SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

The Sermons of Saint Peter Chrysologus

Sermones

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Sermo CVIII.

De homine, ut sit hostia et sacerdos Deo. In verba Apostoli: Obsecro vos per misericordiam Dei, etc

Mira pietas, quae ut precetur, ut largiatur, exorat. Hodie namque beatus Apostolus non humana petens, sed divina conferens, sic precatur: Obsecro vos, per misericordiam Dei. Medicus austera remedia cum recipere persuadet aegrotos, agit precibus, non compellit imperio, sciens infirmitatis, non voluntatis esse, quod salutaria respuit, quoties profutura repellit infirmus. Et filium pater non potestate, sed amore ad rigorem pertrahit disciplinae, non ignorans quam sit aspera immaturis sensibus disciplina. Et si corporalis infirmitas ad curam precibus sic movetur, et si sic puerilis animus vix ad prudentiam ducitur blandimentis, quid mirum si Apostolus, qui semper est et medicus et pater, humanas mentes morbis carnalibus sauciatas, ut ad remedia divina subrigat, sic precatur: Obsecro vos, per misericordiam Dei.

Novum genus obsecrationis inducit. Quare non per virtutem? quare non per majestatem, non per gloriam Dei, sed per misericordiam Dei? Qui per ipsam solam Paulus et crimen persecutoris evasit, et apostolatus tanti adeptus est dignitatem: sicut ipse fatetur, dicens: Qui prius fui blasphemus et persecutor: et injuriosus, sed misericordiam Dei consecutus sum: Et iterum: Fidelis sermo et omni acceptione dignus: quia Christus in hunc mundum venit peccatores salvos facere, quorum primus ego sum, sed misericordiam sum consecutus, ad exemplum omnium, qui crediturus sunt illi in vitam aeternam. Obsecro, inquit, vos per misericordiam Dei. Rogat Paulus, immo per Paulum rogat Deus, quia plus amari vult quam timeri. Rogat Deus quia non tam Dominus esse vult quam pater. Rogat Deus per misericordiam, ne vindicet per rigorem.

Audi rogantem Dominum: Tota die, inquit, expandi manus meas. Nonne qui expandit manus ipso habitu rogat? Expandi manus meas. Ad quem? ad populum. Et ad quem populum? Non tantum non credentem, sed contradicentem. Expandi manus meas. Distendit membra, dilatat viscera, pectus porrigit, offert sinum, gremium pandit, ut patrem se tantae obsecrationis demonstret affectu.

Sermon CVIII.

On man, that he be victim and priest to God. On the words of the Apostle: "I beseech you by the mercy of God", etc.

A wondrous loving-kindness, which pleads in order to beseech, in order to bestow. For today the blessed Apostle, not asking for human things but conferring divine ones, beseeches thus: I beseech you, by the mercy of God (Rom 12:1). A physician, when he persuades the sick to take harsh remedies, acts by entreaties and does not compel by command, knowing that it is of weakness, not of will, that the sick man spits out what is wholesome whenever he pushes away what will profit him. And a father draws his son to the rigour of discipline not by power, but by love, not unaware how harsh discipline is to unripe senses. And if the weakness of the body is thus moved to its cure by entreaties, and if a boy's heart is thus led, and barely, to good sense by coaxing, what wonder if the Apostle, who is ever both physician and father, beseeches thus, to raise to divine remedies human minds wounded by the diseases of the flesh: I beseech you, by the mercy of God?

He brings in a new kind of entreaty. Why not by power? why not by majesty, not by the glory of God, but by the mercy of God? For by that alone Paul both escaped the crime of a persecutor and attained the dignity of so great an apostleship, as he himself acknowledges, saying: I who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor, and insolent; but I obtained the mercy of God (1 Tim 1:13). And again: A faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance: that Christ came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the first; but I obtained mercy, as an example to all who are to believe in him for eternal life (1 Tim 1:15–16). I beseech you, he says, by the mercy of God. Paul asks, or rather through Paul God asks, because he wishes to be loved more than feared. God asks, because he wishes to be not so much Lord as father. God asks by mercy, so as not to punish by rigour.

Hear the Lord asking: All the day long, he says, I have spread out my hands (Isa 65:2). Does not one who spreads out his hands ask by that very posture? I have spread out my hands. To whom? To the people. And to what people? To one not only not believing, but contradicting. I have spread out my hands. He stretches out his limbs, opens wide his inward parts, puts forth his breast, offers his bosom, spreads open his lap, to show himself a father by the affection of so great an entreaty.

Audi et aliter rogantem Deum: Populе meus, quid feci tibi, aut quid contristavi te? Nonne dicit: Si divinitas ignota est, vel caro sit nota? Videte, videte in me corpus vestrum, membra vestra, vestra viscera, ossa vestra, vestrum sanguinem. Et si quod Dei est timetis, quare vel quod vestrum est non amatis? Si Dominum fugitis, quare non recurritis ad parentem? Sed forte vos Passionis meae, quam fecistis, magnitudo confundit. Nolite timere. Crux haec non meus, sed mortis est aculeus. Clavi isti non mihi infigunt dolorem, sed vestram mihi infigunt altius charitatem. Vulnera haec non educunt gemitus meos, sed magis vos meis visceribus introducunt. Extensio corporis mei vos dilatat in gremium, non meam crescit in poenam. Sanguis meus non mihi deperit, sed vestrum prorogatur in pretium. Venite ergo, redite et vel sic probate patrem, quem videtis pro malis bona, pro injuriis amorem, pro vulneribus tantis tantam reddere charitatem.

Sed jam quid obsecret Apostolus audiamus: Obsecro, inquit, vos, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra. Apostolus rogando sic omnes homines ad sacerdotale fastigium provexit. Ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam. O inauditum Christiani pontificatus officium, quando homo sibi ipse est et hostia et sacerdos; quando homo non extrinsecus quod Deo est immolaturus inquirit; quando homo secum, et in se, et quod pro se est, Deo sacrificaturus apportat; quando et eadem manet hostia, idem permanet et sacerdos; quando hostia mactatur et vivit, sacerdos nescit occidere qui litabit. Mirum sacrificium, ubi corpus sine corpore, sine sanguine sanguis offertur.

Obsecro, inquit, vos per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam. Fratres, hoc sacrificium Christi descendit ex forma, qui corpus suum pro vita saeculi vitaliter immolavit: et vere corpus suum fecit hostiam vivam, quia vivit occisus. In tali ergo victima mors expenditur, hostia permanet, vivit hostia, mors punitur. Hinc martyres morte nascuntur, fine inchoant, occisione vivunt, et in coelis lucent, qui in terris putabantur exstincti.

Obsecro, inquit, vos fratres per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam sanctam. Hoc est illud quod propheta cecinit: Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem perfecisti mihi. Esto, homo, esto Dei sacrificium et sacerdos; non amittas quod tibi divina dedit et concessit auctoritas; induere sanctitatis stolam, praecingere balteum castitatis; sit in velamento capitis tui Christus; crux in frontis tui munimine perseveret; pectori tuo appone divinae scientiae sacramentum; in odorem thymiama semper orationis accende; arripe gladium Spiritus; altare cor tuum pone; et sic corpus tuum admove Dei securus ad victimam. Deus fidem, non mortem quaerit; votum, non sanguinem sitit; placatur voluntate, non nece. Hoc probat Deus, ad hostiam Abrahae sancti filium cum poposcit.

Hear God asking in another way too: My people, what have I done to you, or how have I grieved you? (Mic 6:3) Does he not say: "If the divinity is unknown, at least let the flesh be known"? "See, see in me your body, your limbs, your inward parts, your bones, your blood. And if you fear what is God's, why do you not at least love what is yours? If you flee the Lord, why do you not run back to your parent? But perhaps the greatness of my Passion, which you brought about, confounds you. Do not be afraid. This cross is not my sting, but death's. These nails do not drive pain into me, but drive your charity deeper into me. These wounds do not draw out my groans, but rather draw you into my inward parts. The stretching out of my body opens wide to take you into my lap; it does not swell into my punishment. My blood is not lost to me, but is laid out to be your price. Come then, return, and at least in this way put the father to the proof, whom you see repaying good for evil, love for insults, and for such great wounds such great charity."

But now let us hear what the Apostle beseeches: I beseech you, he says, to present your bodies. By asking thus, the Apostle has raised all men to the summit of the priesthood. To present your bodies as a living victim. O unheard-of office of the Christian pontificate, when man is to himself both victim and priest; when man does not look outside himself for what he is to immolate to God; when man brings with himself, and in himself, and what is for himself, what he is to sacrifice to God; when the same victim remains and the same priest continues; when the victim is slain and lives, and the priest who will offer it does not know how to kill! A wondrous sacrifice, where a body is offered without a body, blood without blood.

I beseech you, he says, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a living victim. Brothers, this sacrifice comes down from the pattern of Christ, who immolated his body for the life of the world in a life-giving way: and truly he made his body a living victim, because he lives though slain. In such a sacrificial victim, then, death is spent, the victim remains, the victim lives, death is punished. Hence martyrs are born by death, begin by their end, live by being slain, and shine in heaven, who on earth were thought extinguished.

I beseech you, he says, brothers, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a living victim, holy. This is what the Prophet sang: Sacrifice and oblation you did not want, but a body you have perfected for me (Ps 40:7). Be, man, be God's sacrifice and priest; do not lose what divine authority has given and granted you; put on the robe of holiness, gird on the belt of chastity; let Christ be the covering of your head; let the cross stand fast as the defence of your forehead; set upon your breast the mystery of divine knowledge; kindle ever the incense of prayer for a fragrance; take up the sword of the Spirit; make your heart an altar; and so, without fear, bring your body to be God's victim. God seeks faith, not death; he thirsts for a vow, not for blood; he is appeased by will, not by slaughter. God proved this when he asked for the son of holy Abraham as a victim (Gen 22:2).

Nam quid aliud Abraham quam corpus suum immolabat in filio? Quid aliud Deus quam fidem requirebat in patre, qui filium sicut offerri jussit, sic non permisit occidi?

Tali ergo homo confirmatus exemplo, offer corpus tuum et non solum macta, sed etiam seca per omnia virtutum membra. Quia toties tibi vitiorum artes moriuntur, quoties a te Deo viscera fuerint immolata virtutum. Offer fidem, ut perfidia sit punita; immola jejunium, ut voracitas cesset; sacrifica castitatem, ut moriatur libido; impone pietatem, ut deponatur impietas; invita misericordiam, ut avaritia deleatur, et ut consumatur stultitia, semper sanctitatem convenit immolare: sic fiet corpus tuum tua hostia, si nullo peccati jaculo fuerit sauciata. Vivit corpus tuum, homo, vivit quoties a te Deo virtutum vita vitiorum mortibus immolatur. Non potest mori qui vitali gladio meretur occidi. Ipse autem Deus noster, qui est via, veritas et vita, et a morte nos liberet et perducat ad vitam.

For what else was Abraham immolating in his son but his own body? What else was God requiring in the father but faith, he who, as he commanded the son to be offered, so did not allow him to be killed?

Strengthened then by such an example, man, offer your body, and not only slay it, but also cut it up through all the members of the virtues. For as often do the arts of the vices die for you as the inward parts of the virtues have been immolated by you to God. Offer faith, that unbelief may be punished; immolate fasting, that gluttony may cease; sacrifice chastity, that lust may die; lay on piety, that impiety may be laid down; invite mercy, that avarice may be blotted out; and that folly may be consumed, it is fitting always to immolate holiness: so will your body be your victim, if it has been wounded by no dart of sin. Your body lives, man, it lives whenever it is immolated by you to God with the life of the virtues, with the deaths of the vices. He cannot die who merits to be slain by a life-giving sword. May our God himself, who is the way, the truth and the life, both free us from death and lead us to life.

Sermo CIX.

De hostia corporis et animae Deo rationabiliter offerenda. In eadem verba Apostoli

Quoniam praecedens sermo tantum primordia tangit apostolicae lectionis, nunc de his quae sequuntur quod Dominus inspirat audiamus; sic enim coepit: Obsecro, inquit, vos, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam Numquid Apostolus sic dicendo, sola corpora digna divinis hostiis probat, et animas velut reprobas aut tacet, aut praeterit, aut relinquit? Nonne anima de coelo est, corpus e terra; hoc regitur, regit illa; illa dominatur, hoc servit; hoc vivit, vivificat illa; illa manet, hoc deficit; hoc aetates patitur, illa nescit; et ad extremum mors, quae tantum dominatur in corpus, nec anima praesente contingit? Et quid est quod tacetur anima, et solum corpus ad Dei hostiam sic vocatur?

Fratres, hic Apostolus honorat corpus, non minorat animam. Nam corpus quod capiunt peccata, quod delicta vinciunt, quod deprimunt crimina, quod vitia corrumpunt, quod dejiciunt passiones, hoc Apostolus cupit solvere, liberare studet, laborat attollere, expiare contendit, ut corpus ad originem animae conscendat, non anima descendat corporis ad naturam; et corpus animam comitetur ad coelum, non anima corpus sequatur ad terram. Audi Scripturam dicentem anima qualibus et quantis corporis cruciatibus aggravetur: Corpus, quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena cogitatio sensum multa cogitantem. Ergo non deponi animam, sed corpus Apostolus vult levari; et animam et corpus, id est, hominem totum, ad hostiam sanctam, ad placitum Deo sacrificium vult venire. Quod autem et anima sit Dei sacrificium, Psalmista declarat dicens: Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus.

Ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam, sanctam, placentem Deo. Quia non homo ex eo quod vivit placet, sed placet ex eo quod bene vivit; nec ex eo fit homo hostia si se Deo offerat, sed si sancte offerat Deo. Quantum enim immaculata victima placat Deum, tantum Deum victima, si maculata fuerit, exacerbat. Audi dicentem Deum: Non offeras mihi claudum, non luscum, non mortis contagione pollutum, sed maturum sine macula. Hinc est quod Apostolus vivam Deo petit hostiam. Ergo, fratres, si nos ipsius propitiationis incensum. ...

Sermon CIX.

On the victim of body and soul to be offered to God in a reasonable way. On the same words of the Apostle

Since the preceding sermon touches only the beginnings of the reading from the Apostle, let us now hear, concerning what follows, what the Lord inspires; for thus he began: I beseech you, he says, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a living victim. Can it be that the Apostle, by speaking thus, approves bodies alone as worthy of divine victims, and either keeps silent about souls as though they were reprobate, or passes them over, or leaves them aside? Is not the soul from heaven, the body from earth; this is ruled, that rules; that has dominion, this serves; this lives, that gives life; that remains, this fails; this undergoes the ages of life, that does not know them; and finally, does not death, which has dominion only over the body, fail to touch it while the soul is present? And why is it that the soul is passed over in silence, and the body alone is thus called to be God's victim?

Brothers, here the Apostle honours the body; he does not lessen the soul. For the body, which sins capture, offences bind, crimes press down, vices corrupt, passions cast down, this the Apostle desires to release, is eager to free, labours to lift up, strives to expiate, that the body may climb up to the origin of the soul, not the soul come down to the nature of the body; and that the body may accompany the soul to heaven, not the soul follow the body to earth. Hear Scripture telling with what and how great torments of the body the soul is weighed down: The body, which is corrupted, weighs down the soul, and earthly thought presses down the sense that thinks many things (Wis 9:15). Therefore the Apostle wants not the soul to be laid down, but the body to be lifted up; and he wants both soul and body, that is, the whole man, to come to be a holy victim, a sacrifice pleasing to God. And that the soul too is God's sacrifice, the Psalmist declares, saying: A sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit (Ps 51:19).

To present your bodies as a living victim, holy, pleasing to God. For man is pleasing not because he lives, but is pleasing because he lives well; nor does man become a victim if he offers himself to God, but if he offers himself to God in holiness. For as much as a spotless victim appeases God, so much does a victim, if it has been spotted, provoke God. Hear God saying: You shall not offer me the lame, nor the one-eyed, nor what is polluted by the contagion of death, but what is full-grown and without blemish (Lev 22). Hence it is that the Apostle asks for a living victim for God. Therefore, brothers, if we the incense of that very propitiation ...

Probat hoc Cain, qui cum Deo parva a quo totum perceperat ingratus pontifex sic divisit, ut quod erat pessimum, hoc adoleret altari; quod erat optimum, in suam reservaret offensam; denique cum sua suo male partitur cum auctore, se suosque posteros et a vita et ab humano genere perdivisit. Ergo Abel sequamur ad praemium, non Cain comitemur ad poenam. Abel agnum portans ad Dei sacrificium, sicut agnus assumitur; Cain gestans sibi stipulam, fomentum sibi, per quod exureretur, invenit.

Ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam, sanctam, placentem Deo, rationabile obsequium vestrum. Quantum placat obsequium quod ratione subnixum est, tantum quod rationem non habet, exacerbat. Rationabile obsequium, quod non praesumptione turbatur, non temeritate confunditur, non violatur illicitis, non simulatione fucatur. Ad obsequium regis militaris statio contremiscit; humana dominatio exigit sollicitam servitutem, ad arbitrium jubentis timor obedientis invigilat; quia et cauta devotio praemium justae remunerationis acquirit, et temeritatis poenam praesumptrix servitus non evadit. Quis non vocatus ad aulae regalis se proripit servitutem? quis sine titulo militem se ausus est profiteri? quis sine dignitatis infulis nomen dignitatis invadit Et si haec penes homines sollicita, cautaque sunt, si ratione constant, si convalescunt ordine, si tremore servantur; quanto, penes Deum magis cauta est devotio, magis tremenda servitus, magis sollicitus cultus, ut divinum ratione praestet obsequium?

Rationabile, inquit, obsequium vestrum. Obsequium ratione calens, fervor est; furor est, quod ratione non frenatur. Hinc Judaicus populus Deum dum sibi praeter rationem quaerit, Deum cui cum ratione serviebat, amisit. Hinc filii Aaron dum rationis sunt immemores, dum praesumunt terrenos ignes divinis ignibus admovere, flammam sacrificii salutaris in poenale sibi incendium commutarunt. Hinc Saul tumens regali vertice, dum putat sibi et de sacerdotio quid licere, regnum quod acceperat, altaris temerator amisit. Hinc Judaeus dum legem sine legis ratione excolit, legis interemit auctorem. Hinc gentilis dum deorum populis et deorum monstris, nescius rationis, obsequitur, ad Dei, qui unus et verus est, pervenire non meruit servitutem. Hinc Arius Patri se putat obsequi Filium blasphemando; et dum Filio dat initium, Patri finem miserandus imponit. Hinc Photinus dum coaeternum Patri Filium negat, Pater ut Pater non semper fuerit elaborat. Hinc omnes haereses dum feruntur ad divinitatis injuriam, dum Trinitatem mentiuntur vocabulis, blasphemiis obsequuntur.

Cain proves this, who, an ungrateful pontiff, so divided small things with God, from whom he had received the whole, that what was worst he burnt on the altar, and what was best he kept back for his own disfavour; in short, while he shares out his own wickedly with his author, he cut off himself and his posterity both from life and from the human race (Gen 4:3–5). Let us then follow Abel to the reward, and not accompany Cain to the penalty. Abel, bringing a lamb to God's sacrifice, is taken as a lamb; Cain, carrying stubble for himself, found for himself the fuel by which he would be burnt.

To present your bodies as a living victim, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service. As much as service that rests on reason appeases, so much does service that has no reason provoke. Reasonable service is that which is not disturbed by presumption, not confounded by rashness, not violated by what is unlawful, not painted over by pretence. The military guard trembles at the service of the king; human lordship demands careful servitude, the fear of the one who obeys keeps watch upon the choice of the one who commands; for both cautious devotion wins the reward of just recompense, and presumptuous servitude does not escape the penalty of rashness. Who, uncalled, rushes into the servitude of a royal court? who has dared to profess himself a soldier without a title? who seizes the name of a dignity without the insignia of the dignity? And if these things are careful and cautious among men, if they rest on reason, if they grow strong by order, if they are kept with trembling, how much more cautious is devotion with God, how much more to be trembled at is servitude, how much more careful is worship, that one may render a divine service with reason?

Reasonable, he says, your service. Service glowing with reason is fervour; what is not bridled by reason is fury. Hence the Jewish people, in seeking God for itself beyond reason, lost the God whom it served with reason (Exod 32). Hence the sons of Aaron, in being unmindful of reason, in presuming to bring earthly fires to the divine fires, changed the flame of the saving sacrifice into a penal burning for themselves (Lev 10:1–2). Hence Saul, swelling on his royal height, in thinking that something of the priesthood too was lawful for him, lost, a profaner of the altar, the kingdom he had received (1 Sam 15). Hence the Jew, in cultivating the Law without the Law's reason, killed the author of the Law. Hence the Gentile, ignorant of reason, in rendering service to peoples of gods and to monsters of gods, did not merit to come to the servitude of God, who is one and true. Hence Arius thinks he renders service to the Father by blaspheming the Son; and in giving the Son a beginning, the wretch imposes an end on the Father. Hence Photinus, in denying that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, labours to make out that the Father as Father has not always been. Hence all heresies, in being carried on to the injury of the divinity, in belying the Trinity with names, render service to blasphemies.

Nos autem, fratres, et corpora nostra aptemus in vivam Dei hostiam, obsequium nostrum rationabile procuremus, ut sit fides vera, pura conscientia, mens sobria, spes firma, cor mundum, caro casta, sanctus sensus, pius animus, tuta ratio, casta charitas, larga misericordia, vita sancta, verecundus habitus, et ad omne Christi obsequium humilitas nostrum semper comitetur incessum.

But let us, brothers, fit our bodies too to be God's living victim, let us procure our reasonable service, that there may be true faith, a pure conscience, a sober mind, firm hope, a clean heart, chaste flesh, a holy sense, a pious spirit, a safe reason, a chaste charity, a generous mercy, a holy life, a modest bearing, and that humility may ever accompany our step in every service of Christ.

Sermo CX.

De salute sub fide reposita, justificatione a Deo per Christum, et de morte pro Christo subeunda. In verba ejusdem: Non est autem scriptum propter Abraham tantum, etc

Beatus Apostolus primis et novissimis, id est, Judaeis et Graecis, fidei vexillum unicum semper et singulare erigit ad salutem: quod quisquis habere non meruerit et tenere, coelestium possidere non poterit gloriam triumphorum. Solum est, fratres, quod contra perfidiam dimicantibus aciem dirigit, regem indicat, connectit socios, impiumque hostem sola sui visione terrificat.

