferat et transmittat ad regnum. Ecce jam nos ipsa, fratres, de partu sterilis ad Virginis partum et a Joannis ortu ad ortum nostri fecit proximos Salvatoris. Sed quod superest adhuc de Zacharia pontifice patientius audiamus, ut ad cunabula nostri Regis regali itinere pervenire possimus: qui ob hoc coelestis quadrigae fidam conscendimus sessionem, ut sollicitas et arduas compendiorum semitas vitaremus.

Sed enim lectum est: Et factum est ut impleti sunt dies officii ejus, abiit in domum suam. Ita uni templo astabat tribus tota: parebant millia sacerdotum, propter quod ipsa observatio pontificalis officii erat divisa per plurimos, dispensata per tempora, distributa per vices, ne aut ordinem sacerdotii multitudo confusa turbaret, aut alter legendo jugiter alteri debitum negaret officium.

Post haec autem concepit Elisabeth uxor ejus. Erat illis conjugii facultas, erat illis licentia donata generandi, quibus inerat adhuc legis adolescentia, instabat adhuc religionis infantia. Lex, fratres, illicita prohibuit; licita non negavit; intra donum tenuit, supra donum conferre nil potuit; naturam rexit, supra naturam hominem non erexit. Lex fidei janua, gratiae nuntia, Evangelii praevia, paedagogus religionis infantiae, remisit in sacerdotio legali conjugii castitatem, ut in pontificatu gratiae venturam perpetuae virtutis gloriam nuntiaret. Secundum hanc ergo indulgentiam Elisabeth annositate jam mortua, sanctum reviviscit in partum, et arida atque exarata rugis membra medullis vitalibus in viscera fecunda viridantur: ipsum quoque tempus, ipsum, in quo desierat, revocatur ad corpus; et vetustate nimia domus uteri dilapsa, in faciem novam repente reparatur; stupet ordo, deficit consuetudo, miratur ipsa natura, et ex apparatu mansionis, hospitis meritum dignitasque innotescit.

Sermon XCII.

On the same

Little by little the Gospel's word moves us forward to higher things, lifts us up to the things above. Nor is it a wonder, brothers, if an ethereal chariot carried Elijah up to heaven (2 Kgs 2:11), since every day this four-horse chariot of the Gospels bears the race of men through and sends it on to the kingdom of heaven. See, brothers, it has now brought us near, from the childbearing of the barren woman to the Virgin's childbearing, and from John's birth to the birth of our Saviour. But let us hear more patiently what still remains about Zechariah the pontiff, so that we may come by a royal road to the cradle of our King: we who for this reason have mounted the trusty seat of the heavenly four-horse chariot, so as to avoid the troublesome and steep paths of short cuts.

But it has been read: And it came to pass, when the days of his office were fulfilled, that he went away to his house (Luke 1:23). Thus a whole tribe attended on the one temple: thousands of priests were in service, because the very observance of the pontifical office was divided among very many, apportioned by times, distributed by courses, lest either a confused multitude disturb the order of the priesthood, or one man, by reading continually, deny another the office due to him.

But after this Elizabeth his wife conceived (Luke 1:24). They had the faculty of marriage, they had the licence of begetting granted, they in whom there was still the adolescence of the Law, on whom the infancy of religion still pressed. The Law, brothers, forbade what is unlawful; it did not deny what is lawful; it held within the gift, could confer nothing beyond the gift; it ruled nature, it did not raise man above nature. The Law, the door of faith, the messenger of grace, the forerunner of the Gospel, the tutor of the infancy of religion, allowed in the priesthood of the Law the chastity of marriage, so that it might announce the coming glory of perpetual virtue in the pontificate of grace. According to this indulgence, then, Elizabeth, already dead with age, comes back to life for a holy childbearing, and her dry limbs, furrowed with wrinkles, grow green with vital marrow into a fruitful womb: the very time too, the very time in which she had ceased, is called back to her body; and the house of the womb, fallen into ruin with excessive age, is suddenly repaired to a new face; order is astounded, custom fails, nature itself wonders, and from the furnishing of the dwelling the merit and dignity of the guest become known.

Verum Joannes in generali habitaculo satis se miratus est esse peregrinum, qui se exclusum tempore, abdicatum natura, receptum se in eo auctoris beneficio didicit, non parentis.

Et celabat se mensibus quinque, dicens, quia sic mihi fecit Dominus. Bene totum fecisse Dominum confitetur, quae sibi collatum per hominem nil videbat. Et occultabat se mensibus quinque, quia etsi erat divini muneris, sui tamen temporis non erat quod habebat. Celabat se mensibus quinque. Erubescit anus feta, verecundatur vetula primi partus, et puerperam senectus abscondit extrema, ne sterilitatis opprobrium risus fecundae senectutis augeret. Quod autem risui subjacet senilis et veterana conceptio, persimilis hujus sterilitatis et aetatis Sara probat, quae sibi cum reddi partum, donari filium, cui jam vita prope deerat Domino promittente cognosceret, et ipsa de suo partu risit; et quod risui posset esse omnibus praegnans, et onerata canities, ipsius germinis testatur ex nomine, dicente Scriptura: Et vocavit nomen filii sui Isaac. Quod interpretari risum docuit, adjiciens: Risum mihi fecit Dominus. Hinc est quod Elisabeth sacrum vult celare mysterium, dicendo: Quia sic mihi fecit Dominus. Ut modo conceptus fatiget verecundia, quamdiu negati partus aerumna afflixit; pater tacet ex poena, ex verecundia mater celat. O quanta silentio vox nascitur! O quanta taciturnitate tuba saeculis inclamatura generatur! O quod secretum divini Judicis dat praeconem!

Quia sic mihi fecit Dominus in diebus quibus respexit auferre opprobrium meum inter homines. Honor conjugii, matrimonii dignitas, est procreatio dulcium liberorum; satis enim grave est, et satis triste, et virginitatis carere praemio, et filiorum solatia non habere; sustinere onera matrimonii, et ad fructum matrimonii non venire. Hinc est quod gaudet a se ablatum sterilitatis opprobrium, dicendo: Quia sic mihi fecit Dominus in diebus quibus respexit auferre opprobrium meum inter homines. Quia hoc apud homines miserum computatur, apud Deum vero reatus nullus est, ubi parentis culpa nulla est, sed judicium denegantis. Certe si hoc affert aliqua corporalis infirmitas, necessitas in causa est, non voluntas.

But John wondered greatly to find himself a pilgrim in the common dwelling, he who learned that, shut out by time, disowned by nature, he had been received in it by the kindness of the author, not of the parent.

And she hid herself five months, saying: Thus has the Lord done to me (Luke 1:24–25). Rightly does she confess that the Lord did the whole, she who saw that nothing had been conferred on her through man. And she concealed herself five months, because what she had, though it was of divine gift, was not, however, of her own time. She hid herself five months. The pregnant old woman blushes, the little old woman of a first childbearing is ashamed, and extreme old age hides the woman in childbed, lest the laughter at a fruitful old age should increase the reproach of barrenness. That an aged and veteran conception lies open to laughter, Sarah, very like her in this barrenness and age, proves (Gen 18:12): she who, when she learned, by the Lord's promise, that childbearing was being given back to her, that a son was being granted to her whose life was now almost failing, herself laughed at her childbearing; and that a pregnant woman, and grey hair laden, could be a laughing-stock to all, she testifies from the very name of her offspring, as Scripture says: And he called the name of his son Isaac (Gen 21:3). Which name, she taught, means laughter, adding: The Lord has made laughter for me (Gen 21:6). Hence it is that Elizabeth wishes to hide the sacred mystery, saying: Thus has the Lord done to me. So now shame at the conception wearies her, for as long as the hardship of a childbearing denied afflicted her; the father is silent from punishment, from shame the mother hides. O how great a voice is born of silence! O how great a trumpet, to cry out to the ages, is begotten in quietness! O what a secret of the divine Judge gives the herald!

Thus has the Lord done to me in the days in which he looked upon me to take away my reproach among men (Luke 1:25). The honour of wedlock, the dignity of matrimony, is the begetting of sweet children; for it is very grievous and very sad both to lack the reward of virginity and not to have the comforts of children; to bear the burdens of matrimony, and not to come to the fruit of matrimony. Hence it is that she rejoices that the reproach of barrenness has been taken away from her, saying: Thus has the Lord done to me in the days in which he looked upon me to take away my reproach among men. For this is reckoned wretched among men, but with God there is no guilt where there is no fault of the parent, but the judgement of the one who denies. Certainly, if some bodily weakness brings this about, necessity is the cause, not will.

Sed jam nunc omnis ignava carnis intelligentia sit remota, tota corporei sensus abjiciatur infirmitas: et quaecumque est ingenii humani omnis excludatur intentio, fidei pateant oculi, cordis reserentur aures, mentis currat et incurrat incessus: ut pervenire ad mysterium virginei conceptus, ad sacramentum partus virginei penetrare possimus, adjuvante Domino Jesu Christo, qui ex ea genitus nunc in coelestia regna cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

But now let all sluggish understanding of the flesh be put away, let all the weakness of bodily sense be cast off; and let every effort of human wit, whatever it be, be shut out; let the eyes of faith be open, the ears of the heart unbarred; let the step of the mind run and run on, so that we may be able to arrive at the mystery of the virgin conception, to penetrate to the sacrament of the virgin childbearing, with the help of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, begotten of her, now lives in the heavenly kingdoms with God the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo XCIII.

De conversione Magdalenae

Ad prandium, et ad Pharisaei prandium venisse Christum sollicitus forsitan miratur auditor. Pharisaei domum Christus intravit, non accepturus Judaicos cibos, sed divinam misericordiam largiturus; neque accubuit pocula saporata melle floribus odorata sumpturus, sed poenitentis lacrymas ex ipsis oculorum fontibus potaturus: Deus delinquentium gemitus esurit, sitit lacrymas peccatorum.

Rogabat, inquit, Dominum quidam Pharisaeus, ut manducaret cum illo: et ingressus domum Pharisaei, discubuit. Et ecce mulier quae erat in civitate peccatrix, ut cognovit quod accumberet Dominus in domo Pharisaei, attulit alabastrum unguenti, et stans retro secus pedes ejus, lacrymis coepit rigare pedes ejus, et capillis capitis sui tergebat, et osculabatur pedes ejus, et ungebat unguento. Videtis quia ad Pharisaei mensam venit Christus, non ut carnalibus repleretur escis, sed ut in carne negotium coeleste monstraret; neque ut probaret posita humanitus ante se, sed post se gesta divinitus approbaret. Christum namque semper agnoscimus per humanos actus divinas exercuisse virtutes, dum nova et praeter usus mortalium cuncta esse quae ab eo etiam corporaliter gesta sunt comprobantur.

Pharisaeus ad manducandum vocat Christum: quid ibi quaerit mulier non vocata? Claustra domus non prorumpit extraneus, convivii secretum non praesumit non invitatus intrare, cibos paratos relaxandis mentibus post laborem perturbare non audet arbiter luxuriosus; et quid est quod haec mulier ignota, immo male nota, onusta luctibus, plena lacrymis, clamosa planctu, nescio janitore, nullo conscio, ipso ignorante pastore, domus aditus percurrit omnes, transit totas ministeriorum catervas, ipsum convivii pervolat ad secretum, et facit domum laetitiae domum lamentationis et planctus?

Sermon XCIII.

On the conversion of the Magdalene

The attentive hearer perhaps wonders that Christ came to a dinner, and to a Pharisee's dinner. Christ entered the Pharisee's house not to receive Jewish food but to bestow divine mercy; nor did he recline to take cups flavoured with honey, fragrant with flowers, but to drink the tears of the penitent from the very fountains of the eyes: God hungers for the groans of offenders, thirsts for the tears of sinners.

A certain Pharisee, he says, was asking the Lord to eat with him: and entering the Pharisee's house, he reclined at table (Luke 7:36). And behold, a woman who was a sinner in the city, when she learned that the Lord was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, began to water his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment (Luke 7:37–38). You see that Christ came to the Pharisee's table not to be filled with fleshly foods, but to show in the flesh a heavenly business; nor to try what was set before him in a human way, but to approve what was done behind him in a divine way. For we always recognise that Christ exercised divine powers through human acts, in that all the things that were done by him, even bodily, are proved to be new and beyond the usage of mortals.

The Pharisee invites Christ to eat: what is the woman who was not invited looking for there? A stranger does not burst through the bars of a house, one not invited does not presume to enter the privacy of a banquet, a dissolute onlooker does not dare to disturb food prepared for relaxing minds after labour; and how is it that this woman, unknown, or rather ill known, laden with mourning, full of tears, loud with lamentation, without the doorkeeper knowing, with no one aware, without the host himself knowing, runs through all the entrances of the house, passes all the troops of servants, flies to the very privacy of the banquet, and makes the house of gladness a house of lamentation and mourning?

Fratres, non rogata venit illa, sed jussa; intravit exhibita, non praesumens: ipse sic fecit eam sisti sibi, qui illam coelesti sententia jussit absolvi. Denique dum Pharisaeus veste clarus, primus in sigmate, in ipsis oculis Christi tumens, epulis homini, non Deo placiturus, festivus infunditur, venit mulier, et venit retro, quia reus animus post tergum stat ad veniam, quia per culpam novit se vultus fiduciam perdidisse; venit satisfactura Deo, non homini placitura cum venit; venit pietatis illa, non voluptatis exhibitura convivium. Denique et poenitentiae ponit mensam, fercula compunctionis apponit, panem doloris infert; potum lacrymis temperat in mensura, et ad delicias deitatis totas, totam pulsat cordis sui et corporis symphoniam, organi planctus dat clamorem, citharam per suspiria longa modulatur, gemitus aptat in fistulam; et dum pectus ipsam conscientiam arguens saepe percutit, facit placitura Deo cymbala personare; dumque taliter apportat divinis oculis cibos, totas misericordiae copias sic reportat.

Ecce mulier quae erat in civitate peccatrix. Exaggerat evangelista mulieris facinus, ut accumulet indulgentiam largitoris. In civitate peccatrix. Civitate peccaverat, quia fama sua famam totius tetigerat civitatis; sicque jam non peccatrix solum, sed ipsius civitatis facta fuerat ipsa peccatum. Haec cognovit quod nisi ab illo solo civitatis peccatum non posset auferri, qui solus mundi venerat abolere peccatum. Et ut cognovit quia accumberet Dominus in domo Pharisaei. Non ad stantem, non ad sedentem audet venire peccatrix: Deus cum stat, corripit; cum sedet, judicat; prostratis conjacet, cum decumbit. Ut cognovit quod accumberet Dominus in domo Pharisaei. Inclinem ad miserandum supernam didicit majestatem; et ideo credidit quod esset ad veniam sibi promptus, qui Pharisaei venerat tam promptus ad mensam.

Attulit alabastrum unguenti. Portavit oleum, quia medicinam lethali vulneri a superno medico perquirebat. Stans retro secus pedes ejus. Ad pedes tendit semper citam veniam qui requirit. Et bene stans, quia jam cadere non potest, qui ad pedes Christi meruit pervenire. Stans retro secus pedes ejus. Ut Christi vestigiis innixa percurreret per viam vitae, quae per viam cucurrerat mortis. Lacrymis rigabat pedes ejus.

Brothers, she did not come because she was asked, but because she was bidden; she entered presented, not presuming: he himself so caused her to be set before him who by a heavenly sentence ordered her to be absolved. Indeed, while the Pharisee, splendid in dress, first on the couch, swelling with pride before the very eyes of Christ, ready to please man, not God, with his feast, lounges at his festivity, the woman comes, and comes behind, because the guilty mind stands behind its back for pardon, because it knows that through its fault it has lost the confidence of the face; she comes to make satisfaction to God, not to please man when she comes; she comes to set out a banquet of piety, not of pleasure. Indeed, she sets also the table of penance, serves the dishes of compunction, brings in the bread of pain; she mixes the drink with tears in measure, and for all the delights of the Godhead she strikes up the whole symphony of her heart and her body, she gives the clamour of the organ of lamentation, plays the cithara with long sighs, fits her groans to the pipe; and in often beating her breast, accusing her very conscience, she makes cymbals sound that will please God; and while she thus brings food to the divine eyes, she carries back in this way the whole abundance of mercy.

Behold, a woman who was a sinner in the city. The Evangelist heaps up the woman's misdeed, so as to pile up the indulgence of the giver. A sinner in the city. She had sinned with the city, because her fame had touched the fame of the whole city; and so she had become not only a sinner, but herself the very sin of the city. She knew that the sin of the city could not be taken away except by him alone who alone had come to abolish the sin of the world. And when she learned that the Lord was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house. The sinful woman does not dare to come to him standing, nor to him sitting: God, when he stands, rebukes; when he sits, judges; when he reclines, lies down with the prostrate. When she learned that the Lord was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house. She learned that the majesty on high bends down to pity; and therefore she believed that he would be ready to pardon her who had come so readily to the Pharisee's table.

She brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She carried oil, because she was seeking from the heavenly physician a medicine for a deadly wound. Standing behind at his feet. He who seeks a swift pardon always makes for the feet. And rightly standing, because he can no longer fall who has merited to reach the feet of Christ. Standing behind at his feet. So that, leaning on Christ's footsteps, she who had run along the way of death might run through the way of life. With tears she watered his feet.

En mutatur ordo rerum, pluviam terrae coelum dat semper: ecce nunc rigat terra coelum, immo super coelos et usque ad ipsum Dominum imber humanarum prosilit lacrymarum, ut juxta Psalmistam et de aquis fletuum cantetur illud: Et aquae quae super coelos sunt, laudent nomen Domini. Lacrymis rigabat pedes ejus. O quanta vis in lacrymis peccatorum! rigant coelum, terram diluunt, exstinguunt gehennam, delent in omne facinus lata divina promulgatione sententiam.

Et capillis capitis sui tergebat. Dominicos pedes lavat lacrymis, crinibus tergit. Vacat ab excusatione paupertas; inhumanitas veniam non habebit, quia in totum sibi natura sufficit ad obsequium Creatoris. Et capillis capitis sui tergebat. In peccatricis caput purgandis criminibus refluebat unda, ut sua fonte mulier in novum baptisma suorum dilueret illuviem peccatorum. Et capillis capitis sui tergebat. Ut juxta Psalmistam verticem capilli, ex quo ambulaverat in delictis suis, in sanctitatem tali verteret servitute. Et osculabatur pedes ejus. Praecesserant intervenientes lacrymae, ut oscula devota sequerentur, quia lacrymae satisfactionis sunt documentum, oscula sunt reconciliationis indicia. Et ungebat unguento. Mulierem super caput Domini fudisse oleum, alio evangelista referente, cognovimus: non est ergo quod facit haec mulier mollis et carnalis obsequii, sed plenae humanitatis est sacramentum; quia in capite Christi Deus est, in pedibus evangelizantium pacem.

Orate, fratres, ut et nos in unguine Domini commereamur aliquatenus computari, et ungamur unguento quod pedibus funditur Salvatoris: quia sicut oblatio est, cum offertur unguentum; ita chrisma perfectum est, de Dominicis vestigiis cum redundat. Cujus autem mulier ista typum praeferat, vel quam magnum praefiguret arcanum, donante Deo, tunc dicemus, quando ea quae sunt in sequentibus exponentur.

See, the order of things is changed: heaven always gives rain to the earth; behold, now the earth waters heaven, or rather, above the heavens and even to the Lord himself the shower of human tears leaps up, so that, according to the Psalmist, that verse may be sung of the waters of weeping too: And let the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord (Ps 148:4–5). With tears she watered his feet. O how great is the power in the tears of sinners! they water heaven, wash the earth, extinguish Gehenna, blot out the sentence passed by divine decree against every misdeed.

And she wiped them with the hair of her head. She washes the Lord's feet with tears, wipes them with her locks. Poverty is left without excuse; inhumanity will have no pardon, because nature is wholly sufficient to itself for homage to the Creator. And she wiped them with the hair of her head. Onto the sinful woman's head the wave flowed back for the cleansing of crimes, so that the woman, with her own font, might wash away the filth of her sins into a new baptism. And she wiped them with the hair of her head. So that, according to the Psalmist, she might turn the crown of hair (Ps 68:22) with which she had walked in her offences to holiness by such a service. And she kissed his feet. The tears had gone before, interceding, so that devout kisses might follow, because tears are the proof of satisfaction, kisses are the signs of reconciliation. And she anointed them with ointment. We know, as another evangelist relates, that a woman poured oil on the Lord's head (Matt 26:7): so what this woman does is not of soft and carnal homage, but is a mystery of full humanity; because in the head of Christ is God, in the feet those who bring the good news of peace.

Pray, brothers, that we too may merit together to be counted in some measure in the anointing of the Lord, and may be anointed with the ointment that is poured on the Saviour's feet: because, as it is an offering when ointment is offered, so it is perfect chrism when it overflows from the Lord's footsteps. But whose type this woman displays, or how great a secret she prefigures, we shall tell, by God's gift, when the things that follow are expounded.

Sermo XCIV.

De eadem, et Pharisaeo murmurante, ac Christo respondente

Quoniam sermone proximo partem primam hodiernae percurrimus lectionis, admirati pariter sumus quo fervore, qua fide, quali ausu, quanta obsequii novitate, peccatrix mulier ipsius vestigia contigerit Salvatoris: modo quid Pharisaeus tacens dixerit, quid Christus, cui loquuntur tacita, responderit, audiamus. Videns, inquit, Pharisaeus, qui vocaverat eum, ait intra se dicens: Hic si esset propheta, sciret utique quae et qualis est mulier quae tangit eum. Pharisaee, quod conspicis non est ignorantia, sed potestas; est divini judicii, non erroris humani. Pharisaee, erras, nescire magis potuit si fuisset propheta, quia prophetia non est humani arbitrii, muneris est divini: unde propheta scit non quantum vult, sed quantum dederit ille qui tribuit prophetiam. Hic si esset propheta, sciret utique quae et qualis est mulier quae tangit eum. Mulieris malae tactus urit male conscium, parem polluit, suspectum notat, hominem malae voluntatis infamat: caeterum peccatrix fit bona, fit sancta, fit innocens, cum tetigerit veniae largitorem. Stercora contingunt, sed non inquinant solem. Medicum cum tangunt vulnera, putredo non polluit. Judicem quamvis tangat reus, non potest maculare cum supplicat. Sic peccator cum Dominum tangit, non Dominum sordidat; sed ipse et peccato caret omni, et rapit subito sanctitatem. Probat hoc mulier in profluvio sanguinis constituta, quae ut tetigit fimbriam Domini, non fimbriam polluit, sed ipsa mox inquinamento vetustae caruit passionis.

Hic si esset propheta, sciret utique quae et qualis est mulier quae tangit eum. Pharisaeus Christum prophetam crederet, si exposita oculis, nota populis si videret. Quid putas crediturus erit, cum mox eum mentis suae arbitrum, cordis sui judicem, testem conscientiae suae, cogitationum suarum didicerit cognitorem? Putasne vel tunc fatebitur Deum, quem modo post virtutes tantas judicat nec magistrum? Hic si esset propheta, sciret utique quae et qualis est mulier quae tangit eum.

Sermon XCIV.

On the same, and on the Pharisee murmuring, and Christ answering

Since in the last sermon we ran through the first part of today's reading, we wondered together with what fervour, what faith, what daring, what novelty of homage the sinful woman touched the very footprints of the Saviour: now let us hear what the Pharisee said while silent, and what Christ, to whom silent things speak, answered. Seeing it, he says, the Pharisee who had invited him said within himself: If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what sort of woman this is who touches him (Luke 7:39). Pharisee, what you see is not ignorance but power; it belongs to divine judgement, not to human error. Pharisee, you are wrong: had he been a prophet, he could rather have not known, because prophecy is not of human choice, it is of divine gift: hence a prophet knows, not as much as he wishes, but as much as he who bestows prophecy has given. If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what sort of woman this is who touches him. The touch of a wicked woman burns the man of bad conscience, pollutes one like her, brands the suspect, defames a man of evil will: but the sinful woman becomes good, becomes holy, becomes innocent, when she has touched the giver of pardon. Dung touches the sun, but does not defile it. When wounds touch the physician, the rot does not pollute him. Though the accused touch the judge, he cannot stain him when he supplicates. So the sinner, when he touches the Lord, does not dirty the Lord; but he himself is both rid of all sin and seizes holiness at once. The woman with the flow of blood proves this, who, when she touched the hem of the Lord, did not pollute the hem, but was herself at once rid of the defilement of her old affliction.

If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what sort of woman this is who touches him. The Pharisee would believe Christ a prophet if he saw things laid open to the eyes, known to the people. What do you think he will believe, as soon as he learns that he is the arbiter of his mind, the judge of his heart, the witness of his conscience, the examining judge of his thoughts? Do you think he will acknowledge even then that he is God, whom now, after such mighty works, he does not even judge a master? If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what sort of woman this is who touches him.

Mulier habebat vulnus, sciebat illud, et ideo taliter tanti vulneris medicum perquirebat; Pharisaeus perfidiae morbo saucius, superbiae flamma febriens, per phrenesim se nesciebat insanum. Hinc est quod Christus illuc primum curam vertit, ubi ignota saeviebat infirmitas, ut coelestis medicus uno medicamine duos curaret aegrotos.

Videns Pharisaeus qui vocaverat eum, ait intra se, dicens. Cui, quia intra se cogitaverat Pharisaeus, Christus publica voce respondit; et dum Pharisaei cordis patefecit arcanum, ipsum fuisse totius prophetiae demonstrat auctorem. Respondens, inquit, Jesus, ait: Simon, habeo tibi aliquid dicere. Tibi, cui opus est medicina, et nescis quaerere medicinam; tibi, qui Deum magistrum vocas, et Dei deseris disciplinam: ignoras quoniam magistro magnam facit injuriam, qui se discipulum fatetur ejus, cujus non sequitur institutum? Nam sicut discipuli probitas laus est magistri, ita magistri vituperatio discipulus nesciens disciplinam. Simon, habeo tibi aliquid dicere. Respondit, magister, dic. Iterum, magister, dic, et non Deus dic. Jam jam Deum sentiens, quem vocat magistrum.

Duo, inquit, debitores erant cuidam feneratori: unus debebat denarios quingentos, et alius quinquaginta. Non habentibus illis unde redderent, donavit utrisque; quis ergo eum amplius diligit? Respondens Simon dixit: Aestimo quod is cui plus donavit. Et Dominus, recte judicasti. Audistis quemadmodum coelestis creditor totum debitum charitate compensat, et ad incrementum totius fenoris amoris solius exigit et requirit usuram. Plectendus debitor, qui dilectione sola suam negligit redimere cautionem.

Vis scire, homo, quid Deo debeas? Quod factus es, Dei creditum est; quod es rationis capax, Dei fenus est; quod discretionem mali bonive possides, accepisti; et quod vivendi normam acceperis per chirographum legis, stipulanti Deo spopondisse te non potes diffiteri. Sed dum te per vitia carnis in lutum instar suis demergis, et quadrupedum more vivens qua praeditus es ratione privaris, et in gurgite criminum boni malive perdita discretione confundis, et divinae legis substantiam dissipas, mundana voluptate captivus, factus es gloriosi fenoris debitor luctuosus, cui deficientibus virtutum lucris criminum multiplicatur usura. Sed licet in hac re cecideris, licet fueris in ista devolutus, vide ne desperes: homo, remansit tibi unde piissimo satisfacias creditori. Absolvi vis? Ama. Charitas cooperiet multitudinem peccatorum.

The woman had a wound, she knew it, and therefore she sought out in such a way the physician of so great a wound; the Pharisee, wounded by the sickness of unbelief, feverish with the flame of pride, through frenzy did not know himself to be mad. Hence it is that Christ first turned his care to where an unknown illness was raging, so that the heavenly physician might cure two sick people with one medicine.

The Pharisee who had invited him, seeing it, said within himself, saying. To him, because the Pharisee had thought within himself, Christ answered with a public voice; and in laying open the secret of the Pharisee's heart, he shows that he himself was the author of all prophecy. Jesus answering, he says, said: Simon, I have something to say to you (Luke 7:40). To you, who need medicine and do not know how to seek medicine; to you, who call God master and forsake the discipline of God: do you not know that he does great injury to the master who acknowledges himself the disciple of one whose teaching he does not follow? For as the uprightness of the disciple is the praise of the master, so a disciple who does not know discipline is the reproach of the master. Simon, I have something to say to you. He answered: Master, say it. Again "Master, say it", and not "God, say it". Already, already sensing God, whom he calls master.

There were two debtors, he says, to a certain lender: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty (Luke 7:41). As they had nothing with which to pay, he forgave them both; which of them, then, loves him more? (Luke 7:42) Simon answered and said: I reckon the one to whom he forgave more (Luke 7:43). And the Lord: You have judged rightly. You have heard how the heavenly creditor makes up the whole debt with charity, and for the increase of the whole loan exacts and requires the interest of love alone. That debtor deserves to be punished who neglects to redeem his security by love alone.

Do you want to know, man, what you owe God? That you were made is God's credit; that you are capable of reason is God's loan; that you possess the discernment of evil and good, you received; and that you received the norm of living through the bond of the Law, you cannot deny that you pledged yourself to God when he stipulated. But in that through the vices of the flesh you plunge yourself into the mire like a pig, and, living in the manner of beasts, deprive yourself of the reason with which you are endowed, and in the whirlpool of crimes, the discernment of good and evil lost, you confound them, and you squander the substance of the divine Law, a captive of worldly pleasure, you have become the mournful debtor of a glorious loan, against whom, as the profits of the virtues fail, the interest of crimes is multiplied. But though you have fallen in this matter, though you have rolled down into it, see that you do not despair: man, there remains to you the means to make satisfaction to the most loving creditor. Do you want to be absolved? Love. Charity will cover a multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8).

Negationis crimine quid pejus? et tamen Petrus amore solo valuit hoc delere, probante Domino, cum dicit: Petre, amas me? Inter omnia Dei praecepta amor obtinet principatum. Diliges, inquit, Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua, et ex tota virtute tua. Ama ergo, homo, Deum, et ama totus, ut possis omnia sine labore vincere et delere peccata.

Tenerae militiae, delicati conflictus est amore solo de cunctis criminibus reportare victoriam, sicut ex sequentibus elucescit. Conversus, inquit, ad mulierem, dixit Simoni. Quid est, quod conversus ad mulierem, Simoni loquitur Christus? Quia cum poenitentem respicit, arguit oblatrantem. Dixit Simoni: Vides hanc mulierem? Intravi in domum tuam, aquam pedibus meis non dedisti, haec autem lacrymis rigavit pedes meos, et capillis capitis sui tersit; osculum mihi non dedisti, haec autem ex quo intravi non cessavit osculari pedes meos; oleo caput meum non unxisti, haec autem unguento unxit pedes meos. Propterea, dico tibi: dimittuntur illi peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum; cui autem minus dimittitur, minus diligit. Probatum est quia dilectio delet et abluit universa peccata. Quid est autem quod dixit: Cui minus dimittitur, minus diligit? Ergo ad peccandum satis est ut major charitas comparetur? Absit. Charitas de praeteritis subvenit, non liberat de futuris; charitas nescit peccare cum diligit; charitas non est charitas, si delinquit; charitas Dei custos est sanctitatis.

Fratres, si nos esse peccatores novimus, et esse nolumus peccatores, pedibus Christi demus lacrymas, spargamus capillos, figamus oscula, pietatis oleum tota devotione fundamus; ut dicatur nobis: Dimittuntur vobis peccata multa, quia dilexistis multum. Imitemur hanc mulierem, quam conspicimus non solum caruisse peccatis, sed ad totum sanctitatis verticem pervenisse. Quae sit autem haec mulier, quia hodiernus sermo charitatis nos distulit, sicut jam promisimus, in sequentibus Deo auctore pandemus.

What is worse than the crime of denial? and yet Peter was able to blot it out by love alone, as the Lord proves when he says: Peter, do you love me? (John 21:15–17) Among all God's precepts love holds the first place. You shall love, he says, the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mark 12:30). Love God, then, man, and love him with your whole self, so that you may be able to overcome and blot out all sins without labour.

It belongs to a tender service, a gentle combat, to carry off the victory over all crimes by love alone, as is made clear by what follows. Turning, he says, to the woman, he said to Simon (Luke 7:44). What does it mean, that Christ, turned towards the woman, speaks to Simon? That while he looks upon the penitent, he rebukes the one who barks against her. He said to Simon: Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave no water for my feet, but she has watered my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; you gave me no kiss, but she, from the time I entered, has not ceased to kiss my feet; you did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment (Luke 7:44–46). Therefore I say to you: her many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much; but he to whom less is forgiven, loves less (Luke 7:47). It is proved that love blots out and washes away all sins. But what is it that he said: He to whom less is forgiven, loves less? Is it, then, reason enough for sinning, that greater charity may be gained? Far from it. Charity comes to the help of things past, it does not set free from things to come; charity does not know how to sin while it loves; charity is not charity if it does wrong; the charity of God is the guardian of holiness.

Brothers, if we know that we are sinners, and do not wish to be sinners, let us give tears to the feet of Christ, spread out our hair, fix kisses, pour out the oil of piety with all devotion, so that it may be said to us: Your many sins are forgiven you, because you have loved much (Luke 7:47). Let us imitate this woman, whom we see not only to have been rid of sins but to have reached the whole summit of holiness. But who this woman is, since today's sermon on charity has made us put it off, we shall disclose, as we have already promised, in what follows, with God as author.

Sermo XCV.

De eadem, ubi de Magdalenae allegorica conversione

Omnia quae a Christo corporaliter gesta referuntur, sic subnixa sunt historica veritate, ut plena semper sacramentis coelestibus comprobentur. Et quia, quod erat in facie lectionis jam perstrinximus sermone repetito, orate ut, sicut promisimus, interna ejus, Spiritu sancto revelante, pandamus. Inhonora est dictio, quae Dei facta humana tantum expositione depromit.

Rogavit, inquit, Dominum quidam Pharisaeus ut manducaret cum illo. Pharisaeus, fratres, catholicus dicitur Judaeorum; nam et resurrectionem credit, et a Sadducaeo resurrectionem negante dissentit. Hinc est quod rogat Christum, id est, resurrectionis auctorem, ut manducet cum illo: quia qui convivit Christo, mori nescit, utique vivit semper. Rogabat Dominum ut manducaret cum illo. Rogas, Pharisaee, ut manduces cum illo; crede, esto Christianus, et manducas ex illo. Ego sum, inquit, panis qui de coelo descendi. Semper Deus majora tribuit quam rogatur; nam se manducandum dedit, qui rogabatur, ut manducandi secum fiduciam largiretur; et tamen sic hoc dedit, ut illud quod postulatus est non negaret. Nonne promittit hoc et sponte discipulis suis? Vos qui perseverastis mecum, manducabitis et bibetis in mensa mea in regno meo. Christiane, qui se tibi hic manducandum dedit, quid suum tibi denegare poterit in futurum? Et qui tantum tibi viaticum paravit ad victum, quid in illa tibi mansione perpetua non paravit? Manducabitis in mensa mea in regno meo. Audisti Dei convivium, sollicitus non sis de qualitate convivii. Qui pervenire regis meretur ad mensam, manducabit quidquid regni dominatio possidet et potestas; sic qui ad convivium venerit Creatoris, habebit in deliciis suis quidquid continetur in creatura.

Sed ad coepta redeamus. Et ingressus domum Pharisaei. Quam domum? Nempe synagogam ingressus accubuit. In synagoga, fratres, tunc accubuit, quando occubuit Christus: sed corpus suum Ecclesiae transmisit ad mensam, ut esset coelestis caro manducaturis gentibus ad salutem. Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii Hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis. Quemadmodum autem manducetur caro Christi, quomodo bibatur et sanguis ejus, norunt illi qui sunt sacramentis coelestibus instituti.

Sermon XCV.

On the same, where it treats of the Magdalene's allegorical conversion

All the things that are related as done bodily by Christ are so upheld by historical truth that they are always proved to be full of heavenly mysteries. And because we have already touched upon what was on the surface of the reading in a repeated sermon, pray that, as we promised, we may disclose its inner things, the Holy Spirit revealing them. Without honour is the discourse that sets forth the deeds of God by a merely human exposition.

A certain Pharisee, he says, asked the Lord to eat with him (Luke 7:36). The Pharisee, brothers, is called the catholic of the Jews; for he both believes the resurrection, and dissents from the Sadducee, who denies the resurrection. Hence it is that he asks Christ, that is, the author of the resurrection, to eat with him: because he who lives with Christ does not know how to die; surely he lives always. He was asking the Lord to eat with him. You ask, Pharisee, to eat with him; believe, be a Christian, and you eat of him. I am, he says, the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:41). God always grants greater things than he is asked for; for he gave himself to be eaten, he who was being asked to grant the confidence of eating with him; and yet he so gave this as not to deny what he was asked for. Does he not promise this also of his own accord to his disciples? You who have persevered with me shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom (Luke 22:28–30). Christian, he who has given himself to you here to be eaten, what of his can he refuse you in the future? And he who has prepared so great a provision for the journey for your sustenance, what has he not prepared for you in that perpetual dwelling? You shall eat at my table in my kingdom. You have heard of God's banquet; do not be concerned about the quality of the banquet. He who merits to come to a king's table will eat whatever the dominion and power of the kingdom possesses; so he who comes to the Creator's banquet will have among his delights whatever is contained in the creation.

But let us return to what we began. And entering the Pharisee's house. What house? Surely, he entered the synagogue and reclined. In the synagogue, brothers, Christ reclined then, when he lay down in death: but he sent his body over to the table of the Church, so that the heavenly flesh might be for salvation to the Gentiles who would eat it. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you (John 6:53). But how the flesh of Christ is eaten, how his blood too is drunk, those know who have been instructed in the heavenly sacraments.

Ecce, inquit, mulier quae erat in civitate peccatrix. Quae mulier? Ecclesia sine dubio. In civitate peccatrix. Civitate qua? Illa de qua dixerat propheta: Quomodo facta est meretrix civitatis fidelis Sion? Et alibi: Vidi iniquitatem et contradictionem in civitate, et iniquitas et labor in medio ejus et in justitia; et non defecit de plateis ejus usura et dolus. In civitate ergo perfidiae septa muris, superbiae turribus communita, distincta iniquitatum plateis, obserata contradictionum portis, depicta doli fucis, indurata silicibus usurarum, negotiorum doloribus aggravata, infamata lupanaribus, id est, idolorum templis, mulier haec, id est Ecclesia, gravissimum trahebat reatum ex tanta praecedentium colluvie peccatorum.

Sed ubi audivit venisse Christum ad domum Pharisaei, id est, ad synagogam: ibi, hoc est, ad Judaicum Pascha, passionis suae mysteria tradidisse, aperuisse sui corporis et sanguinis sacramentum, manifestasse nostrae redemptionis arcanum, Scribas velut pessimos despiciens janitores. Vae vobis legisperitis, qui tulistis clavem scientiae! Irruptis contradictionum foribus, contempto ipso chori Pharisaici principatu, ardens, anhelans, aestuans ad totum legalis convivii penetrale pervenit: ibique reperit Christum inter amoris epulas et dulcia pocula traditum, Judaicam occubuisse per fraudem, juxta illud prophetae: Quoniam si inimicus exprobrasset mihi, supportassem utique; et si is qui oderat me, super me mala locutus fuisset, abscondissem me utique ab eo: tu vero, homo unanimis, dux meus et notus meus, qui mecum dulces capiebas cibos, in domo domini ambulavimus cum consensu.

Ut cognovit accubuisse Dominum in domo Pharisaei, id est, in synagoga omni dolo, tota fraude addictum, passum, crucifixum et sepultum; tamen a fervore fidei tanta ista non retardatur injuria, sed portat unguentum, portat Christiani chrismatis oleum: et quia Christi faciem videre non meruit corporalem, stat retro non loco, sed tempore, inhaeret ejus vestigiis, ut sequatur; et jam desiderii plus quam conscientiae lacrymas fundit, ut quem abeuntem videre non meruit, mereatur videre redeuntem. Lacrymas ergo ad pedes Domini profluo amore perfundit; dum pedes evangelizantium regnum ejus bonorum operum manibus tenet, lavat lacrymis charitatis, confessionis labiis osculatur, et totum misericordiae profundit unguentum, donec conversus ad eam; quid est conversus? hoc est, reversus, dicat Simoni, dicat Pharisaeis, dicat negantibus, dicat populo Judaeorum: Intravi domum vestram, aquam pedibus meis non dedistis.

Behold, he says, a woman who was a sinner in the city (Luke 7:37). What woman? The Church, without doubt. A sinner in the city. In what city? That of which the prophet had said: How has the faithful city of Zion become a harlot? (Isa 1:21) And elsewhere: I have seen iniquity and contradiction in the city, and iniquity and toil in its midst and in justice; and usury and deceit have not departed from its streets (Ps 55:10–12). In the city, then, fenced with the walls of unbelief, fortified with the towers of pride, laid out with the streets of iniquities, barred with the gates of contradictions, painted with the dyes of deceit, hardened with the flints of usuries, weighed down with the pains of business, defamed by brothels, that is, by the temples of idols, this woman, that is, the Church, was dragging a most heavy guilt from so great a sewer of preceding sins.

But when she heard that Christ had come to the Pharisee's house, that is, to the synagogue; that there, that is, at the Jewish Pasch, he had handed on the mysteries of his Passion, opened the sacrament of his body and blood, made manifest the secret of our redemption, despising the scribes as the worst of doorkeepers. Woe to you lawyers, who have taken away the key of knowledge! (Luke 11:52) Bursting the doors of contradictions, despising the very headship of the Pharisaic choir, burning, panting, seething, she came to the innermost recess of the banquet of the Law: and there she found Christ, amid the feasts of love and the sweet cups, betrayed, fallen through Jewish fraud, according to that saying of the Prophet: For if an enemy had reproached me, I would surely have borne it; and if he who hated me had spoken evil against me, I would surely have hidden myself from him: but you, a man of one mind with me, my guide and my familiar friend, who took sweet food with me, in the house of the lord we walked in agreement (Ps 55:13–15).

When she learned that the Lord had reclined in the Pharisee's house, that is, in the synagogue, had been given over to every guile, to all fraud, had suffered, been crucified and buried; yet she is not held back from the fervour of faith by so great an injury, but she brings ointment, she brings the oil of Christian chrism: and because she did not merit to see the bodily face of Christ, she stands behind, not in place but in time, she clings to his footsteps, so as to follow; and now she sheds tears more of longing than of conscience, so that him whom she did not merit to see departing she may merit to see returning. So she pours out tears at the Lord's feet with flowing love; while she holds with the hands of good works the feet of those who announce his kingdom, washes them with the tears of charity, kisses them with the lips of confession, and pours out the whole ointment of mercy, until, turned towards her (what is "turned"? that is, returned), he may say to Simon, say to the Pharisees, say to those who deny, say to the people of the Jews: I entered your house, you gave no water for my feet (Luke 7:44).

Et haec quando dicet? Quando venerit in majestate Patris sui, et segregabit justos ab injustis, quasi pastor qui segregat oves ab haedis; et dicet: Esurivi, et non dedistis mihi cibum; sitivi, et non dedistis mihi potum; hospes fui, et non suscepistis me. Hoc est dicere, Aquam pedibus meis non dedistis; haec autem, dum meorum pedes lavat, pedes ungit, pedes osculatur, fecit servis quod vos Domino non fecistis, fecit pedibus quod capiti vos negastis, impendit minimis quod vos vestro denegastis auctori: Tunc dicet ad Ecclesiam: Dimittuntur tibi peccata multa, quia dilexisti multum. Quia tunc erit remissio peccatorum, quando tolletur materia tota peccandi, quando corruptio induet incorruptionem; quando mortalitas immortalitatem consequetur, quando peccati caro caro totius efficietur sanctitatis, quando terrena servitus coelesti dominatione mutabitur, quando militia humana divinum promovebitur ad regnum.