Sic enim hodie coepit: Non est autem scriptum propter Abraham tantum, quod reputatum est illi ad justitiam; sed et propter nos credentes in eum qui suscitavit jesum Dominum nostrum a mortuis. Videtis, fratres, quia dum priores futura, dum praeterita credunt posteri, sic uno itinere fidei utrique perveniunt ad salutem, dum illi venturum Christum, nos jam venisse profitemur, illi usque ad mortem more hominis descensurum mirantur et credunt, nos esse mortuum et resurrexisse gloriamur. Et quid plura, fratres? Ideo salus haec tam antecedentium, quam sequentium oculis est negata, ut tota esset in fide.

Quod autem dixit: Qui suscitavit Jesum Dominum nostrum a mortuis. Ne quis ab alio credat, ipse sui factor et resuscitator est corporis, qui dixit: Potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam: neque enim ab alio resurrectio suscitari, neque ab alio vivificari vita potuit, nec eadem negare sibi quod erat omnibus collatura. Quia nec fons sitit, nec panis esurit, nec sol indiget luce, nec requies ipsa lassescit.

Qui traditus est, inquit, propter delicta nostra, et resurrexit propter justificationem nostram. Traditus propter delicta, non ut ea quae non poterat mori vita puniretur, sed ut delicta, quae nos a vita exsulaverant, sola delerentur. Et resurrexit propter justificationem nostram.

Sermon CX.

On salvation laid up under faith, on justification from God through Christ, and on death to be undergone for Christ. On the words of the same: "Now it was not written for Abraham's sake only", etc.

The blessed Apostle always raises for the first and the last, that is, for Jews and Greeks, the only and singular standard of faith for salvation: whoever has not merited to have it and hold it will not be able to possess the glory of the heavenly triumphs. It alone, brothers, draws up the battle line for those who fight against unbelief, shows the king, binds the comrades together, and terrifies the impious enemy by the mere sight of it.

For thus he began today: Now it was not written for Abraham's sake only, that it was reckoned to him for justice; but also for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (Rom 4:23–24). You see, brothers, that while those before believe things to come and those after believe things past, so both reach salvation by one road of faith, while they profess Christ as one to come, we as one who has already come; they marvel and believe that he would go down even to death in the manner of a man, we glory that he died and rose again. And what more, brothers? This salvation was denied to the eyes both of those who went before and of those who follow for this reason, that it might be wholly in faith.

As for what he said: Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Lest anyone believe that it was by another, he himself is the Maker and the raiser up again of his own body, he who said: I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again (John 10:18); for neither could the resurrection be raised up by another, nor life be given life by another, nor could it deny to itself what it was to confer on all. For neither does a spring thirst, nor bread hunger, nor the sun need light, nor rest itself grow weary.

Who was delivered up, he says, for our offences, and rose again for our justification (Rom 4:25). Delivered up for offences, not so that the life which could not die should be punished, but so that the offences alone, which had exiled us from life, should be blotted out. And rose again for our justification.

Manente condemnatione justificari non potest condemnatus; nos ergo quos primi culpa sic parentis addixerat, ut mors obnoxios sibi jure retineret, Christus coelestis et verus parens, soluta mortis condemnatione, per mortem propriam resurrectionem justificat, ut non reus pereat, sed reatus; ipsaque poena, id est mors, quae reos fuerat jussa percellere, merito deficiat et suae amittat infulas potestatis.

Cur innocentem, cur ipsum judicem crudelis et impia est ausa contingere? et ideo addidit: Justificati igitur ex fide pacem habeamus ad Deum. Hoc est dicere, desinat, desinat mater dissensionum, hostis quietis, pacis inimica contentio, non extollatur Judaeus per legem, gentilis non superbiat per naturam, philosophus ab opinionibus suis spumosis et inanibus detumescat, nemo de meritis, nemo de operibus glorietur; quia vitam, quam praevaricatio prima sustulerat, et elongaverat a nobis furiosa contentio, restituit et reddidit pax divina. Pacem habeamus ad Deum, per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum. Terra non rebellet in coelos, caro non insurgat in spiritum; sed supernae pacis humilis perpetem jungatur ad gloriam.

Per quem accessum habemus. Quare nobis ipse factus est via, fide in gratiam istam. Dux vitae istius fides est, fratres. In qua stamus et gloriamur in spe gloriae filiorum Dei. Stamus certe fide, non corpore; et in spe, non in re jam percepta gloriamur.

Non solum autem, sed et gloriamur in tribulationibus, scientes quod tribulatio patientiam operatur, patientia autem probationem, probatio autem spem, spes vero non confundit. Ecce quibus aetatibus justus perfectum roboratur in virum: in tribulatione, patientia, probatione, spe. Tribulatio, fratres, velut prima justi viri concutit et conturbat infantiam: sed cum invenerit ista patientem, ad majora adolescentem jam bonae indolis tunc erudit. Tribulatio patientiam operatur. Patientia est, fratres, quae Christi juvenem aptum probat esse virtutibus. Spes vero non confundit. Spes est quae virum perficit: et ad mensuram Christi plenitudinis indefessa producit. Perfectae virtutis est, quod in re non teneas spei robore possidere.

Quia charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis. Et ut diffusae in nos divinae charitatis ostenderet qualitatem, adjecit: Ut quid enim Christus, cum adhuc infirmi essemus secundum tempus, pro impiis mortuus est? Vix enim pro justo quis moritur: nam pro bono forsitan quis audeat mori? Commendat autem charitatem suam Deus in nobis, quia adhuc cum peccatores essemus, Christus pro nobis mortuus est.

While the condemnation remains, the condemned cannot be justified; us therefore, whom the fault of the first parent had so bound over that death held us by right as liable to itself, Christ, the heavenly and true parent, having loosed the condemnation of death, justifies through his own death, through resurrection, so that it is not the accused who perishes, but the guilt; and that the penalty itself, that is, death, which had been ordered to strike the accused, may rightly fail and lose the insignia of its power.

Why did it dare, cruel and impious, to touch the innocent one, to touch the judge himself? And therefore he added: Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God (Rom 5:1). That is to say: let it cease, let it cease, contention, the mother of dissensions, the enemy of quiet, the foe of peace; let the Jew not be lifted up by the Law, let the Gentile not be proud by nature, let the philosopher come down from the swelling of his frothy and empty opinions, let no one glory in merits, no one in works; because the life which the first transgression had taken away, and which furious contention had put far from us, divine peace has restored and given back. Let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let earth not rebel against the heavens, let flesh not rise up against spirit; but let it be joined, humble, to the everlasting glory of the peace above.

Through whom we have access (Rom 5:2). That is why he himself became for us the way, by faith into this grace. The leader of this life is faith, brothers. In which we stand and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God. We stand, surely, by faith, not by the body; and we glory in hope, not in a thing already received.

And not only so, but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience proof, and proof hope, and hope does not confound (Rom 5:3–5). See by what ages the just man is strengthened into a perfect man: in tribulation, patience, proof, hope. Tribulation, brothers, shakes and disturbs, as it were, the first infancy of the just man; but when it has found him patient, it then trains him, a youth now of good disposition, for greater things. Tribulation works patience. It is patience, brothers, that proves the young man of Christ fit for the virtues. And hope does not confound. It is hope that makes the man perfect, and leads him, unwearied, to the measure of the fullness of Christ. It belongs to perfect virtue to possess by the strength of hope what you do not hold in fact.

Because the charity of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rom 5:5). And to show the quality of the divine charity poured out upon us, he added: For why did Christ, when we were still weak, according to the time, die for the impious? (Rom 5:6) For scarcely does anyone die for a just man: for perhaps for a good man someone might dare to die? (Rom 5:7) But God commends his charity in us, because when we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8).

Si Christus genus hominum sic dilexit, ut daret pro impiis et peccatoribus mortem suam, justis quid aliud credimus largiturum, quam vitam suam, regnum suum, gloriam suam. Ex te suscepit mortem, quam impiis impenderet super terram: reservat tibi, quod in se et per se semper possidet, et possidet in coelo.

Dicamus ergo cum propheta: Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam. Hoc est et ego moriar pro illo. Et quid simile? Ille sponte pro impio et peccatore, ego vix pro justo et bono: ego vix, quia me ad mortem non tam voluntas quam necessitas ducit. Audi ipsum dicentem ad Petrum: Cum autem senueris, praecinget te alius, et ducet quo tu non vis.

In adversis, fratres, necessitas voluntati non potest comparari; acquiescere necessitatis est, velle virtutis. Volenti mors ipsa subjecta est, quia semper dominata est mors nolenti. Et tamen, fratres, quia divinae charitatis nil simile potest homo redhibere, det quod potest, quia secundum quod habet acceptus est. Deficiat ad gloriam, moriatur ad vitam, pereat ad salutem. Gloriemur, fratres, de nova istius commutatione commercii; quia mors, quae erat inter homines reparatio tota pietatis, per Christum divinae commendatio est facta charitatis.

If Christ so loved the human race as to give his death for the impious and for sinners, what else do we believe he will bestow on the just than his life, his kingdom, his glory? From you he took up death, to spend it for the impious upon earth: he keeps for you what in himself and through himself he always possesses, and possesses in heaven.

Let us say then with the Prophet: What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has rendered to me? (Ps 116:12) I will take the chalice of salvation (Ps 116:13). That is: I too will die for him. And what likeness is there? He, willingly, for the impious and the sinner; I, scarcely, for the just and the good: I scarcely, because not so much will as necessity leads me to death. Hear him saying to Peter: But when you are old, another will gird you, and lead you where you do not wish (John 21:18).

In adversity, brothers, necessity cannot be compared with will; to acquiesce is of necessity, to will is of virtue. To the willing, death itself is subject, because death has always had dominion over the unwilling. And yet, brothers, since man can render back nothing like the divine charity, let him give what he can, because he is accepted according to what he has. Let him fail for glory, die for life, perish for salvation. Let us glory, brothers, in the new exchange of this commerce; for death, which among men was the whole repayment of piety, has through Christ been made the commendation of divine charity.

Sermo CXI.

De peccato originali. In verba ejusdem: Propterea sicut per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit

Praesens, fratres, Apostoli lectio cum dicit, per unum hominem mundum totum suscepisse sententiam, non ad perorandum nos, sed ad flendum renovato et intimo dolore compellit. Si enim eximii vates singularis populi, et unius urbis, ac solius nonnumquam hominis diu lamentavere discrimen; quae mens non totis tenebris obscuretur, quos sensus non tota hebetudo confundat, quos oculos non redigat in fontes et fluenta lacrymarum, quando unius lapsus exstitit ruina cunctorum, et unius culpa omnium defluxit ad poenam, ac parentis vitium universo generi exitium ferale praeparavit, dicente Apostolo: Propterea sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit, et per peccatum mors. Miserum me! ipse qui erat causa bonorum omnium, janua factus est hic malorum.

Peccatum in hunc mundum intravit. In hunc mundum: miraris eum posteris obfuisse, qui facinore suo damnaverit mundum? Sed dicis, Quomodo intravit? Per quem intravit? Quomodo? Per culpam. Per quem? Per hominem. Et quid? peccatum natura est, an substantia? Nec natura est, nec substantia, sed accidens: et adversa est haec potestas quae videtur in opere, sentitur in poena, impugnat animam, vulnerat mentem, ipsam violat, confunditque naturam. Et quid plura, fratres? Hoc est peccatum naturae, quod est fumus oculis, quod febris corpori, quod dulcissimis fontibus amara salsedo. Utique purus et lucidus est oculus per naturam, sed per fumi conturbatur et obscuratur injuriam. At corpus membrorum partibus et sensibus suis, per hoc quod est a Deo conditum, viget; sed ubi vis febrium coeperit, et procella dominari, totum efficitur imbecillum: tunc amaritudo oris, tunc oculorum caligo, tunc gressuum nutabunda vestigia, tunc inimica aura, tunc chari graves, tunc ipsa obsequia videntur odiosa. Et fontes quantum grati sunt per suam dulcedinem et naturam, tantum efficiuntur ingrati, cum aliquod vitium ex accessione susceperint.

Sed ad coepta redeamus. Sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit, et per peccatum mors. Ecce, fratres, janua, per hominem peccatum, et per peccatum intrasse videmur in mortem. Peccatum, o crudelis fera, et non uno capite in hominum genus saevire contenta! quam vidimus trino ore tota humanae stirpis germina tam pretiosa devorantem: trino ore, fratres, peccatum capit, mors devorat, deglutit infernus.

Sermon CXI.

On original sin. On the words of the same: "Therefore as through one man sin entered into this world"

The present reading from the Apostle, brothers, when it says that through one man the whole world received sentence, drives us not to speak at length but to weep, with renewed and inmost pain. For if the eminent prophets of a single people, and of one city, and sometimes of one man alone, long lamented the peril, what mind would not be darkened by utter darkness, what senses would not utter dullness confound, what eyes would it not turn into springs and streams of tears, when the fall of one became the ruin of all, and the fault of one flowed down into the penalty of all, and the vice of the parent prepared a deadly destruction for the whole race, as the Apostle says: Therefore, as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death (Rom 5:12)? Wretched me! He who was the cause of all good things became here the door of evils.

Sin entered into this world. Into this world: do you wonder that he harmed his posterity, who by his misdeed condemned the world? But you say: "How did it enter? Through whom did it enter?" How? Through fault. Through whom? Through man. And what then? Is sin nature, or substance? It is neither nature nor substance, but accident: and this is a hostile power, which is seen in the deed and felt in the penalty; it assails the soul, wounds the mind, violates and confounds nature itself. And what more, brothers? This is what sin is to nature: what smoke is to the eyes, fever to the body, bitter saltness to the sweetest springs. Surely the eye is pure and clear by nature, but it is disturbed and darkened by the injury of smoke. And the body flourishes in the parts of its members and in its senses, because it was made by God; but when the force of fevers has begun, and their storm to rule, the whole becomes feeble: then the bitterness of the mouth, then the dimness of the eyes, then the tottering steps, then the air is hostile, then dear ones are burdensome, then the very attentions seem hateful. And springs, as much as they are pleasing by their sweetness and their nature, become so much unpleasing when they have received some vice by an addition.

But let us return to what we began. As through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death. See, brothers, the door: through man sin, and through sin we are seen to have entered into death. Sin, O cruel beast, not content to rage against the human race with one head! whom we have seen devouring with a threefold mouth all the so precious offspring of the human stock: with a threefold mouth, brothers, sin seizes, death devours, hell swallows.

Et quo, sicut diximus, fonte lacrymarum talis nobis plane deflendus est parens, qui nos tantarum miseriarum reliquit haeredes, qui non solum collata bona perdidit, sed omnes posteros suos tam feris creditoribus obnoxios sic reliquit? O dura haereditas ac crudelis! O miseri, quibus nec adipisci libuit, nec renuntiare licuit nos haeredes!

Audi quod sequitur: Et ita in omnes homines mors transivit. Sed ne injustum forte videatur cur per unum in omnes, quia omnes per unum; per eum te detestaris esse damnatum, per quem te editum esse gloriaris in lucem. Sed dicis, Si generi debeo quod natus sum, numquid et crimini, ut ante me reum faciat natura quam culpa? Huic quaestioni tuae mox qui sequitur Apostoli sermo respondet, dicendo: In quo omnes peccaverunt. Si in illo omnes peccaverunt, merito per illum omnes suscepere supplicium. Sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit, et per peccatum mors: et ita in omnes homines pertransivit, in quo omnes peccaverunt. Sive in homine, sive in peccato; per illum et in illo omnes peccaverunt. Non ergo peccatum versum est in naturam, sed dum peccatum mortem ingerit, poenam sibi debitam exigit per naturam.

Deus naturam ita fecerat ut homines crearet ad vitam: quae tamen dum morti nolens generat, illa se peccato fatetur obnoxiam, cujus poenae deservit in vita. Nam quis ista sentiat, fratres, quod exstingui velit natura partus suos, et germina sua tam chara velit necari? Sed dum ingemiscit et condolet, amissam suspirat et desiderat suspicere libertatem. Sed per quem acceperit, Joannes primus signanter ostendit, qui viso Christo proclamat et vociferatur, dicens: Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccatum mundi. Peccatum mundi, hoc est, fratres, quod per unum hominem Apostolus intrasse testatur. Gaudete ergo, fratres, quia peccatum quod nos gravi pondere deprimebat ad tartarum, a Christo sublatum est, in tartara jam demersum; et nos, quos morti culpa primi parentis addixerat, secundi et divini parentis gratia a poena revocavit ad vitam.

Salvari ergo sine Christo homo non poterat, quia totius mundi peccatum ante ipsius permanebat adventum. Sed tu quod per Christum justificaris, amplecteris; et quod per Adam damnatus es, tu refutas; et alterius tibi poenam obfuisse conquereris, qui tibi conspicis alterius subvenisse justitiam. Numquid non in semine tota arbor? Vitium ergo seminis vitium est totius arboris. Si sibi ipsa per se natura subvenire potuisset, numquam eam ad reparandum in se auctor ipse suscepisset. Ad vitam eam creatam credis, qui adhuc eam per auctorem dubitas esse reparatam?

And with what spring of tears, as we have said, must such a parent be wept for by us, who left us heirs of such great miseries, who not only lost the goods bestowed on him, but left all his posterity thus liable to such savage creditors? O hard and cruel inheritance! O wretched that we are, heirs who neither chose to acquire it nor were allowed to renounce it!

Hear what follows: And so death passed to all men. But lest it should perhaps seem unjust that it passed through one to all: it is because all are through one; you detest having been condemned through him through whom you glory in having been brought forth into the light. But you say: "If I owe it to my stock that I was born, do I owe it also to a crime, so that nature makes me guilty before fault does?" To this question of yours the Apostle's word that follows replies at once, saying: In whom all have sinned. If all sinned in him, rightly through him have all undergone the punishment. As through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death: and so it passed through to all men, in whom all have sinned. Whether in the man or in the sin: through him and in him all sinned. Sin, then, was not turned into nature; but in bringing in death, sin exacts through nature the penalty due to it.

God had made nature so as to create men for life: yet nature, in begetting for death against its will, acknowledges itself liable to sin, whose penalty it serves in life. For who would think this, brothers, that nature wishes its offspring to be extinguished, and its so dear shoots to be killed? But while it groans and grieves with them, it sighs for the freedom it lost and longs to look up to it. But through whom it received it, John first showed expressly, who, on seeing Christ, proclaims and cries aloud, saying: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The sin of the world, brothers, is that which the Apostle testifies entered through one man. Rejoice, then, brothers, because the sin which pressed us down with heavy weight to Tartarus has been taken away by Christ, now sunk in Tartarus; and us, whom the fault of the first parent had bound over to death, the grace of the second and divine parent has called back from the penalty to life.

Man therefore could not be saved without Christ, because the sin of the whole world remained until his coming. But you embrace the fact that you are justified through Christ; and that you were condemned through Adam, you reject; and you complain that another's penalty has harmed you, you who see that another's justice has come to your help. Is not the whole tree in the seed? The vice of the seed, then, is the vice of the whole tree. If nature could have helped itself by itself, the author himself would never have taken it up into himself to restore it. Do you believe it was created for life, you who still doubt that it has been restored through its author?

Usque ad legem enim, inquit, peccatum erat in mundo. Usque ad legem cum audis, usque ad finem legis, hoc est, usque ad adventum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, accipe. Quia peccatum non imputabatur, ait, cum lex non esset. Et quando lex non fuit, quae cum ipso homine coepit? si lex non fuisset, Adam praevaricator utique non fuisset, sicut idem aperit Apostolus, cum dicit: Sed regnavit mors ab Adam usque ad Moysen. Utrique legem acceperant: sed Adam mox praevaricatus est, ut accepit; Moyses praevaricatoribus promulgavit acceptam, dicente Apostolo: Lex praevaricationum causa posita est. Regnavit ergo mors per legem, quia gravius praevaricatores quam peccatores; et non tantum parentis vitio, sed suo jam lapsos facinore, saeva devoravit.

Sed regnavit, inquit, mors ab Adam usque ad Moysen, etiam in eos qui non peccaverunt in similitudinem praevaricationis Adae. Quia non tantum magnos, sed devorabat et parvulos; et non tantum noxios, sed et devastabat innoxios: innoxios dico a culpa propria, non parentis. Et hinc gravius erat lamentanda conditio, quia ejus parentis solvebat poenam, cujus vix vitam degustarat infantulus; et luebat peccatum mundi, qui mundum cognitum non habebat. Acquiescamus ergo, fratres, quod per unum et unius delicto mors regnavit, si omnes per unum absolvi desideramus, et esse per Christum: quia qui vivit, Christo debet, non sibi; et Adam quod moritur id debebit.

For until the Law, he says, sin was in the world (Rom 5:13). When you hear "until the Law", take it as "until the end of the Law", that is, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. For sin was not imputed, he says, when there was no law. And when was there no law, since it began with man himself? If there had been no law, Adam would surely not have been a transgressor, as the same Apostle discloses when he says: But death reigned from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14). Both had received a law: but Adam transgressed as soon as he received it; Moses promulgated to transgressors the law he had received, as the Apostle says: The Law was set down because of transgressions (Gal 3:19). Death therefore reigned through the law, because, savage, it devoured transgressors more grievously than sinners, and those who had fallen not only by the parent's vice, but now by their own misdeed.

But death reigned, he says, from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the likeness of Adam's transgression. For it devoured not only the great, but the little ones too; and it laid waste not only the guilty, but the innocent too: innocent, I say, of their own fault, not of their parent's. And hence the condition was the more grievously to be lamented, because the little infant was discharging the penalty of that parent whose life he had scarcely tasted; and he was paying for the sin of the world who had not known the world. Let us acquiesce, then, brothers, that through one and by the offence of one death reigned, if we desire all to be absolved through one, and to be through Christ: because he who lives owes it to Christ, not to himself; and that he dies, he will owe to Adam.

Sermo CXII.

De morte per hominem, vita et gratia per Christum habita, deque abundantia delicti propter legem. In verba ejusdem: Si enim unius delicto mors regnavit per unum

Si quis poculum aquae frigidae sitienti porrigit viatori, aliquantum quidem animum recreat aestuantis, et humanitati plane succurrit, non tamen penitus sitim exstinguit: ita et magnum divinae scientiae desiderantibus nosse secretum, noster sermo non sufficit, qui ad praesens festinationi deservit et tempori. Nam si ad humana perdiscenda tota hominis brevis est vita, quod tempus sufficere credimus ad intelligentiam posse divinam? Date ergo veniam, fratres, si intra punctum temporis et horae unius vix momentum obscura lucidare, clausa reserare, firmare dubia, profunda contingere, tot saeculorum ineffabile sacramentum per omnem modum aperire non possum, et eloqui, si vel caute aemulis, secure filiis, credentibus confidenter, constanter incredulis non valemus. Verum quia hodie apostolicus sermo claro se lumine sensibus audientium totus infudit, nec quidquam catholicis mentibus reliquit ambiguum, cum dicit: Si enim unius delicto mors regnavit per unum; declamandi studium seponentes, tota simplicitate ipsis apostolicis eloquiis innitemur, ut verum scire cupientibus nulla sermone nostro generetur obscuritas.

Si enim unius delicto, ut dicit, mors regnavit per unum, quare mortem ab uno et primo homine esse posteris acquisitam insinuare et approbare evangelica laborat auctoritas? Et quamvis sufficiat illa sententia, quae dicit: Deus mortem non fecit; quare eam tam trucem, tam crudelem, tam immitem nonnulli a Deo velint esse conditam, scire non possum. Nemo sine piaculo aestimat tam pium, tam bonum Deum, mortem creare potuisse, cujus universus mundus dolore continuo, gemitu, lacrymis, accusat et detestatur auctorem. Si mors etiam penes homines est criminum poena, quo ausu concreata homini et poenae ante creditur innocenti Deo insita esse quam vita?

Sermon CXII.

On death through man, on life and grace had through Christ, and on the abounding of the offence because of the Law. On the words of the same: "For if by the offence of one death reigned through one"

If someone holds out a cup of cold water to a thirsty traveller, he does indeed somewhat refresh the mind of the man burning with heat, and plainly comes to the help of humanity, yet he does not wholly quench the thirst: so too, for those who desire to know the great secret of divine knowledge, our sermon does not suffice, which for the present is servant to haste and to time. For if the whole life of man is short for learning human things thoroughly, what time do we believe suffices for being able to understand the divine? Grant me pardon, then, brothers, if within a point of time, scarcely the moment of a single hour, I cannot light up the obscure, unlock the closed, make firm the doubtful, touch the deep, open in every way the ineffable mystery of so many ages, and speak it, if we are not able to speak cautiously to rivals, securely to sons, confidently to believers, steadfastly to unbelievers. But since today the Apostle's word has poured itself wholly with clear light into the senses of the hearers, and has left nothing ambiguous to catholic minds, when it says: For if by the offence of one death reigned through one (Rom 5:17), we, setting aside the zeal for declaiming, shall lean in all simplicity on the Apostle's own words, so that no obscurity may be produced by our sermon for those who desire to know the truth.

For if by the offence of one, as he says, death reigned through one, why does the authority of the Gospel labour to suggest and to prove that death was acquired for posterity from the one and first man? And although that sentence suffices which says: God did not make death (Wis 1:13), why some would have it that death, so savage, so cruel, so merciless, was made by God, I cannot know. No one without sacrilege thinks that God, so loving, so good, could have created death, whose author the whole world, with continual pain, with groaning, with tears, accuses and detests. If even among men death is the penalty of crimes, with what daring is it believed that death was created together with man, and implanted by God, as a penalty, in an innocent being before life was?

Sed audiamus Apostolum: Si enim unius delicto mors regnavit per unum, multo magis abundantiam gratiae, et donationis, et justitiae accipientes in vita regnabunt per unum Christum Dominum nostrum. Ecce unum, et unum, Adam et Christus. Per illum peccatum regnavit in mortem, per istum gratia regnavit in vitam. Denique duo haec principia vitae et mortis, absolutionis et poenae, desideratae libertatis et damnationis extremae, is qui sequitur sermo Apostoli aperit et declarat.

Igitur sicut per unius delictum in omnes homines in condemnationem, ita et per unius justitiam in omnes homines in justificationem vitae. Per unum et unum, aut mors regnat, aut vita conceditur. Quid hic ergo addere sermo possit interpretis? quibus si adjunges silentium, omnis aemulorum succumbit intentio. Per unius delictum in omnes homines in condemnationem, ita et per unius justitiam in omnes homines in justificationem vitae. Sicut fonti fluvius, sicut fructus semini, ita origini deservit aut addicta aut erepta posteritas, sicut ex his quae adjecit Apostolus plenius approbatur.

Sicut enim unius hominis inobedientia peccatores constituti sunt multi, ita unius obedientia justi constituentur multi. Sit homo peccator, ut sit Deus justus, quia reatus redundat ad judicem, si poena percellit innoxium. Et ideo dixit: Sicut per unius hominis inobedientiam peccatores constituti sunt multi. Ut scirent se ejus culpae fuisse participes, cujus poenae socios se esse persentiunt.

Sed jam quid lex profuerit, attestante Apostolo, audiant legis amatores. Lex autem, inquit, subintravit, ut abundaret delictum. Ecce, ut Apostolus dicit, non imminutionem delictorum lex fecit esse, sed copiam; non per se, fratres, sed per eum qui legem per imbecillitatem ferre non poterat. Non magnitudo lucis hebetat oculos, quae solis a Deo creata est oculis, sed oculorum infirmitas lucis totam sustinere non potest, et ferre claritatem: ita et lex, fratres, quae per se satis justa erat, et satis sancta, dum ab homine fragili severam exigit disciplinam, magis magisque oneravit et prodidit delinquentem. Et hoc quare, fratres? Ut per gratiam et veniam Conditoris rediret ad vitam qui per tumorem et ignorantiam, cum male de innocentia gloriaretur, in debitum parentis deducebatur et poenam.

But let us hear the Apostle: For if by the offence of one death reigned through one, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, reign in life through the one Christ our Lord. See: one and one, Adam and Christ. Through that one sin reigned into death, through this one grace reigned into life. Indeed, these two principles of life and of death, of absolution and of penalty, of longed-for freedom and of final damnation, the word of the Apostle that follows opens and declares.

Therefore, as through the offence of one to all men for condemnation, so also through the justice of one to all men for justification of life (Rom 5:18). Through one and one, either death reigns or life is granted. What then could the word of an interpreter add here? If you join silence to these words, every effort of the rivals collapses. Through the offence of one to all men for condemnation, so also through the justice of one to all men for justification of life. As the river serves its spring, as fruit its seed, so posterity, whether bound over or rescued, serves its origin, as is more fully proved from what the Apostle added.

For as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one many will be made just (Rom 5:19). Let man be a sinner, that God may be just; for the guilt rebounds upon the judge, if the penalty strikes the innocent. And therefore he said: As through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners. So that they might know that they had been sharers in the fault of him whose companions in the penalty they feel themselves to be.

But now let the lovers of the Law hear, with the Apostle as witness, what the Law profited. But the Law, he says, came in, that the offence might abound (Rom 5:20). See, as the Apostle says, the Law brought about not a diminishing of offences, but an abundance; not of itself, brothers, but through him who through feebleness could not bear the Law. It is not the greatness of the light that dulls the eyes, a light which God created for the eyes alone, but the weakness of the eyes cannot sustain the whole of the light and bear its brightness: so too the Law, brothers, which in itself was very just and very holy, in demanding strict discipline from frail man, burdened and exposed the offender more and more. And why this, brothers? That through the grace and pardon of the Maker he might return to life who, through swelling pride and ignorance, while he wrongly gloried in his innocence, was being led down into the debt and the penalty of the parent.

Morbus igitur latebat occultus, per quem omnium secreta medullarum et venarum meatus in ipsorum vitalium tendebant exitium, et quamdam *συνχρίσιν* in omnibus generabat internis. Venit lex quae et vulnus proderet, et tandem vetusto languori supernum advenire medicum nuntiaret. Venit lex, quae mandatorum fomentis in cutem produceret quod in altum lethaliter saeviebat. Venit lex, ut gladio praeceptorum velut apostema longi temporis aperiret, et collectam diu saniem salutaris subinde siccaret effusio. Nec tamen per se, fratres, aut vulnus claudere aut aegrotanti perfectam addere valebat ipsa sanitatem. Quod ubi vidit aegrotus, et tandem statum suum miserandus agnovit, coepit tendere festinus ad medicum, ut quod per legem proditum, et per ipsam diu fuerat ampliatum, tanti medici peritia curaretur et gratia. Ampliatum vulnus dicimus, fratres, quia post incisionem, putredo, fetor, horror, vexatio ipsi vulneri abscissione generatur, et fit per curam deterior miserandi facies ipsa languoris quam fuerat ignoranti periculum cum lateret. Venit ergo medicus; et jam fesso curis, et curationum vexationibus perdefesso, solius verbi auctoritate subvenit. Sicut centurio ille confitetur, cum dicit: Dic verbo, et sanabitur puer meus. Et impleretur illud propheticum: Misit Verbum suum, et sanavit eos.

Et ideo sequitur: Ubi abundavit peccatum, superabundavit et gratia. Ac si diceret: Ubi dilatatum est vulnus, supereffusa est sanitas. Nemo ergo ingratus sit legi, quia quem aegrotantem et jacentem invenerat, levavit, fovit, et ut saluti traderet, ipsum usque ad medicum salubri exsultatione perduxit, ut, sicut dixit Apostolus: Quemadmodum regnavit peccatum in mortem, ita gratia regnet in vitam aeternam, per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Gratia in vitam, peccatum regnat in mortem. Recta fides non mortem, non interitum hominis auctori Deo deputat, sed salutem. Mors sit hominis, sit peccati, ut vita creata et reddita solum credatur esse per Christum.

The disease, then, lay hidden, through which the secret places of all the marrows and the passages of the veins were tending to the destruction of the vital parts themselves, and it was producing a certain synkrisis in all the inward parts. The Law came, to reveal the wound, and at last to announce that the heavenly physician was coming to the long-standing sickness. The Law came, to bring out to the skin, by the poultices of the commandments, what was raging deadly in the depths. The Law came, to open with the blade of the precepts, as it were, an abscess of long standing, so that a healing outflow might then dry up the pus long gathered. Yet of itself, brothers, it was not able either to close the wound or to add perfect health to the sick man. When the sick man saw this, and, wretched, at last recognised his state, he began to hasten to the physician, so that what had been exposed through the Law, and had long been enlarged through it, might be cured by the skill and the grace of so great a physician. We say the wound was enlarged, brothers, because after the incision, putrefaction, stench, horror and distress are produced in the wound itself by the cutting, and through the cure the very face of the pitiable sickness becomes worse than the danger had been to the man who did not know it while it lay hidden. Then the physician came; and to one now worn out with cures and utterly exhausted by the distresses of treatments, he brought help by the authority of his word alone. As that centurion confesses, when he says: Say the word, and my servant will be healed (Matt 8:8). And that saying of the Prophet was to be fulfilled: He sent his Word, and healed them (Ps 107:20).

And therefore there follows: Where sin abounded, grace also abounded the more. As if he said: Where the wound was widened, health was poured out the more. Let no one then be ungrateful to the Law, because the one whom it had found sick and lying down, it lifted up, tended, and, to hand him over to health, brought with healthful exultation all the way to the physician, so that, as the Apostle said: As sin reigned into death, so grace might reign into eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 5:21). Grace into life; sin reigns into death. Right faith ascribes to God the author not death, not the destruction of man, but salvation. Let death be man's, let it be sin's, so that life, created and restored, may be believed to be through Christ alone.

Sermo CXIII.

De non permanendo in peccato, ut gratia abundet, et de virtutibus inserviendo. In verba ejusdem: Quid ergo dicemus? Permanebimus in peccato, ut gratia abundet? etc

Beatus Apostolus quando nota interrogat, quando manifesta perquirit, eos videlicet objurgat et increpat qui eloquia divina sua interpretatione corrumpunt: et inde concipiunt suffragia criminum, unde assumere debuerant documenta virtutum. Sic enim hodie coepit: Quid ergo dicemus? Permanebimus in peccato, ut gratia abundet? Superius dixerat, fratres: Ubi abundavit peccatum, superabundavit et gratia; et ideo ita exorsus est, ac pro illo divino et singulari magisterio imperitis se velut interrogatione participat, ut quae sunt prudentiae coelestis plena eruditione respondeat.

Si enim ubi abundavit peccatum, superabundavit et gratia. Quid ergo dicemus? Permanebimus in peccato, ut gratia abundet? Si prona est delinquentibus pietas, si gratia copiosa peccantibus, si injustis amica largitas est divina, certe si futura bona malis praesentibus acquiruntur, quid nobis virtutum iter arduum, quid durus obtinendae justitiae labor, quid inter malos jugis servandae innocentiae cruciatus? Augeantur humana facinora, ut bonitas coelestis exuberet; faciamus mala, ut dixit, ut veniant bona; permaneamus in peccato, ut gratia abundet.

Ad haec, fratres, idem qui interrogat Apostolus ipse respondit: Absit. Qui enim mortui sumus peccato, quomodo adhuc vivemus in illo? Cum dicit Absit, taliter intelligentiam insipientium exsecratus est et sensum: siquidem medicus non vulneri, sed curae proficit et saluti; nec putredini, nec morbis, sed soli congaudet ille sanitati. Ita et Deus, qui pro magnitudine vulneris adhibuit magnitudinem vigoremque medicinae, et nec peccato, sed homini largitus est gratiam; nec ad multiplicanda, sed ad delenda delicta imbrem suae pietatis effudit.

Sermon CXIII.

On not remaining in sin that grace may abound, and on serving the virtues. On the words of the same: "What then shall we say? Shall we remain in sin, that grace may abound?", etc.

The blessed Apostle, when he asks about things known, when he inquires into things manifest, is in fact rebuking and reproving those who corrupt the divine words by their own interpretation, and draw from them the support of crimes, whence they ought to have taken the lessons of the virtues. For thus he began today: What then shall we say? Shall we remain in sin, that grace may abound? (Rom 6:1) He had said above, brothers: Where sin abounded, grace also abounded the more (Rom 5:20); and therefore he began thus, and, in that divine and singular teaching of his, makes himself a sharer with the unskilled, as it were, by a question, so that he may answer with full learning what belongs to heavenly prudence.

For if where sin abounded, grace also abounded the more. What then shall we say? Shall we remain in sin, that grace may abound? "If loving-kindness is inclined towards offenders, if grace is abundant towards sinners, if the divine bounty is a friend to the unjust, surely, if future goods are acquired by present evils, why should we have the steep road of the virtues, why the hard labour of obtaining justice, why the continual torment of keeping innocence among the wicked? Let human misdeeds increase, that heavenly goodness may overflow; let us do evil, as he said, that good may come (Rom 3:8); let us remain in sin, that grace may abound."

To these things, brothers, the same Apostle who asks has himself answered: Far from it (Rom 6:2). For we who are dead to sin, how shall we still live in it? When he says Far from it, he has thus execrated the understanding and the sense of the foolish: for indeed the physician serves not the wound but the cure and health; nor does he rejoice in putrefaction or in diseases, but in health alone. So too God, who applied a greatness and vigour of medicine proportionate to the greatness of the wound, bestowed grace not on sin but on man; and poured out the rain of his loving-kindness not to multiply offences but to blot them out.

Nemo, nemo sic de aegritudine gratuletur, ut velit in vulnere permanere. Ingratus medico, inimicus est curae, qui semper curari aestuat, nec umquam desiderat hic sanari; et ita Dei gratiam suis cupit exuberare peccatis, ut sibi cupiat peccata cumulari. Miser qui tali voto reus esse contendit per veniam. Fugienda, fratres, dementia ista est, fugienda, quae etiam post curam captiva tenetur amore morborum, recidiva enim lethalis est saepius aegritudo.

Quod autem dixit: Qui enim mortui sumus peccato, praesentis temporis loquitur hic figuram: quia mortuos nos dixit esse peccato, non nobis jam in toto mortuum dixit esse peccatum; quia etsi peccatum ipsum actu operis sanctis et fidelibus est defunctum, vivit tamen, et adhuc in nostram desaevit mortem. Tunc autem peccatum ipsum morietur in nobis, cum corruptibile hoc induerit incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induerit immortalitatem, et factus fuerit sermo qui scriptus est: ubi est, mors, aculeus tuus? ubi est, inferne, victoria tua? Aculeus autem mortis peccatum est. Vivit autem peccato, qui ejus, sicut in consequentibus dicit, concupiscentiis famulatur; et stimulis miserandus inservit, qui obsecundat vitiis, qui criminibus infelici et continua captivitate succumbit, qui quod delicti est esse autumat hoc naturae, et morbo qui est accidens utitur velut opere et beneficio Conditoris.

Et ideo ad arguendum talium ignorantiam addidit dicens: An nescitis quia quicumque in Christo Jesu baptizati sumus, in morte ipsius baptizati sumus? Consepulti enim sumus illi per baptismum in mortem. Audiant fideles, et intelligant: quemadmodum triduana Domini sepultura trina demersione figuratur in baptismo; ut resurrexisse cum Christo, et si necdum corpore, vitae jam novitate congaudeant; sitque totus homo virtutum domicilium, qui receptaculum fuerat ante vitiorum. Ut, sicut dixit, quomodo Christus surrexit a mortuis per gloriam Patris, ita et nos in novitate vitae ambulemus. Christus quidquid suarum virtutum est, refert ad gloriam Patris; et homo, cujus suum nihil est, sibi vindicare quod per Christum resurrexit elaborat. Quod autem dixit: In novitate vitae ambulemus, quae superius diximus, illa confirmat, ut si necdum hoc corpore, vita tamen jam totus immutatus incedat; intelligat se, et dominetur elementis, qui elementis hactenus per ignorantiam serviebat; largiatur sua per gloriam, qui prius turpiter furabatur aliena; et qui carnis exercebat illicita, contemnat etiam licentias corporales; et qui innocentiam hactenus impie moliebatur exstinguere, pro innocentia gloriosius ipse moriatur. Et quid plura? Si ex vetere homine jam novus effectus est, vitiorum gurgitem in fontem commutet ipse virtutum.

Let no one, no one, so congratulate himself on his illness as to wish to remain in his wound. Ungrateful to the physician, an enemy to the cure, is he who is ever burning to be treated and never desires to be healed here; and he so wishes the grace of God to overflow by his sins that he wishes sins to be heaped up for himself. Wretched the man who with such a wish strives to stand accused by means of pardon. This madness, brothers, must be fled, must be fled, which even after the cure is held captive by the love of diseases; for a relapse is very often a deadly illness.

As for what he said: For we who are dead to sin, he speaks here in the figure of the present time: for he said that we are dead to sin, he did not say that sin is already wholly dead to us; for although sin itself is dead, as to the act of the deed, to the saints and the faithful, it still lives, and still rages for our death. But then sin itself will die in us, when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, and the word that is written has come to pass: Where, O death, is your sting? Where, O hell, is your victory? (1 Cor 15:54–55) Now the sting of death is sin (1 Cor 15:56). But he lives to sin who, as he says in what follows, serves its concupiscences; and the wretch is slave to its goads who humours vices, who succumbs to crimes in an unhappy and continual captivity, who asserts that what belongs to the offence belongs to nature, and uses a disease, which is an accident, as if it were the work and the benefit of the Maker.

And therefore, to refute the ignorance of such men, he added, saying: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised in Christ Jesus have been baptised in his death? (Rom 6:3) For we have been buried together with him through baptism into death (Rom 6:4). Let the faithful hear and understand how the three days' burial of the Lord is figured in baptism by the triple immersion; so that they may rejoice to have risen with Christ, if not yet in body, yet already in newness of life; and that the whole man may be an abode of the virtues, who before had been a receptacle of vices. So that, as he said, as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. Christ refers whatever belongs to his powers to the glory of the Father; and man, who has nothing of his own, labours to claim for himself that he rose again through Christ. As for what he said: Let us walk in newness of life, it confirms what we said above: that, if not yet in this body, yet in life he may go forward wholly changed; let him understand himself, and have dominion over the elements, who till now through ignorance served the elements; let him bestow his own goods for glory, who before shamefully stole what belonged to others; and let him who practised the unlawful things of the flesh despise even bodily licences; and let him who till now impiously strove to extinguish innocence himself die more gloriously for innocence. And what more? If from the old man he has now been made new, let him himself change the whirlpool of vices into a spring of virtues.

Usque ad finem autem lectionis hoc ingerit beatus Apostolus, hoc demonstrat, illum posse cum Christo vivere, illum regnare cum Christo, qui resurgentis Christi innocentiam sequitur, imitatur vitam, implere nititur sanctitatem. Quod dicit: Ut destruatur corpus peccati; destruatur, fratres, actu, non substantia; opere, non figura, quia peccato, non Deo vult hominem perire, qui ait: Existimate vos mortuos esse peccato, vivere autem Deo. Et supernae libertati, fratres, restituere hominem tota pietate contendit, qui dicit: Non regnet peccatum in vestro mortali corpore. Et iterum: Peccatum vobis non dominetur. Non dixit, Non veniat ad vos; non dixit, Non provocet, non titillet; sed, Non regnet, non dominetur, confligat ad vincentis gloriam, dimicet et decidat ad triumphum victoris; et tandem se doleat impia peccati dominatio a servis quondam suis tota securitate calcari; et crudelis tyrannus ingemiscat subjectum se suorum pedibus captivorum; et ad eorum triumphum, de quibus diu triumphaverat, se veteranus hostis pervenisse deploret.