Orate, fratres, ut et nos in parte Ecclesiae constituti, ad ea quae numeravimus pervenire mereamur, auctore ipso Christo, cui est honor et gloria una cum Spiritu sancto in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

And when will he say this? When he comes in the majesty of his Father, and will separate the just from the unjust, as a shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats; and he will say: I was hungry, and you did not give me food; I was thirsty, and you did not give me drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take me in (Matt 25:42–43). That is to say: "You gave no water for my feet; but she, in washing the feet of my own, anointing their feet, kissing their feet, has done for the servants what you did not do for the Lord, has done for the feet what you refused to the head, has spent on the least what you denied to your own author." Then he will say to the Church: Your many sins are forgiven you, because you have loved much (Luke 7:47). Because then there will be remission of sins, when the whole matter of sinning is taken away, when corruption puts on incorruption; when mortality attains immortality, when the flesh of sin becomes the flesh of all holiness, when earthly servitude is changed into heavenly dominion, when human service is promoted to the divine kingdom.

Pray, brothers, that we too, set in the Church's portion, may merit to come to the things we have enumerated, with Christ himself as author, to whom be honour and glory together with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo XCVI.

De parabola zizaniorum

Si dicta vel facta Christi passim carnalibus sensibus subjicerentur, torpesceret animus meus, vacaret, dormiret ingenium, cor tabesceret, exstingueretur quidquid humani vigoris est et caloris. Proposuit, inquit, illis parabolam. Sicut in lapide friget ignis, latet ignis in ferro, ipse tamen ignis ferri ac lapidis collisione flammatur; sic obscurum verbum verbi ac sensus collatione resplendet. Certe si mystica non essent, inter infidelem fidelemque, inter impium atque pium discretio non maneret, et esset devotus sicut contumax, iners sicut qui laborat, pervigil ut ille qui dormit: nunc vero cum petit anima, mens pulsat, quaerit sensus, sperat pietas, fides exigit, meretur intentio, apparet et sudantis fructus, et poena desidis, et justitia largitoris simul, quia plus accepta sapiunt quam possessa, inventa magis quam subjecta delectant. Hinc est quod doctrinam suam Christus parabolis velat, tegit figuris, sacramentis operit, reddit obscuram mysteriis.

Proposuit, inquit, illis parabolam. Illis, hoc est, non suis, sed extraneis, inimicis utique, non amicis; spectantibus ad calumniam, non audientibus ad salutem. Ideo in parabolis, inquit, loquor eis, quia videntes, non vident; et audientes, non audiunt, neque intelligunt. Quare? Quia qui calumniatur praeterita, videre praesentia non meretur; neque dignus est agnoscere gratiam, qui legem ne cognosceretur, abscondit. Vae vobis, inquit, legisperitis, quia tulistis clavem scientiae; ipsi non introistis, et eos qui introibant, prohibuistis.

Proposuit, inquit, illis parabolam, dicens: Simile est regnum coelorum homini. Et quid offendit Christus, si in similitudinem hominum factus est, ut pereunti humano generi subveniret? Scandalizat Dominus, si, ut manumittat servos, inveniatur in habitu servitutis? quando quidquid est majestas futurae, quidquid adventus et regni, ecce homini comparatur. Simile est, inquit, regnum coelorum homini qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo; cum autem dormirent homines, venit inimicus ejus, et superseminavit zizania in medio tritici, et abiit.

Sermon XCVI.

On the parable of the cockle

If the words or deeds of Christ were everywhere subject to the senses of the flesh, my mind would grow numb, would lie idle, my wit would sleep, my heart would waste away, whatever there is of human vigour and warmth would be put out. He put forth, he says, a parable to them (Matt 13:24). As fire is cold in the flint, as fire lies hidden in the iron, and yet fire itself bursts into flame when iron and flint strike together, so an obscure word shines out when word and sense are set together. Certainly, if there were nothing mystical, no distinction would remain between the faithless and the faithful, between the impious and the pious, and the devout would be as the stubborn, the idle as he who labours, the wakeful as he who sleeps: but now, when the soul asks, the mind knocks, the understanding seeks, piety hopes, faith demands, earnestness deserves, there appear together the fruit of the one who sweats, the penalty of the slothful and the justice of the giver, because things received have more savour than things possessed, and things found delight more than things laid before us. Hence it is that Christ veils his teaching in parables, covers it with figures, hides it under sacraments, makes it dark with mysteries.

He put forth, he says, a parable to them. To them, that is, not to his own, but to strangers; to enemies, surely, not to friends; to men who watched for slander, not to men who listened for salvation. Therefore I speak to them in parables, he says, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand (Matt 13:13). Why? Because he who slanders things past does not deserve to see things present; nor is he worthy to recognise grace who hid the Law so that it might not be known. Woe to you lawyers, he says, for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering (Luke 11:52).

He put forth, he says, a parable to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like a man. And in what does Christ offend, if he was made in the likeness of men, to come to the help of the perishing human race? Is the Lord a cause of offence if, to set servants free, he is found in the condition of servitude? when whatever majesty there is of what is to come, whatever of the coming and of the kingdom, is, behold, compared to a man. The kingdom of heaven is like, he says, a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep, his enemy came and sowed cockle over it among the wheat, and went away (Matt 13:24–25).

Audistis quemadmodum sator mundi rerum principia bona sevit, nec ullum malum ab originis processit auctore; ab inimico superseminatum est malum, malum non est a rerum parente procreatum. Et vidit Deus, inquit, omnia quaecumque fecit, et ecce bona valde. Bona, et valde bona: nam quem Deus faciens vocavit mundum, inficiens reddidit inimicus immundum; et hominem quem Deus in paradiso deliciarum collocavit ad vitam, inimicus in hac laboris vita detraxit ad mortem; et affectum quem carni Deus inseruit per naturam, inimicus in parricidium per invidiam commutavit. Cain probat hoc qui primus germano sanguine terram tinxit, et in exitum fraternum mortis dignus exstitit dedicator. Sic ex discordia nata mors semper humanam scindit et separat charitatem.

Et quia longum est ire per singula, vel paucis aperire compellimur, inimicus qualiter bonis mala, virtutibus vitia, vitalibus mortalia, nostram semper superseverit ad ruinam. Nonne ex uno homine Deus omnem replevit terram, et semine ex uno pius sator totum genus hominum tantam multiplicavit ad messem? Sed inimicus mox homines in unum redegit omnes; et superseminando mala quod bene satum fuerat, delevit diluvio, non rigavit. Sic legem divinis et veracibus satam praeceptis, humanis et mendacibus fucavit inventis: ut de sacerdote fieret persecutor, de doctore depravator existeret, de defensore legis redderetur inimicus. Sic creaturas ad agnitionem conditas Creatoris, ut nesciretur Deus, deos esse mentitus est. Hinc sapientes saeculi fecit stultos, speculatores mundi docuit nihil videre, professores scientiae fecit scientiam non habere, inquisitores rerum omnium dimisit ignaros. Sic evangelicam segetem satam coelesti semine haeretica zizania superseminando confudit inimicus, ut manipulos fidei gehennae fasciculos faceret, ne triticum fieret coelestium horreorum. Et quid plura? Posteaquam est ipse in daemonem conversus ex angelo, ne qua creatura in suo statu consisteret, arte, dolis, machinis, fraude contendit.

Sed jam praesentis parabolae verba pandamus. Simile est regnum coelorum homini. Cui? Utique Christo. Qui seminavit bonum semen. Quia in ipso rerum semine nescit malum conditio Creatoris. In agro suo. Hoc est, in mundo, dicente ipso Domino, Ager hic mundus est. Cum autem dormierunt homines. Id est, sancti Patres, patriarchae, prophetae, apostoli, martyres, in sopore mortis temporaliter dormientes, quia sanctorum mors somnus est; peccatorum vero mors est, quia in inferno poenae vivunt, vitae pereunt peccatores.

You have heard how the sower of the world sowed the beginnings of things good, and no evil came forth from the author of their origin; the evil was sown over them by the enemy, the evil was not brought forth by the parent of things. And God saw, he says, all things whatever he had made, and behold, very good (Gen 1:31). Good, and very good: for what God in making it called the world (mundus), the enemy in staining it rendered unclean (immundus); and man, whom God set in the paradise of delights for life, the enemy dragged down to death in this life of toil; and the affection which God planted in the flesh by nature, the enemy by envy turned into parricide. Cain proves it, who was the first to stain the earth with a brother's blood, and stood forth as the fitting inaugurator of death in his brother's end. So death, born of discord, ever tears and sunders human charity.

And since it is long to go through each thing, we are compelled to show, if only in a few words, how the enemy has ever sown, to our ruin, evils over goods, vices over virtues, things of death over things of life. Did not God fill the whole earth from one man, and did not the loving sower, from one seed, multiply the whole race of men to so great a harvest? But the enemy soon brought all men down to one; and by sowing evils over what had been well sown, he blotted it out with the flood, he did not water it. So the Law, sown with divine and truthful precepts, he painted over with human and lying inventions: so that out of a priest came a persecutor, out of a teacher a perverter arose, out of a defender of the Law an enemy was made. So the creatures made for the knowledge of the Creator he lyingly declared to be gods, that God might not be known. Hence he made the wise of this age fools, taught the observers of the world to see nothing, made the professors of knowledge have no knowledge, sent away the searchers into all things ignorant. So the enemy, by sowing heretical cockle over it, confounded the Gospel crop sown with heavenly seed, to make the sheaves of the faith bundles for Gehenna, so that it might not become the wheat of the heavenly granaries. And what more? After he himself had been turned from an angel into a demon, he strove by craft, by tricks, by engines, by fraud, that no creature might stand firm in its own state.

But now let us open the words of the present parable. The kingdom of heaven is like a man. To whom? To Christ, surely. Who sowed good seed. Because in the very seed of things the Creator's founding knows no evil. In his field. That is, in the world, as the Lord himself says: This field is the world (Matt 13:38). But when men had fallen asleep. That is, the holy Fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, sleeping for a time in the slumber of death, because the death of the saints is sleep; but for sinners it is death, because sinners live in hell for punishment and perish for life.

Veniens inimicus ejus. Id est, diabolus. Superseminavit zizania. Superseminavit, non seminavit. Praecedunt Creatoris bona, mala diaboli postsequuntur; ut malum quod est ex diabolo, sit accidens, non natura. Superseminavit zizania in medio tritici. Quia diabolus haereses inter fideles, inter sanctos peccatum, inter pacificos lites, inter simplices dolos, inter innocentes nequitiam gratis serere consuevit: non ut acquirat zizania, sed ut triticum perdat; nec ut reos capiat, sed ut adimat innocentes. Hostis plus ducem quam militem petit; nec obsidet mortuos, sed impugnat viventes: sic diabolus non peccatores quaerit capere, quos possidet subjugatos, sed ut justos capiat, sic laborat.

Superseminavit zizania in medio tritici, et abiit. Quia diabolus impellit quidem viribus ad ruinam, sed posteaquam prostraverit, derelinquit; diabolus non quaerit hominem, sed hominis interitum quaerit. Fratres, ille malis nostris gaudet, turget ruinis nostris, nostris vulneribus convalescit, nostrum sanguinem sitit, nostra saturatur ex carne, nostris vivit ex mortibus. Diabolus hominem non vult habere, sed perdere. Quare? Quia ad coelum unde ille cecidit, non vult, non fert, non patitur hominem pervenire.

Et quia nos sermo trahit longius hodie, reliqua differamus, ut et communem relevemus laborem, et quae dicenda sunt plenius exsequamur. Deus autem noster et mihi dicendi gratiam, et vobis audiendi desiderium donare dignetur.

His enemy, coming. That is, the devil. Sowed cockle over it. He sowed over, he did not sow. The good things of the Creator go before, the evil things of the devil follow after; so that the evil which is from the devil is an accident, not nature. Sowed cockle over it among the wheat. Because the devil is wont to sow, for nothing, heresies among the faithful, sin among the saints, quarrels among the peaceable, deceits among the simple, wickedness among the innocent: not to gain cockle, but to destroy the wheat; nor to catch the guilty, but to carry off the innocent. An enemy goes for the general more than for the soldier; and he does not besiege the dead, but attacks the living: so the devil does not seek to capture sinners, whom he holds subdued, but labours so as to capture the just.

Sowed cockle over it among the wheat, and went away. Because the devil drives men to ruin with all his force, but once he has laid them low, he abandons them; the devil does not seek man, but seeks man's destruction. Brothers, he rejoices in our evils, swells with our ruins, grows strong on our wounds, thirsts for our blood, is sated on our flesh, lives on our deaths. The devil does not want to have man, but to destroy him. Why? Because he does not want, does not bear, does not endure that man should reach the heaven from which he fell.

And since the sermon draws us on too far today, let us put off the rest, both to relieve our common labour and to carry out more fully what is to be said. May our God deign to grant me the grace of speaking and you the desire of hearing.

Sermo XCVII.

De eadem

Quia festinus antehac sermo, ut communem temperaret laborem, ad totum parabolae praetereuntis non valuit pervenire secretum, nunc reliqua, Domino revelante, pandamus. Proposuit, inquit, illis parabolam, dicens: Simile est regnum coelorum homini qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo; cum autem dormirent homines, venit inimicus ejus, et superseminavit zizania in medio tritici, et abiit. Cum autem dormirent homines. Insidiator in noctibus latitat, in diebus vigilantes fugit, appetit dormientes, fortis conflictum petit, provocat palam spectantibus omnibus, et coram populis vult habere victoriam. Maximae infirmitatis indicium est dormientibus irruisse.

Cum autem dormirent homines, venit inimicus ejus. Malus numquam non stultus. Quid hic egit inimicus? Esto quod dormierint servi, numquid et Dominus dormiebat? Esto quod oculos servorum sopor clauserit post laborem; numquid et dominantis oculos ulla vicerat lassitudo? Inimice, lucis refuga, vigilasti, laborasti, sed non latuisti: nam, dormientibus servis, Dominus ipse te videt: desertor coeli praevenisti, fecisti, sed non profecisti. Deo perire non potest quod ipse custodit: fraudis auctor, in Dominum non committis, sed in servos, dum facis ut negligentiae illorum quod tuae fraudis est ascribatur. Ille, ille te videt, qui totius et fraudis testis est et laboris. Manent ergo laboris sui fructus benefacientem, manent et nequitiae suae poenae fraudantem; illi triticum ad horreum coeleste portabunt, tu tibi zizaniorum tuorum portabis fasciculos ad gehennam.

Cum autem dormirent homines, venit inimicus ejus, et superseminavit zizania. Ut quid? Ut periret dominica messis, et hoc ad lucrum quid pertinebat inimici, nisi quod invidiae spiritus hominum damnum suum computat lucrum, et quod perierit hominibus, hoc se aestimat acquisivisse? Sed diabolus hoc ideo, ut diximus, tenebris celantibus est molitus, ut adulteratae messis noxa redundaret ad servos, et hinc poenam sumerent, unde speraverant palmam.

Sermon XCVII.

On the same

Since the earlier sermon, hurrying so as to temper our common labour, could not reach the whole secret of the parable it was running through, now, as the Lord reveals it, let us open the rest. He put forth, he says, a parable to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep, his enemy came and sowed cockle over it among the wheat, and went away (Matt 13:24–25). But while men were asleep. The lurker lies hidden by night, by day he flees the wakeful, he goes for the sleeping; the brave man seeks the fight, challenges openly with all looking on, and wants to have his victory before the peoples. To have fallen upon the sleeping is the mark of the greatest weakness.

But while men were asleep, his enemy came. The wicked man is never other than a fool. What did the enemy achieve here? Granted that the servants slept: can it be that the Lord too was asleep? Granted that sleep closed the servants' eyes after their labour: can it be that any weariness had overcome the eyes of the master? Enemy, fugitive from the light, you kept watch, you laboured, but you were not hidden: for while the servants sleep, the Lord himself sees you; deserter of heaven, you came first, you did the deed, but you did not get on. What God himself guards cannot perish to him: author of fraud, it is not against the Lord that you offend, but against the servants, in that you make what is your fraud be laid to their negligence. He, he sees you, who is witness of the whole, both of the fraud and of the labour. So the fruits of his labour await the one who does well, and the penalties of his wickedness await the one who defrauds; they will carry the wheat to the heavenly granary, you will carry for yourself the bundles of your cockle to Gehenna.

But while men were asleep, his enemy came and sowed cockle over it. To what end? That the Lord's harvest might perish; and what did this have to do with the enemy's gain, except that the spirit of envy reckons the loss of men its own gain, and thinks it has acquired whatever has perished for men? But the devil contrived this under cover of darkness, as we have said, for this reason, that the harm of the adulterated harvest might fall back on the servants, and they might receive punishment from the very thing from which they had hoped for the palm.

Denique vigilantes servi prae timore, ista cur evenerint expavescunt: hoc metuentes, ne zizaniorum germina ad illorum redirent offensam, quorum conscientia praeter jactum boni seminis nil habebat. Hinc est quod auditum sui domini praevenerunt, ne securi de innocentia, reatum de silentio sustinerent: cum vocatur innocens ad reatum, dum purgari aestuat, urget et stimulat cognitorem.

Cum autem crevisset herba et fructum fecisset, tunc, inquit, apparuerunt et zizania. Quod latet in herba, manifestatur in spica; et quod celatur in germine, aperitur in fructu: sic quos credentes putamus pares, fide dispares invenimus, sic judicii prodit messis quod Ecclesiae germen occultat. Juxta illud dictum Dominicum: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos. Flores multi, multitudinem fructuum pollicentur, sed exanimati ventorum flabris, ad fructum paucissimi perseverant: sic credentes in Christo multi Ecclesiae videntur in pace; ubi autem persecutionis procella perflaverit, pauci martyrii reperiuntur in fructu. Sed Euphemia sancta plus solvit in fructu quam promisit in flore; quae, manente virginitatis flore, copiosum martyrii pervenit ad fructum.

Accesserunt, inquit, servi patrisfamilias, dicentes ei. Accesserunt, fratres, mente non corpore; non loco, sed fide; dixerunt non clamore vocis, sed cordis tacito cum dolore: Domine, nonne bonum semen seminasti in agro tuo? Seminasti, non seminavimus: nos quod perfecte facimus, tibi semper nostro assignamur auctori, et tu in iis quae nobis facienda praecipis, ipse operator assistis. Ergo si nos operis tui facis esse pro tua dignatione consortes, non nobis solis quod zizania nascuntur ascribas. Domine, aut tecum nos munit innocentia, aut nobiscum te reatus attingit; nos nostro operi non potuimus invidere, magnis sudoribus offensam non potuimus comparare; tu quod vis, unde vis, quando vis, habes; nos praeter tuam gratiam nil habemus, per quam stamus, vivimus, movemur et sumus, et sine qua jacemus, deficimus et perimus. Ergo nos haec nobis sic laboravimus, ut perirent? Sed quis hoc fecerit, qui solus non dormis, nobis dormientibus, tu vidisti; et si tu vidisti, juste Judex (factum quis scit? ille qui vigilat, non ille qui dormit), ergo tu prode eum, ut nos quos sic anxios conspicis, facias sic securos.

Ait dominus, Inimicus homo hoc fecit. Inimicus homo hoc fecit; et tu quare hoc cum videres, Domine, permisisti? Quare? Quia timere fraudes non potest, cui nil potest deperire; et quia plus est mixta discernere quam prohibere mixturam, majus est reparare perdita quam illaesa servare; simul quia oportet zizania esse, ut qui probati sunt manifesti fiant.

Indeed the servants, kept awake by fear, take fright at why these things have happened: fearing this, that the shoots of the cockle might rebound to the disfavour of those whose conscience held nothing but the sowing of good seed. Hence it is that they went before their lord's hearing, lest, secure of their innocence, they should bear guilt from their silence: when an innocent man is summoned to answer for guilt, while he burns to clear himself, he presses and urges on the examining judge.

But when the blade had grown and borne fruit, then, he says, the cockle also appeared (Matt 13:26). What lies hidden in the blade is shown in the ear; and what is concealed in the shoot is opened in the fruit: so those whom we think equal as believers we find unequal in faith, so the harvest of judgement brings out what the shoot of the Church conceals. According to that saying of the Lord: By their fruits you will know them (Matt 7:16). Many flowers promise a multitude of fruits, but, struck lifeless by the blasts of the winds, very few hold on to the fruit: so in the Church many believers in Christ are seen in time of peace; but when the storm of persecution has blown through, few are found in the fruit of martyrdom. But holy Euphemia paid out more in fruit than she promised in flower; for, the flower of her virginity remaining, she came to the abundant fruit of martyrdom.

There came up, he says, the servants of the householder, saying to him (Matt 13:27). They came up, brothers, in mind, not in body; not in place, but in faith; they spoke not with the shout of the voice, but with the silent pain of the heart: Lord, did you not sow good seed in your field? "You sowed, not we: in what we do perfectly we are always ascribed to you, our author, and you yourself, in the things you command us to do, stand by us as the worker. If, then, of your condescension you make us sharers in your work, do not ascribe to us alone that cockle springs up. Lord, either innocence shields us together with you, or guilt touches you together with us; we could not have grudged our own work, we could not have bought disfavour with great sweat; you have what you will, whence you will, when you will; we have nothing apart from your grace, through which we stand, live, move and are (Acts 17:28), and without which we lie fallen, fail and perish. Did we, then, labour at these things for ourselves in such a way that they should perish? But who did this, you, who alone do not sleep, saw while we slept; and if you saw, just Judge (who knows what was done? he who keeps watch, not he who sleeps), then reveal him, so that you may make us, whom you see so anxious, as secure."

The master said: An enemy has done this (Matt 13:28). An enemy has done this; and you, Lord, why did you permit it when you saw it? Why? Because he cannot fear frauds to whom nothing can be lost; and because it is more to sort out what is mixed than to forbid the mixture, it is greater to restore what was lost than to keep things unharmed; and at the same time because there must be cockle, so that those who are approved may be made manifest (1 Cor 11:19).

Servi autem dixerunt ei, Vis imus et colligimus zizania? Sic devoti servi indefessum promittunt laborem, nec patiuntur Dominicae messis videre vel temporaliter feditatem; sed Dominus, quem tempora non fatigant, et quando vult potest abolere suae messis injuriam, vetat dicendo: Non. Et quare prohibuerit mox revelat. Ne forte colligentes zizania, eradicetis simul cum eis et triticum. Sic imperiti erant cultores, sic operis nescii, sic discretionis scientiam non habentes, ut evellentes zizania, eradicarent et triticum? Ubi sunt prophetae per Dei spiritum prophetantes? Ubi Petrus cui Pater revelat? Ubi Paulus in quo operatur et loquitur Christus? Ubi omnes sancti, plane sancti, sed servi, tantum scientes, quantum singulis scientiarum largitor indulsit?