To the end of the reading the blessed Apostle presses this, shows this: that he can live with Christ, that he can reign with Christ, who follows the innocence of the risen Christ, imitates his life, strives to fulfil his holiness. As for his saying: That the body of sin may be destroyed (Rom 6:6), let it be destroyed, brothers, in act, not in substance; in work, not in figure; because he wishes man to perish to sin, not to God, he who says: Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God (Rom 6:11). And he strives with all piety, brothers, to restore man to the freedom above, he who says: Let not sin reign in your mortal body (Rom 6:12). And again: Let sin not have dominion over you (Rom 6:14). He did not say: "Let it not come to you"; he did not say: "Let it not provoke, let it not tickle"; but: Let it not reign, let it not have dominion; let it fight, to the glory of the one who conquers; let it battle and fall, to the triumph of the victor; and let the impious dominion of sin at last grieve to be trampled in all security by those who were once its servants; and let the cruel tyrant groan that he is made subject to the feet of his own captives; and let the veteran enemy lament that he has come to the triumph of those over whom he long triumphed.

Sermo CXIV.

De servis legis et gratiae. In verba ejusdem: Peccavimus, quia non sumus sub lege, sed sub gratia, etc

Sicut peregrinanti reditus ad propria dulcis semper et charus est, et vernaculae domus vestibula sunt gratiosa post tempus, ita mihi post intervalla sermonis ad apostolicarum seriem lectionum suavior est recursus. Siquidem a proposito dicendi ordine, et continuo tramite loquendi discedere nos saepe necessitas religiosa compellit; quia sic doctrinae ordo moderandus est, ut non modo aliud impediatur ex alio. Unde quid hodie beatus Apostolus dixerit audiamus.

Quid ergo ait? Peccavimus, quia non sumus sub lege, sed sub gratia? Absit. Haec interrogatio, fratres, eorum arguit imperitiam qui, legis consuetudine captivati, gratiae beneficio nesciunt sentire virtutes; et quos praeceptorum legalium series prodidit contumaces, eos sola munerum commoda et festivitatum pompa observationibus vanis fecit et reddidit obstinatos. Et cum legem tempus excluserit, quid cultor legis a lege faciet abdicatus? Judaee, quid habes quod non perdidisti? Si autem perdidisti, quid gloriaris quasi non perdideris? Ubi est templum, ubi est sacerdos, ubi sacrificium, ubi incensum, ubi purificationes tuae, ubi solemnitatum tuarum non omittenda devotio? Sed ut sis Judaeus, merito circumcideris, quia bonis omnibus abscissus es supradictis. Scriptum est enim: Maledictus omnis qui non permanserit in omnibus quae scripta sunt in libro legis. Si maledictus est qui in uno offenderit, quoties maledictus erit qui nihil ex omnibus probabitur effecisse?

Peccavimus, ait, quia non sumus sub lege, sed sub gratia? Ac si diceret, fratres: Peccavimus, quia in cura non permansimus jam sanati? Peccavimus, quia ignem, ferrum, medicamenta reliquimus jam curati? Infelix aeger, qui post curam non vult curare tormentum. Et quid plura, fratres? Numquam curat, qui infirmantis quaerit et exspectat arbitrium?

Sermon CXIV.

On the servants of the Law and of grace. On the words of the same: "Have we sinned, because we are not under the Law, but under grace?", etc.

As to a traveller the return to his own is always sweet and dear, and the porches of the house where he was born are pleasing after a time, so to me, after intervals in preaching, the return to the series of the readings from the Apostle is the sweeter. For a religious necessity often compels us to depart from the proposed order of speaking and from the continuous path of discourse; for the order of teaching must be so governed that one thing is not now hindered by another. So let us hear what the blessed Apostle has said today.

What then does he say? Have we sinned, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? (Rom 6:15) Far from it. This question, brothers, convicts the unskilfulness of those who, held captive by the custom of the Law, do not know how to perceive by its benefit the powers of grace; and those whom the series of the precepts of the Law exposed as stubborn, the mere advantages of gifts and the pomp of festivals made and rendered obstinate in vain observances. And since time has shut out the Law, what will the worshipper of the Law do, cut off from the Law? Jew, what have you that you have not lost? And if you have lost it, why do you glory as if you had not lost it? Where is the temple, where is the priest, where the sacrifice, where the incense, where your purifications, where the devotion of your solemnities, which might not be omitted? But that you may be a Jew, rightly are you circumcised, because you have been cut off from all the goods mentioned above. For it is written: Cursed is everyone who does not remain in all the things that are written in the book of the Law (Gal 3:10). If he is cursed who has offended in one thing, how often will he be cursed who will be proved to have done nothing of them all?

Have we sinned, he says, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? As if he said, brothers: Have we sinned because, already healed, we did not stay under treatment? Have we sinned because, already cured, we have left the fire, the knife, the medicines? Unhappy the sick man who after the cure does not wish to cure the torment. And what more, brothers? Never does he cure who asks for and waits upon the choice of the sick man?

Nam cum ex humore frigido semper ignis succendatur in corpore, et rigor nimius dum membra vexat et concutit, acrius ipse efficit et gignit incendium; ita aegrotus ad augendam flammam quae suis semper aestuat et anhelat in venis, dari sibi aquam frigidam impatienter exspectat, nesciens quod tunc calor calore restinguitur, frigore nutritur incendium. Lex ergo dum hominis semper exspectat et sustinet voluntatem, nec tamen homo peccati sarcina praepeditus sufficere legalibus praevalet obedire mandatis, cultorem suum lex non absolvit a peccati vinculo, sed crimine praevaricationis obligat.

Et ideo addidit, dicens: Nescitis quod cui exhibuistis vos servos ad obediendum, servi estis ejus cui obedistis, sive peccati ad mortem, sive obeditionis ad vitam? Quid est, fratres, quod cum de lege loqueremur, hominem prodidit servum fuisse peccati? Sive peccati, ait, ad mortem, sive obeditionis ad vitam. Quia superius dixerat, peccatum vobis non dominetur; non enim estis sub lege, sed sub gratia. Qui ergo sub lege sunt peccati, deprimuntur et incurvantur imperio, nec poterunt miseri de peccati turpissima servitute, nisi gratia manumittente, liberari.

Gratias autem ago Deo, dixit, quia fuistis servi peccati. Sic gratias agit, quasi qui congaudeat hominem servum fuisse peccati? Absit. Gratias agit, non quia ante servi fuimus domini tam crudelis, sed quia etiam non sumus subjugati, sicut ex sequentibus id ipsum manifestat expressius, dicens: Obaudistis autem ex corde in eam formam doctrinae, in quam traditi estis: liberati autem a peccato, servi facti estis justitiae.

Obaudivimus, fratres, beneficio vocantis, non nostro, quia captivi sic tenebamur arbitrio. Obaudistis autem ex corde in eam formam doctrinae. In quam? In Evangelii nempe, ubi novo libertatis genere non est omissa servitus, sed mutata, quia melior est devota famulatio quam vaga et praesumpta libertas. Servi facti estis justitiae. Haec servitus, fratres, non obligat, sed absolvit; non onerat, sed honorat; abstergit servitutis maculam, non inurit. Quid hic, rogo, non divinum est, ubi servitus pellitur servitute, ubi fugatur conditione conditio, ubi mors morte moritur, ubi perditio perditione sanatur, et ut proprie ac breviter dicatur, ubi tota adversitas ipsius adversitatis mucrone prosternitur?

For since from a cold humour fire is always kindled in the body, and excessive chill, while it torments and shakes the limbs, itself more sharply produces and begets the burning; so the sick man, to increase the flame which always burns and pants in his veins, impatiently waits for cold water to be given him, not knowing that then heat is quenched by heat, and the burning is fed by cold. The Law, then, while it always waits for and bears with the will of man, and yet man, hindered by the burden of sin, is not strong enough to obey the commands of the Law, does not release its worshipper from the tie of sin, but binds him by the crime of transgression.

And therefore he added, saying: Do you not know that to whom you presented yourselves as servants to obey, you are the servants of him whom you obeyed, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to life? (Rom 6:16) What is it, brothers, that, when we were speaking of the Law, he disclosed that man had been the servant of sin? Whether of sin, he says, to death, or of obedience to life. Because he had said above: Let sin not have dominion over you; for you are not under the Law, but under grace (Rom 6:14). Those, then, who are under the Law are pressed down and bent by the command of sin, and the wretches will not be able to be freed from the most shameful servitude of sin unless grace sets them free.

But I give thanks to God, he said, that you were servants of sin (Rom 6:17). Does he give thanks, then, as one who rejoices that man was the servant of sin? Far from it. He gives thanks not because we were once servants of so cruel a master, but because we are no longer subjugated, as he shows the very same more expressly from what follows, saying: But you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you were delivered; and being freed from sin, you have become servants of justice (Rom 6:17–18).

We obeyed, brothers, by the kindness of the one who called, not by our own, because we were held so captive in our choice. But you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine. Into which? Into that of the Gospel, surely, where by a new kind of freedom servitude has not been dropped but changed, because devoted service is better than wandering and presumptuous freedom. You have become servants of justice. This servitude, brothers, does not bind but releases; does not burden but honours; it wipes away the stain of servitude, it does not brand it in. What here, I ask, is not divine, where servitude is driven out by servitude, where condition is put to flight by condition, where death dies by death, where perdition is healed by perdition, and, to speak properly and briefly, where the whole of adversity is laid low by the blade of adversity itself?

Quod autem dixit: Humanum dico propter infirmitatem carnis vestrae: sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiae, et iniquitati ad iniquitatem; ita exhibete membra vestra servire justitiae in sanctificationem. Magnitudinem pietatis ostendit, cum evangelicam doctrinam ad tam humilia et pene verecunda deponit exempla; ut sanctitati tantum quantum immunditiae, quantum iniquitati justitiae tantum imponat, et imperet servituti. Absurda, fratres, atque indecens videtur comparatio, quae tantum gloriae quantum turpitudini hominem cupit esse subjectum; sed utinam vel tantum! Et quando tantum Deo quantum mundo, quando tantum coelo quantum terrae, quando tantum virtuti quantum vitiis fragilitas humana famulatur? Totus homo miser sic carni deditur, sic rebus praesentibus occupatur, ut nihil in se, quod futurae vitae, quod divinis bonis deserviat, derelinquat.

Illecebrae temporalis vim beatus Apostolus uno sermone humanis conscientiis convenienter aptavit, convenienter expressit, ut tanta voluntate justitiae, pudicitiae ac munditiae humana membra serviant, quanta vehementia dementiaque turpitudini vitiisque se dederunt. Parva aut forte nulla exigit, qui cupit devicta proprietate concedere; et adimit excusationem qui possibilia tibi et usitata praecipit te repensari debere pro maximis. Da ergo, homo, Deo tantum quantum carni vitiisque tribuisti. Et quid est, quod ante vitiis, non Deo, debeas teipsum, quod a te Deus tuo tantum utique amore perquirit?

Sequitur: Cum enim servi essetis peccati, liberi fuistis justitiae; nunc autem liberati a peccato, servi facti estis justitiae. Ante servi peccati, nunc servi justitiae. Per Apostolum ecce succedit servitus servituti, contumax tu nunc tempus tuae libertatis ostende; peccatum te ante mentiebatur liberum, quem tenebat miserande captivum, nunc gratia te vocat servum, quem ut vere faceret esse liberum, Dei ipsius adoptavit in filium. Impleta est ergo Christi sententia, qua dicit: Qui vult esse dominus, sit servus. Beata est haec servitus, quae dominationem generat sempiternam. Illa enim libertas fructum poenae, et confusionem nobis intulit non ferendam, sicut dicit: Quem enim fructum habuistis tunc in his quae nunc erubescitis? nam finis illorum mors est. Ecce qualiter manumittit, ecce quali praemio honorat illam diabolus servitutem; ut mors simul et vitam finiat et inchoet poenam. At qui Christo serviunt, fratres, illusa morte cum stipendiis, sanctitatis perpetuam transferuntur ad vitam; finis enim Christi non suscipit finem, quia non interficit hominem finis iste, sed perficit.

As for what he said: I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh: for as you presented your members to serve uncleanness, and iniquity for iniquity; so present your members to serve justice for sanctification (Rom 6:19). He shows the greatness of his piety when he brings down the teaching of the Gospel to such lowly and almost shameful examples; so that he may lay upon servitude, and command it, as much for holiness as for uncleanness, as much for justice as for iniquity. Absurd, brothers, and unseemly seems the comparison, which wishes man to be subject as much to glory as to shamefulness; but would that it were even as much! And when does human frailty serve God as much as the world, heaven as much as earth, virtue as much as vices? The whole wretched man is so given over to the flesh, so taken up with present things, that he leaves nothing in himself to serve the life to come, to serve the divine goods.

The force of temporal allurement the blessed Apostle fittingly applied to human consciences in one sentence, fittingly expressed, so that human members may serve justice, chastity and cleanness with as great a will as the vehemence and madness with which they gave themselves to shamefulness and vices. He asks little, or perhaps nothing, who desires to make his grant while the ownership is held back; and he takes away every excuse who commands that with things possible to you and customary you must repay him for the greatest. Give then, man, to God as much as you have given to the flesh and to the vices. And why is it that you should owe yourself first to the vices and not to God, the self that God asks of you, surely, only for love of you?

There follows: For when you were servants of sin, you were free from justice; but now, being freed from sin, you have become servants of justice (Rom 6:20, 18). Before, servants of sin; now, servants of justice. See, through the Apostle servitude succeeds servitude: you, stubborn one, show now the time of your freedom; sin before lied that you were free, while it held you wretchedly captive; now grace calls you a servant, you whom, to make you truly free, it has adopted as a son of God himself. Fulfilled, then, is Christ's saying, in which he says: He who wishes to be lord, let him be servant (Matt 20:27). Blessed is this servitude, which begets an everlasting lordship. For that freedom brought us the fruit of punishment and an unbearable confusion, as he says: For what fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death (Rom 6:21). See how the devil sets free, see with what reward he honours that servitude: that death at once ends life and begins punishment. But those who serve Christ, brothers, death being mocked together with its wages, are carried over to the perpetual life of holiness; for Christ's end admits no end, because this end does not kill man but perfects him.

Sermo CXV.

De lege abrogata per gratiam. In verba ejusdem: An ignoratis, fratres, scientibus enim legem loquor, etc

Posteaquam Davidicam citharam spiritualis intelligentiae plectro et modulatione tangentes, animos vestros et corda permulsimus, intonantis quoque Evangelii ad suscitandos sensus vestros principia metuenda praebuimus, ad Apostolicum magisterium mox credidimus esse remeandum, ut tripartitus ordo sermonis ecclesiasticae doctrinae salutiferam teneat et praebeat disciplinam. Nam et cantilena a continuo labore relaxat animos, et Evangelica auctoritas mentis reparat et exsuscitat ad laborem, apostolicus vigor a tramite recto removeri et nostros non sinit sensus evagari. Hanc beati Apostoli per ordinem sequi hodie reperimus lectionem.

An ignoratis, fratres, inquit, scientibus enim legem loquor, quia lex dominatur homini quanto tempore vivit? Et indicit similitudinem. Nam quae sub viro est mulier, vivente viro, alligata est legi; si autem mortuus fuerit vir ejus, soluta est a lege viri: igitur vivente viro, vocabitur adultera, si fuerit cum alio viro; si autem mortuus fuerit vir ejus, soluta est a lege viri. Videtis, fratres, beati Apostoli magnum coelestis magisterii documentum, quemadmodum legis tempora legalibus testimoniis asserit praeteriisse, totamque ejus praerogativam miro conjugii exinanivit exemplo. Et merito lex carnali conjugio comparatur, quae non obtinuit cum synagoga spirituale consortium.

Nam cum accepisset eam ad observantiam disciplinae, ad sancti germinis fecunditatem, ad augmentum pudoris, ad custodiam castitatis, ad superni thalami sacrum reverendumque secretum, ad mysticam thori coelestis unitatem, reperit in ea totius meretricationis illuviem. Occurrit enim tanto viro, id est legi, non compta moribus, non monilibus ornata virtutum, non incessu gravis, non vere illo flammeo virginalis verecundiae operta velamento; sed lasciva oculis, soluta gressibus, praeventa illecebris, et tota dolis et simulationibus perfucata.

Sermon CXV.

On the Law abrogated through grace. On the words of the same: "Do you not know, brothers, for I speak to those who know the Law", etc.

After we had soothed your minds and hearts, touching David's harp with the plectrum and the melody of spiritual understanding, and had also set before you the fearsome beginnings of the thundering Gospel to rouse your senses, we thought we should soon return to the teaching of the Apostle, so that the threefold order of the sermon may hold and offer the saving discipline of the Church's doctrine. For the chant relaxes hearts from continual labour, and the authority of the Gospel restores the mind and rouses it to labour, and the vigour of the Apostle does not allow our senses to be moved from the straight path and to wander. This reading of the blessed Apostle we find today follows in its order.

Do you not know, brothers, he says, for I speak to those who know the Law, that the Law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? (Rom 7:1) And he sets out a comparison. For the woman who is under a husband is bound to the law while her husband lives; but if her husband has died, she is loosed from the law of the husband: therefore, while her husband lives, she will be called an adulteress if she has been with another man; but if her husband has died, she is loosed from the law of the husband (Rom 7:2–3). You see, brothers, the great lesson of the heavenly teaching of the blessed Apostle: how he asserts by testimonies of the Law that the times of the Law have passed, and has emptied its whole prerogative by the wonderful example of marriage. And rightly is the Law compared to a carnal marriage, since it did not obtain a spiritual fellowship with the Synagogue.

For when it had received her for the observance of discipline, for the fruitfulness of a holy offspring, for the increase of modesty, for the keeping of chastity, for the sacred and reverend secret of the bridal chamber above, for the mystical unity of the heavenly couch, it found in her the filth of all harlotry. For she came to meet so great a husband, that is, the Law, not adorned with good conduct, not decked with the necklaces of the virtues, not grave in her gait, not covered indeed with that bridal veil of virginal modesty; but wanton in her eyes, loose in her steps, overtaken by allurements, and wholly painted over with deceits and pretences.

Quam cum vir tantus visam justa indignatione despiceret, et eam procul a sua societate propelleret, atque toto exsecraretur judicio gravitatis; illa nec despecta erubuit, nec contempta se correxit, nec resipuit, sed repulsa, sed tota praeceps ad idolorum lupanaria convolavit, et maluit subire fornicationis infamiam atque adulterii crimen incurrere, quam male placiti habitus turpitudinem non horrere. Unde et merito eam beatus propheta deplorat, dicens: Quomodo facta est meretrix civitas fidelis Sion? Cujus adulteria quoque Ezechiel sanctus toto pene volumine praescribit. Hinc est, fratres, quod cum in Evangelio a scribis et doctoribus legis apud Dominum ista accusaretur adultera, avertit faciem suam Dominus, et declinavit in terram, ne crimen cerneret quod puniret; et maluit, fratres, in pulvere scribere veniam, quam dare in carne sententiam.

Hanc Apostolus adulteram ad Christi nititur revocare consortium, nec patitur pristini lapsus timore tardari, quae vivente viro merito exstitit adultera, quia fuit cum alio viro, nunc vero non deserit legem, quae ad legis recurrit auctorem; sed moritur legi legalibus addicta sententiis, ut vivat gratiae et resurgat per veniam, quae fuerat interempta et mortificata per legem. Denique cum eam a maritali jure defuncto viro asserat absolutam, ipsam potius, non virum, insequentibus defunctam esse testatur: quia non lex homini, sed homo moritur legi; nec mandatum praeterit, sed mandato deficit ille qui labitur a mandato.

Audi quod sequitur. Itaque, fratres mei, et vos mortificati estis legi. Numquid dicit, mortua est vobis lex? Et vos mortificati estis legi. Et bene addidit, Per corpus Christi. Quia lex reum astringit, arctat obnoxium, punit et interficit criminosum. Qui ergo per corpus Christi ab omni crimine exemptus est et erutus, feliciter moritur legi, ut innocentiae vivat et gratiae.

Ut sitis, inquit, alterius, qui ex mortuis resurrexit. Alterius. Alter ipse effectus est, cum nostram corruptionem in incorruptionem mutavit, et mortalitatem immortalitatis transvexit ad gloriam. Ut fructificemus, ait, Deo. Consortes coelestis naturae per Christum, non terrae, sed Deo; non morti, sed vitae; et Deo fructum asserit deferri, non carni.

And when so great a husband, having seen her, despised her with just indignation, and drove her far from his society, and execrated her with the whole judgement of his gravity, she neither blushed when despised, nor corrected herself when scorned, nor came to her senses, but, repulsed, flew all headlong to the brothels of idols, and preferred to undergo the infamy of fornication and to incur the crime of adultery rather than not to shudder at the shamefulness of a guise that pleased amiss. Hence too the blessed prophet rightly laments her, saying: How has the faithful city of Zion become a harlot? (Isa 1:21) Whose adulteries holy Ezekiel too sets down in almost his whole volume. Hence it is, brothers, that when in the Gospel this adulteress was accused before the Lord by the scribes and the doctors of the Law, the Lord turned away his face and bent down to the ground, lest he should see the crime that he would have to punish; and he preferred, brothers, to write pardon in the dust rather than to pronounce sentence on the flesh (John 8:3–8).

This adulteress the Apostle strives to call back to the fellowship of Christ, nor does he allow her to be held back by fear of her former fall, she who, while her husband lived, rightly stood an adulteress because she was with another man, but now does not desert the Law, since she runs back to the author of the Law; but she dies to the Law, bound over by the sentences of the Law, that she may live to grace and rise again through pardon, she who had been slain and put to death through the Law. Indeed, while he asserts that she is released from the husband's right by the husband's death, he testifies in what follows that it is rather she, not the husband, who has died: because the Law does not die to man, but man dies to the Law; nor does the commandment pass away, but he fails the commandment who slips from the commandment.

Hear what follows. Therefore, my brothers, you too have been made dead to the Law (Rom 7:4). Does he say: "The Law has died to you"? You too have been made dead to the Law. And well he added: Through the body of Christ. Because the Law binds the accused, confines the one liable to it, punishes and kills the criminal. He then who through the body of Christ has been exempted and rescued from every crime happily dies to the Law, that he may live to innocence and to grace.

That you may belong, he says, to another, who rose from the dead. To another. He himself became other, when he changed our corruption into incorruption, and carried mortality across to the glory of immortality. That we may bear fruit, he says, to God. Sharers of the heavenly nature through Christ, not to earth but to God, not to death but to life; and he asserts that fruit is borne to God, not to the flesh.

Cum enim, inquit, essemus in carne, passiones peccatorum, quae per legem erant, operabantur in membris nostris, ut fructificaremus morti. Cum dicit: Cum essemus, praeteritum tempus indicat, dum in sola carne positi, immo magis expositi, quae carni sunt tantum sapere, facere, velle cogebamur, juxta aliud Apostoli: Qui in carne sunt, Deo placere non possunt. Cum enim essemus, inquit, in carne, passiones peccatorum, quae per legem erant. Dicam sicut dictum est a Domino: Si lumen quod in te est tenebrae sunt, ipsae tenebrae quantae? Si per legem passiones peccatorum membris dominantur humanis, quid ipsae per se facient passiones, quae nascenti mox homini infeliciter et poenaliter obsecundant? Cum taliter nascentem, generatur taliter, angores deprimunt, urgent pericula, afficiunt poenae: passiones sunt, fratres, per quas infirmatur infantia, pueritia trahitur, adolescentia insanit, juventus et senectus multis luctibus cumulantur; ipsae sunt quae totam hominis vitam inimico conturbante comitantur ad lapsum; quas lex dum prohiberet, admonuit; dum discuteret, ampliavit; dum accusaret, reddidit chariores; et quae per ignorantiam latebant, fecit esse per scientiam notiores. Et sicut per falcem spinae magis dum succiduntur accrescunt, ita dum resecantur per legem, pullulant passiones, quia intrinsecus velut in radice carnis fixae solidantur. Lex intrinsecus culturam fidei habet satis justam, nec proficit: unde ad frugem mortis ipsum cespitem humanae carnis sua excitatione perducit.

Passiones, inquit, peccatorum, quae per legem erant, operabantur in membris nostris, ut fructificaremus morti. Instrumentum quod ad vitam erat, ad frugem mortis sibi in nobis vindicant passiones. Sauciati ergo taliter per Christi gratiam, a lege mortis absolvimur, et Spiritum sanctum percipimus intrinsecus debellatorem, victoremque vitiorum; ut passiones forinsecus exclusae pulsent, tentent, provocent, sed concidant ad nostrorum gloriam triumphorum. Nobis, nobis cupit vincere, qui cum dominaretur nobis dignatus est militare, sicut dixi. Ergo serviamus in novitate Spiritus a carnis servitute jam liberi, quia vera dominatio est famulatus Dominicae sanctitatis; nam et vetus homo et vetus littera totam corrupit et perdidit disciplinam.

For when we were in the flesh, he says, the passions of sins, which were through the Law, were at work in our members, so that we bore fruit to death (Rom 7:5). When he says When we were, he indicates past time, when, placed in the flesh alone, or rather exposed, we were compelled to savour, to do, to will only the things that are of the flesh, according to that other saying of the Apostle: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom 8:8). For when we were, he says, in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the Law. I will say as it was said by the Lord: If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness itself? (Matt 6:23) If through the Law the passions of sins have dominion over human members, what will the passions do by themselves, which humour man unhappily and penally as soon as he is born? Since one is begotten in such a way, anguish presses down the one so born, dangers urge him on, penalties afflict him: they are passions, brothers, through which infancy is weakened, childhood is dragged along, adolescence goes mad, youth and old age are heaped with many mournings; it is they which accompany the whole life of man to its fall, the enemy stirring it up; which the Law, in forbidding them, called to mind; in examining them, enlarged; in accusing them, made dearer; and what lay hidden through ignorance, it made better known through knowledge. And as thorns grow the more when they are cut down by the sickle, so the passions sprout while they are pruned back by the Law, because inwardly, fixed as in the root of the flesh, they are made firm. The Law has inwardly a very just cultivation of faith, and yet it does not profit: hence by its own stirring it brings the very turf of human flesh to a harvest of death.

The passions, he says, of sins, which were through the Law, were at work in our members, so that we bore fruit to death. The instrument that was for life, the passions claim for themselves in us for a harvest of death. Wounded thus, then, through the grace of Christ, we are released from the law of death, and receive within us the Holy Spirit as the vanquisher and conqueror of vices; so that the passions, shut out, may knock from outside, tempt, provoke, but fall to the glory of our triumphs. For us, for us he desires to conquer, who, though he was lord over us, deigned to serve as a soldier, as I have said. Let us therefore serve in the newness of the Spirit (Rom 7:6), now free from the servitude of the flesh, because true lordship is the service of the Lord's holiness; for both the old man and the old letter corrupted and ruined the whole discipline.

Sermo CXVI.

De cognitione peccati per legem. In verba ejusdem: Quid ergo dicemus? Lex peccatum est? Absit, etc

Quoties diverso genere, sed voce consona mystica resonat cantilena, mita dulcedine pascit et delectat auditum; ita cum vario modo, sed uno Spiritu eodemque sensu divina et coelestis doctrina depromitur, libentius et cum suavitate maxima evangelicae scientiae pandit et aperit sacramentum. Et ideo post propheticam melodiam et virtutum Christi stupenda miracula, ad apostolicarum redeamus ordinem lectionum. Talis ergo hodiernae exstitit continentia lectionis.

Quid ergo dicemus? lex peccatum est? Absit. Sed peccatum non cognovi, nisi per legem: nam concupiscentiam non sciebam, nisi lex diceret: Non concupisces. Occasione autem accepta, peccatum per mandatum operatum est in me omnem concupiscentiam. Audistis, fratres, quo morbo sine Christo laboraverit humana conditio, quam captiva sine gratia fuerit humana fragilitas, quae lege, quae mandatis non prohibebatur, sed armabatur ad crimina: quae ob hoc audiebat, ob hoc cognoscebat, non ut vinceret peccata, sed faceret.

Peccatum non cognovi, nisi per legem. Vitia non nosse felicitatis est, nosse periculi, vicisse virtutis est. Rex nobilis et fortis, hostibus suis longius occurrit, et ita praevenit ingruentium dolos, ut dejici nequeat fides militum, civium nequeat conturbari constantia: sic modo generosus animus per Christi gratiam corporis sui transgreditur miserandas angustias, et ita totus delicta praevenit, proculcat vitia, et crimina totus internecione prosternit, ut nequeant fucis sensus fallere, dolis ingenium depravare, tumultuationibus misera, imbecilla corda dissolvere, ardore, sanguinibus, fumantes occasiones incendere, vario passionum genere membra naturaliter infirma vexare. Quod ignis aridae segeti, hoc vitia corpori sunt humano, quae sola securius separatione vincuntur, necantur ignorantia, et nescita feliciter evanescunt. Nam si ad mentem et sensus pervenerint, si contigerint animos, si semel membra penetraverint, inexstinguibile gignitur et exaltatur incendium: et nisi unda coelestis corda rigaverit, mentes infuderit, membra madefecerit, totum quod est roboris humani, subditur et redigitur in favillam.

Sermon CXVI.

On the knowledge of sin through the Law. On the words of the same: "What then shall we say? Is the Law sin? Far from it", etc.

As often as a mystical chant resounds in different kinds but with harmonious voice, it feeds and delights the hearing with mild sweetness; so when the divine and heavenly doctrine is drawn forth in various ways, but by one Spirit and in one and the same sense, it spreads out and opens the mystery of the knowledge of the Gospel more willingly and with the greatest sweetness. And therefore, after the prophetic melody and the astonishing miracles of Christ's powers, let us return to the order of the readings from the Apostle. Such, then, was the content of today's reading.

What then shall we say? Is the Law sin? (Rom 7:7) Far from it. But I did not know sin except through the Law: for I did not know concupiscence, except that the Law said: You shall not covet. But taking occasion, sin through the commandment worked in me all concupiscence (Rom 7:8). You have heard, brothers, with what disease the human condition laboured without Christ, how captive human frailty was without grace, which by the Law, by the commandments, was not restrained, but armed for crimes: which heard for this, knew for this, not to conquer sins but to commit them.

I did not know sin except through the Law. Not to know vices belongs to happiness, to know them to danger, to have conquered them to virtue. A noble and brave king goes out far to meet his enemies, and so forestalls the wiles of those advancing that the loyalty of the soldiers cannot be cast down, nor the constancy of the citizens be disturbed: so now a generous mind, through the grace of Christ, passes beyond the pitiable straits of its body, and so wholly forestalls offences, tramples on vices, and lays crimes wholly low in destruction, that they cannot deceive the senses with false colours, corrupt the wit with wiles, dissolve wretched, feeble hearts with tumults, kindle smoking occasions with heat and with blood, harass with various kinds of passions the members, which are weak by nature. What fire is to a dry crop, that vices are to the human body; they are conquered more safely by separation alone, they are killed by ignorance, and, unknown, they happily vanish. For if they have reached the mind and the senses, if they have touched spirits, if once they have penetrated the members, an unquenchable burning is begotten and rises high: and unless the heavenly wave has watered the hearts, flooded the minds, soaked the members, the whole of human strength is subdued and reduced to ashes.

Lex, inquit, peccatum est? Absit. Sed peccatum non cognovi nisi per legem. Ac si diceret: Aurum avaritia non est, sed avaritiam non cognovi, nisi per aurum. Vinum ebrietas non est, sed ebrietatem non cognovi, nisi per vinum. Pulchritudo corporis non est concupiscentia, sed formae decus concupiscentiae me rapuit et perduxit ad lapsum. Sic ergo ipsa per se mala non sunt, quae a Deo ad utilitatem, ad salutem, ad gratiam sunt creata, sed per ea delinquendi datur occasio. Ergo avarus aurum accusat, ebrius vinum, lascivus aut lepidus formae vult esse quod contigit ad ruinam.

Ita et lex quae a Deo data fuerat ad salutem, quae erat per se coelestis et sancta, facta est per hominem miseri hominis ad ruinam, sicut ex sequentibus probat Apostolus, qui dicit: Itaque lex quidem sancta, et mandatum sanctum et justum et bonum. Quod ergo bonum erat, non intulit mortem, sed peccatum, quod principaliter intulerat mortem, quod fragilem, quod imbecillem, quod humanam naturam pronam fecerat ad lapsus et vitia. Quod latebat, et hostiliter humano grassabatur in corpore, lex reprehendit, lex prodidit, dum admonet hominem de innocentia, de sanctitate, de justitia, de virtute, de fide; dum arguit de vitiis, de delictis, de criminibus.

Sed homo, audire quidem coepit virtutes, coepit velle, sed non attigit; coepit detestari, sed sequi vitia; odisse delicta, sed facere; horrere crimina, sed implere: unde tarde se servum captivum, se male rabiei sensit addictum et coepit clamare: Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit a corpore mortis hujus? Cui respondetur: Gratia Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Quo audito coepit libertatem quaerere per auctorem, salutem per veniam, vitam per solam sperare gratiam. Nam diu ignoraverat unde esset difficilis innocentia, unde laboriosa justitia, anxia sanctitas, virtus ardua, fides tota periculis plena, unde sic tantas copias haberent delicta, unde crimina dum succiduntur increscunt, virtutes deficiunt dum coluntur. Lex aperuit, lex docuit, lex tota luce monstravit, crimina per peccatum, virtutes per Deum in humanis sensibus, in humana mente dominari; nec posse ante superari delicta quam delictorum fuerit auctor exstinctus, quod est peccatum, quod Christus abstulit, attestante Joanne, cum dicit: Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi.

Sine lege enim, inquit, peccatum mortuum erat. Ego autem vivebam sine lege aliquando. Sed cum venisset mandatum, peccatum revixit. Et ego mortuus sum, et inventum est mihi mandatum, quod erat ad vitam, hoc esse ad mortem. Nam peccatum occasione accepta per mandatum seduxit me, et per illud occidit. Peccatum mortuum erat, non quia non erat, sed quia ignorabatur, et proprie dictum est, Peccatum revixit.

Is the Law, he says, sin? Far from it. But I did not know sin except through the Law. As if he said: Gold is not avarice, but I did not know avarice except through gold. Wine is not drunkenness, but I did not know drunkenness except through wine. The beauty of the body is not concupiscence, but the grace of form carried me away to concupiscence and led me to a fall. So, then, the things themselves are not evil in themselves, which were created by God for usefulness, for health, for delight, but through them occasion is given for offending. So the miser accuses gold, the drunkard wine, the lascivious or the elegant would have it be beauty's doing that he came to ruin.

So too the Law, which had been given by God for salvation, which was in itself heavenly and holy, was made through man the ruin of wretched man, as the Apostle proves from what follows, saying: So the Law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good (Rom 7:12). What then was good did not bring death, but sin, which had brought death in the first place, which had made human nature frail, feeble, prone to falls and vices. What lay hidden and raged as an enemy in the human body, the Law rebuked, the Law exposed, in admonishing man of innocence, of holiness, of justice, of virtue, of faith; in reproving him of vices, of offences, of crimes.

But man began indeed to hear of the virtues, began to will, but did not reach it; began to detest vices, but to follow them; to hate offences, but to commit them; to shudder at crimes, but to fulfil them: whence late he felt himself a captive servant, felt himself wretchedly bound over to rage, and began to cry out: Unhappy man that I am, who will free me from the body of this death? (Rom 7:24) To whom the answer is given: The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 7:25). Having heard this, he began to seek freedom through the author, salvation through pardon, to hope for life through grace alone. For long he had not known why innocence was difficult, why justice laborious, holiness full of care, virtue steep, faith wholly full of dangers, why offences had such great forces, why crimes grow while they are cut down, and virtues fail while they are cultivated. The Law opened, the Law taught, the Law showed in full light, that crimes through sin, virtues through God, hold dominion in the human senses, in the human mind; and that offences cannot be overcome before the author of offences has been extinguished, which is sin, which Christ took away, as John testifies when he says: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

For without the Law, he says, sin was dead (Rom 7:8). But I once lived without the Law (Rom 7:9). But when the commandment came, sin revived. And I died, and the commandment which was for life was found to be for me for death (Rom 7:10). For sin, taking occasion through the commandment, seduced me, and through it killed me (Rom 7:11). Sin was dead not because it did not exist, but because it was not known; and it was properly said: Sin revived.

Quia erat sepultum in ignorantia nostra: non mandatum per peccatum, sed peccatum per mandatum revixit, dum facit praevaricari qui fuerat ante peccator; dum reum perficit etiam contumacem, desertorem exsuscitat et rebellem. Unde merito homo jam tunc se exclamat mortuum, quando se unde, et quare et per quem moreretur agnovit.

Peccatum, fratres, quam crudelis tyrannus sit, jam videmus. Per mandatum seduxit me, et per illud occidit. Quia argumentum salutis tetendit in laqueum, quia curam fecit esse languorem, quia instrumentum sanitatis exitiale mutavit in vulnus, quia vitam ipsam in gladium lethalem convertit: Per mandatum seduxit me, et per illud occidit. At quomodo sibi jam, quod esset occisus, provideret jam mortuus? nam quis poterat subvenire occiso, nisi Christus, qui vitam reparavit occisus? qui talionem morti reddidit per mortem, mortem peremit, atque eam prodidit contumacem, quae incubare jussa poenis reorum, attentare ausa est ipsum judicem, invadere ipsum innocentiae praesumpsit auctorem: unde merito mors mortua est, et in me non ego vivo, sed vivit, agit, regnat, imperat Christus.

For it was buried in our ignorance: not the commandment through sin, but sin through the commandment revived, in making him transgress who before was a sinner; in making the accused stubborn as well, rousing up a deserter and a rebel. Hence rightly man already then cries out that he is dead, when he recognised whence, and why, and through whom he was dying.

What a cruel tyrant sin is, brothers, we now see. Through the commandment it seduced me, and through it killed me. Because it stretched the proof of salvation into a snare, because it made the cure to be sickness, because it changed the instrument of health into a deadly wound, because it turned life itself into a lethal sword: Through the commandment it seduced me, and through it killed me. But how should one already dead provide for himself, since he had been killed? For who could help the slain, but Christ, who, slain, restored life? who paid death back in kind through death, slew death, and exposed it as stubborn, death which, ordered to brood over the punishments of the accused, dared to attempt the judge himself, presumed to assail the very author of innocence: hence rightly death has died, and in me it is not I who live, but Christ lives, acts, reigns, commands.

Sermo CXVII.

De Adam primo et novissimo. In verba ejusdem: Factus est primus homo Adam in animam viventem, etc

Duos homines beatus Apostolus hodie retulit humano generi dedisse principium, Adam videlicet et Christum: duos homines pares corpore, sed merito dispares; compage membrorum tota veritate persimiles, sed ipso sui principio tota dissimiles veritate. Factus est, inquit, primus homo Adam in animam viventem: novissimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem. Ille primus ab isto novissimo factus est, a quo est et animam consecutus, ut viveret; hic est ipso se figuratus auctore, qui vitam non exspectaret ab altero, sed ipse vitam solus omnibus largiretur; ille vilissimo plasmatur ex limo, ex utero pretioso Virginis hic procedit; in illo terra mutatur in carnem, in isto caro promovetur in Deum. Et quid plura? Hic est Adam, qui suam tunc in illo cum fingeret imaginem collocavit. Hinc est quod ejus et personam suscipit, et nomen recepit, ne sibi, quod ad suam imaginem fecerat deperiret. Primus Adam, novissimus Adam; ille primus habet initium, hic novissimus non habet finem. Quia hic novissimus vere ipse est primus, ipso dicente: Ego primus, et ego novissimus. Ego sum primus, id est sine initio. Ego novissimus, utique sine fine.

Sed non prius, inquit, quod spirituale est, sed quod animale, deinde quod spirituale. Prius utique terra quam fructus; sed non tam pretiosa terra quam fructus; illa gemitus exigit et labores, hic substantiam largitur et vitam. Merito propheta de tali fructu gloriatur, dicens: Terra nostra dedit fructum suum. Quem fructum? Illum nempe de quo alibi dicit: De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam.

Primus homo, ait, de terra terrenus; secundus homo, de coelo coelestis. Ubi sunt qui conceptum Virginis, Virginis partum, mulierum partibus existimant exaequandum, cum illud de terra sit, hoc de coelo; hoc divinae virtutis sit, illud infirmitatis humanae; illud sit in corpore passionis, hoc totum sit in tranquillitate divini Spiritus, humani corporis in quiete? Sanguis siluit, caro stupuit, soporata sunt membra, et aula Virginis tota est in coelesti commoratione suspensa, donec auctor carnis, carnis sumeret indumentum, et fieret homo coelestis, qui non solum terram redderet homini, sed homini donaret et coelum. Virgo concipit, Virgo parturit, Virgo permanet.

Sermon CXVII.

On the first and the last Adam. On the words of the same: "The first man Adam was made into a living soul", etc.

The blessed Apostle has today related that two men gave the human race its beginning, namely Adam and Christ: two men equal in body but unequal in merit; in the framework of their members very like in all truth, but in their very beginning unlike in all truth. The first man Adam, he says, was made into a living soul: the last Adam into a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). That first one was made by this last one, from whom he also received a soul, that he might live; this one was fashioned with himself as author, who would not wait for life from another, but would himself alone bestow life on all; that one is moulded from the vilest slime, this one comes forth from the precious womb of the Virgin; in that one earth is changed into flesh, in this one flesh is advanced into God. And what more? This is the Adam who, when he was then fashioning that one, placed his own image in him. Hence it is that he both takes up his person and received his name, lest what he had made to his own image should be lost to him. First Adam, last Adam; that first one has a beginning, this last one has no end. For this last one is truly himself the first, as he himself says: I the first, and I the last (Isa 48:12). I am the first, that is, without beginning. I the last, surely without end.

But not first, he says, what is spiritual, but what is animal, then what is spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). Earth surely comes before the fruit; but the earth is not so precious as the fruit; that one demands groans and labours, this one bestows substance and life. Rightly the Prophet glories in such fruit, saying: Our earth has yielded its fruit (Ps 85:13). What fruit? That, surely, of which he says elsewhere: Of the fruit of your womb I will set upon your throne (Ps 132:11).

The first man, he says, from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven, heavenly (1 Cor 15:47). Where are those who think that the conception of the Virgin, the Virgin's child-bearing, is to be put on a level with the child-bearings of women, since that is from earth, this from heaven; this is of divine power, that of human weakness; that is in a body of passion, this is wholly in the tranquillity of the divine Spirit, in the quiet of the human body? The blood was silent, the flesh was astonished, the members were put to sleep, and the whole palace of the Virgin was held suspended in a heavenly sojourn, until the author of flesh should take the garment of flesh, and become a heavenly man, who would not only give back earth to man, but would give man heaven too. The Virgin conceives, the Virgin gives birth, the Virgin remains.

Ergo virtutis est caro conscia, non doloris, quae magis pariendo integritatis augmenta suscipit, damna pudoris ignorat; testis potius sui partus existit, quae nullas partus pertulit passiones; et sacramentis coelestibus interfuisse se nova mater miratur, quae nascentis ordinem intelligit humanae consuetudinis nil habere. Si Deum sic nasci magus fatetur munere, fatetur dum adorat; advertite quid sentire, quid credere debeat Christianus.

Sed quod sequitur audiamus. Qualis terrenus, tales et terreni, et qualis coelestis, tales et coelestes. Quemadmodum non nati taliter, tales poterunt inveniri, non manendo quod nati sunt, sed quod renati sunt permanendo? Hinc est, fratres, quod virginei fontis uterum coelestis spiritus arcana luminis sui admixtione fecundat; ut quos origo limosae stirpis profuderat sub misera conditione terrenos, coelestes pariat, et ad similitudinem sui perducat auctoris.