Sed dicis, Hoc occultum nil erat, nil erat ibi occultum, quando aliud videbatur in specie, aliud habebatur in flore; et quod hodie erat zizania, cras in triticum vertebatur: sic hodie habetur haereticus, qui crastina fit fidelis; et qui ad praesens peccator cernitur, ad futurum justus assistit. Hinc est etiam quod auctor utraque referebat ad messem, id est, usque ad judicium divinae patientiae suae et nostrae poenitentiae tempus, ut qui de se malo commutarit ad bonum, Dominicum deputetur in triticum, coelestibus horreis aggregandus; qui se de fideli fecerit infidelem, gehennae deputetur incendio. Et quid plura? Si zizaniis non Dei patientia subveniret, nec Matthaeum de Publicano evangelistam, nec Paulum de persecutore apostolum Ecclesia possideret. Denique Ananias eradicare triticum tunc quaerebat, quando ad Saulum missus, de Paulo talia querebatur: Domine, quanta mala fecit sanctis tuis! hoc est, eradica zizania; quid ad lupum ovis? quid ad contumacem devotus? quid ad persecutorem talis praedicator missus? Sed cum Ananias videret Saulum, Paulum Dominus tunc videbat; cum Ananias persecutorem diceret, tunc Dominus praedicatorem sciebat; et cum ille eum zizania judicaret inferni, Christus eum vas electionis, triticum in coelesti horreo jam ponebat. Vade, inquit, quia vas electionis est mihi.

But the servants said to him: Do you want us to go and gather up the cockle? So devoted servants promise unwearied labour, and cannot bear to see, even for a time, the foulness of the Lord's harvest; but the Lord, whom times do not weary, and who can abolish the wrong done to his harvest whenever he will, forbids it, saying: No. And why he forbade it he reveals at once. Lest perhaps, in gathering the cockle, you root up the wheat together with it (Matt 13:29). Were the husbandmen so unskilled, so ignorant of their work, so lacking in the knowledge of discernment, that in pulling up the cockle they would root up the wheat as well? Where are the prophets who prophesied through the Spirit of God? Where is Peter, to whom the Father reveals (Matt 16:17)? Where is Paul, in whom Christ works (Gal 2:8) and speaks (2 Cor 13:3)? Where are all the saints, saints indeed, but servants, knowing only as much as the giver of all knowledge has granted to each?

But you say: "There was nothing hidden in this." Nothing hidden there, when one thing was seen in the appearance and another was held in the flower, and what today was cockle was tomorrow turned into wheat! So today a man is held a heretic who tomorrow becomes one of the faithful; and he who at present is seen a sinner stands in the future just. Hence it is too that the author referred both to the harvest, that is, to the judgement, the time of his divine patience and of our penance, so that he who has changed from evil to good may be counted among the Lord's wheat, to be gathered into the heavenly granaries; and he who has made himself from faithful faithless may be counted for the fire of Gehenna. And what more? If the patience of God did not come to the help of the cockle, the Church would possess neither Matthew, an evangelist out of a publican, nor Paul, an apostle out of a persecutor. Indeed Ananias was seeking to root up the wheat when, sent to Saul, he made such complaint of Paul: Lord, how many evils he has done to your saints! (Acts 9:13) that is, root up the cockle; what has the sheep to do with the wolf? what the devout with the stubborn? what is such a preacher doing, sent to a persecutor? But while Ananias saw Saul, the Lord then saw Paul; while Ananias spoke of a persecutor, the Lord then knew a preacher; and while he judged him to be cockle of hell, Christ was already setting him as a vessel of election, as wheat in the heavenly granary. Go, he says, for he is a vessel of election to me (Acts 9:15).

Sermo XCVIII.

De parabola grani sinapis

Audistis hodie, fratres, quemadmodum grano sinapis tota regni coelestis comparata est magnitudo. Et quid est quod potestatem tantam, sic parva, sic minima, immo minimorum minima similitudo concludit? Sic enim ait Dominus: Cui simile est regnum Dei? et cui simile aestimabo illud? Cum dicit: Cui est simile, quasi quaerentis indicat et producit affectum. Et ille solus Verbum, scientiae fons, dicendi flumen, qui omnium corda rigat, sensus aperit, ingenium dilatat, in invenienda similitudine nunc laborat?

Sed quid invenerit audiamus. Simile est, inquit, regnum coelorum grano sinapis. Quaerens in coelo et in terra, nil invenit nisi granum sinapis, in quo potentiam totam supernae dominationis includat; et illud regnum singularitate potens, aeternitate felix, divinitate fulgens, diffusum toto coelo, tota terra dilatatum, in grani sinapis coarctat et concludit angustias? Simile est regnum coelorum grano sinapis. Spes ista est credentium tota? Exspectatio ista est fidelium summa? Ista est felicitas virginum longis continentiae laboribus comparata? Ista est gloria martyrum totius effusione sanguinis conquisita? Hoc est quod nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit? hoc est quod ineffabili sacramento diligentibus Deum promittit Apostolus esse praeparatum? Fratres, non facile Dominicis moveamur in dictis; nam si infirmum Dei, fortius est hominibus; et stultum Dei sapientius est hominibus, hoc minimum Dei tota magnitudine mundi magnificentius invenitur; si modo hoc granum sinapis nos sic nostris seminemus in mentibus, ut intelligentiae magnam nobis in arborem crescat, et sensus altitudine tota levetur ad coelum, ac totos scientiarum diffundatur in ramos atque ita ora nostra ferventia vivido fructus sui sapore succendat, et ita igne seminis sui toto nobis ardeat, et flammetur in pectore, atque nostrae ignorantiae totum nobis auferat sua degustatione fastidium.

Sermon XCVIII.

On the parable of the grain of mustard seed

You have heard today, brothers, how the whole greatness of the heavenly kingdom has been compared to a grain of mustard seed. And how is it that a likeness so small, so very slight, or rather the least of the least, encloses so great a power? For thus the Lord says: What is the kingdom of God like? and what shall I reckon it like? (Luke 13:18) When he says: What is it like, he shows and brings forth, as it were, the attitude of one who searches. And does he who alone is the Word, the fount of knowledge, the river of speech, who waters the hearts of all, opens the senses, enlarges the mind, now labour to find a likeness?

But let us hear what he found. The kingdom of heaven is like, he says, a grain of mustard seed (Matt 13:31). Searching in heaven and on earth, he finds nothing but a grain of mustard seed in which to enclose the whole power of the dominion above; and that kingdom, mighty in its singularity, happy in its eternity, shining with divinity, spread through all heaven, extended over all the earth, he narrows and shuts up in the straits of a grain of mustard seed? The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. Is this the whole hope of believers? Is this the sum of the expectation of the faithful? Is this the happiness of virgins, purchased by the long labours of continence? Is this the glory of martyrs, won by the shedding of all their blood? Is this what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it gone up into the heart of man (1 Cor 2:9)? is this what the Apostle promises, by an ineffable mystery, to have been prepared for those who love God? Brothers, let us not be easily disturbed at the Lord's sayings; for if the weak thing of God is stronger than men, and the foolish thing of God is wiser than men (1 Cor 1:25), this least thing of God is found more magnificent than the whole greatness of the world; provided only that we so sow this grain of mustard seed in our minds that it grows for us into a great tree of understanding, and is raised to heaven with all the height of sense, and spreads out into all the branches of knowledge, and so kindles our burning mouths with the lively savour of its fruit, and so burns in us with the whole fire of its seed, and blazes in our breast, and by its taste takes from us all the loathing of our ignorance.

Simile est regnum coelorum grano sinapis, quod acceptum homo misit in hortum suum, et crevit, et factum est in arborem magnam, et volucres coeli requieverunt in ramis ejus. Grani sinapis, sicut dicit, instar est regnum Dei, quod de supernis affertur verbo, suscipitur auditu, fide seritur, credulitate radicatur, spe crescit, confessione diffunditur, virtute tenditur, et dilatatur in ramos, ad quos vocat aves coeli, id est, spirituales sensus, atque in ipsis eas quieta suscipit mansione. Veniat haereticus, veniat, quia redeuntibus Ecclesiae semper patescit ingressus; veniat, audiat, et pietati Dominicae jam desinat oblatrare: Si coelestis regni majestas omnis ad grani sinapis similitudinem venit, quid quaeritur quod Deus ad hominem, Dominus servi descendit in formam? Sic enim venit, haeretice, ut tibi totum per fidem cresceret, cui jam totum defecerat per naturam.

Simile est regnum coelorum grano sinapis. Sed sinapis revertamur ad granum: sic tota regni summa manet, et consistit in regno coelorum. Christus est regnum coelorum, qui, velut granum sinapis, in hortum virginei corporis missus, orbe toto crucis in arborem crevit, ac tantum dedit fructus sui saporem, cum teritur passione, ut quidquid est vitale suo saporaret et condiret attactu. Nam sicut in integritate grani sinapis virtus habetur occulta, apparet vero virtus ejus vehementissime si teratur; ita Christus corpore teri voluit, qui suam noluit latere virtutem. Et nos, fratres, teramus istud granum sinapis, ut ejus vim in hac similitudine sentiamus. Christus rex, quia tota ipse est origo regnandi; Christus regnum, quia in ipso est regni sui tota majestas; Christus homo, quia totus homo reparatur in Christo; Christus granum sinapis, unde magnitudo tota Dei, tota hominis exiguitate minoratur. Et quid plura? Omnia ipse factus est, ut in se repararet omnes; Christus homo accepit granum sinapis, hoc est, regnum Dei accepit homo Christus, quod habuit semper Deus Christus; misit in hortum suum, hoc est, in Ecclesiam sponsam.

Hujus horti saepe meminit in Canticis Canticorum, dicendo: Hortus clausus. Ecclesia hortus est Evangelii vomere orbe toto diffusus cultura, clausus stimulis disciplinae, ab omni pessimo gramine apostolico labore purgatus, fidelium plantariis, liliis virginum, rosis martyrum, confessorum viriditate amoenus, fragrans floribus sempiternis.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and put into his garden, and it grew, and became a great tree, and the birds of the air rested in its branches (Luke 13:19). Like a grain of mustard seed, as he says, is the kingdom of God, which is brought from above by the word, received by hearing, sown by faith, rooted by belief, grows by hope, spreads by confession, stretches out by virtue, and widens into branches, to which it calls the birds of the air, that is, the spiritual senses, and in them receives them in a quiet dwelling. Let the heretic come, let him come, for the entrance to the Church always stands open to those who return; let him come, let him hear, and let him at last cease to bark against the Lord's loving-kindness: if the whole majesty of the heavenly kingdom came to the likeness of a grain of mustard seed, why is it questioned that God came down to man, the Lord into the form of a servant? For he came thus, heretic, that everything might grow for you through faith, for whom everything had already failed through nature.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. But let us return to the grain of mustard seed: thus the whole sum of the kingdom remains and stands firm in the kingdom of heaven. Christ is the kingdom of heaven, who, like a grain of mustard seed, put into the garden of the virginal body, grew throughout the whole world into the tree of the cross, and gave such savour of his fruit, when he was crushed in the Passion, that whatever is living he flavoured and seasoned by his touch. For as in the grain of mustard seed, while it is whole, its power is kept hidden, but its power appears most vehemently if it is crushed; so Christ willed to be crushed in body, who did not will his power to lie hidden. And let us too, brothers, crush this grain of mustard seed, so as to feel its strength in this likeness. Christ the king, because he himself is the whole origin of reigning; Christ the kingdom, because in him is the whole majesty of his kingdom; Christ man, because the whole man is restored in Christ; Christ the grain of mustard seed, whence the whole greatness of God is lessened to the whole smallness of man. And what more? He himself became all things, that he might restore all men in himself; Christ the man received the grain of mustard seed, that is, the man Christ received the kingdom of God, which Christ, God, always had; he put it into his garden, that is, into the Church his bride.

Of this garden he often makes mention in the Song of Songs, saying: A garden enclosed (Song 4:12). The Church is a garden, spread through the whole world by the tilling of the Gospel's ploughshare, enclosed by the goads of discipline, cleansed of every evil weed by apostolic labour, lovely with the plantings of the faithful, the lilies of virgins, the roses of martyrs, the green of confessors, fragrant with everlasting flowers.

Hoc itaque granum sinapis in hortum suum misit Christus, id est, promissione regni sui, quod radicatum est in patriarchis, natum est in prophetis, crevit in apostolis, in Ecclesia fecit arborem magnam, multiplices dedit in donationibus ramos, quos enumerat Apostolus, dicendo: Alii datus est sermo sapientiae, alii verbum scientiae, alii cura sanitatum, alii operatio virtutum, alii prophetia, alii discretio spirituum, alii genera linguarum.

Audistis, fratres, istud granum sinapis in arborem quam prorupit, audistis quas fundavit radices, audistis quales quantosque se jam diffuderit et secaverit in ramos, in quibus coeli, non aeris, aves, in pennis sapientiae et prudentiae volatu, fidei securitate requiescant. Et tu audi, si vis terrenas bestias non timere, si vis evitare aves rapaces, voraces vultures, hoc est, aves aereas, quae sunt omnes nequitiae spirituales; elevare a terra, terrena deserere: sume alas columbae propheticae deargentatas, sume pennas divini Solis fulgore radiatas, evola in specie auri, ut in tantis et talibus ramis jam nullis laqueis attentanda requiescas semper, et de volatu tali valida; et de tanta mansione secura. De similitudine sequenti, sequenti verbo, Domino docente, declarabimus.

This grain of mustard seed, then, Christ put into his garden, that is, by the promise of his kingdom, which was rooted in the patriarchs, born in the prophets, grew in the apostles, in the Church made a great tree, put forth manifold branches in its gifts, which the Apostle enumerates, saying: To one is given the utterance of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another the care of healings, to another the working of mighty works, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another kinds of tongues (1 Cor 12:8–10).

You have heard, brothers, into what a tree this grain of mustard seed has burst forth; you have heard what roots it has laid down; you have heard into what branches, of what kind and how great, it has already spread and divided itself, in which the birds of heaven, not of the air, on the wings of wisdom and prudence in their flight, rest in the security of faith. And you, hear: if you wish not to fear the beasts of the earth, if you wish to escape the birds of prey, the greedy vultures, that is, the birds of the air, which are all the spiritual wickednesses, rise from the earth, forsake earthly things: take the silvered wings of the prophetic dove (Ps 68:14), take feathers shining with the brightness of the divine Sun, fly away in the likeness of gold, so that in branches so great and such as these, tempted now by no snares, you may rest for ever, strong from such a flight and secure in so great a dwelling. Of the following likeness we shall speak in the following discourse, as the Lord teaches.

Sermo XCIX.

De parabola fermenti

Bene cucurrit hodiernae series lectionis, ut evangelica mulier mater nostra acciperet a Domino fermentum, per quod nobis hodie hoc templum tantam sanctitatis exigeretur et surgeret in massam. Sic enim coepit Dominus: Cui simile aestimabo regnum Dei? Simile est fermento, quod acceptum mulier abscondit in farinae mensuris tribus, donec fermentatum est totum. Bonus Dominus, amator suorum Christus, regni sui similitudines iterat, variat comparationes, quas non de occulto sumit, non captat de coelestibus, sed profert de quotidiano usu, de communi conversatione proponit, ut ad omne genus hominum perveniat, quod est omnibus profuturum, juxta illud prophetae: Audite haec, omnes gentes, auribus percipite, omnes qui habitatis orbem, quique terrigenae, et filii hominum, simul dives et pauper. Si quid de divinitatis occulto, si quid de secreto regali, si quid de penetralibus divitum afferret in medium, hoc nesciret pauper, non caperet mediocritas, notum simplicitas non haberet: nunc vero loquitur nota diviti, usitata pauperi, omnibus vitae ipsius necessitate vernacula, quia homo in Dei vocatione quaeritur, non discernitur in ejus vocatione persona.

Sed lectam similitudinem replicemus. Cui simile, inquit, aestimabo regnum Dei? Sic dicendo appendit animos auditorum, et attonitos reddit stupore toto, quid regno Dei, quid imperio divino valeat comparari: atque illis mente per multa et magna pervagantibus coeli Dominus in hospitio pauperis, in manu panicoctariae mulieris regni sui invenit et format exemplum, dicendo: Simile est fermento, quod acceptum mulier abscondit in farinae mensuris tribus, donec fermentatum est totum.

Ante regnum suum grano sinapis comparabat, nunc illud efficit simile fermento. Ante sinapis granum memorat accepisse virum, mulierem nunc asserit accepisse fermentum. Dicit ante exiguum semen virum sevisse in magnae arboris incrementum, mulierem modo fermentum breve ad profectum totius massae abscondisse manifestat. Vere, sicut dixit apostolus Paulus: Neque vir sine muliere, neque mulier sine viro in Domino.

Sermon XCIX.

On the parable of the leaven

The course of today's reading has run well, so that the woman of the Gospel, our mother, should receive from the Lord the leaven through which this temple might today be raised up for us and rise into so great a lump of holiness. For thus the Lord began: To what shall I reckon the kingdom of God like? (Luke 13:20) It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole was leavened (Luke 13:21). The good Lord, Christ, the lover of his own, repeats the likenesses of his kingdom, varies his comparisons, which he does not take from what is hidden, does not catch from heavenly things, but brings forth from daily use, sets before us from common life, so that what is to profit all may reach every kind of men, according to that saying of the Prophet: Hear this, all you nations; give ear, all you who dwell in the world, both earthborn and sons of men, rich and poor together (Ps 49:2–3). If he brought into the open anything of the hidden things of divinity, anything of the royal secret, anything of the inner chambers of the rich, the poor man would not know it, the lowly would not grasp it, simplicity would not hold it known: but now he speaks things known to the rich, familiar to the poor, homely to all by the very necessity of life, because in God's calling it is man that is sought, and in his calling no distinction is made of person.

But let us unfold once more the likeness that was read. To what, he says, shall I reckon the kingdom of God like? By saying this he holds the hearts of his hearers in suspense, and leaves them astonished in utter amazement at what can be compared to the kingdom of God, to the divine empire: and while they wander in mind through many great things, the Lord of heaven finds and shapes the example of his kingdom in the guest-house of a poor man, in the hand of a baking-woman, saying: It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole was leavened.

Before, he compared his kingdom to a grain of mustard seed; now he makes it like leaven. Before, he relates that a man took the grain of mustard seed; now he asserts that a woman took the leaven. Before, he says that a man sowed a tiny seed for the growth of a great tree; now he shows that a woman hid a little leaven for the rising of the whole lump. Truly, as the apostle Paul said: Neither is man without woman, nor woman without man, in the Lord (1 Cor 11:11).

Ad unum regnum diversum sexum varia similitudo perducit, neque virum separat a muliere vocatio Christiana, quos Deus conjungit, natura sociat, et mira similitudine similes reddit habitus, forma componit, et facit Deus, ut sit homo unus duo, duo unus, alter ipse homo in copula conjugali; ne sit aut singularitas destituta, aut confusa conjunctio.

Sed quare has similitudines regni sui Dominus per virum producit et feminam? Quare majestatem tantam tam vilibus, tam disparibus format exemplis? Fratres, pretiosum latet in hac vilitate mysterium, dicente Apostolo, Mysterium hoc magnum est, ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia. Comparationibus istis humani generis negotium geritur principale, per virum et mulierem mundi causa saeculis tractata finitur: Adam primus homo, mulier prima Eva, ab arbore scientiae boni et mali, ad evangelici sinapis ardorem deducuntur, ut oculos quos illecebrosa arbor aperiendo clauserat, sinapis arbor grani sui collyrio et acritudine ipsa dum claudit aperiret; ut ora quae venenosae arboris gustus infecerat; salutaris arbor flammeo gustus sui sapore sanaret; et ista arbor igneo pastu suo conscientiam toto conversationis suae ardore succenderet, quam frigidam illa toto jam rigore perfecerat. Neque hic jam vel agit; vel confunditur nuditas, ubi hominem totum tegit venia, fidei facit calere vestitus: sed hoc per granum sinapis, quod acceperat vir, confertur feminae.

Quid vero per fermentum quod accepit mulier, conferatur homini, sollicitius perscrutemur. Simile est, inquit, regnum Dei fermento, quod acceptum mulier, abscondit in farinae mensuris tribus. Res de usu geritur: vir in agro sinapis arborem serit, domi mulier fermentum procurat, et panes praeparat alimoniae, quia virum foris exspectat labor, intus mulierem domestica cura constringit. Hinc est quod Sara sterilis et anus ex ista praeparatione fermenti, et ex tribus mensuris, tres subcinericios panes dominicae hospitalitati offert mystico et apponit obsequio, ut sterilitas mundi tota senectute conclusa, in mensuris tribus, hoc est, in aequalitate Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti, fermentum fidei collocaret, et Domino suo tres panes poneret confessione Trinitatis; atque pro munere hoc totam Christiani germinis fecundaret ad prolem.

A varied likeness leads the different sexes to the one kingdom, and the Christian calling does not separate man from woman, whom God joins, nature associates, and, by a wonderful likeness, bearing makes alike and form composes; and God makes man to be one in two, two in one, the other being the same man in the tie of marriage; so that there may be neither a forsaken singleness nor a confused joining.

But why does the Lord bring forth these likenesses of his kingdom through a man and a woman? Why does he shape so great a majesty in examples so mean, so unequal? Brothers, a precious mystery lies hidden in this meanness, as the Apostle says: This mystery is great, but I speak in Christ and in the Church (Eph 5:32). In these comparisons the chief business of the human race is carried on; through a man and a woman the cause of the world, handled through the ages, is brought to its end: Adam the first man, Eve the first woman, are led from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to the burning of the Gospel's mustard, so that the eyes which the enticing tree had closed by opening them, the mustard tree, with the eye-salve and the very sharpness of its grain, might open them in closing them; so that the mouths which the taste of the poisonous tree had infected, the saving tree might heal with the fiery savour of its taste; and that this tree, with its fiery food, might kindle with the whole ardour of its converse the conscience which that other had made cold with utter stiffness. Here nakedness no longer either stirs or is put to shame, where pardon covers the whole man, and the garment of faith makes him warm: but this is conferred on the woman through the grain of mustard seed which the man had received.