Ergo jam renati, jam reformati ad nostri imaginem Creatoris, quod praecipit Apostolus impleamus. Igitur sicut portavimus imaginem terreni, portemus et imaginem coelestis. Fuerit necessitas, quod de terra concreti coelestia spirare nequivimus, quod de concupiscentia nati concupiscentiam non valuimus evitare, quod illecebris dominantibus acquisiti coacti sumus illecebrarum turpitudinem sustinere, quod saeculi hujus habitaculo recepti captivi fuimus malis; ad instar nostri Domini, sicut diximus, jam renati, quos utique concepit virgo, vivificavit spiritus, portavit pudor, genuit integritas, nutrivit innocentia, edocuit sanctitas, virtus exercuit, Deus adoptavit in filios, imaginem totam tota similitudine nostri portemus auctoris: non majestate qua solus est, sed innocentia, simplicitate, mansuetudine, patientia, humilitate, misericordia, concordia, qua dignatus est nobis fieri et esse communis. Cesset vitiorum pruritus pestifer, delictorum lethalia blandimenta vincantur; exsecrandus furor, criminum comprimatur origo; discutiatur a sensibus caligo tota pompae saecularis; abjiciatur a mentibus mundanae cupiditatis illusio; appetatur paupertas Christi, quae divitias in coelestibus possidet sempiternas; tota sanctitas animae custodiatur et corporis, ut non magnitudine, sed actu imago Creatoris nostri portetur et clarescat in nobis.

Therefore the flesh is aware of power, not of pain; it rather receives, by bringing forth, increases of integrity, and knows nothing of losses of modesty; it stands rather as witness of its own child-bearing, having borne none of the passions of child-bearing; and the new mother marvels that she has been present at heavenly mysteries, understanding that the order of the one being born had nothing of human custom. If the magus acknowledges by his gift that God was thus born, acknowledges it while he adores, consider what the Christian ought to think, what he ought to believe.

But let us hear what follows. As was the earthly, such also are the earthly; and as is the heavenly, such also are the heavenly (1 Cor 15:48). How will those not born in such a way be able to be found such, not by remaining what they were born, but by persevering in what they were reborn? Hence it is, brothers, that the heavenly spirit makes fruitful the womb of the virginal font by the hidden admixture of its light; so that those whom the origin of a slimy stock had poured out earthly under a wretched condition, it may bring forth heavenly, and lead them to the likeness of their author.

Therefore, now reborn, now re-formed to the image of our Creator, let us fulfil what the Apostle commands. Therefore as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor 15:49). Let it have been necessity that, formed of earth, we could not breathe heavenly things; that, born of concupiscence, we were not able to avoid concupiscence; that, acquired by ruling allurements, we were forced to endure the baseness of allurements; that, received into the dwelling of this world, we were captive to evils: now reborn after the likeness of our Lord, as we have said, we whom indeed a virgin conceived, the spirit gave life, modesty carried, integrity begot, innocence nourished, holiness taught, virtue trained, God adopted as sons, let us bear the whole image of our author with whole likeness: not in the majesty in which he alone is, but in the innocence, simplicity, meekness, patience, humility, mercy, concord, in which he deigned to become and to be one in common with us. Let the pestilent itch of vices cease, let the deadly blandishments of offences be overcome; let the execrable fury, the origin of crimes, be repressed; let the whole darkness of worldly pomp be shaken from the senses; let the illusion of worldly desire be cast from minds; let the poverty of Christ be sought, which possesses everlasting riches in heaven; let the whole holiness of soul and body be guarded, so that the image of our Creator may be borne and shine in us not in greatness but in act.

Affirmat quod diximus Apostolus, cum dicit: Hoc autem dico, fratres, quia caro et sanguis regnum Dei possidere non possunt. Ecce quomodo carnis resurrectio praedicatur, quia ibi caro possidebitur a spiritu, non caro spiritum possidebit, sicut ex sequentibus elucescit. Neque corruptio incorruptionem possidebit. Vides quia non caro deperit, sed corruptio; non homo, sed culpa; non persona, sed crimen; ut homo in Deo, et coram Deo vivens, finem se delictorum tandem gaudeat consecutum. De resurrectione proprius sermo proferendus est, fratres, quia transcursim, et in ipso verbi fine, non convenit dici de eo quod nos ad aeterna tempora ac perpetuam transmittit ad vitam.

The Apostle affirms what we have said, when he says: Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). See how the resurrection of the flesh is preached: because there the flesh will be possessed by the spirit, the flesh will not possess the spirit, as shines out from what follows. Nor will corruption possess incorruption. You see that it is not the flesh that perishes, but corruption; not the man, but the fault; not the person, but the crime; so that man, living in God and before God, may rejoice that he has at last reached the end of offences. A sermon of its own must be given on the resurrection, brothers, because it is not fitting to speak in passing, and at the very end of a discourse, of what carries us across to the eternal ages and to perpetual life.

Sermo CXVIII.

De morte et resurrectione carnis

Quoniam tota spes fidei Christianae in resurrectione constituta est mortuorum, ne quisquam de ea ausus sit dubitare, beati Pauli asserentis, eam auctoritate, rebus, exemplis, latissimam recitari vobis fecimus hodie lectionem, ad quam sermo noster quod adjicere possit non potuit invenire. Sed quia nostri officii vestra charitas semper exigit servitutem, repetere haec eadem, inculcare vehementius haec ipsa, resurrectionis ipsius ardore gestimus. Fratres, semper de resurrectione libet dicere, jugiter de resurrectione delectat audire, quia mori numquam libet, vivere semper delectat. Resonet ergo in ore nostro resurrectio semper, semper resurrectio ad nostrae mentis transmittatur auditum, ut mors quae nostros semper obsidet sensus, cum terrore suo, cum lamentis suis a nostris sensibus effugetur.

Quia sic agricola fructus uberes et exsatiatas epulas cantat, ut immanem vomeris laborem non sentiat et sudorem. Sic nauta portus modulatur et lucra, ne undarum ruinas, ne maris discrimina pertimescat. Sic miles, ne vulnera metuat, ut gladios non pertimescat, praedas personat et triumphos. Unde resurrectionem mente, ore, oculis, spectet, cantet, cogitet Christianus, ut totam mortis possit despicere et calcare formidinem.

Mors est, fratres, desperationis domina, incredulitatis mater, germana corruptionis, inferni parens, diaboli conjux, omnium malorum regina, quae omne genus hominum tali ordine inexplebili impugnat, ut primum susurratricem suam desperationem praemittat talia suadentem: Homo, cur tua perdis tempora? Ecce domina mors tua venit, animam tuam in nihilum redigens, carnem tuam putredine, ossa tua vetustate consumens, ut te qui non fuisti antequam nascereris, faciat non esse post mortem. Redde ergo debita ante mortem, moriturus cito, tibi, aetatibus tuis: da lusibus infantiam, da deliciis adolescentiam, da voluptatibus juventutem, da senectutem mihi, ne sine causa de spe cogites desperatus.

Post istam mittit incredulitatem suam filiam, sic minantem: Quasi non moriturus, quasi evasurus mortem, sic de vita disponis? Homo, te decipit fides, tu fidei credis, quae ut tollat praesentia, futura promittit, et ut auferat quae sunt ante mortem, nescio quae invisibilia pollicetur esse post mortem. Quis inde venit, aut quis sapiens credit tot saeculis promissa, nec reddita? O si manduces et bibas! Manduca et bibe, cras enim morieris.

Sermon CXVIII.

On death and the resurrection of the flesh

Since the whole hope of the Christian faith is set in the resurrection of the dead, lest anyone should dare to doubt of it, we have had read to you today the very full reading of blessed Paul, who asserts it by authority, by facts, by examples, to which our sermon has not been able to find anything it could add. But since your charity always demands the servitude of our office, we long, in the very ardour of the resurrection, to repeat these same things, to press these very things more vehemently. Brothers, it is always pleasant to speak of the resurrection, it is a constant delight to hear of the resurrection, because it never pleases to die, it always delights to live. Let the resurrection then always resound in our mouth, let the resurrection always be passed on to the hearing of our mind, so that death, which always besieges our senses, with its terror, with its laments, may be put to flight from our senses.

For so the farmer sings of abundant crops and of feasts that satisfy, so as not to feel the monstrous labour of the ploughshare and the sweat. So the sailor sings of harbours and gains, lest he should dread the crash of the waves, the perils of the sea. So the soldier, so as not to fear wounds, not to dread swords, sings aloud of spoils and triumphs. Hence with mind, mouth, eyes let the Christian behold, sing, ponder the resurrection, so that he may despise and trample on the whole terror of death.

Death, brothers, is the lady of despair, the mother of disbelief, the sister of corruption, the parent of hell, the wife of the devil, the queen of all evils, who assails the whole human race in such insatiable order that she first sends ahead her whisperer, despair, urging such things: "Man, why do you waste your time? Behold, your lady death is coming, reducing your soul to nothing, consuming your flesh with rot, your bones with age, so as to make you, who did not exist before you were born, not exist after death. Pay your debts, then, before death, you who will soon die: to yourself, to your ages: give infancy to games, give adolescence to delights, give youth to pleasures, give old age to me, lest in despair you think of hope for nothing."

After her she sends her daughter disbelief, threatening thus: "As if you were not going to die, as if you were going to escape death, is it thus that you dispose of your life? Man, faith deceives you, you believe faith, which, to take away present things, promises future ones, and, to remove what is before death, promises who knows what invisible things after death. Who has come from there, or what wise man believes things promised for so many ages, and not delivered? O, if you would eat and drink! Eat and drink, for tomorrow you will die (Isa 22:13)."

Tertiam germanam nequitiae suae corruptionem tali dirigit cum furore, ut aspectus hominum invadat, attrahat, occupet, per sepulcra, extremos ostendens carceres, suos jacere ibi demonstrat immobiliter vinculatos; et ut homines sensus hominis horrore toto, toto pavore conturbet, effundit putredinem, eructat saniem, spargit fetores, atque ad unum corpus hominis innumeros carnifices a se vermes dedisse proclamat. Quare non desperationi, quare non incredulitati crederent Christiani? Haec sunt mortis bella, his ducibus, his consiliis, tali conflictu captivat, vastat, interficit omnes quos natura praesentem perducit ad vitam, ducit reges, trahit populos, gentes impellit, non divitiis redimi, non flecti precibus, non lacrymis molliri, non viribus umquam potuit ista superari.

Erravere, fratres, qui de bono mortis scribere sunt conati. Et quid mirum? tunc se mundi sapientes magnos aestimant et praeclaros, si id quod est summum malum, hoc esse summum bonum simplicibus persuaserint: merito Scriptura de istis dicit: Vae qui dicunt bonum malum, et malum bonum. Vae qui ponunt tenebras lucem, et lucem tenebras! Et re vera quem non isti fallerent, quem non caecare potuerunt, qui vivere malum, mori bonum, incautis credere perfecerunt? Sed haec, fratres, veritas submovet, lux fugat, impugnat fides, Apostolus notat, Christus delet, qui dum bonum vitae reddit, malum mortis prodit, damnat, excludit.

Sic enim coepit Apostolus: Notum autem vobis facio, fratres, Evangelium, quod praedicavi vobis, quod et accepistis, in quo et statis, per quod et salvamini: qua ratione praedicavi vobis, tenere debetis, nisi sine causa credidistis? Tradidi enim vobis in primis, quod et accepi, quia Christus mortuus est pro peccatis nostris, et quia sepultus est, et quia resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas. Dei largitas victurum, non moriturum ditat. Aut quid bonum accipit, si non erit ipse qui accipit? In quo et statis. Stat utique qui semper vivit, quia mortuus semper jacet. In quo et salvamini. Si quis moritur, perit; salvatur vero ille qui semper vivit. Qua ratione praedicavi vobis, tenere debetis, nisi sine causa credidistis. Non solum, fratres, sine causa credidit, sed et sine causa vixit, qui se ad hoc solum natum credidit ut periret.

Her third sister in wickedness, corruption, she directs with such fury that she invades, draws, occupies the gaze of men, showing them through the sepulchres the last prisons, demonstrates that her own lie there immovably fettered; and, to disturb men, the senses of man, with all horror, with all fright, she pours out rot, belches out pus, scatters stenches, and proclaims that she has given from herself innumerable executioners, the worms, to the one body of a man. Why should Christians not believe despair, why not believe disbelief? These are the wars of death; with these leaders, with these counsels, with such conflict she takes captive, lays waste, kills all whom nature brings forth to present life; she leads kings, drags peoples, drives nations; she could never be ransomed by riches, bent by prayers, softened by tears, overcome by strength.

They erred, brothers, who tried to write on the good of death. And what wonder? The wise men of the world then think themselves great and illustrious, if they have persuaded the simple that what is the highest evil is the highest good: rightly Scripture says of these: Woe to those who call good evil, and evil good. Woe to those who make darkness light, and light darkness! (Isa 5:20) And in truth whom would these men not deceive, whom could they not blind, who brought the unwary to believe that to live is evil, to die is good? But these things, brothers, truth removes, light puts to flight, faith assails, the Apostle brands, Christ blots out, who, in giving back the good of life, exposes, condemns, shuts out the evil of death.

For thus the Apostle began: Now I make known to you, brothers, the Gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, through which you are also saved: in what terms I preached it to you, you must hold fast, unless you have believed in vain (1 Cor 15:1–2). For I delivered to you first of all what I also received: that Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that he rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3–4). God's bounty enriches one who will live, not one who will die. Or what good does he receive, if he himself who receives will not exist? In which you also stand. He stands, surely, who always lives, because the dead man always lies. In which you are also saved. If anyone dies, he perishes; but he is saved who always lives. In what terms I preached it to you, you must hold fast, unless you have believed in vain. Not only, brothers, has he believed in vain, but he has also lived in vain, who believed that he was born only for this, to perish.

Homo quid tibi oritur quod non occidat? quid tibi quod occiderit, non resurgit? Dies mane oritur, et iterum resurgit in mane; sero sepelitur in nocte, et iterum resurgit in mane. Sol quotidie nascitur, quotidie moritur, resurgit ipse quotidie; tempora dum transeunt, pereunt; dum redeunt, reviviscunt. Unde, homo, si Deo non credis, si non acquiescis legi, si non consentis auditui, vel oculis tuis crede, vel elementis resurrectionem tuam tibi jugiter praedicantibus acquiesce. Certe si ista longe sunt inferiora, quae in tuis manibus sunt, et de morte tuo opere suscitantur, te posse Dei opere doceant suscitari.

Vade ad semen, Apostolo te docente; tolle triticum aridum sine sensu, sine motu; duc sulcum, fodi terram, fac sepulcrum, sepeli triticum, inspice quemadmodum morte deperit, humore turgescit, putredine corrumpitur; et cum pervenerit ad totum quidquid desperatio, quidquid incredulitas, quidquid corruptela tibi superius ingerebat, tunc subito reviviscit in germine, in herba pubescit, juvenescit in caule, maturescit in fruge, et ad illam totam ipsam, quam tu periisse deflebas, speciem resurgit et formam; ut te, homo, triticum non tam doceat manducare quam sapere, non tam cogat laborare quam credere. Reliqua nos taceamus, quia et unde, et quando, et quomodo, et per quem mors venerit, beatus Apostolus plano et satis lucido ac divino declarat eloquio. Homo, accipe fidem, quia gratis datur; crede resurrectionem, quia qui promittit illam pretium non requirit.

Man, what rises for you that does not set? what that has set for you does not rise again? The day rises in the morning, and rises again in the morning; at evening it is buried in the night, and rises again in the morning. The sun is born every day, dies every day, itself rises again every day; the seasons, while they pass, perish; while they return, revive. Hence, man, if you do not believe God, if you do not acquiesce in the law, if you do not assent to what you hear, at least believe your eyes, or acquiesce in the elements that continually preach your resurrection to you. Surely, if these things are far inferior, which are in your hands and are raised from death by your own work, let them teach you that you can be raised by the work of God.

Go to the seed, the Apostle teaching you (1 Cor 15:36–37); take dry wheat, without sense, without motion; draw a furrow, dig the earth, make a sepulchre, bury the wheat, see how it perishes in death, swells with moisture, is corrupted with rot; and when it has come to the whole of whatever despair, whatever disbelief, whatever decay suggested to you above, then suddenly it revives in the shoot, grows its down in the blade, grows young in the stalk, ripens in the ear, and rises again to that whole very appearance and form which you wept for as lost; so that the wheat, man, may teach you not so much to eat as to be wise, may compel you not so much to labour as to believe. Let us be silent about the rest, because whence, and when, and how, and through whom death came, the blessed Apostle declares in plain, very clear and divine speech. Man, receive faith, because it is given freely; believe the resurrection, because he who promises it asks no price.

Sermo CXIX.

De vero cursu pro corona gloriae. In verba ejusdem: Nescitis quod hi qui in stadio currunt, etc

Beatus apostolus Paulus non solum per doctrinam legis, sed saeculi hujus exemplo ad coronam nos gloriae coelestis hortatur. Sic enim inter caetera ait, ut audivit dilectio vestra. Nescitis quod hi qui in stadio currunt, omnes quidem currunt, sed unus accipit bravium; et addidit: Sic currite, ut comprehendatis.

Secundum terrenum exemplum, multi quidem, ut ait Apostolus, in stadio currunt, sed unus accipit coronam, id est, ille qui melius currit; ita et in stadio vitae praesentis, multi quidem currunt, sed unus accipit coronam. Currunt Judaei per legem, currunt philosophi per inanem sapientiam, currunt et haeretici per falsam annuntiationem, currunt catholici per veram fidei praedicationem: sed de his omnibus unus coronam accipit, id est, populus catholicus, qui, recepto fidei cursu, tendit ad Christum, ut ad palmam immortalitatis coronamque perveniat. Quapropter et Judaei, et philosophi, et haeretici in vacuum currunt, qui non recto fidei tramite gradiuntur. Quid enim prodest Judaeis currere per observationem legis, qui Christum, dominum legis ignorant? Currunt et philosophi per inanem sapientiam saeculi, sed superfluus et vacuus cursus ipsorum est, qui veram Christi sapientiam nesciunt. Vera enim sapientia Dei Christus est, quae non ornatur verbis, nec luculenta oratione, sed fide cordis agnoscitur.

Currunt et haeretici per venenatam fidei suae assertionem, currunt per jejunia, currunt per eleemosynam, sed pervenire ad coronam nequeunt, quia non currunt; falsa enim fides eorum verae fidei gratiam accipere non meretur. Manifestat hoc Apostolus alio loco, cum dicit: Et si distribuero omnem substantiam meam pauperibus, et si tradidero corpus meum igni ut ardeat, charitatem autem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest. Non enim habet charitatem Christi, qui Christo non fideliter credit. Et ideo bene addidit Apostolus, dicendo: Sic currite, ut comprehendatis. Currere ergo debemus fideli cursu in fide Christi, in mandatis Dei, in operibus justitiae, ut ad coronam aeternae vitae pervenire possimus.

Sermon CXIX.

On the true race for the crown of glory. On the words of the same: "Do you not know that those who run in the stadium", etc.

The blessed apostle Paul exhorts us to the crown of heavenly glory not only through the teaching of the Law, but by the example of this world. For thus, among other things, he says, as your love has heard. Do you not know that those who run in the stadium all run indeed, but one receives the prize? (1 Cor 9:24); and he added: So run that you may obtain it.

According to the earthly example, many indeed, as the Apostle says, run in the stadium, but one receives the crown, that is, he who runs better; so too in the stadium of the present life many indeed run, but one receives the crown. The Jews run through the Law, the philosophers run through empty wisdom, the heretics too run through a false proclamation, the catholics run through the true preaching of the faith: but of all these one receives the crown, that is, the catholic people, which, having taken up the course of faith, makes for Christ, that it may reach the palm and the crown of immortality. Therefore the Jews, and the philosophers, and the heretics run in vain, since they do not walk on the straight path of faith. For what does it profit the Jews to run through the observance of the Law, when they do not know Christ, the lord of the Law? The philosophers too run through the empty wisdom of the world, but their course is superfluous and empty, since they do not know the true wisdom of Christ. For the true wisdom of God is Christ, which is not adorned with words nor with brilliant speech, but is known by the faith of the heart.

The heretics too run through the poisoned assertion of their faith, they run through fasts, they run through almsgiving, but they cannot reach the crown, because they do not run; for their false faith does not merit to receive the grace of the true faith. The Apostle shows this in another place, when he says: And if I distribute all my substance to the poor, and if I deliver my body to the fire to burn, but do not have charity, it profits me nothing (1 Cor 13:3). For he does not have the charity of Christ who does not faithfully believe in Christ. And therefore the Apostle well added, saying: So run that you may obtain it. We ought therefore to run with a faithful course, in the faith of Christ, in the commandments of God, in the works of justice, that we may be able to reach the crown of eternal life.

Denique quemadmodum nobis currendum est, idem Apostolus consequenter ostendit, dicendo: Omnis, inquit, qui in agone contendit, ab omnibus continens est; et illi quidem ut corruptibilem coronam accipiant, nos autem incorruptibilem. Vide quibus nos Apostolus exemplis ad coronam promissae immortalitatis invitat. In agone isto terreno qui vincere volunt, abstinent se a cibis quibusdam, a potu nimio, abstinent ab omni immunditia, sub tanta castitate, ut etiam propria conjugia non requirant; nec aliter se vincere posse sperant, nisi corpus suum castum pudicumque servaverint. Et post tantum laborem quid aliud quam parvam, et corruptibilem, et vilem quidem coronam accipiunt? Si ergo pro corruptibili corona tantus labor a quibusdam suscipitur, quanto magis nos omnem laborem sustinere debemus, quibus praemium coeleste et aeternae gloriae corona promittitur?

Est ergo nobis agonizandum non levi certamine: certamus enim contra spiritualia nequitiae, contra diabolum et angelos ejus; certamus contra injustitiam, contra impietatem, contra malitiam, contra impudicitiam, contra diversas illecebras peccatorum. Et si certantes vincimus, tot coronas accipimus quot vitiorum victores fuerimus. Magnus itaque agon iste est, in quo spectaculum Domino exhibemus: spectamur enim certantes a Domino, spectamur ab angelis ejus; in terra vincimus, sed praemium virtutis in coelestibus accipimus. Denique sancti martyres in agone certaminis positi, non solum vitia peccatorum, sed ipsam mortem vicerunt, et praemia immortalitatis susceperunt. In hoc agone primo Dominus et Salvator noster, et certavit et vicit, ut nobis exemplum certaminis et victoriae demonstraret.

Haec ergo vobiscum tractantes, semen boni certaminis injicimus in cordibus vestris, tamquam sulcata invenientes pectora vestra aratro justitiae. Colite igitur verbum quod sparsimus in vobis, ut possit germinare quod satum est. Deus autem visitatione sua, rore suae vos pietatis infundat; et det incrementum seminibus nostris, quo possitis in collectis manipulis meritorum ad fructum centesimum pervenire.