But what is conferred on the man through the leaven which the woman received, let us search out more carefully. The kingdom of God is like, he says, leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour. The thing is taken from common use: the man sows the mustard tree in the field, at home the woman sees to the leaven and prepares loaves for food, because labour awaits the man outside, the care of the house holds the woman within. Hence it is that Sarah, barren and old, from this preparing of leaven and from three measures offers three ash-baked loaves to the hospitality shown the Lord and sets them before him in mystical homage (Gen 18:6), so that the barrenness of the world, shut up in utter old age, might place the leaven of faith in three measures, that is, in the equality of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and might set three loaves before her Lord in the confession of the Trinity; and for this gift might be made fruitful for the whole offspring of the Christian seed.

Sed ad proposita redeamus. Mulier accepit a Deo fermentum fidei, quae acceperat a diabolo perfidiae fermentum; abscondit in mensuris tribus, hoc est, in tribus hominum temporibus, quod est ab Adam usque ad Noe, a Noe usque ad Moysen, a Moyse usque ad Christum; ut mulier quae corruperat fermento mortis in Adam totam massam generis humani, fermento resurrectionis totam carnis nostrae massam redintegraret in Christo; ut mulier quae confecerat panem gemitus et sudoris, panem vitae coqueret et salutis; et esset omnium viventium mater vera per Christum, quae erat in Adam mater omnium mortuorum. Ob hoc namque Christus nasci voluit, ut sicut per Evam venit ad omnes mors, ita per Mariam rediret omnibus vita. Quae Maria hujus fermenti implet typum, similitudinem praefert, consignat figuram, dum de supernis suscipit fermentum Verbi, et humanam carnem in alvo Virginis, immo in alvo Virginis coelestem totam conspersit in massam.

Sed quid allegorici sensus in hac similitudine maneat, jam prodamus. Mulier quae accepit fermentum, Ecclesia est: fermentum quod accepit, coelestis doctrinae est sacramentum: mensurae tres in quibus perhibetur abscondisse fermentum, Lex, Prophetae, Evangelia, ubi divinus sensus mystico absconditur et celatur in verbo, ut fidelem non lateat, lateat infidelem. Quod autem dixit: Donec fermentatum est totum; illud est quod Apostolus dicit: Ex parte scimus, et ex parte prophetamus: cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, cessabunt quae ex parte sunt. In conspersione scientia nunc divina est, aspergit sensus, levat corda, incrementat ingenia, et doctrinarum more ad sapientiae coelestis dilatat, suscitat, diffundit augmentum, fermentatur totum. Quando? Adveniente Christo.

But let us return to what we set out to treat. The woman received from God the leaven of faith, she who had received from the devil the leaven of unbelief; she hid it in three measures, that is, in the three times of men, which are from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Moses, from Moses to Christ; so that the woman who in Adam had corrupted the whole lump of the human race with the leaven of death might restore the whole lump of our flesh in Christ with the leaven of the resurrection; so that the woman who had made the bread of groaning and of sweat might bake the bread of life and of salvation; and that she who in Adam was the mother of all the dead might be through Christ the true mother of all the living. For this reason Christ willed to be born, that as death came to all through Eve, so life might return to all through Mary. And Mary fulfils the type of this leaven, bears its likeness, seals its figure, in that she receives from above the leaven of the Word, and the human flesh in the Virgin's womb, or rather in the Virgin's womb, she kneaded whole into a heavenly lump.

But what allegorical sense remains in this likeness, let us now bring out. The woman who received the leaven is the Church: the leaven which she received is the mystery of heavenly doctrine: the three measures in which she is said to have hidden the leaven are the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels, where the divine sense is hidden and concealed in a mystical word, so that it may not be hidden from the faithful, and may be hidden from the faithless. And as for his saying: Until the whole was leavened, that is what the Apostle says: We know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when what is perfect has come, the things that are in part will cease (1 Cor 13:9–10). Divine knowledge is now in the kneading: it sprinkles the senses, lifts up the hearts, increases the minds, and after the manner of teachings it widens, stirs up, spreads them to the growth of heavenly wisdom; the whole is leavened. When? At the coming of Christ.

Sermo C.

De Syrophoenissa, sive Chananea

Hodie Beatus Marcus, cum Syrophoenissae mulieris commendat prudentiam, fidem refert, credulitatis extollit ardorem, sollicitis auditoribus non parvam generat quaestionem, dicendo: Et inde surgens Dominus abiit in partes Tyri et Sidonis, et ingressus domum, neminem scire voluit, et non potuit latere. Voluit et non potuit: velle, et non posse, non est divinae majestatis, est infirmitatis humanae; scriptum est enim: Omnia quaecumque voluit Dominus fecit in coelo et in terra, in mari et in omnibus abyssis. Et Apostolus: Voluntati ejus quis resistit? Succumbit necessitati quae non libera et absoluta voluntas. Leprosus dicit ad Dominum: Si vis, potes me mundare; et evangelista dicit: Voluit, et non potuit. Quid ait beatus Marcus? Numquid extollenda ita est mulieris fides, ut inclinetur Domini possibilitas et voluntas? Aut est tanta sagacitas fidei, ut nolente Deo divinum valeat investigare secretum? Tale mihi videtur et illud esse, cum Dominus Hemorrhoissae fidem in suae virtutis vult prodere, ac probare documento, interrogando: Quis me tetigit? Cui discipuli dicunt: Turbae te comprimunt, et dicis, Quis me tetigit? Discipulis videbatur quod omnes tangerent Dominum solo corpore comprimentes, et tali carnali incessu omnes similiter jungerentur: similiter ille, qui aliter senserat, et aliter inquirebat, pervenisse mulierem ad majestatem suam, ad suam penetrasse virtutem, mente, non corpore, non communi tactu, sed fide, istam sciebat. Unde clamat non homo, sed Deus; non caro, sed spiritus: Quis me tetigit? ut eum proderet virtus operis, quem tunc humanitas occultabat.

Sed quid sit voluit, et quid sit non potuit, evidentius inquiramus. Promissionis suae memor Christus, Israelitici populi primum venerat ad salutem, ut quod Abrahae promiserat, et semini ejus David, ejusque posteris, fidele redderet persolutum: sed quia indignos se sua perfidia praestiterunt, obtinuit, rapuit, traxit fides gentium, quod infidelitas sprevit et perdidit Judaeorum. Audi ipsum dicentem: Non sum missus nisi ad oves perditas domus Israel.

Sermon C.

On the Syrophoenician, or Canaanite, woman

Today blessed Mark, while he commends the prudence of the Syrophoenician woman, relates her faith, extols the ardour of her belief, raises no small question for attentive hearers, saying: And rising from there the Lord went away into the region of Tyre and Sidon, and entering a house, he willed that no one should know it, and he could not be hidden (Mark 7:24). He willed and could not: to will and not to be able is not of the divine majesty, it is of human weakness; for it is written: Whatever the Lord willed he has done, in heaven and on earth, in the sea and in all the deeps (Ps 135:6). And the Apostle: Who resists his will? (Rom 9:19) The will that is not free and unbound gives way to necessity. The leper says to the Lord: If you will, you can make me clean (Matt 8:2); and the Evangelist says: He willed, and could not. What does blessed Mark say? Can it be that the woman's faith is to be so extolled that the Lord's ability and will are made to bow? Or is the shrewdness of faith so great that, against God's will, it can search out the divine secret? Such, it seems to me, is that other place too, when the Lord wills to bring out the faith of the woman with the flow of blood and to prove it by a proof of his power, asking: Who touched me? (Mark 5:30) To whom the disciples say: The crowds press upon you, and do you say: Who touched me? (Mark 5:31) It seemed to the disciples that all who pressed upon the Lord with the body alone were touching him, and that by such fleshly jostling all alike were joined to him: he, likewise, who had perceived otherwise and was asking otherwise, knew that the woman had reached his majesty, had penetrated to his power, with the mind, not the body, not with common touch, but with faith. Hence it is not man but God, not flesh but spirit, who cries out: Who touched me? so that the power of the work might betray him whom his manhood then concealed.

But let us inquire more plainly what he willed means, and what he could not means. Christ, mindful of his promise, had come first for the salvation of the people of Israel, to render faithfully paid what he had promised to Abraham and to his seed David and to his posterity: but because they showed themselves unworthy by their unbelief, the faith of the Gentiles obtained, seized, carried off what the faithlessness of the Jews despised and lost. Hear him saying: I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24).

Sed oves luporum contagione jam rabidae, et ipsis bestiis propria feritate saeviores, laniare et violare suum semper voluere pastorem: atque ideo velle suum Christus implere non poterat, non impossibilitate sua, sed nequitia perditorum, et quod aliis detulerat, aliis conferre cogebatur, dicente ipso: Regnum coelorum vim patitur, et qui vim faciunt, diripiunt illud. Vim fecit fides gentium, ut raperet haereditatem Patris, ipsam haereditatem totam diriperet filiorum, sicut evidentius praesenti lectione monstratur.

Mulier enim statim ut audivit de eo, cujus habebat filia spiritum immundum, intravit, et procidit ante pedes ejus. Erat autem gentilis Syrophoenissa genere. Et rogabat eum ut daemonium ejiceret de filia ejus. Qui dixit illi: Sine prius satiari filios; non enim est bonum tollere panem filiorum, et mittere canibus. Non dixit, non est bonum mittere canibus; sed, Non est bonum tollere filiis, et mittere canibus: quia dare panem canibus, etsi humanitatis non est, humanae tamen est rationis. Canis dormientibus dominis nocte et custos et pervigil prodit extraneum, turbat furem, occurrit latroni, ut curam relevet et sollicitudinem servulorum.

Verumtamen quomodo tulit panem filiis, quibus toties et taliter obtulit, tribuit, ingessit? Sed illi oblatum conculcare ad scelus, non ad vitam sumere sunt conati: et tamen comminutum et conculcatum a filiis, canis tota fide, toto desiderio lambere festinavit. Hinc est quod sic respondit: Utique Domine, nam et catelli sub mensa comedunt de micis puerorum. Merito quae se canem confessa est, in hominem commutatur, et juste convertuntur in canes qui se filios esse noluerunt; merito adoptatur in filiam, levatur, honoratur ad mensam, quae se sub mensa laudabili et provida humilitate dejecit; juste toto nunc epulatur micas ex pane, quae suis meritis se intellexit, et confessa est vix mereri. Et quid plura? Hinc est quod, propter justitiam suam, Dominus, nec Judaeis dare potuit, nec gentibus denegare.

But the sheep, already rabid from the contagion of wolves, and in their own savagery fiercer than the beasts themselves, always wanted to tear and violate their shepherd: and so Christ could not fulfil his willing, not through any impossibility of his own, but through the wickedness of the lost; and what he had brought to some, he was compelled to bestow on others, as he himself says: The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and those who do violence carry it off (Matt 11:12). The faith of the Gentiles did violence, so as to seize the inheritance of the Father, to carry off the whole inheritance itself of the sons, as is shown more plainly in the present reading.

For the woman, as soon as she heard of him, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, came in, and fell down at his feet (Mark 7:25). Now she was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by race (Mark 7:26). And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her: Let the children first be filled; for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs (Mark 7:27). He did not say: It is not good to throw it to the dogs; but: It is not good to take it from the children and throw it to the dogs: because to give bread to dogs, though it is not a matter of humanity, is yet a matter of human reason. The dog, while its masters sleep at night, both guard and wakeful, betrays the stranger, alarms the thief, meets the robber, so as to relieve the care and the solicitude of the servants.

But how did he take the bread from the children, to whom he so often and so greatly offered it, gave it, pressed it upon them? But they tried to trample what was offered, to their wickedness, not to take it, to their life: and yet the dog, with all her faith, with all her longing, hastened to lick it up, broken and trampled by the children. Hence it is that she answered thus: Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs (Mark 7:28). Rightly is she who confessed herself a dog changed into a human being, and justly are they turned into dogs who refused to be sons; rightly is she adopted as a daughter, lifted up, honoured at the table, who with praiseworthy and provident humility cast herself down under the table; justly does she now feast on the crumbs of the whole loaf, who understood and confessed that by her own merits she hardly deserved it. And what more? Hence it is that, for the sake of his justice, the Lord could neither give to the Jews nor refuse to the Gentiles.

Sermo CI.

De morte contemnenda a fidelibus, et quare illam permiserit Deus. In illud Lucae: Nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus, etc.

Audistis, fratres, quemadmodum milites suos Christus regia exhortatione compellat, ut despectu mortis interfectores corporis non pavescant. Denique eos in amicorum jura transcribit, qui studio triumphi, qui amore libertatis, sanguinem cum gaudio et sine trepidatione fuderint; sic enim ait: Vobis autem dico amicis meis, Ne terreamini ab his qui occidunt corpus, et post haec non habent amplius quid faciant. Ostendam autem vobis quem timeatis: timete eum qui postquam occiderit, habet potestatem mittere in gehennam. Vobis autem dico amicis meis, Ne terreamini: quia libertatem probat virtus, metus indicat servitutem; nam liber ad gloriam, servus natus est ad timorem; merito ergo ad Dei amicitias sublimatur, qui propter Deum humanas despicit mortes, nescit timores. Si amicos morum facit imitatio, morum similitudo conjungit, convenienter eos amicos vocat Christus, quos imitatione sua mundi jacula, et ipsam mortis formidinem conspicit et praevidet calcaturos.

Vobis autem dico. Id est, non omnibus, sed amicis. Vobis autem dico. Quos mors absolvit ista, non finit. Vobis dico. Quos corporis resolutio promovet ad melius, non transducit ad poenam. Vobis dico. Quibus morte vita inchoatur, non finitur. Vobis dico, Quorum mors pretiosa fit non sui qualitate, sed causa, dum vitae magis lucra invenit quam vitae perdat usuram.

Sed audiamus quid dicat amicis suis. Ne terreamini ab his qui occidunt corpus. Audiant qui de bono mortis veterum vetusta volumina detriverunt, nihil tamen inde capere virtutis, aut consolationis aliquid invenire valuerunt. Quia etsi totis eloquentiae viribus ad tolerantiam mortis armarunt animos, siccarunt lacrymas, suspiria sustulerunt, negaverunt gemitus, incluserunt dolores, nihil tamen aut de spe certa, aut de perpetua vita, aut de vera suis lectoribus salute conquisierunt. Quis homini, quis sapienti dicat? Mori naturae est, necesse est deperire. Nobis vixerunt veteres, vivimus nos futuris, nemo sibi; quod non potest tolli velle virtutis est: suscipe voluntarius ad quod urgeris invitus; mors antequam veniat non est; cum autem venerit, venisse nescitur. Nec ergo amisisse te doleas quod cum amiseris non dolebis. Sed haec talia cum dixerint, dicunt totum de sententia, non de vita.

Sermon CI.

On death to be despised by the faithful, and why God permitted it. On the passage of Luke: "Do not fear those who kill the body", etc.

You have heard, brothers, how Christ addresses his soldiers with a royal exhortation, that in contempt of death they should not dread the slayers of the body. Indeed, he enrols in the rights of friends those who, out of zeal for triumph, out of love of liberty, have shed their blood with joy and without trembling; for thus he says: But I say to you, my friends, Do not be terrified by those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do (Luke 12:4). But I will show you whom you should fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into Gehenna (Luke 12:5). But I say to you, my friends, Do not be terrified: because virtue proves liberty, dread betrays servitude; for the free man is born for glory, the servant for fear; rightly, then, is he raised to the friendship of God who for God's sake despises human deaths, knows no fears. If imitation of character makes friends, if likeness of character joins them, fittingly does Christ call those friends whom he sees and foresees will trample, in imitation of him, the darts of the world and the very terror of death.

But I say to you. That is, not to all, but to friends. But I say to you. Whom this death releases, not ends. I say to you. Whom the dissolving of the body promotes to something better, does not carry over to punishment. I say to you. For whom by death life is begun, not finished. I say to you: whose death becomes precious not by its own quality but by its cause, in that it finds the gains of life rather than loses the interest of life.

But let us hear what he says to his friends. Do not be terrified by those who kill the body. Let them hear, those who wore out the old volumes of the ancients on the good of death, and yet could draw from them nothing of virtue, nor find any consolation. For though with all the forces of eloquence they armed minds for the bearing of death, dried tears, took away sighs, forbade groans, shut in pains, yet they won nothing for their readers either of sure hope, or of perpetual life, or of true salvation. Who would say to a man, who to a wise man? "To die belongs to nature; it is necessary to perish. The ancients lived for us, we live for those to come, no one for himself; to will what cannot be taken away is the part of virtue: take on willingly that to which you are driven unwilling; death, before it comes, is not; and when it has come, it is not known to have come. Do not, then, feel pain at having lost what, once you have lost it, you will feel no pain for." But when they have said such things, they speak wholly of the sentence, not of life.

Quia unde, et quando, et quomodo tibi, et per quem mors venerit, nescierunt: nobis autem auctor vitae prodidit mortis auctorem; Deus namque vitam fecit, diabolus machinatus est in vitam, divino eloquio sic prodente: Deus mortem non fecit, invidia autem diaboli mors introivit in orbem terrarum.

Sed dicis, Quare Deus opere diaboli opus suum passus est deperire? O homo, si interrogata scire velles, vacares paululum, dares animum, aperires aures, ut negotium principale arbiter ipse tu tam curiosus agnosceres. Sed tu occupatus aliis semper, tibi numquam, quare nescias rerum causas, negotia tota saeculorum, judiciorum profundum, et impenetrabile secretum, deses et otiosus accusas. Nonne ut apices litterarum, ut elementa cognosceres, addictus magistro, scholis affixus, totus patiens laboris et poenae, nec domum noveras, nec parentes? Quam utile tibi est ad quod tibi magister addicitur, ingeritur schola, et tibi poenis tuis, labore suo doctor supplicat, ut ista velis scire, ut talia et tanta digneris audire. Probant hoc apostoli, et maxime Paulus, qui vapulando docuit, non caedendo, ut eximius magister quot sunt homini mores, tot ferret et exciperet passiones. Et nos ea in puncto temporis rerum principia, causas saeculi discamus, quia jubemur; et quomodo nos jubemur? et tu audis non quomodo debes; et nos ista servitus, necessitas talis excusat; te libertas tanta, voluntas talis, indubitanter accusat: quod dicimus, officii nostri est; quod minus dicimus, est fastidii tui.

Quaeris, homo, cur non mortem Deus mox cum ipso exstinxit auctore, et lethale virus sua providentia tunc non providit, ne ad totius orbis, et praecipue ad suae imaginis perniciem perveniret? Coelum quod tu vides, homo, firmatum aere toto portat aquas multas, nec portatur ab aliquo ipsum, quia sola illud appendit jussio, sola sustinet vis praecepti, divino eloquio sic prodente: Qui extendit coelum sicut pellem, qui tegit in aquis superiora ejus Terra quae tanto calcatur pondere, atque onere montium, ac mole solidatur, supernatat liquido fundamento, dicente propheta: Qui fundavit terram super aquas, ut quod stat, mandati sit, non naturae. Ipse, inquit, dixit, et facta sunt; ipse mandavit, et creata sunt, ut quod stat, sit divini operis, non rationis humanae.

For whence, and when, and how, and through whom death came to you, they did not know: but to us the author of life has revealed the author of death; for God made life, the devil plotted against life, as the divine word declares: God did not make death, but by the envy of the devil death entered the world (Wis 1:13; 2:24).

But you say: "Why did God allow his own work to perish by the work of the devil?" O man, if you wanted to know what you ask, you would give yourself a little leisure, you would give your mind to it, you would open your ears, so that you yourself, so curious an arbiter, might come to know the chief business. But you, busy always with other things, never with yourself, idle and lazy, complain that you do not know the causes of things, the whole business of the ages, the depth of the judgements and the impenetrable secret. Did you not, to learn the strokes of the letters, the first elements, bound to a master, fixed to the schools, wholly enduring of toil and punishment, know neither home nor parents? How useful to you is the end for which a master is assigned to you, a school is pressed upon you, and the teacher, by your punishments and his own toil, pleads with you that you may be willing to know these things, that you may deign to hear things of such kind and so great! The apostles prove this, and above all Paul, who taught by being beaten, not by beating, so that, an outstanding master, he bore and took upon himself as many sufferings as there are ways in man. And let us learn in a moment of time those beginnings of things, the causes of the world, because we are commanded; and how are we commanded? and you do not listen as you ought; and us this servitude, such necessity, excuses; you so great a liberty, such a will, beyond doubt accuses: what we say is of our office; what we say too little is of your distaste.

Do you ask, man, why God did not at once put out death together with its author, and did not then by his providence provide against the deadly poison, lest it should come to the ruin of the whole world, and above all of his own image? The heaven that you see, man, made firm by the whole air, carries many waters, and is itself carried by nothing, because command alone hangs it there, the force of a precept alone sustains it, as the divine word declares: Who stretches out the heaven like a skin, who covers its upper parts in the waters (Ps 104:2–3). The earth, which is trodden by so great a weight, and made solid by the burden of the mountains and by their mass, floats on a liquid foundation, as the Prophet says: Who founded the earth upon the waters (Ps 136:6), so that what stands may be of command, not of nature. He himself spoke, he says, and they were made; he himself commanded, and they were created (Ps 148:5), so that what stands may be of divine work, not of human reasoning.

Mare quod tanto commotionis suae vertice fertur, et elevatur ad nubes, frenant tenues arenae, ut videamus potestatem tantam non pulveri cedere, sed praecepto. Omnia quae in eis sunt, moventur ac vivunt solo jussu facta; iterum sola jussione solvenda confirmat propheta, cum dicit: Initio tu, Domine, terram fundasti, et opera manuum tuarum sunt coeli; ipsi peribunt, tu autem permanebis, et omnes sicut vestimentum veterascent; et velut opertorium mutabis eos, et mutabuntur. Quomodo? Ut tempori vetustas, non Creatori pereat creatura.

Sed tu jam nos, quicumque quaeris, evagatos esse dicis: quia cum tu quaeris quare Deus mortem in destructionem sui plasmatis permiserit permanere, nos coelum, terram, mare ex nihilo facta, et solvenda iterum ex nihilo, longo sermone descripsimus, tibi magis ac magis disquirendi materiam conquisivimus. Dicis: Ego quaesivi cur homo pereat, tu et ipsa elementa peritura firmasti, ut de generalitate pereundi solatium, non quietem de ratione, fessis mortalium sensibus provideres; quasi non doloris sit perire coelum, solvi terram, et totam rerum faciem jure mortalitatis aboleri. Dicis, rogo, quid pulchrius coelo? quid splendidius sole? quid luna gratius? quid ornatius stellis? quid salubrius terra? quid utilius mari? aut quae in istis vetustas? quae sicut nata vel facta sunt perseverant; quod utique gratius esset ista stare, quam perdere. Homo, forsitan esset jucundius, sed non utilius: nam istis stantibus tu nutasti; istis lucentibus caecatus es, ne videres; coeli claritas stupefecit sensus tuos, oculos tuos sol splendore coecavit: nam decore deceptus horum, opificem tu negasti; istos rectores mundi, istos confessus es deos, quos tuae Deus verus subjecerat servituti; necesse est ergo solvi cuncta, novari omnia, ut vel tunc facta credas, cum videris esse reparata. Nec nos aestimes evagatos, quos in argumentum tuae intelligentiae totam percurrisse conspicis creaturam.

Homo, quando te auctor tuus fecit ex pulvere, non vidisti; nam si te vidisses factum, numquam te moriturum sic deflevisses. Vidisti te perfectum, vidisti te viventem, vidisti te decorum, auctori tuo te similem jam vidisti: unde esses, qualis esses, quia nec nascentem, nec morientem videras, nesciebas? Hinc est quod naturae dedisti totum, tibi te, Deo nihil: propterea Deus per naturam redegit te, permisit ex nihilo in pulverem revocari; ut quid fueris sic videas, et resurrecturus agas gratias, qui factus, qui creatus ingratissimus exstitisti.

The sea, which is borne on so high a crest of its tossing and lifted up to the clouds, slender sands bridle, that we may see so great a power yield not to dust but to a precept. All things that are in them move and live, made by command alone; the Prophet confirms that they are to be dissolved again by command alone, when he says: In the beginning you, Lord, founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands; they will perish, but you will remain, and they will all grow old like a garment; and like a covering you will change them, and they will be changed (Ps 102:26–27). How? So that oldness may perish to time, not the creature to the Creator.

But now you, whoever you are who ask, say that we have wandered off: because when you ask why God permitted death to remain for the destruction of his handiwork, we have described at length heaven, earth, sea, made out of nothing and to be dissolved again out of nothing, and have gathered for you more and more matter for inquiry. You say: "I asked why man perishes; you have assured me that the very elements will perish, so as to provide for the weary senses of mortals a consolation from the universality of perishing, not rest from reason; as if it were no pain that heaven should perish, the earth be dissolved, and the whole face of things be abolished by the law of mortality." You say, I ask you: "What is more beautiful than heaven? what more splendid than the sun? what more pleasing than the moon? what more adorned than the stars? what more wholesome than the earth? what more useful than the sea? or what oldness is there in these? they continue as they were born or made; surely it would be more pleasing that these should stand than that they should be destroyed." Man, perhaps it would be more pleasant, but not more useful: for while these stood, you tottered; while these shone, you were blinded so as not to see; the brightness of heaven stunned your senses, the sun blinded your eyes with its splendour: for, deceived by their beauty, you denied the artificer; these you confessed as rulers of the world, these as gods, which the true God had made subject to your service; it is necessary, then, that all things be dissolved, all things be made new, so that at least then you may believe them made, when you see them restored. Do not think that we have wandered off, when you see that we have run through the whole creation as a proof for your understanding.

Man, when your author made you from dust, you did not see it; for if you had seen yourself made, you would never have so lamented that you are to die. You saw yourself perfect, you saw yourself living, you saw yourself comely, you saw yourself already like your author: whence you came, what you were, since you had seen yourself neither being born nor dying, you did not know? Hence it is that you gave everything to nature, yourself to yourself, nothing to God: therefore God, through nature, brought you down, permitted you to be called back from nothing into dust; so that you may thus see what you were, and, being destined to rise again, may give thanks, you who, made, created, showed yourself most ungrateful.

Non timeamus ergo, fratres, sicut dixit Dominus, eos qui occidunt corpus, quia istam vitam non perimunt, sed destruunt, dum de temporali faciunt sempiternam. Quid plura, fratres? permisit tunc mori, qui poterat suscitare; qui vivificare sufficit, permisit occidi; cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

Let us not fear, then, brothers, as the Lord said, those who kill the body, because they do not annihilate this life, but take it apart, in that from temporal they make it everlasting. What more, brothers? He permitted death then who could raise to life; he who is able to give life permitted men to be slain; to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CII.

De Centurione

Christus in corpore nostro manens, quod omnes non suscitavit mortuos, omnes non sanavit aegrotos, credamus hoc non potestati defuisse, sed tempori. Tunc orbem totum toto virtutis suae fulgore radiasset, et sustulisset tempus fidei, et nihil secundi adventus sui reservasset ad gloriam. Nec vero sic virtutum suarum temperavit insignia, ut et divinitatis suae manifestaret indicium, et credendi documentum plenissimum largiretur, et excusationem callidae infidelitatis auferret, sicut hodie centurio cujus evangelista Lucas meminit, fide sua providentiaque monstravit.

Centurionis, ait, cujusdam servus male habens moriebatur, qui illi pretiosus erat. Centurio hic Romanus erat; sed plus erat hic ipse fructu centesimo Christianus. Et Deo magis militabat iste quam saeculo; et in humano bello fortis, fortior in divino, pacis custodia permanebat. Cujus servus male habens moriebatur, qui illi pretiosus erat. Servus erat, qui pretio taxabatur. Quaeramus ergo quis est iste servus qui illi erat pretiosus. Si dominatur anima, corpus servit; et homini nil corpore pretiosius. Hic servus centurionis istius pretiosus infirmabatur ad mortem; ergo centurio rogabat ut Christus solus mortali corpori largiendo vitam perpetem subveniret.

Cum audisset, inquit, de Jesu, misit ad eum seniores Judaeorum. Gentilis Judaeos ad Christum mittit; et in lege positis, qui sine lege erat, legis demonstrat auctorem. Nemo ergo miretur si gentilis, hoc est Christianus, aut vocat, aut ducit, aut perducit ad Christum. Misit ad eum seniores Judaeorum, rogans eum ut veniret, et salvaret servum ejus. At illi cum venissent ad Jesum, rogabant eum sollicite dicentes: Dignus est ut hoc illi praestes, diligit enim gentem nostram, et synagogam ipse aedificavit nobis. Judaei rogant pro gentili, qui pro se non rogant; et agunt satis pro salute alieni servi, qui pro salute suorum nihil agunt filiorum. Aiunt: Dignus est ut hoc illi praestes. Si dignus est qui audit, credit, mittit ad Christum: ad Christum qui venit, videt, et non credit, quam probatur indignus? Diligit enim gentem nostram. Ille diligit gentem vestram, quam sic Christo supplicem facit; sed vos odistis eam, quam sic Christo redditis contumacem.

Sermon CII.

On the centurion

That Christ, while he remained in our body, did not raise all the dead, did not heal all the sick, let us believe was wanting not to his power but to the time. Else he would have lit up the whole world with the whole brightness of his power, and would have taken away the time of faith, and would have reserved nothing for the glory of his second coming. But as it is, he so tempered the signs of his mighty works as both to show a token of his divinity, and to grant a most full proof for believing, and to take away the excuse of cunning faithlessness, as today the centurion whom the Evangelist Luke records has shown by his faith and his foresight.

The servant of a certain centurion, he says, being ill, was dying, who was precious to him (Luke 7:2). This centurion was a Roman; but this same man was more a Christian, with a hundredfold fruit. And he served as a soldier for God more than for the world; and brave in human war, braver in the divine, he remained in the keeping of peace. Whose servant, being ill, was dying, who was precious to him. He was a servant, who was valued at a price. Let us ask, then, who this servant is who was precious to him. If the soul is master, the body serves; and to man nothing is more precious than the body. This precious servant of this centurion was sick to the point of death; so the centurion asked that Christ alone, by granting perpetual life to the mortal body, would come to its help.

When he had heard, he says, of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews (Luke 7:3). A Gentile sends Jews to Christ; and to those set under the Law he who was without the Law shows the author of the Law. Let no one then wonder if a Gentile, that is, a Christian, either calls, or leads, or brings through to Christ. He sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and save his servant. And when they had come to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying: He is worthy that you should grant him this, for he loves our nation, and he himself built us our synagogue (Luke 7:4–5). The Jews ask for a Gentile, who do not ask for themselves; and they do much for the safety of another man's servant, who do nothing for the safety of their own sons. They say: He is worthy that you should grant him this. If he is worthy who hears, believes, sends to Christ: how unworthy is he proved who comes to Christ, sees, and does not believe? For he loves our nation. He loves your nation, which he thus makes a suppliant to Christ; but you hate it, you who thus render it stubborn against Christ.

Aut quomodo Christianus non diligit gentem vestram, qui dum Christum fatetur ex gente vestra, quidquid gentis vestrae est coelestem tollit et extollit ad gloriam? Diligit enim gentem nostram, et synagogam ipse aedificavit nobis. Audistis quia semper diruta est synagoga, et jacet jugiter in caementis, nec coelestem surgit in fabricam, nisi eam in Ecclesiae culmen Christianus fabricator instruxerit.

Jesus, inquit, ibat cum illis. Sed illi non ibant cum Jesu, cum quo mente non ibant; nec cum illo erant, qui sejuncti corde, corpore videbantur adjuncti. Et cum jam non longe esset. A quo? A gentili. Quantum Judaei se sejungebant a Christo, Christus tamen gentibus jungebatur. Et cum longe jam non esset, misit ad eum centurio amicos. Qui ante miserat Judaeos, nunc amicos mittit: ut Judaeos, sic dicendo indicet inimicos, probante hoc Apostolo cum dicit: Inimici propter vos. Judaei dum credidisse gentes invident, quidquid erat et legis et gratiae perdiderunt. Misit ad eum amicos. Audi ad apostolos Dominum dicentem: Jam non dicam vos servos, sed amicos. Sicut fides servos promovet in amicos, ita perfidia filios in poenalem redigit servitutem.

Misit ad eum amicos, dicens: Domine, noli vexari. Quare? Quia non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. Videtis quia Christus ducebat magis Judaeos quam adduceretur a Judaeis, ut audirent esse penes centurionem Divinitatis reverentiam, penes gentilem legis cultum, penes militem stipendium gratiae, penes Romanum fidei doctrinam, in frigore pagano Christianum calorem, in terreno pectore coeleste secretum, et notitiam totam dominationis supernae in tota saeculi servitute. Domine, noli te vexare. Hoc est dicere, Deus, quid te vexas humano in corpore? quid te conficis labore terreno? et viae longitudine te fatigas? quid peregrinaris locis, qui es ubique totus? atque intra te totam tenes et possides creaturam? Domine, noli te vexare, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. Fratres, quod est tectum quod hominem aut dignum facit, aut reddit indignum, quo divinum invitet, aut repellat accessum? Fratres, hoc tectum corpus est quod tegit animam, quod operit sensum spiritus, quod cordis domicilium velat, quod libertatem mentis a coelesti visione secludit. Sub hoc ergo tecto centurio indignum ducit intrare Christum, hoc est, in corpus humanum divinam succedere majestatem. Non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. Sed Deus, qui quod humanum est, cum vult, facit esse divinum, et quod nostrae carnis est, cum dignatur, suum commutat in spiritum, nec habitare carnem, nec tectum nostri corporis dedignatur intrare.

Or how does the Christian not love your nation, who, in acknowledging Christ to be of your nation, lifts and exalts whatever is of your nation to heavenly glory? For he loves our nation, and he himself built us our synagogue. You have heard that the synagogue is always in ruins, and lies continually in rubble, and does not rise into a heavenly building, unless the Christian builder has built it up into the summit of the Church.

Jesus, he says, went with them (Luke 7:6). But they were not going with Jesus, with whom they did not go in mind; nor were they with him who, separated in heart, seemed joined in body. And when he was now not far off. From whom? From the Gentile. However far the Jews separated themselves from Christ, Christ nevertheless was joining himself to the Gentiles. And when he was now not far off, the centurion sent friends to him. He who before had sent Jews now sends friends: so as to point out by this way of speaking that the Jews are enemies, as the Apostle proves when he says: Enemies for your sake (Rom 11:28). The Jews, in begrudging the Gentiles their believing, have lost whatever there was both of the Law and of grace. He sent friends to him. Hear the Lord saying to the apostles: No longer will I call you servants, but friends (John 15:15). As faith promotes servants to friends, so unbelief brings sons down into penal servitude.

He sent friends to him, saying: Lord, do not be troubled. Why? Because I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. You see that Christ was leading the Jews rather than being brought by the Jews, so that they might hear that with the centurion was reverence for the Divinity, with the Gentile the worship of the Law, with the soldier the pay of grace, with the Roman the teaching of the faith, in pagan cold Christian warmth, in an earthly breast a heavenly secret, and the whole knowledge of the dominion above in the whole servitude of the world. Lord, do not trouble yourself. That is to say: God, why do you trouble yourself in a human body? why do you wear yourself out with earthly toil? and weary yourself with the length of the road? why do you travel from place to place, you who are everywhere whole? and hold and possess the whole creation within yourself? Lord, do not trouble yourself, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. Brothers, what is the roof that makes a man either worthy or unworthy, by which he invites or repels the approach of the divine? Brothers, this roof is the body, which covers the soul, which hides the sense of the spirit, which veils the abode of the heart, which shuts off the freedom of the mind from the heavenly vision. Under this roof, then, the centurion deems it unworthy that Christ should enter, that is, that the divine majesty should come into a human body. I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. But God, who, when he will, makes what is human to be divine, and, when he deigns, changes what is of our flesh into his own spirit, does not disdain either to dwell in flesh or to enter the roof of our body.

Propter quod, inquit, et meipsum indignum arbitratus sum venire ad te. Hoc est utrumque devoti, quia et ad se Deum venire indignum ducit, et se accedere ad eum scit esse non dignum. Quis intrat ad judicem non vocatus? quis non jussus ingreditur ad regem? quanto magis ad Deum non venit quis non vocatus. Quos vocavit, inquit, eos et justificavit. Centurio ergo non refugit adventum Domini, Christi praesentiam non recusat, sed agit ut vocantis sit gratia, non sit temeritas praesumentis.

Nam Deus quid possit, humano suggerit et informat exemplo dicendo: 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. Hoc est, si ego, qui sum sub potestate constitutus, imperio verbi solo facio mihi parere subjectos, quomodo tu qui nulli subjaces, et cujus omnia subjacent potestati, verbo non potes jubente curare? sanitatem mittere? mandare virtutes? Aut verbo reficere non potes, quod verbo fecisti? Dixit, inquit, et facta sunt; mandavit, et creata sunt. Aut aliquid ex aliquo reparare non sufficis, cuncta ex nihilo qui parasti? Dic ergo verbo, et sanabitur puer meus. Implevit illud quod propheta de Deo cecinit: Misit verbum suum, et sanavit eos; et eripuit eos de corruptela eorum.

Fratres, centurio iste, dicendo: Non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, Christiani populi gerit figuram, qui Christi praesentiam corporalem se judicat non mereri, sed solo verbo, nuntio, auditu fidei tantum, totas Domini audit, credit, respicit in sua sanitate virtutes. Nam quod dicit: Dico huic, Vade, et vadit; et alii, Veni, et venit; et servo meo, Fac hoc, et facit; Judaeorum repulsam, vocationem gentium, Christiani populi obedientiam sic demonstrat. Dico huic, hoc est, Judaeo, qui non credidit, Vade, et vadit; et alii, hoc est, Gentili, quia credidit, Veni, et venit; et servo meo, hoc est, Christiano, Fac hoc, et facit. Oremus, fratres, ut mereamur Christiani non nomine tantum esse, sed fide; et ut quae jubentur, non audiamus tantum, sed faciamus audita. Quia sicut devoti servi est fecisse jussa, ita jussa contumacis est non fecisse.

For which reason, he says, I did not think myself worthy either to come to you (Luke 7:7). This is the devout man's part in both ways: he both deems it unworthy that God should come to him, and knows that he is not worthy to approach God. Who goes in to a judge uncalled? who enters before a king unbidden? how much more does no one come to God uncalled. Those whom he called, he says, he also justified (Rom 8:30). The centurion, then, does not flee the Lord's coming, does not refuse Christ's presence, but acts so that it may be the grace of the one who calls, not the rashness of one who presumes.

For what God can do he suggests and shapes by a human example, saying: 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 (Luke 7:8). That is: if I, who am set under authority, by the command of a word alone make those subject to me obey me, how can you, who are subject to no one, and to whose authority all things are subject, not heal by a word that commands? not send health? not command mighty works? Or can you not restore by a word what you made by a word? He spoke, he says, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created (Ps 148:5). Or are you not able to restore something from something, you who prepared all things from nothing? Say the word, then, and my servant will be healed (Luke 7:7). He fulfilled what the Prophet sang of God: He sent his word, and healed them; and rescued them from their corruption (Ps 107:20).

Brothers, this centurion, in saying: I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, bears the figure of the Christian people, which judges that it does not merit the bodily presence of Christ, but by the word alone, by the message, by the hearing of faith only, hears, believes, beholds in its own healing all the mighty works of the Lord. For when he says: 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; he shows in this way the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, the obedience of the Christian people. I say to this one, that is, to the Jew, who did not believe, Go, and he goes; and to another, that is, to the Gentile, because he believed, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, that is, to the Christian, Do this, and he does it. Let us pray, brothers, that we may merit to be Christians not in name only but in faith; and that what is commanded we may not only hear, but may do what we have heard. For as it is the part of a devoted servant to have done what was commanded, so it is the part of a stubborn one not to have done what was commanded.

Dic ergo verbo, et sanabitur puer meus. Quo audito, inquit, Jesus miratus est. Creator mirabilium miratur; aurium conditor, quasi qui non audita nesciat, sic stupet audita: sed dum gentilem sic credidisse miratur, incredulitatem corripit Judaeorum. Denique, Sequentibus se turbis dicit, in morte manentes arguens sic Judaeos: Amen dico vobis, nec in Israel tantam fidem inveni. Verum est, fratres: fides sola vivit, et vivet in gentibus; signa et virtutes lassant, et nihil proficiunt in Judaeis.

Say the word, then, and my servant will be healed. When he heard this, he says, Jesus marvelled (Luke 7:9). The Creator of marvels marvels; the Maker of ears, as one who does not know what he has not heard, is thus astonished at what he has heard: but in marvelling that a Gentile has so believed, he rebukes the disbelief of the Jews. Indeed, he speaks to the crowds that followed him, thus reproving the Jews who remained in death: Amen I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. It is true, brothers: faith alone lives, and will live, among the Gentiles; signs and mighty works grow weary and achieve nothing among the Jews.

Sermo CIII.

De filio viduae excitato a mortuis, deque corporum resurrectione

Hodie beatus evangelista, quia viduae matris unicum jam funereis vinculis illigatum, lamentabili impositum jam feretro, prosequentibus turbis euntem jam carceris ad sepulcrum, per Christum vitae redditum nuntiavit, omnium concussit corda, movit mentes, stupefecit auditum. Sed hoc gentes mirentur, Judaei stupeant, mundus pavescat: nos autem, qui omnes a saeculis mortuos ad unam vocem Christi sepulcris excitandos credimus, cur miramur? Exsurgent, inquit Isaias, mortui, et resurgent qui in monumentis sunt. Et Dominus: Veniet hora quando mortui audient vocem Filii Dei; et qui audierint, vivent. Ad haec Apostolus: In momento, in ictu oculi, in novissima tuba; canet enim tuba, et mortui resurgent incorrupti.

Quae est ista tuba, quae inferis infert bellum, sepulcri resolvit moles, intonat mortuis vitam, resurgentibus in lucem perpetem dat triumphum? Quae est? Illa quam superius Dominus dixit: Mortui audient vocem Filii Dei. Tuba non quae arctato spiritu per concavum cornu ligni vel aeris tristem bellantibus dat mugitum, sed quae de corde Patris, ore Filii, vitalem simul et inferis et superis dat clamorem. Et in novissima tuba; tuba quae in principio mundum vocavit ex nihilo, ipsa in novissimo mundum revocabit ex perdito; et quae initio hominem suscitavit ex limo, ipsa in fine hominem resuscitabit ex pulvere.

Fratres, sic credimus, quia tuba divinae vocis chaos divisit, collegit orbem, mundavit elementa, distinxit mundum, suspendit coelum, fundavit terram, mare vinxit, mersit infernos, dedit ordinum vices, jussit rerum continuam servitutem; ac ne vacuus horreret orbis, aptavit habitatores, habitacula sic discrevit: in coelo posuit angelos solo

Sermon CIII.

On the widow's son raised from the dead, and on the resurrection of bodies

Today the blessed Evangelist, since he has announced that the only son of a widowed mother, already bound in the ties of burial, already laid on the mournful bier, already going, with the crowds following, to the sepulchre of his prison, was restored to life through Christ (Luke 7:12–15), has shaken the hearts of all, moved their minds, stunned their hearing. But let the Gentiles marvel at this, the Jews be stupefied, the world tremble: but we, who believe that all the dead from the beginning of the ages are to be raised from their sepulchres at the one voice of Christ, why do we marvel? They shall arise, says Isaiah, the dead, and those who are in the tombs shall rise again (Isa 26:19). And the Lord: The hour will come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live (John 5:25). To this the Apostle: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise again incorruptible (1 Cor 15:52).

What is this trumpet, which brings war upon the underworld, breaks open the mass of the sepulchre, thunders life to the dead, gives triumph to those who rise into perpetual light? What is it? That of which the Lord spoke above: The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. A trumpet, not one which with pent breath through a hollow horn of wood or bronze gives a grim bellowing to men at war, but one which from the heart of the Father, by the mouth of the Son, gives a life-giving cry to the underworld and to those above alike. And at the last trumpet: the trumpet which in the beginning called the world out of nothing will itself at the last call the world back out of ruin; and that which in the beginning raised man from the slime will itself at the end raise man again from the dust.