Indeed, how we must run, the same Apostle shows next, saying: Everyone, he says, who strives in the contest abstains from all things; and they indeed to receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible (1 Cor 9:25). See with what examples the Apostle invites us to the crown of the promised immortality. In this earthly contest those who wish to win abstain from certain foods, from excessive drink, they abstain from all uncleanness, with such chastity that they do not seek even their own marriages; nor do they hope to be able to win otherwise than by keeping their body chaste and modest. And after so great a labour what else do they receive but a small, and corruptible, and indeed cheap crown? If then for a corruptible crown so great a labour is undertaken by some, how much more ought we to endure every labour, to whom a heavenly reward and the crown of eternal glory are promised?

We must therefore contend in no light combat: for we fight against the spiritual forces of wickedness, against the devil and his angels; we fight against injustice, against impiety, against malice, against unchastity, against the various allurements of sins. And if, fighting, we conquer, we receive as many crowns as we have been victors over vices. Great therefore is this contest, in which we offer a spectacle to the Lord: for we are watched as we fight by the Lord, we are watched by his angels; we conquer on earth, but we receive the reward of virtue in heaven. Indeed, the holy martyrs, set in the contest of combat, conquered not only the vices of sins but death itself, and received the rewards of immortality. In this contest our Lord and Saviour first both fought and conquered, to show us an example of combat and of victory.

In treating these things with you, then, we cast the seed of good combat into your hearts, finding your breasts as it were furrowed by the plough of justice. Cultivate, then, the word which we have sown in you, that what has been sown may be able to sprout. May God, by his visitation, pour into you the dew of his loving-kindness; and may he give increase to our seeds, so that, with the sheaves of merits gathered in, you may be able to come to the hundredfold fruit.

Sermo CXX.

De figura saeculi vitanda, et forma Salvatoris assumenda. In verba ejusdem: Nolite configurari huic saeculo, etc

Christus apostolos sal esse hodie patefecit, dicendo: Vos estis sal terrae. Ne quis ergo impatienter ferat, si beati Pauli verba ut grana divini salis terimus, quatenus altius soporati, sensus intelligentiam condire possimus. Grana enim salis integra saliunt, quatenus in medullis ipsa subtilius attenuata descendant: sic sermo Apostoli communiter lectus praebet simplicem sensum, profundam scientiam praestat, lectione sedula iteratur ad illa quae ante perscrutati sumus.

Hodie dicit beatus Apostolus: Nolite configurari huic saeculo. Putasne beatus Paulus apostolus dicendo sic, elementorum figuris ne configuremur obsistat? neve simus ut Persarum reges, qui subjecta nunc pedibus suis sphaera, ut polum se calcare credantur, Dei vices mentiuntur: nunc radiato capite ne sint homines, solis resident in figura; nunc impositis sibi cornibus, quasi viros se esse doleant, effeminantur in lunam: nunc varias velut siderum sumunt formas, ut hominis perdant figuram, et nihil supernae claritatis acquirant. Sed ista licet de saeculi vanitate descendant, et sapientibus tam fugienda sint quam ridenda, tamen Apostolus cum dicit: Nolite configurari huic saeculo, saeculi vitam corrigit, arguit mores, judicat institutum, castigat voluntates, luxuriam condemnat, et totam vanitatum saecularium pompam propellit, effugat, excludit a mentibus Christianis.

Sed hoc modo strictim commonet quod est in principio hujus Epistolae latius exsecutus, ubi figuram saeculi in vitiis sic figurat: Repletos omni iniquitate, malitia, fornicatione, avaritia, nequitia, plenos invidia, homicidiis, contentione, dolo, malignitate, susurratores, detractores, Deo odibiles, contumeliosos, erectos, superbos, inventores malorum, parentibus non obedientes, insipientes, incompositos, sine affectione, sine misericordia, qui cum justitiam Dei cognovissent, non intellexerunt, quoniam qui talia agunt, digni sunt morte: non solum qui faciunt illa, sed qui consentiunt facientibus.

Sermon CXX.

On shunning the fashion of the world, and taking on the form of the Saviour. On the words of the same: "Do not be conformed to this world", etc.

Christ today made it plain that the apostles are salt, saying: You are the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13). Let no one, then, take it impatiently if we grind the words of blessed Paul like grains of divine salt, so that, lulled more deeply, we may season the understanding of the sense. For whole grains of salt leap, so that, worn finer, they themselves may go down into the marrows: so the word of the Apostle, read in common, offers a simple sense, provides deep knowledge, and is repeated in diligent reading to reach the things that we have examined before.

Today the blessed Apostle says: Do not be conformed to this world (Rom 12:2). Do you think that blessed Paul the apostle, by saying this, is opposing our being conformed to the figures of the elements? or our being like the kings of the Persians, who, now with a sphere set beneath their feet so as to be believed to tread the sky, counterfeit the place of God; now, with radiate head, lest they be men, sit in the figure of the sun; now, with horns set upon them, as if they grieved to be men, are made effeminate into the moon; now take on, as it were, the various forms of the stars, so as to lose the figure of man and acquire nothing of the brightness above? But although these things come down from the vanity of the world, and are as much to be shunned as laughed at by the wise, yet the Apostle, when he says: Do not be conformed to this world, corrects the life of the world, reproves its morals, judges its way of living, chastises its wills, condemns its dissoluteness, and drives away, puts to flight, shuts out from Christian minds the whole pomp of worldly vanities.

But here he only briefly reminds us of what he set out more fully at the beginning of this Epistle, where he figures the figure of the world in its vices thus: Filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness; full of envy, murders, contention, deceit, malignity; whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, proud, inventors of evils, disobedient to parents, foolish, disorderly, without affection, without mercy; who, though they had known the justice of God, did not understand that those who do such things are worthy of death: not only those who do them, but those who consent to those who do them (Rom 1:29–32).

Fratres, audistis formam saeculi, didicistis speciem, vidistis figuram: si tamen formam et non informe monstrum, ubi confusione criminum tota rerum facies est deleta, ubi peccatorum connubio tota mundi figura est dissoluta, ubi delictorum morbis imago ipsa ablata est conditoris, ubi homo in vitiis est sepultus, ubi corrupti corporis scatent scelera, ubi homo hominis est sepulcrum, ubi in homine non homo cernitur, sed cadaver.

Apostolus ergo huic formae nos prohibet esse conformes, et configurari nos huic vetat figurae; huic similitudini consimiles non esse permittit, sed ad formam Dei reformat, ad similitudinem revocat Christi, et totam reducit ad imaginem conditoris, dicens: Sed reformamini in novitate sensus vestri. Hoc est, sitis per Christum sensibus innovati, abjecta saeculi hujus figura; et tota inveteratae imaginis deformitate projecta, formam vestram in formam vestri reducite Salvatoris: ut novitas sensuum vestrorum in vestris actibus elucescat, et coelestis homo coelesti habitu jam gradiatur in terra. Qualiter autem componat formam novi hominis, jam patescat.

Sicut enim in uno corpore multa membra habemus, omnia autem membra non eumdem habent actum; sic multi unum corpus sumus in Christo, singuli autem alter alterius membra. Habentes autem donationes secundum gratiam, quae data est nobis, differentes. Agit, agit ut corpus, quod collocat in coelesti actu, in superna vita, in moribus sanctitatis membrorum consensu et copulatione consistat: neque pes oculi ministerium, neque oculus pedis officium perverso tumore confundat; sed ut sanctitatis membra donis contenta sint largitoris, et credant suum esse membra omnia, quod unum fecerit membrum, quia minorari nescit membrum unum, quod totum honoratur in corpus.

Hinc est quod Apostolus actus membris, membra actibus sic depingit: Sive qui docet in doctrina, qui exhortatur in exhortatione, qui tribuit in simplicitate, qui praeest in sollicitudine, qui miseretur in hilaritate. Charitas sine simulatione; odientes malum, adhaerentes bono, invicem honore praevenientes, invicem benigni, sollicitudine non pigri, spiritu ferventes, Domino servientes, spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes, orationi instantes, memoriis sanctorum communicantes, hospitalitatem sectantes: benedicite et nolite maledicere; gaudere cum gaudentibus, flere cum flentibus; providentes bona, non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus.

Brothers, you have heard the form of the world, you have learnt its appearance, you have seen its figure: if indeed it is a form and not a formless monster, where by the confusion of crimes the whole face of things has been blotted out, where by the wedlock of sins the whole figure of the world has been dissolved, where by the diseases of offences the very image of the Maker has been taken away, where man is buried in vices, where the wickednesses of a corrupted body swarm, where man is the sepulchre of man, where in man not man is seen, but a corpse.

The Apostle therefore forbids us to be conformed to this form, and prohibits our being configured to this figure; he does not allow us to be like this likeness, but re-forms us to the form of God, calls us back to the likeness of Christ, and brings the whole back to the image of the Maker, saying: But be re-formed in the newness of your sense (Rom 12:2). That is, be renewed in your senses through Christ, the figure of this world cast away; and, the whole deformity of the aged image thrown off, bring your form back to the form of your Saviour: so that the newness of your senses may shine forth in your actions, and the heavenly man may walk now on earth in heavenly bearing. And how he composes the form of the new man, let it now be made plain.

For as in one body we have many members, but all the members do not have the same action; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another (Rom 12:4–5). And having gifts differing according to the grace that has been given to us (Rom 12:6). He works, he works that the body which he sets in heavenly action, in the life above, in the ways of holiness, may stand firm by the agreement and the coupling of the members: that neither the foot confound the ministry of the eye, nor the eye the office of the foot, by perverse swelling; but that the members of holiness may be content with the gifts of the giver, and believe that what one member has done belongs to all the members, because one member cannot be lessened, which is honoured whole in the body.

Hence it is that the Apostle thus depicts actions for members, members for actions: Whether he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, in solicitude; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness (Rom 12:7–8). Charity without pretence; hating evil, cleaving to good; outdoing one another in honour; kind to one another; not slothful in solicitude; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer; sharing in the memorials of the saints; pursuing hospitality: bless, and do not curse; rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep; providing good things not only before God, but also before men (Rom 12:9–17).

Nolite esse prudentes apud vosmetipsos, nulli malum pro malo reddentes; si fieri potest, quod ex vobis est, cum omnibus hominibus pacem habentes; non vindicantes vosmetipsos, sed date locum irae. Si esurierit inimicus tuus, ciba illum; si sitit, potum da illi; noli vinci a malo, sed vince in bono malum.

Superius, fratres, Apostolus patefecit membra vitiorum, revelavit modo nobis membra virtutum; ut coeleste corpus tantis solidatum membris, nervis talibus roboratum, possit facile mundi bella prosternere, diaboli superare conflictus. Et ita vivens, ut Apostolus docuit, non prosternit mundum? non proterit carnem? non diabolum vincit? non aequatur angelis? non major est coelo? Plane major coelo, quia coelum non movetur sponte, non voluntate agit, non judicio facit quidquam, sed sola necessitate servit semper, quia semel jussum est servire; impollutum se non viribus, non labore custodit: unde cum non sit obnoxium poenae, sic tamen nec consistit ad praemium. At homo ex terrena vilitate concretus, dum terrenam labem vincit, dum sanguinis stimulos frangit, dum carnis exuberat passiones, transcendit coelum, ad ipsam deitatis pervolat sedem: et sic fit major coelo, meritis supergreditur angelos, non natura.

Probat hoc apostolus Paulus, qui dum satis terram vincit, et intravit coelum, et transivit alium, et usque ad tertium meruit pervenire. Et juste, nam primus conscendere debet coelos; qui sic et verbo et exemplo homines penetrare docuit coelos. Erit, erit major coelo, qui vixerit sicut docuit Paulus; erit clarior sole, qui sic virtutum radiis toto orbe splendet, ut fuscari se nulla vitiorum nocte permittat. Erit, erit iste lucidior luna, qui tenebras has non tenuato lumine temperat, sed totam saeculi noctem pleno meritorum fulgore depellit: nec sicut luna quotidiana lucis detrimenta praesentit, sed jugi factorum lampade in superni luminis claritate persistit; nec iste sicut illa menstruo interpolatur obscuro, sed in claritate Dei continua permanebit. Et si magna est illa, quod mitigat noctem, quanto hic major, cujus vita recipit nil de nocte? De stellis taceo, quia quot coelum stellis, tot sancti virtutibus elucescunt, dicente Domino: Vos estis lux mundi, lucete sicut luminaria in mundo. Ad summum, coelum, sol, luna, stellae (Deo dicente) transibunt, justus autem in claritate Dei continua permanebit.

Do not be wise in your own eyes, rendering to no one evil for evil; if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, having peace with all men; not avenging yourselves, but give place to wrath (Rom 12:16–19). If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink; do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil in good (Rom 12:20–21).

Above, brothers, the Apostle laid open the members of the vices; now he has revealed to us the members of the virtues; so that the heavenly body, made solid by such members, strengthened by such sinews, may easily lay low the wars of the world and overcome the conflicts of the devil. And does not one who lives so, as the Apostle taught, lay low the world? does he not crush the flesh? does he not conquer the devil? is he not made equal to the angels? is he not greater than heaven? Plainly greater than heaven, because heaven is not moved of its own accord, does not act by will, does nothing by judgement, but serves always by necessity alone, because it was once ordered to serve; it keeps itself unpolluted not by strength, not by labour: hence, though it is not liable to punishment, so neither does it stand for a reward. But man, compacted of earthly vileness, in conquering the earthly stain, in breaking the goads of blood, in rising above the passions of the flesh, transcends heaven, flies to the very seat of the Godhead: and so he becomes greater than heaven, surpasses the angels by merits, not by nature.

The apostle Paul proves this, who, in fully conquering the earth, both entered heaven, and passed through another, and merited to reach even the third (2 Cor 12:2). And justly, for he ought to be the first to climb the heavens who thus by word and by example taught men to penetrate the heavens. He will be, he will be greater than heaven, who has lived as Paul taught; he will be brighter than the sun, who so shines with the rays of the virtues throughout the world that he allows himself to be darkened by no night of vices. He will be, he will be brighter than the moon, who tempers this darkness not with a thinned light, but drives away the whole night of the world with the full splendour of merits: nor does he, like the moon, feel the daily losses of light, but by the constant lamp of deeds he persists in the brightness of the light above; nor is he, like her, interrupted by a monthly darkening, but he will remain in the continual brightness of God. And if she is great because she softens the night, how much greater is he whose life receives nothing of the night? Of the stars I say nothing, because as many stars as heaven has, so many are the virtues with which the saints shine, as the Lord says: You are the light of the world (Matt 5:14), shine as lights in the world (Phil 2:15). In short, heaven, sun, moon, stars (God saying so) will pass away (Matt 24:35), but the just man will remain in the continual brightness of God.

Velim, fratres, de singulo Apostoli verbo singulas proferre dictiones; sed quia et frequentata lectio fastidium generat audienti, et nos diutius non possumus evangelicas tacere virtutes, gratum sit charitati vestrae quod compendioso sermone praesentem clausimus lectionem. Deus autem noster, et quae diximus, et quae tacuimus, ipse sanctis vestris sensibus insinuare dignetur.

I would wish, brothers, to deliver a discourse of its own on each single word of the Apostle; but since a reading much repeated breeds weariness in the hearer, and we cannot any longer keep silent the mighty works of the Gospel, may it be pleasing to your charity that we have closed the present reading with a short sermon. May our God himself deign to instil into your holy senses both what we have said and what we have left unsaid.

Sermo CXXI.

De divite et Lazaro

Audistis, fratres, hodie et paupertatis finem, et divitiarum qualis sit exitus cognovistis, dicente Domino: Homo quidam erat dives, et induebatur purpura et bysso, et quotidie epulabatur splendide. Et erat quidam mendicus nomine Lazarus, ulceribus plenus, qui jacebat ad januam ejus, cupiens saturari de micis, quae cadebant de mensa divitis, et nemo illi dabat: sed et canes veniebant et lingebant ulcera ejus. Factum est autem ut moreretur pauper, et portaretur ab angelis in sinum Abrahae. Dives autem mortuus est et sepultus in inferno. En, fratres, quam rerum lamentanda mutatio: pauperem portant angeli, divitem deglutit infernus. En, fratres, mors pauperis totam vitam divitis vicit, et elatio sola pauperis totam divitis pompam transcendit et gloriam. Quare sic sepultura decipit oculos? quare sic exsequiarum pompa mentitur? In obsequium divitis migrat hic tota civitas, cum funus effertur; pauper vadit solus, pauperem duorum portat miseratio bajulorum, nec quatuor ut mortuo, sed duo sub uno vecte, quasi projiciendo oneri portitores addicantur inviti. Merito ei mox angelica officia, merito divina deputantur obsequia, cui tam crudeliter negata sunt ipsa humanitatis extrema. Funus divitis antecedit lugubris turba servorum; feretrum pauperis praecedit angelorum psallentium multitudo. In marmoreo tumulo et curata veste jacet divitis corpus inclusum; pauperis caro naturali quiescit in limo, et materiali situ vermium morsus nescit, praevenit putredines et fetores.

Sed requiramus, fratres, quae divitis culpa, quod crimen, quod scelus eum supplíciis addixit inferni, et ante judicium damnationis ejus, elogium tot saeculis fecit, ipso judice referente, cantari, dicente Domino: Homo quidam erat dives, et induebatur purpura et bysso, et epulabatur quotidie splendide. Et erat quidam mendicus nomine Lazarus, qui jacebat ad januam divitis, et cupiebat saturari de micis, quae cadebant de mensa divitis.

Sermon CXXI.

On the rich man and Lazarus

You have heard today, brothers, the end of poverty, and you have learned what the outcome of riches is, as the Lord says: A certain man was rich, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted splendidly every day (Luke 16:19). And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who lay at his gate, longing to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one gave to him; but the dogs too came and licked his sores (Luke 16:20–21). And it came to pass that the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). But the rich man died and was buried in hell. See, brothers, what a lamentable reversal of things: angels carry the poor man, hell swallows the rich man. See, brothers, the death of the poor man has overcome the whole life of the rich man, and the lifting up of the poor man alone has gone beyond all the rich man's pomp and glory. Why does burial so deceive the eyes? why does the pomp of funerals so lie? Here the whole city moves out to do homage to the rich man when his body is carried out; the poor man goes alone, the pity of two porters carries the poor man, and not four, as for a dead man, but two under one pole, as if carriers were bound against their will to a load to be thrown away. Rightly, then, are angelic offices at once assigned to him, rightly divine homage, to whom even the last offices of humanity were so cruelly denied. A mourning crowd of servants goes before the rich man's funeral; a multitude of angels singing psalms goes before the poor man's bier. In a marble grave and in carefully tended garments lies the rich man's body, shut in; the poor man's flesh rests in its natural slime, and in that material bed it does not know the bite of worms: it has gone before corruption and stench.

But let us ask, brothers, what fault of the rich man, what crime, what wickedness consigned him to the torments of hell, and, before the judgement, caused the record of his condemnation to be sung through so many ages, the judge himself reporting it, as the Lord says: A certain man was rich, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted splendidly every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at the rich man's gate, and longed to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

Numquid per se tantum divitiae criminosae sunt? aut solae et per se penes Deum damnandae sunt vestes? et tantum per se puniendae sunt epulae, ut non solum careant praemio bonorum, sed omnium malorum ferant et mereantur exitium? Aut ita per se probata est, et sanctificata mendicitas, ulcera tam sacrata, ut angelorum manibus Abrahae sancti rapiantur ad gremium? Et mirum, fratres, quod Abraham, quondam dives, hunc divitem spernit, dicente Scriptura: Erat autem Abraham dives valde, et eum quem habuit in bonis praesentibus parem, nunc reprobat et patitur esse poenalem, praesertim cum neque pauperis hujus bona, neque mala divitis istius prodiderit sermo divinus. Cur ergo nunc Abraham ambit pauperem, divitem refugit et refutat? Aut quemadmodum hunc Abraham innocentem habuere divitiae, hunc fecere divitiae criminosum; illum promovere ad omnium requiem beatorum, hunc in omnium malorum barathrum deputarunt?

Verum ne propositus sermo vestrum diu fatiget animum, suspendat auditum, acceleranda nobis est hujus solutio quaestionis. Abraham, fratres, non sibi, sed pauperi dives fuit, et opes non habere, sed prorogare gestivit: magis magisque in sinu pauperis quam in horreis recondere suas studuit facultates, sicut toto vitae ejus ordine perdocetur. Nam peregrinus ipse jugiter laboravit, sicque ne peregrinus peregrinum se esse sentiret: sub tentorio manens ipse, sine tecto advenam manere non passus est; et hospitem hospes semper ipse suscepit, extorris patria, domicilii nescius, ipse et dominus omnium fuit, et patria; sciens se non incubatorem, sed dispensatorem divinae positum largitatis, ut vindicaret oppressos, absolveret captivos, eriperet jam jamque morituros, ipsum se morti novus bellator addicit, apud quem pietas in alterum vita sua charior fuit. Abraham suscepto hospiti astitit, non assedit; et fuit iste non conviva hospitis, sed minister. Abraham viso peregrino, dominum se esse nescivit, ipse allator prandii, ad coquinam satis delicatam sollicitus addixit uxorem: et qui se suaque omnia famulis suis credit ac committit, committere vix audet hospitem conjugi quam probatae.

Et quid plura, fratres? Hujus denique humanitas sic sancta, sanctis est semper manibus praeparata, ut invitaret apud illum ipsum Deum, et compelleret hospitari. Ille ad Abraham, ille ad requiem pauperum, ille ad hospitum receptaculum venit, qui se in hospite et paupere receptum fatebitur in futuro, cum dicet: Esurivi, et dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et dedistis mihi bibere; hospes fui, et suscepistis me.