Brothers, so we believe, because the trumpet of the divine voice divided chaos, gathered the globe, cleansed the elements, set the world apart, hung up the heaven, founded the earth, bound the sea, sank the underworld, gave the orders their turns, commanded the unbroken service of things; and that the world might not shudder in its emptiness, it fitted it with inhabitants and thus distinguished their dwellings: in heaven it set the angels, living by

spiritu viventes, in terra constituit vitas varias terrenorum, in aere dedit animas aligeras pervolare, in aquis tam pusilla quam magna fecit, ut viveret animantium multitudo; ac miro modo sic ex disjunctis partibus junxit compagem mundi, ut nec commixtio discreta confunderet, nec discretio rerum scinderet unitatem. Hinc est, quod diei ac noctis copula sic divisa est, ut ex quiete labor, requies ex labore constaret. Hinc sol et luna vicissim mundi circumeunt metas, ut sol geminata luce amplificet claritatem diei, et luna lumine suppari ex toto caeca noctis tempora non relinquat. Hinc stellae suo cursu varios mutant ortus, ut noctibus et signent tempora, et viantibus dent ducatum. Hinc tempora eundo veniunt, esse incipiunt dum desistunt. Hinc semina nascuntur, crescunt, adolescunt, juvenescunt, senescunt, decidunt, moriuntur, et iterum vitalibus sepulta sulcis, resoluta putredine, salutari ex morte in vitam suam redeunt, de corruptione perpetua suscitantur in forma.

Et si hoc, fratres, Dei vox, tuba Christi, per dies, per menses, per tempora, per annos vocat, revocat, ducit, reducit, praecipit esse, facit non esse, dat morti, vitae reddit, quare quod in omnibus semper facit, semel facere non possit in nobis? Aut in nobis solis virtus divina lassescit, propter quos solos totum quod praedictum est Dei est operata majestas? Homo, si tibi omnia sua ex morte reviviscunt, cur tu Deo non reviviscas ex morte? Aut in te solo Dei creatura deperit, propter quem subsistit, agitur, mutatur, innovatur tota quotidie creatura?

Fratres, haec dico, non signorum Christi cupiens exinanire virtutes, sed hortor ut unius resurgentis exemplo ad fidem resurrectionis omnium concitemur, et credamus quod crux nostri corporis sit aratrum; fides, semen; sulcus, sepulcrum; resolutio, germen; exspectatio, tempus; ut cum ver Dominici adventus arriserit, corporum nostrorum matura tunc viriditas vitalem resurgat in messem, nesciturum jam finem, nesciturum canitiem, non passuram fasces, nec flagella sensuram. Quia depositis in morte vetustatis paleis novum gloriosi corporis consurgit in fructum. Si ad unius viduae lacrymas temporales sic motus est Christus, ut occurreret in via, ut ex oculis stillantia dolorum fluenta restingueret, ut recuteret mortem, reduceret hominem, resuscitaret corpus, vitam reduceret, planctum verteret in gaudium, et exsequias lugubres in festivitatem natalitiam commutaret, et feretro datum matri vivum redderet ex morte; quid modo faciet quando inardescet viribus suis ad Ecclesiae suae lacrymas diuturnas, ad sponsae suae sanguineos sudores? Nam per supplicantem Ecclesiam lacrymas fundit juges, per martyres sacrum sanguinem sudat, donec unicum suum, hoc est populum Christianum, quem tot ad mortem ferunt tempora, occurrens Christus de mortali feretro perpetuae vitae reddat in supernae matris gaudium sempiternum.

spirit alone; on earth it established the various lives of earthly creatures; in the air it gave winged souls to fly about; in the waters it made things small as well as great, so that a multitude of living creatures might live; and in a wonderful way it so joined the frame of the world out of separate parts, that neither did the distinct commingling confound, nor did the distinction of things split the unity. Hence it is that the pairing of day and night is so divided that labour stands on rest, and rest on labour. Hence the sun and the moon go round the bounds of the world in turn, so that the sun with doubled light may enlarge the brightness of the day, and the moon with its nearly equal light may not leave the times of night wholly blind. Hence the stars by their course change their various risings, so as both to mark the times by night and to give guidance to travellers. Hence times come by going, they begin to be while they cease. Hence seeds are born, grow, grow up, grow young, grow old, fall, die, and again, buried in life-giving furrows, dissolved in decay, return from a saving death to their life, and are raised from corruption in perpetual form.

And if, brothers, the voice of God, the trumpet of Christ, through days, through months, through seasons, through years, calls, calls back, leads, leads back, commands to be, makes not to be, gives to death, gives back to life, why could he not do once in us what he always does in all things? Or does the divine power grow weary in us alone, for whose sake alone the majesty of God has wrought all that has been told? Man, if for you all things revive from their death, why should you not revive for God from death? Or does God's creature perish in you alone, for whose sake the whole creation subsists, is set in motion, is changed, is renewed every day?

Brothers, I say this not wishing to empty the power of Christ's signs, but I exhort that by the example of one who rose we may be roused to faith in the resurrection of all, and may believe that the cross of our body is the plough; faith, the seed; the furrow, the sepulchre; dissolution, the sprouting; waiting, the season; so that when the spring of the Lord's coming has smiled, the greenness of our bodies, ripe at last, may rise again into a living harvest, never more to know an end, never to know grey hair, never to suffer the rods, nor to feel the scourges. For, the chaff of oldness laid aside in death, the new rises up into the fruit of a glorious body. If at the passing tears of one widow Christ was so moved as to meet her on the way, as to stanch the streams of grief dripping from her eyes, as to strike death back, bring back the man, raise the body, bring back life, turn lamentation into joy, and change the mournful funeral into a feast of birth, and give back alive from death to the mother the one given to the bier; what will he do now, when he blazes with his strength at the long tears of his Church, at the bloody sweat of his bride? For through the Church in supplication he sheds unceasing tears, through the martyrs he sweats sacred blood, until Christ, coming to meet his only son, that is, the Christian people, whom so many ages bear to death, restores him from the deadly bier to perpetual life, into the everlasting joy of the mother above.

Verum quia nascentis Christi venit tempus, et miraculum coeleste jam radiat paritura virginitas, atque ortum divini regis nobis non stella jam nuntiat, sed ipse solis ascensus, adoraturi occurramus omnes, et muneribus sacris Deum regemque virgineo processisse fateamur ex templo: offeramus munera, quia nascenti regi semper publica paratur oblatio, offeramus munera, quia indevotus satis est vacuus adorator. Hoc probat magus, qui onustus auro, succensus thure, sacratus myrrha, Christi cunabulis inclinatur. Quale est, si quod fecit magus, non faciat Christianus? Quale est, si ad gaudium nascentis Christi fleat pauper, captivus gemat, hospes lamentetur, ejulet peregrinus? Festa coelestia Judaeus decimis semper honoravit, Christianus quid de se sentit, si vel centesimis non honorat?

Fratres, ne quis me hoc dicere existimet declamantis studio, non dolentis affectu. Doleo, certe doleo, quando lego Christi cunabula magos rigasse auro, et video altare corporis Christi Christianos vacuum reliquisse, et in tempore hoc praesertim, quando se pauperum fames vasta, quando se fundit turba lamentabilis captivorum. Non habeo nemo dicat, quando Deus ex eo quod habes, non ex eo quod non habes, quaerit; quando duo aera viduae in acceptum dignanter ascribit. Devoti simus Creatori, ut nobis devota sit creatura. Proximorum nostrorum sustentemus angustias, ut a nostris liberemur angustiis. Repleamus altare Dei, ut nostra horrea repleat fructuum plenitudo. Certe si non damus, quia non accipimus non queramur. Ipse autem Deus noster donet vobis tam praesentia quam futura bona, per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, cui est omnis honor et perpetua gloria, una cum Spiritu sancto, nunc et semper, et per omnia saecula saeculorum, Amen.

But since the time of Christ's birth has come, and virginity about to give birth already shines as a heavenly wonder, and the rising of the divine king is announced to us now not by a star but by the very ascent of the sun, let us all go out to meet him, to adore, and with sacred gifts let us acknowledge that God and king has come forth from the virginal temple: let us offer gifts, because for a king who is born a public offering is always prepared; let us offer gifts, because an empty-handed worshipper is very undevout. The magus proves it, who, laden with gold, kindled with frankincense, hallowed with myrrh, bows down before the cradle of Christ (Matt 2:11). What sort of thing is it, if the Christian does not do what the magus did? What sort of thing is it, if at the joy of Christ's birth the poor man weeps, the captive groans, the stranger laments, the pilgrim wails? The Jew always honoured the heavenly feasts with tithes: what does the Christian think of himself, if he does not honour them even with hundredths?

Brothers, let no one think that I say this from the zeal of a declaimer, and not from the feeling of one who grieves. I grieve, surely I grieve, when I read that the Magi watered the cradle of Christ with gold, and I see that Christians have left the altar of the body of Christ empty, and at this time above all, when the vast hunger of the poor, when the lamentable crowd of the captives pours itself out. Let no one say, I have nothing, when God asks from what you have, not from what you do not have; when he graciously credits the widow's two coins to her account. Let us be devoted to the Creator, that the creature may be devoted to us. Let us relieve the straits of our neighbours, that we may be delivered from our own straits. Let us fill the altar of God, that the fullness of fruits may fill our granaries. Surely, if we do not give, let us not complain that we do not receive. May our God himself grant you good things both present and to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be all honour and perpetual glory, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CIV.

De divite, cujus ager ferax fuit

Quotiens dives iste venit in medium, quem tot saeculis, orbe toto, die omni, clamor divinae vocis accusat, totiens divitiarum fallax fugatur illecebra, totiens cupiditatum furens flamma restinguitur, avaritiae totiens rabies vesana mitigatur. Sic namque hodie coepit Dominus Jesus. Hominis cujusdam divitis uberes fructus ager attulit; et cogitabat intra se dicens: Quid faciam, quod non habeo quo congregem fructus meos? Et dixit, Hoc faciam, destruam horrea mea, et majora faciam, et illuc congregabo omnia quae nata sunt mihi bona mea; et dicam animae meae: Anima, habes bona multa posita in annos multos: requiesce, manduca, bibe, epulare. Dixit autem illi Deus, Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetunt a te, quae autem parasti, cujus erunt? Miserum, quem ubertas sterilem, abundantia anxium, inhumanum copia, divitiae fecere mendicum. Humanus ager inhumanum dominum sustinebat; et quod terra fundebat largiter, concludebat et congregabat anguste; ut esset alienorum custos, qui esse suorum noluit prorogator, ingratus Deo, sibi nequam, hostis pauperum, divitum nota, carcer naturae.

Hominis cujusdam divitis uberes fructus ager attulit, et cogitabat intra se. Quasi possit extra se quispiam cogitare, sed intra se iste cogitabat, qui in corde suo impietatis consilio recepto nil pietatis sibi, misericordiae nil reliquit. Cogitabat intra se, dicens. Digno consiliario se usus, qui mali animi non poterat habere solatium, non poterat habere collegam. Et cogitabat intra se, dicens. Mens impia cum pietate certabat, et patiebatur intestinum bellum, qui misericordiae pacem perdiderat et quietem. Et cogitabat intra se, dicens: Quid faciam? Interrogantis vox est; et quem putas interrogabat iste? Erat in illo alter, quia ad ejus penetralia jam diabolus possessor insederat; et qui intraverat in cor Judae, mentis ejus tenebat arcanum. Quid faciam, quod non habeo? Audistis quomodo non habet dives? Ecce clamat: Non habeo. Verum est, quia non habet semper, qui quaerit semper; et non habet ubi congreget, qui ut congreget sic requirit.

Sermon CIV.

On the rich man whose field was fruitful

Whenever this rich man comes into our midst, whom for so many ages, throughout the world, every day, the cry of the divine voice accuses, so often is the deceitful enticement of riches put to flight, so often is the raging flame of covetous desires put out, so often is the mad fury of avarice soothed. For thus the Lord Jesus began today. The field of a certain rich man brought forth plentiful fruits; and he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do, since I have nowhere to gather my fruits? (Luke 12:16–17) And he said: This I will do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater ones, and there I will gather all my goods that have grown for me; and I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years: rest, eat, drink, feast (Luke 12:18–19). But God said to him: Fool, this night they demand your soul back from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? (Luke 12:20) Wretched man, whom plenty made barren, abundance anxious, wealth inhuman, riches a beggar! A humane field bore an inhuman master; and what the earth poured out lavishly he shut in and gathered narrowly; so that he who would not be the dispenser of his own became the keeper of what belonged to others, ungrateful to God, worthless to himself, enemy of the poor, a disgrace to the rich, a prison of nature.

The field of a certain rich man brought forth plentiful fruits, and he thought within himself. As if anyone could think outside himself; but this man was thinking within himself, who, having received into his heart the counsel of impiety, left himself nothing of piety, nothing of mercy. He thought within himself, saying. He used himself as a counsellor worthy of him, he who could have no comfort for an evil mind, could have no colleague. And he thought within himself, saying. An impious mind contended with piety, and he suffered a war within, who had lost the peace and the quiet of mercy. And he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do? It is the voice of one who asks; and whom, do you think, was this man asking? There was another in him, because the devil had already settled as owner in his inner chambers; and he who had entered into the heart of Judas held the secret of his mind. What shall I do, since I do not have? Have you heard how the rich man does not have? Behold, he cries: I do not have. It is true, because he who always seeks always does not have; and he does not have where to gather who seeks so as to gather.

Sed audiamus quid ei responderit consiliarius internus. Destruam horrea mea. Evidenter apparuit qui latebat, quia a destructione incipit semper inimicus. Agit, agit, ut quae habes destruas, et quae concupieris non reformes. Miser dives, ignarus de praesentibus, disputas stultissime de futuris; quam melius praesentia, ubi est sedes animae, transtulisses! At nunc catenae horreorum tuorum strinxerunt fauces pauperum, vinxerunt hospitum colla, esurientium viscera contriverunt: unde pauperum te praecedunt gemitus et sequuntur, accusant te hospitum luridi vultus, te turba impetit plangens petentium; ut addictus a superno Judice satietatem poenarum capias, qui horreorum tuorum seras, negando caeteris, tibimet conclusisti.

Cogitanti intra se diviti merito ille taliter respondit, qui scit cogitationes hominum, quoniam vanae sunt: Stulte, hac nocte repetunt animam tuam a te; quae autem parasti, cujus erunt? Bene stulte, quia ibi totum de carne fuerat, nil de corde. Bene stulte, quia migraturae mox animae condita satis longa praeparabat. Hac nocte a te repetunt animam tuam. Convenienter hac nocte, quia fugiens misericordiae lucem, avaritiae tenebris se manciparat, dicendo: Manduca, bibe, epulare. Quod autem bibentes filii noctis sint, non diei, Apostolus sic declarat. Et qui inebriantur, nocte ebrii sunt; per obscura fertur, assumitur per tenebras, qui vitae subsidium claustris suorum mandavit et condidit horreorum. Repetunt animam tuam a te. Quare non dixit: qui dederat, repetit, sed repetunt? Quia sanctorum Deus repetit animas et reducit; tartarei ministri repetunt et pertrahunt animas impiorum.

Et cogitabat intra se, dicens: Quid faciam, quod non habeo quo congregem fructus meos? Et dixit: Hoc faciam; destruam horrea mea et majora faciam, et illuc congregabo omnia quae nata sunt mihi bona mea; et dicam animae meae: Anima, habes multa bona posita in annos multos: manduca, bibe, epulare. Dixit autem illi Deus: Stulte, hac nocte repetunt animam tuam; quae autem parasti cujus erunt? Unde iste dives sic praeventus est, ut magis cogitata perderet quam parata; et impletum est illud prophetae: Exibit spiritus ejus, et revertetur in terram suam; in illa die peribunt omnes cogitationes eorum.

But let us hear what the counsellor within answered him. I will pull down my barns. He who lay hidden has plainly appeared, because the enemy always begins with destruction. He works, he works, that you may pull down what you have and not rebuild what you have coveted. Wretched rich man, ignorant of the present, you argue most foolishly about the future; how much better had you transferred your present goods where the seat of the soul is! But now the chains of your barns have strangled the throats of the poor, bound the necks of strangers, crushed the bowels of the hungry: hence the groans of the poor go before you and follow after, the pallid faces of strangers accuse you, the wailing crowd of those who beg assails you; so that, sentenced by the Judge above, you may take your fill of punishments, you who, by denying others, have shut the bolts of your barns upon yourself.

To the rich man thinking within himself he rightly answered thus who knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain (Ps 94:11): Fool, this night they demand your soul back from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? Well is he called fool, because there everything had been of the flesh, nothing of the heart. Well is he called fool, because for a soul soon to depart he was preparing stores to last very long. This night they demand your soul back from you. Fittingly this night, because, fleeing the light of mercy, he had sold himself into the darkness of avarice, saying: Eat, drink, feast. That drinkers are sons of the night, not of the day, the Apostle declares thus. And those who are drunk are drunk at night (1 Thess 5:7); he is borne through darkness, taken away through the shadows, who entrusted the support of life to the locks of his barns and stored it there. They demand your soul back from you. Why did he not say: He who had given demands it back, but: They demand it back? Because God demands back the souls of the saints and leads them home; the ministers of Tartarus demand back and drag away the souls of the wicked.

And he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do, since I have nowhere to gather my fruits? And he said: This I will do: I will pull down my barns and build greater ones, and there I will gather all my goods that have grown for me; and I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years: eat, drink, feast. But God said to him: Fool, this night they demand your soul back; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? Hence this rich man was so overtaken that he lost what he had thought rather than what he had prepared; and that saying of the Prophet was fulfilled: His spirit will go forth, and he will return to his earth; on that day all their thoughts will perish (Ps 146:4).

Cogitavit iste quid post se relinqueret, non quid praemitteret ante se: unde juxta Apostolum: Evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis, et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum; aestimantes se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt. Cui dicitur stulte, et excitatus de somno praesentis vitae, in illa perpetuitate nihil invenit in manibus suis; sicut dixit Psalmista: Dormierunt somnum suum, et nihil invenerunt omnes viri divitiarum in manibus suis.

Vigila ergo, dives, in opere bono, in malo dormi; ut non sit manus tua pauperi vacua, ut tibi plena sit semper. Quia dives quantum largiter profundit, tantum largiter redundat in rebus. Esto ergo dives in misericordia, si semper esse vis dives: et tunc erunt horrea tua majora, tunc plena, si non fuerint largitate vacua, cupiditate inclusa.

This man thought of what he would leave behind him, not of what he would send ahead of him: hence, according to the Apostle: They became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened; thinking themselves to be wise, they became fools (Rom 1:21–22). He to whom "fool" is said, roused from the sleep of the present life, finds nothing in his hands in that perpetuity; as the Psalmist said: They have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands (Ps 76:6).

Keep watch, then, rich man, in good work; in evil, sleep; so that your hand may not be empty for the poor, so that it may always be full for you. For as much as the rich man lavishly pours out, so much does he lavishly overflow in goods. Be rich, then, in mercy, if you want always to be rich: and then your barns will be greater, then full, if they are not empty of largesse, shut up by greed.

Sermo CV.

De muliere quae habebat spiritum infirmitatis

Hodie cura Christi, et divinae virtutis dedit mirabile documentum, et diabolicae fraudis nudavit astutiam, et absolvit mulierem longo et obscuro vulnere sauciatam; sicut ait Evangelista: Erat Jesus docens in synagoga sabbatis, et mulier quae habebat spiritum infirmitatis annis decem et octo, et erat inclinata, nec omnino poterat sursum respicere. Quam cum vidisset Jesus, vocavit illam, et ait illi: Mulier, dimissa es ab infirmitate tua. Et imposuit illi manus, et confestim erecta est et glorificabat Deum.

Habebat spiritum infirmitatis, et erat inclinata: patebat vulnus, sed auctor vulneris non patebat; languorem videbant cuncti, sed languoris materiam non videbant. Erat in aperto poena, sed in ipsa poena carnifex latebat inclusus; corpus aspiciebatur incurvum, sed non aspiciebatur incurvi corporis pondus; in medio civium portabat mulier hostem suum, sed hostem cives ut propellerent non videbant. Ars nequissimi spiritus corporis necessitas credebatur, ut praedo callidus teneret captivam dolo, quam tenere viribus non valebat. Diabolus nihil esset, si essent sollicitiores homines et cautiores. Aut quid in homine umquam praevaluit ille virtute, nisi arte, mendacio, insidiis, fraude, dolo, nequitia, vitiorum ministerio, furore criminum? Ille voluntates hominum semper explorat, et bonas quidem voluntates refugit; malis autem voluntatibus obsecundat, ut sit minister scelerum, criminum leno, parasitus ipse vitiorum. Et quia potestate non potest, dominatur turpissimis mentibus turpissima servitute. Sic mendacio decepit Evam, sic cupiditate laqueavit Judam, sic Judaeos caecavit invidia, sic gentes idolorum caligavit errore, sic confudit populos pompa rerum, sic parvulos vanitate ne sana saperent occupavit.

Denique quid circa praesentem mulierem molitus sit audiamus. Et ecce, inquit, mulier, quae habebat spiritum infirmitatis annis decem et octo, et erat inclinata, nec omnino poterat sursum respicere. Videtis quia haec mulier depressa nequissimi spiritus onere suspirabat, qui semper oneribus peccatorum deprimit homines, et inclinat ad terram, ne coelum videant, ne superna sapiant, ne Deum aspectent, ne ad libertatem suam per suum revertantur auctorem; sed inclinato capite, defixis oculis, prono vultu, captivi sub jugo semper hostis teneantur antiqui.

Sermon CV.

On the woman who had a spirit of infirmity

Today the cure of Christ both gave a wonderful proof of the divine power, and stripped bare the cunning of the devil's fraud, and set free a woman wounded by a long and hidden wound; as the Evangelist says: Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbaths, and there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was bent over, and could not look upward at all (Luke 13:10–11). When Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her: Woman, you are released from your infirmity (Luke 13:12). And he laid his hands on her, and at once she was made straight and glorified God (Luke 13:13).

She had a spirit of infirmity, and was bent over: the wound lay open, but the author of the wound did not lie open; all saw the sickness, but did not see the matter of the sickness. The punishment was in the open, but in the punishment itself the executioner lay hidden, shut within; the body was seen bent, but the weight on the bent body was not seen; in the midst of the citizens the woman carried her enemy, but the citizens did not see the enemy so as to drive him away. The craft of the most wicked spirit was believed to be a necessity of the body, so that the cunning robber might hold captive by guile her whom he could not hold by force. The devil would be nothing, if men were more watchful and more cautious. Or in what has he ever prevailed over man by might, except by craft, lying, snares, fraud, deceit, wickedness, the ministry of vices, the fury of crimes? He always explores the wills of men, and good wills indeed he flees; but evil wills he humours, so as to be the minister of wickednesses, the pander of crimes, himself the parasite of vices. And because he cannot by power, he lords it over the basest minds by the basest servitude. So by a lie he deceived Eve, so by greed he snared Judas, so he blinded the Jews with envy, so he darkened the Gentiles with the error of idols, so he confounded the peoples with the pomp of things, so he took hold of the little ones with vanity, that they might not savour what is sound.

Indeed, let us hear what he contrived in the case of the present woman. And behold, he says, a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was bent over, and could not look upward at all. You see that this woman, pressed down, was sighing under the burden of the most wicked spirit, who always presses men down with the burdens of sins and bends them to the earth, that they may not see heaven, may not savour the things above, may not gaze on God, may not return to their liberty through their author; but, with head bowed, eyes fixed down, face to the ground, may be held captive always under the yoke of the ancient enemy.

Sic premebatur publicanus ille, qui oculos suos ad coelum tollere non valebat, sed percutiebat peccati conscium pectus; et quia negandi locus non erat, locum misericordiae perquirebat, dicendo: Deus, propitius esto mihi peccatori. Hoc sustinens propheta beatissimus sic canebat: Iniquitates meae superposuerunt caput meum, et sicut onus grave gravatae sunt super me. Et ut sui operis aperiret auctorem, alibi sic profatur: Verticem capilli perambulantium in delictis suis. Quia qui non resistunt delictis, sed perambulant in eis, eorum diabolus et equitat, et percurrit in verticem; ut qui ad mala suo vadunt studio, ad pejora diaboli ducantur impulsu, Apostolo dicente: Tamquam euntes ducebamini.

Sed quid in hac historia spiritualis intelligentiae maneat perscrutemur. Et ecce mulier quae habebat spiritum infirmitatis annis decem et octo, et erat inclinata, nec omnino poterat sursum respicere. Quae est ista cujus infirmitatis etiam tempora describuntur? Quae est ista, cui ferre de terra, sed inclinare ad eam languor calidus sic studebat? Quae est? Haec quae modo est sanctorum genitrix Ecclesia sancta filiorum, quam, sicut dicit Apostolus, spiritus aeris hujus, spiritus diffidentiae, spiritus erroris, spiritali vexabat incommodo, atque ita ponderibus diversis pronam dabat et deponebat ad terram, ut ad coelum numquam sublevaretur aspectu.

Sed quid est quod haec quae Ecclesiae typum portat, in Synagoga sic reperitur incurva? Quid est? Quia dum fugit gentium sacrilegia, et declinat sarcinas idolorum, graviora incurrit, et portat pondera Synagogae, probante Domino, cum dicit: Vae vobis, Scribae et Pharisaei, qui alligatis onera gravia, et imponitis super humeros hominum, ipsi autem nec vel minimo digito ea vultis movere. Unde et beatus Petrus: Nunc ergo quid tentatis Deum, inquit, imponere jugum super cervices discipulorum, quod neque nos, neque patres nostri portare potuimus? Hinc est quod Christus, ab his oneribus homines cupiens alleviare, clamat: Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos: tollite jugum meum super vos, quia suave est. Cum dicit omnes, et Judaeos utique vocat, et gentes.

Sed quare per decem et octo annos mulieris hujus trahitur aegritudo? Quia nisi decalogus legis ogdoadis venisset ad gratiam, numquam sancta Ecclesia, numquam mulier haec ad plenitudinem temporis, ad diem salutis, ad tempus acceptum, ad sui Salvatoris praesentiam pervenisset. Hanc autem mulierem gessisse Ecclesiae sic figuram ipsius qualitas curationis assignat. Vocavit, inquit, ad se illam, et imposuit illi manus. Sic curare semper Ecclesiam satis novit, qui fieri Christianus meruit, et quotidie fieri conspicit Christianos.

So was that publican weighed down, who could not lift his eyes to heaven, but struck his breast conscious of sin; and since there was no room for denial, he sought the room of mercy, saying: God, be merciful to me a sinner (Luke 18:13). Bearing this, the most blessed Prophet sang thus: My iniquities have gone over my head, and like a heavy burden they have weighed heavy upon me (Ps 38:5). And to reveal the author of this work, elsewhere he speaks thus: The crown of the head of those who walk about in their offences (Ps 68:22). For those who do not resist offences but walk about in them, the devil both rides and runs over the crown of their head; so that those who go to evil by their own eagerness may be led to worse by the devil's impulse, as the Apostle says: As you went, you were led (1 Cor 12:2).

But let us search out what of spiritual understanding remains in this history. And behold, a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was bent over, and could not look upward at all. Who is she, of whose illness even the times are described? Who is she, whom a burning sickness strove so hard, not to lift from the earth, but to bow down to it? Who is she? She who now is the holy Church, the bearer of holy sons, whom, as the Apostle says, the spirit of this air, the spirit of distrust, the spirit of error (Eph 2:2), vexed with a spiritual affliction, and so with diverse weights bowed her down and laid her low to the earth that she might never be lifted up in her gaze to heaven.

But what is it that she who bears the type of the Church is found thus bent in the Synagogue? What is it? Because, in fleeing the sacrileges of the Gentiles and turning aside from the burdens of idols, she runs into heavier ones and bears the weights of the Synagogue, as the Lord proves when he says: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, who bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but you yourselves will not move them even with your least finger (Matt 23:4). Hence blessed Peter too: Now therefore why do you tempt God, he says, by putting a yoke on the necks of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10) Hence it is that Christ, desiring to relieve men of these burdens, cries: Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you: take my yoke upon you, for it is sweet (Matt 11:28–30). When he says all, he surely calls both Jews and Gentiles.

But why is this woman's illness drawn out through eighteen years? Because unless the Decalogue of the Law had come to the grace of the ogdoad, never would the holy Church, never would this woman have come to the fullness of time, to the day of salvation, to the acceptable time, to the presence of her Saviour. That this woman thus bore the figure of the Church is shown by the very manner of her cure. He called her to him, he says, and laid his hands on her. That the Church always cures thus he knows well who has merited to become a Christian, and sees Christians being made every day.

Namque ut incurvus peccatis erigatur gentilis ad coelum, prius a gentili per impositionem manuum nequam spiritus effugatur. Nam qui solo verbo fugarat daemones, et infirmitates omnes sola sanaverat jussione, quare super hanc mulierem suas imponit manus? Quare circa istam curandi ordinem novat, nisi quia jam tunc in una sanat omnes; immo, quia non ante suscipit Ecclesiam, nisi eam per impositionem manuum suarum purget a diabolo, et faciat Christianam; et amplius, faciendorum Christianorum curam praesentis curae formet et instituat sacramento.

Sed archisynagogus indignatur quare Christus sabbatis curet, hodieque Judaeus in Ecclesiae cura zeli furore torquetur, dum coelestes sensus intelligentia terrena revolvit, ac putat sabbatum jumentis, non hominibus consecratum, qui periclitanti bovi vel asino sabbato festinus occurrit, hominique morienti sabbato pietatis quidquam, miserationis quidquam non indulget. Et hoc facit excors, ut in pectore violet sabbatum, et in homine ipsam violet sanctitatem: ac sic Deo Dei lege praescribit; et observando sabbatum, Deo sabbatum sic refundit, quod Deus Judaeo pro labore terreno et opere carnis clementer indulsit. Et conversi sunt in arcum perversum, qui in Dominum legis legis praecepta rectissima sic retorquent. Judaee, qui te ab humanis, ut vel uno die, vel sabbato, saluti tuae curatione cessares ... Et tu, Christiane, diem Domino dominicum serva, si vis illum videre Domini diem, si vis quidquid est dominicum per Dominum possidere.

For, that the Gentile bent by sins may be raised up to heaven, the wicked spirit is first put to flight from the Gentile by the laying on of hands. For he who had put demons to flight by a word alone, and had healed all infirmities by a command alone, why does he lay his hands upon this woman? Why in her case does he change the order of healing, unless because even then in one woman he heals all; or rather, because he does not receive the Church before he purges her from the devil by the laying on of his hands and makes her Christian; and further, that by the sacrament of the present cure he might shape and institute the care of the Christians yet to be made?

But the ruler of the synagogue is indignant that Christ heals on the Sabbaths; and to this day the Jew is tormented with the fury of jealousy at the Church's cure, in that he turns over heavenly senses with an earthly understanding, and thinks the Sabbath consecrated for beasts, not for men, he who on the Sabbath hurries to help an ox or an ass in danger, and to a man dying on the Sabbath grants nothing of piety, nothing of tender mercy. And the senseless man does this, so as to violate the Sabbath in his breast, and in man to violate holiness itself: and so he lays down the law to God by God's Law; and by keeping the Sabbath he thus pays back to God the Sabbath which God mercifully granted to the Jew for his earthly labour and the work of the flesh. And they were turned into a crooked bow (Ps 78:57), who thus twist back against the Lord of the Law the most upright precepts of the Law. Jew, who you from human tasks, so that at least on one day, or on the Sabbath, you might cease, for your own welfare, from the care ... And you, Christian, keep the Lord's day for the Lord, if you wish to see that day of the Lord, if you wish to possess through the Lord whatever is the Lord's.

Sermo CVI.

De ficu quae fructum non protulit

Sicut peritus magister ad audiendum rudes, ad intelligendum tardos, discipulorum sensus vario genere doctrinae pulsat, suscitat, accendit ingenium, ita Dominus similitudinibus variis, diversis comparationibus, populorum pigros, tardosque animos ad evangelicum convocat et invitat auditum; namque hodie sic coepit: Arborem fici habebat quidam plantatam in vinea sua, et venit quaerens fructum in illa, et non invenit. Dixit autem ad cultorem vineae: Ecce tres anni sunt, ex quo venio quaerens fructum in ficulnea hac, et non invenio: succide eam; ut quid et terram occupat? At ille respondens, ait illi, Domine, dimitte illam etiam hoc anno, usque dum fodiam circa illam, et mittam stercora, et siquidem fecerit fructum; sin autem, in futuro succides illam.

Arborem fici habebat quidam plantatam in vinea sua. Rogo quid tam planum, quid tam lucidum, quid tam commune, quid rusticis sic vernaculum, quid proprium sic peritis quam propositae similitudinis forma? Quae de generali usu veniens omnes et verbo instruit et convertit exemplo. Infructuosa arbor intricat cespitem, necat spatia, exhaurit terrae vires, cultorem conficit damno, afficit taedio possidentem: ac sic excidere istam lucrum est, est istam commodum non habere. Sic homo utique qui naturae donum, munus animae, rationis beneficium, excellentiam sensus, judicium mentis, artis industriam, culturae bonum, per steriles atque inopes actus evertit, occupat, mergit, auctori fructum, cultori gratiam negat; sicut arbor e terra, sic iste e vita meretur excidi. Et sicut infecunda arbor si fuerit in vinea, dum fundit mortiferam subjectis viribus umbram, inimica non sibi soli, sed etiam palmitibus fit fecundis: ita homo deses, ignavus, si praesit populis, non sibi soli fit noxius, sed multis, dum sequentes se suo vitiat et perdit exemplo.

Sed hanc similitudinem quare Dominus dixerit audiamus. Arbor ficus, brumali tempore transacto, dum grossos producit in florem, et simulat suum suis floribus fructum, decipit incautos, illudit ignaros. Namque mox projicit grossos, pigrum proficit et prorumpit in germen; et fit posterior caeteris fructu, quae videbatur caeteras anteisse. Merito ergo a Domino Synagoga arbori fici comparatur, quae calefacta tempore legali, temporaliter ecclesiastici fructus floruit in figura.

Sermon CVI.

On the fig tree that bore no fruit

As a skilled master, to make the untaught hear and the slow understand, knocks at, rouses, kindles the senses and the wit of his pupils by every kind of teaching, so the Lord, by various likenesses, by diverse comparisons, calls together and invites to the hearing of the Gospel the sluggish and slow minds of the peoples; for today he began thus: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none (Luke 13:6). And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none: cut it down; why does it even occupy the ground? (Luke 13:7) But he answered and said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on dung, and if indeed it bears fruit; but if not, in the future you shall cut it down (Luke 13:8–9).

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. I ask, what is so plain, what so clear, what so common, what so homely to country folk, what so fitting for the learned, as the form of the likeness set before us? Coming from general use, it both instructs all by its word and converts them by its example. A fruitless tree chokes the turf, kills the space around it, drains the strength of the soil, wears out the husbandman with loss, wearies its owner: and so to cut it down is gain, not to have it is an advantage. So surely is the man who, by barren and needy acts, overturns, smothers, sinks the gift of nature, the endowment of the soul, the benefit of reason, the excellence of sense, the judgement of the mind, the industry of skill, the good of cultivation, and denies fruit to his author, thanks to his cultivator; as the tree from the earth, so he deserves to be cut off from life. And as an unfruitful tree, if it is in a vineyard, in pouring a deadly shade on the strength beneath it, becomes an enemy not to itself alone but also to the fruitful branches: so a slothful, idle man, if he is set over peoples, becomes harmful not to himself alone but to many, in that he corrupts and destroys by his example those who follow him.

But let us hear why the Lord spoke this likeness. The fig tree, when the winter season is past, in bringing forth its early figs into flower, and feigning its fruit with its flowers, deceives the unwary, mocks the ignorant. For soon it casts off the early figs, slowly makes progress and bursts into shoot; and the tree that seemed to have gone before the rest becomes later than the rest in fruit. Rightly, then, is the Synagogue compared by the Lord to a fig tree, which, warmed in the time of the Law, flowered for a time in the figure of the Church's fruit.

Patriarcharum namque radice solidata, sacerdotali exaltata culmine, propheticis dilatata ramis, Judaicae observationis repleta grossis florebat, tunc spe sola fructum datura per Christum, immo ipsum Christum datura post fructum, dicente Psalmista: De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam.

Unde sancti scientes haec, spem fructus ex flore capiebant, et solabantur praesentia de futuris: videntes jam jamque succedere aeterna mortalibus, perpetua caducis, Legi gratiam, Synagogae Ecclesiam, coelestia terrenis, humanis divina, omnibus Christum; quem quia venturum longa patientia sustinebant, venisse fideli gaudio sunt gavisi. Ex istis erat Simeon ille, cui promissum erat ut non videret mortem, donec videret Christum Domini, quem in ulnas habens, talem prorupit in vocem. Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace. Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum. Ignari vero dum fiduciam gerunt in lege tota, neque sunt de Christi exspectatione solliciti, neque suscipere Christum, neque agnoscere meruerunt: et ita sunt legalibus decepti flosculis, sicut nescios grossis suis decipit ficus. Hinc est quod Dominus adventus sui tempora scire cupientes mittit ad ficum, dicens: Videte ficulneam et omnes arbores. Cum producunt jam fructum, scitis quia prope est aestas; ita et vos cum videritis haec fieri, scitote quia prope est regnum Dei. Videtis quia ficus non signat praesentia, sed indicat sic futura.

Sed jam per ordinem propositum prosequamur exemplum. Arborem fici habebat quidam plantatam in vinea sua. Synagoga est arbor ficus, possessor arboris Christus, vinea in qua refertur plantata arbor ista, Israeliticus est populus, Isaia propheta sic dicente: Vinea Domini Sabaoth domus Israel est. Venit, inquit, quaerens fructum in illa, et non invenit. Venit Christus, et in Synagoga fructum fidei reperit nullum, quia tota dolis erat inumbrata perfidiae. Ad ficulneam venit Christus, ad quam legitur Adam nudus fugisse post culpam, dicente Geneseos libro: Et cognoverunt quia nudi sunt: et consuerunt folia fici, et fecerunt sibi succinctoria. Venit ergo ad ficum Christus, ut inveniret Adam, ut nudum tegeret pio suo corporis indumento, cujus ficus non velabat, sed stimulabat pudorem; cujus ficus ista, id est Synagoga, circumcisionibus suis nudabat partem verecundi corporis, non tegebat.

For, made firm in the root of the patriarchs, raised high in the priestly summit, spread out in the branches of the prophets, filled with the early figs of Jewish observance, it was flowering, then to give fruit through Christ by hope alone, or rather, after the fruit, to give Christ himself, as the Psalmist says: Of the fruit of your womb I will set upon your throne (Ps 132:11).

Hence the saints, knowing these things, took hope of the fruit from the flower, and consoled things present with things to come: seeing now, even now, the eternal succeed to the mortal, the perpetual to the perishable, grace to the Law, the Church to the Synagogue, heavenly things to earthly, divine to human, Christ to all things; and because they awaited his coming with long patience, they rejoiced with faithful joy that he had come. Of these was that Simeon, to whom it had been promised that he would not see death until he saw the Christ of the Lord, and holding him in his arms, he broke out into such words. Now you dismiss your servant, Lord, according to your word, in peace (Luke 2:29). For my eyes have seen your salvation (Luke 2:30). But the ignorant, in placing their trust in the Law entire and not being solicitous for the expectation of Christ, merited neither to receive Christ nor to recognise him: and so they were deceived by the little flowers of the Law, as the fig tree deceives the unknowing with its early figs. Hence it is that the Lord sends those who desire to know the times of his coming to the fig tree, saying: Look at the fig tree and all the trees (Luke 21:29). When they now put forth their fruit, you know that summer is near; so you too, when you see these things happen, know that the kingdom of God is near (Luke 21:30–31). You see that the fig tree does not mark things present, but thus points to things to come.

But now let us follow the example set before us, in its order. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. The Synagogue is the fig tree, the owner of the tree is Christ, the vineyard in which this tree is said to have been planted is the people of Israel, as the prophet Isaiah says: The vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel (Isa 5:7). He came, he says, seeking fruit on it, and found none. Christ came, and in the Synagogue found no fruit of faith, because it was wholly overshadowed by the deceits of unbelief. Christ came to the fig tree, to which we read that Adam fled naked after his fault, as the book of Genesis says: And they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Gen 3:7). Christ came, then, to the fig tree, to find Adam, to cover the naked man with the loving garment of his body, him whose shame the fig tree did not veil but goaded; him whose bashful part of the body this fig tree, that is, the Synagogue, laid bare by its circumcisions and did not cover.

Venit, inquit, quaerens fructum, et non invenit. Dixit autem ad cultorem vineae: Ecce anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quaerens fructum in ficulnea hac, et non invenio; succide eam. Cultor vineae, qui infructuosam ficum jubetur excidere, est praesul Synagogae angelus, qui sterilitatem, quia non potest excusare, inducias impetrat supplicando. Sed illud praetereundum non est quod dixit: Ecce anni tres sunt. Tres anni, tria sunt tempora per quae Christus ad Synagogam fructum quaesiturus advenit, id est, per legem, per prophetas, per ipsam sui praesentiam corporalem, ut infructuosa ficus, quae jam divinitati fructus velut non necessarios denegabat, vel homini, vel esurienti, vel manducaturo Christo cibos necessarios non negaret.

Sed nunc quid cultor vineae responderit audiamus. Domine, dimitte illam et hoc anno. Cultor vineae concedi adhuc evangelici temporis precatur annum, de quo Isaias dicit: Praedicare annum Domini acceptum, et diem retributionis. Ut quid? Usque dum fodiam circa illam. Vult eam apostolico vomere perfodere, quia legalis cultri non valuit sentire culturam. Et mittam stercora. Tantae radici necessaria, quae pro tanta pinguedine cespitis sancti fota coelesti imbre non meruit esse fecunda. Ficus sterilis, Synagoga misera miseratione gentium stercoratur; ut vilissimis adjuta fomentis redeat ad fructum, quae tanto et pretioso ubere decessit de fructu: quae si post haec in eadem sterilitate permanserit, jam non cultoris falce, sed ipsius dominantis securi, desperata et inutilis succidetur. Et ideo non dixit: In futuro succidam eam, sed Succides eam, juxta illud Joannis: Jam securis ad radicem arborum posita est: Omnis ergo arbor non faciens fructum bonum, excidetur et in ignem mittetur. Quia post evangelici cultum temporis infructuosas arbores securis judicii succidet, et novissimum suscipiet et cremabit incendium.

He came, he says, seeking fruit, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none; cut it down. The dresser of the vineyard, who is ordered to cut down the fruitless fig tree, is the angel who presides over the Synagogue, who, because he cannot excuse its barrenness, obtains a truce by entreaty. But that must not be passed over which he said: Behold, these three years. The three years are three times through which Christ came to the Synagogue to seek fruit, that is, through the Law, through the prophets, through his own bodily presence, so that the fruitless fig tree, which was already refusing to the divinity its fruits as though they were not needed, might not refuse needful food at least to Christ the man, hungry, about to eat.

But now let us hear what the dresser of the vineyard answered. Lord, let it alone this year also. The dresser of the vineyard prays that the year of the Gospel time may still be granted, of which Isaiah says: To preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompense (Isa 61:2). To what end? Until I dig around it. He wants to dig it through with the apostolic ploughshare, because it could not feel the tilling of the knife of the Law. And put on dung. Needful for so great a root, which, for all the richness of the holy soil, warmed by the rain of heaven, did not deserve to be fruitful. The barren fig tree, the miserable Synagogue, is manured with the tender mercy of the Gentiles, so that, helped by the meanest warmings, she may return to fruit who with so great and so precious a richness fell away from fruit: and if after this she remains in the same barrenness, no longer by the pruning-hook of the dresser, but by the axe of the master himself, despaired of and useless, she will be cut down. And therefore he did not say: In the future I will cut it down, but: You shall cut it down, according to that saying of John: Already the axe is laid to the root of the trees: every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire (Matt 3:10). For after the cultivation of the Gospel time the axe of judgement will cut down the fruitless trees, and the last fire will receive them and burn them.