Are riches criminal merely in themselves? or are garments alone, and in themselves, to be condemned before God? and are feasts in themselves so much to be punished that they not only lack the reward of the good, but bear and deserve the destruction of all the wicked? Or is beggary in itself so approved and sanctified, are sores so hallowed, that they are snatched by the hands of angels to the lap of holy Abraham? And it is a wonder, brothers, that Abraham, once a rich man, spurns this rich man, as the Scripture says: Now Abraham was very rich (Gen 13:2); and him whom he had as his equal in present goods he now rejects and allows to be under punishment, especially since the divine word has disclosed neither the good deeds of this poor man nor the evil deeds of that rich man. Why then does Abraham now court the poor man, and shun and rebuff the rich man? Or how did riches keep this Abraham innocent, and riches make this man criminal; advance the one to the rest of all the blessed, and assign the other to the pit of all evils?

But so that the sermon before us may not long weary your mind and hold your hearing in suspense, we must hasten the solution of this question. Abraham, brothers, was rich not for himself but for the poor man, and he was eager not to have riches but to pay them out: more and more he was zealous to store his means in the bosom of the poor man rather than in barns, as the whole course of his life fully teaches. For he himself toiled continually as a stranger, and so, that a stranger might not feel himself a stranger: dwelling himself under a tent, he did not allow the newcomer to remain without a roof; and, a guest himself, he always took in the guest; an exile from his country, knowing no home, he himself was both master of all and their country; knowing that he had been set not as a hoarder but as the steward of God's bounty, to avenge the oppressed, to set the captives free, to snatch those already on the point of death, he gives himself over to death, a new kind of warrior, he in whom piety towards another was dearer than his own life. Abraham, when he had received the guest, stood by him, did not sit down; and he was not his guest's companion at table, but his servant. Abraham, at the sight of the stranger, did not know himself to be master; he himself brought in the meal, and in his solicitude set his wife, delicate as she was, to the kitchen: and he who entrusts and commits himself and all he has to his household servants hardly dares to commit the guest to a wife, however proven.

And what more, brothers? Indeed, his humanity, so holy, was always made ready by holy hands, so that it invited God himself to his house and compelled him to be his guest. He came to Abraham, he came to the rest of the poor, he came to the shelter of guests, he who in the future will acknowledge that he was received in the guest and in the poor man, when he says: I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a guest, and you took me in (Matt 25:35).

Factum est autem ut moreretur pauper et portaretur ab angelis in sinum Abrahae. Non immerito, fratres, sua tunc omnes sanctos suscepit in requie, et in ipsa coelesti beatitudine fungitur dispensatoris officio: quia dum semper hic suscepit peregrinos et pauperes, ipsum cum angelis suscipere Deum, ipsum sub tentorio suo videre hospitem meruit, quem semper habuit largitorem. Et revera, fratres, parum se beatum credidit, si in ipsa superna gloria ab hospitalitatis pio cessaret officio. Et solis donis frueretur divinis, qui hic humana bona crudelem se credidit cuiquam si negaret. Abraham, fratres, venientibus longe semper occurrit, praetereuntes etiam prece vocat, nolentes magna cum supplicatione suam compellit ad mensam, prima et saginata de gregibus hospitibus semper apponit, suis et conjugis suae manibus factos calentes semper offert panes, quos frigidos et hesternos esse utique jugis humanitas non sinebat.

At iste alter dives, immo divitiarum captivus, servus opum, et ipsis censibus compeditus, tantum pompae ignobile sepulcrum, in quo pietatis totus utique et visus defecerat, et auditus, non jam personam, non pauperem, sed ipsam misericordiam despicit ad januam suam Lazaro sic jacente. Purpura, bysso, delicatis vestibus, epulis blandis ferrea viscera crudelis anima nutriebat: quem Deus humanae salutis avidus inquisitor emollire cupiens, non tam Lazarum, quam ipsum pietatis conflatorium ejus projecit ad januam; conflatorium dixi, propter ferrea viscera. Impiis ergo oculis mendicus Lazarus ingeritur, admovetur, et ut dives dare possit, magis magisque divitis census cumulatur; sed dives adamante durior, quidquid Deus pauperis propter alimoniam divitis conferebat ad censum, ille aut effundebat turpiter, aut crudeliter reponebat.

Item Deus, ut non taceret, ut clamaret, ut admoneret divitem, ut panem se quaerere tantum jejunus pauper ostendat, ut vel ad minima largienda abundantis impellat animum, augetur pauperi fames. Cupiebat, inquit, de micis saturari quae cadebant de mensa divitis. At dives variis crapulatus ferculis indigeriem suam ructabat ad coelum, ne vocem pauperis humi et taliter jacentis audiret. Itemque Deus, quia obduratis auribus unius oris nil erat vox clamantis, ad aperiendum cor divitis totum corpus pauperis vulneribus aperit, ut in admonendo divite tot essent pauperis ora quot vulnera.

And it came to pass that the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Not undeservedly, brothers, did he then take all the saints into his rest, and in heavenly blessedness itself he performs the office of a steward: because, as here he always took in strangers and the poor, he merited to receive God himself with the angels, to see as a guest under his tent him whom he had always had as his giver. And truly, brothers, he thought himself too little blessed if in the glory on high itself he ceased from the pious office of hospitality, and enjoyed the divine gifts alone, he who here thought himself cruel if he denied human goods to anyone. Abraham, brothers, always runs out a long way to meet those who come, calls with entreaty even those who pass by, compels the unwilling with great supplication to his table, always sets before his guests the first and the fattened of his flocks, always offers warm loaves made by his own hands and his wife's, which his unceasing humanity would certainly not allow to be cold and of yesterday.

But this other rich man, or rather the captive of riches, the servant of his wealth and fettered by his very fortune, a mere ignoble sepulchre of pomp, in whom all the sight and all the hearing of piety had utterly failed, despises no longer a person, no longer a poor man, but mercy itself, while Lazarus lay thus at his gate. With purple, with fine linen, with delicate garments, with flattering feasts the cruel soul fed its iron bowels: and God, the eager seeker of man's salvation, desiring to soften him, cast at his gate not so much Lazarus as the very forge of piety; I said forge, because of the iron bowels. So the beggar Lazarus is thrust before those impious eyes, brought close to them, and that the rich man may be able to give, the rich man's wealth is heaped up more and more; but the rich man, harder than adamant, whatever God added to the rich man's wealth for the poor man's nourishment, either squandered shamefully or stored away cruelly.

Again God: that he might not be silent, that he might cry out, that he might warn the rich man, that the poor man, fasting, might show that he sought bread alone, that he might drive the mind of the man of plenty to bestow at least the least things, the poor man's hunger is increased. He longed, he says, to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But the rich man, gorged with dishes of every kind, belched his indigestion up to heaven, so as not to hear the voice of the poor man lying on the ground in such a state. And again God, since to hardened ears the voice of one mouth crying out was nothing, to open the rich man's heart opens the poor man's whole body with wounds, so that in warning the rich man the poor man might have as many mouths as wounds.

Solvuntur viscera, ulcera producuntur, hiatus vulnerum dilatatur, sanies effunditur, et tota pauperis caro componitur in scenam pietatis: ut quem vox esurientis non moverat, vel suspiria, vel dolores, gemitus et tota aerumnarum congeries commoveret; sed dives superbo oculo, insatiabili corde, haec omnia et audire, et videre, et sentire contemnit.

Quaerit adhuc Deus quemadmodum dives a sua obstinatione solvatur. Solvit pauperi manus a suis artubus, uti nec abigeret canes divitis, quos vulneribus suis divitis erat pasturus in vulnus: et novo modo, fratres, humanitatis ordo mutatur; fit humana mendicitas, ut cupiditas prodatur inhumana. Dives pauperem nec cadentibus de mensa micis pascit, et Lazarus pauper, quia aliud non habebat, etiam de carnibus suis canibus humanus exstitit. Miser dives, si panem non dedisti, quare vel canes abigere noluisti? Sed mitiores te canes tui, immo tu saevior canibus tuis: nam te saeviente illi parcunt, qui non ad morsum dentes, sed linguas ad obsequium sic producunt, ut in modum spongiae non vexent vulnera, sed detergant. Dives, in canibus tuis famem pietas vicit: in te pietatem saturitas non evicit. Nam quod canes hoc studio facere curarunt, usus ipse, qui semper est in oculis, probat. Nam canes lambendo semper curant vulnera sua: canes curant pauperem magisterio naturae, et homo hominem negligit, ipsa graviter accusante natura. Verum est, verum est, quod dives nec micas dare potest, dum semper avarus eget. Differendus est sermo, fratres, quia et dicendi tempus absumpsimus, et lectionis loca, quae nobis tractanda sunt maxime, subsequuntur.

His inward parts are loosened, sores break out, the gaping of the wounds is widened, the pus pours out, and the poor man's whole flesh is set out as a stage of piety: so that him whom the voice of the hungry man had not moved, the sighs at least, or the pains, the groans and the whole heap of miseries might stir; but the rich man, with proud eye and insatiable heart, disdains to hear and see and feel all this.

God still seeks how the rich man may be loosed from his obstinacy. He loosens the poor man's hands from their joints, so that he could not even drive away the rich man's dogs, which he was to feed with his wounds to the rich man's wounding: and in a new way, brothers, the order of humanity is changed; beggary becomes humane, so that greed may be exposed as inhuman. The rich man does not feed the poor man even with the crumbs falling from his table, and Lazarus the poor man, because he had nothing else, proved humane to the dogs even with his own flesh. Wretched rich man, if you did not give bread, why did you not at least want to drive away the dogs? But your dogs are gentler than you, or rather you are more savage than your dogs: for while you rage, they spare, putting out not their teeth to bite, but their tongues in service, so that like a sponge they do not hurt the wounds but wipe them clean. Rich man, in your dogs piety conquered hunger: in you fullness did not win piety. For that the dogs took care to do this with zeal, experience itself, which is always before our eyes, proves. For dogs always heal their own wounds by licking: dogs heal the poor man by the teaching of nature, and man neglects man, while nature itself gravely accuses him. It is true, it is true, that the rich man cannot give even crumbs, in that the miser is always in want. The sermon must be put off, brothers, because we have used up the time for speaking, and the places of the reading that we must above all expound come next.

Sermo CXXII.

De eisdem

Deberet, fratres, sermo noster hodie sancti Andreae, in quantum sufficit, referre virtutes: sed quia de divite illo et Lazaro, evangelico paupere, quod superest nos diximus reddituros, et B. Andreae apostolatus et martyrii sui praerogativa sufficit, et abundat ad gloriam, si placet, nos quae promisimus, quae debemus, ipso Domino reddente, solvamus. Scientes namque quod et dicenti et audienti semper generet lassitudo fastidium, superiore tractatu maximam partem propositae distulimus lectionis, ut reparatis animorum viribus salutaris verbi sequentia toto vigore et debito caperemus auditu.

Post illa enim quae diximus, haec sequuntur. Et elevans oculos cum esset in tormentis, Abraham vidit a longe, et Lazarum in sinu ejus. Et elevans oculos suos. Sero dives sursum levat oculos suos, quos semper depressit in terram. Dives, quos oculos levas, ipsi sunt accusatores tui; quos oculos levas, ipsi non placant judicem, sed inflammant; non reportant veniam, sed reatum; et exigunt poenarum cumulum, non solamen. Quo oculos levas? quid clamas adhuc, dives? quo respicis, dives? Ibi est Lazarus, ibi est impietatis tuae proditor, testis criminis, crudelitatis assertor.

Et clamavit, inquit, Pater Abraham, miserere mei. Modo cognoscis patrem, et modo tibi patrem se esse nescis, quem in Lazaro patrem sic sprevisti: modo tibi justus occurrit, qui tunc, ut tibi pius esset, diu Lazarum passus est cruciari. Infelix quem sic ipsa origo arguit, quem sic ipse lucis auctor addicit; infelix cui in judicio pro magnitudine criminis, non misereri genitor, non pater ignoscere, non affectio potuit subvenire. Quid clamas adhuc, dives? Adhuc dives, sed crimine, non censu; non substantia, sed reatu. Quid clamas? quid postulas? Hoc loco jam non geritur postulatio, sed controversia, ubi e diverso consistit ipse qui passus est: sed agentium diversus est locus: hic agit de proximo, ille de longe; hic de sinu suggerit, clamat ille de tartaro; exorat ille de requie, queritur hic de poena.

Sermon CXXII.

On the same

Our sermon today, brothers, ought to recount, as far as it is able, the virtues of Saint Andrew: but since we said that we would pay back what remains on that rich man and on Lazarus, the poor man of the Gospel, and since the prerogative of his apostleship and of his martyrdom suffices and abounds for the glory of blessed Andrew, if it please you, let us pay what we promised, what we owe, the Lord himself paying it back. For, knowing that weariness always breeds distaste both in the one who speaks and in the one who hears, in the former exposition we put off the greater part of the reading set before us, so that, with the strength of our minds restored, we might take in what follows of the saving word with full vigour and with due hearing.

For after what we have said, this follows. And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom (Luke 16:23). And lifting up his eyes. Late does the rich man lift up his eyes, which he always kept cast down to the earth. Rich man, the eyes you lift up are themselves your accusers; the eyes you lift up do not appease the judge, but inflame him; they bring back not pardon, but guilt; and they exact a heap of punishments, not comfort. Where do you lift your eyes? why do you still cry out, rich man? where do you look, rich man? There is Lazarus, there is the betrayer of your impiety, the witness of your crime, the one who proves your cruelty.

And he cried out, he says, Father Abraham, have mercy on me (Luke 16:24). Now you recognise a father, and now you do not know that he is a father to you, whom you so spurned as a father in Lazarus: now the just man meets you, who then, to be kind to you, allowed Lazarus to be tormented a long time. Unhappy man, whom his very origin so convicts, whom the very author of light so condemns; unhappy man, for whom in the judgement, because of the greatness of his crime, neither the begetter could have mercy, nor the father forgive, nor affection bring help. Why do you still cry out, rich man? Still rich, but in crime, not in wealth; not in substance, but in guilt. Why do you cry out? what do you ask? In this place no petition is being pressed any longer, but a lawsuit, where on the opposite side stands he who suffered: but the parties to the suit stand in different places: this one pleads from close by, that one from afar; this one prompts from the bosom, that one cries from Tartarus; that one entreats from rest, this one complains from punishment.

Sed quid dicit dives: Pater Abraham, miserere mei. Bene diceres, si Lazarus in sinu residens ipsum pectus judicis non teneret; bene diceres, si Lazarus justissimi cognitoris tota non possideret arcana. Gratis rogat judicem, quem sic innocens confessor accusat; et frustra sibi credit judicem posse subvenire, quando ore judicis pronuntiat ipse tanta qui pertulit.

Miserere mei, et mitte Lazarum. Adhuc tu in Lazarum sic crudelis? Lazarum mitte. Quo? Ad infernum de gremio, de solio sublimi ad profundissimum chaos, ad tormentorum stridorem de sancta quiete, de tanto silentio beatorum. Et mitte Lazarum. Ut video, quod agit dives, non est novelli doloris, sed livoris antiqui, et coelo magis incenditur quam gehenna. Est grave illis malum, est illis incendium non ferendum quos aliquando habuere contemptui videre felices. Adhuc divitem malitia non deserit, quem jam possidet poena, qui non se ad Lazarum duci postulat, sed ad se Lazarum vult deduci. Ad cruciatus tui stratum, dives, pius Abraham Lazarum mittere non potest, quem tu ad mensam tuam non es dignatus admittere. Jam vobis versae sunt vices: vides ejus gloriam, cujus supplicium sic sprevisti; videt ille cruciatus tuos, qui te tunc tua mirabatur in gloria.

Sed videamus, fratres, quare sibi mitti Lazarum sic deplorat. Mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aqua, et refrigeret linguam meam. Erras, dives, haec flamma non tam linguae quam mentis est, non tam linguae quam cordis est; et adhuc iste conscientiae calor est, non illud extremum quid te manet et exspectat incendium. Nam si te jam novissimi judicii totus ignis ambiret, et illius desperatae damnationis sententia jam teneret, numquam levares oculos, numquam patrem colloqui, numquam pro te rogare, numquam praesumeres intervenire pro fratribus. Certe si te jam possidet totus ignis inferni, si te gehennae flamma complectitur, quare solius linguae aestibus desideras subveniri? Nisi quia cum pectus tuum anhelat flamma sui criminis et reatus, magis lingua uritur, ardet, aestuat, quae insultavit pauperi, quae misericordiam denegavit: haec praecedit ad judicium, haec antea degustat et patitur cruciatus, haec de toto corpore prima sentit ardorem, quae cum prima hic varios deliciarum cibos, et odorata degustaret pocula, mandare pietatem noluit, fieri misericordiam non praecepit, sed et ipsa cum alii facerent, derogabat. Ipse est qui induebatur purpura et bysso. Quid est, dives? ab aestu byssus non defendit? purpura non resistit inferno? Remanserunt ista; deseruerunt ista, et ipse nunc nudus sudas, aestuas, qui aliquando insultabas aestibus artificiosa nuditate vestitus.

But what does the rich man say? Father Abraham, have mercy on me. You would say well, if Lazarus, sitting in the bosom, did not hold the very breast of the judge; you would say well, if Lazarus did not possess all the secrets of the most just examining judge. In vain does he, whom an innocent confessor so accuses, entreat the judge; and to no purpose does he think that the judge can help him, when he who endured so much himself pronounces sentence by the judge's mouth.

Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus. Are you still so cruel to Lazarus? Send Lazarus. Where? To hell from the lap, from the lofty throne to the deepest chasm, to the gnashing of torments from holy quiet, from so great a silence of the blessed. And send Lazarus. As I see, what the rich man is doing comes not from new pain, but from old spite, and heaven burns him more than Gehenna. It is a grievous evil, it is an unbearable burning for them to see happy those whom they once held in contempt. Malice still does not leave the rich man, whom punishment already possesses, who does not ask to be brought to Lazarus, but wants Lazarus brought down to himself. To the bed of your torment, rich man, the kind Abraham cannot send Lazarus, whom you did not deign to admit to your table. Now your turns are reversed: you see the glory of him whose torment you so despised; he sees your torments, he who then marvelled at you in your glory.

But let us see, brothers, why he so laments that Lazarus should be sent to him. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. You are wrong, rich man: this flame is not so much of the tongue as of the mind, not so much of the tongue as of the heart; and this is still the heat of conscience, not that last burning which remains for you and awaits you. For if the whole fire of the last judgement already surrounded you, and the sentence of that hopeless condemnation already held you, you would never lift your eyes, never presume to speak with your father, never to pray for yourself, never to intercede for your brothers. Surely, if the whole fire of hell already possesses you, if the flame of Gehenna embraces you, why do you want relief for the burning of your tongue alone? Unless it is because, while your breast pants with the flame of its crime and guilt, the tongue burns the more, blazes, seethes, the tongue that insulted the poor man, that refused mercy: it goes ahead to the judgement, it tastes and suffers the torments first, it is the first of the whole body to feel the burning, it that, when it first tasted here the various foods of delight and the perfumed cups, would not order piety, did not command that mercy be done, but even disparaged it when others did it. He it is who was clothed in purple and fine linen. What is this, rich man? does fine linen not protect you from the heat? does purple not withstand hell? These things have stayed behind; these things have deserted you, and now you yourself sweat naked, you burn, you who once mocked the heat, clothed in an artful nakedness.

Et mitte Lazarum ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aqua, et refrigeret linguam meam. Quid est dives? ubi sunt torrentes torcularium tuorum? ubi sunt horrea ad famem pauperis non minus cupiditatibus dilatata quam copiis? ubi sunt vina ad inopiam pauperis annositatibus et ipsa temporum oblivione servata? ubi sunt effusiones, lapsus, flumina ministeriorum tuorum? Ista omnia tibi periere, non crimini, qui sitis extremi digiti guttam, quam si vel solam dedisses pauperi, non sitires. Immisericordem te gutta, et mica reddidit inhumanum, in quibus totus pauperis et victus consistit et vita. Velim scire, dives, si vel ipsi tibi in poena positus ignoscis, quia ad haec mala non venisses, si de tantis horreis micam, guttam de tantis torcularibus tunc dedisses. Parum est quod caro eget, quod natura exigit, quod sufficit vitae; avaritia causa est quod homo magna et multa recondit non sibi, sed aliis ad suum plane praesentem vel posterum cruciatum.

Sed dicis, dives: Ego et si vinum negavi, aquam peto, quam communem cunctis animantibus auctor ipse omnium praestitit et natura. Puto, dives, quod et aquam pauperi tu negasti, cui ne ingrederetur januam tuam, ne ad tuum puteum perveniret, canes quam plurimos objecisti. Quid est autem quod dicis? Mitte Lazarum ut intingat extremum digiti in aqua, et non deferat aquam? ergo juxta est aqua: et si juxta est, quare de proximo non sumis? quare? quia vinctae sunt manus tuae merito, dives, quia solutis debilitate Lazari manibus subvenire contempsisti. Debet homo, debet debilibus sua membra partiri: quae cum Job non daret, sed redderet, sic dicebat: Ego fui oculus caecorum, pes autem claudorum; ego eram pater invalidorum. Homo, si non habes nummum, da pauperi manum, quia majorem misericordiam facit, qui ad mensam suam manu pauperem debilem ducit. Ipsum se pauperi dedit, qui se aptavit in obsequium pauperis, aptavit in pauperis servitutem. Iterum, fratres, praesentis verbi plenitudinem differamus, ut tertia auditione quam sententiam ab Abraham beatissimo pertulerit dives proloquamur.

And send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. What is this, rich man? where are the torrents of your winepresses? where are the barns enlarged against the hunger of the poor no less by greed than by plenty? where are the wines kept against the need of the poor through the years and through the very forgetting of time? where are the outpourings, the spillings, the rivers of your services? All these have perished for you, not for your crime, you who thirst for a drop from the tip of a finger: had you given even that alone to the poor man, you would not thirst. A drop made you merciless, and a crumb inhuman, the things in which the poor man's whole living and life consist. I should like to know, rich man, whether, set in punishment, you even forgive yourself, since you would not have come to these evils if you had then given a crumb from such great barns, a drop from such great winepresses. Little is what the flesh needs, what nature demands, what suffices for life; avarice is the cause that man stores up things great and many, not for himself, but for others, to his own torment, present plainly, or to come.

But you say, rich man: "Even if I refused wine, I ask for water, which the very author of all things and nature have provided as common to all living things." I think, rich man, that you refused even water to the poor man, against whom you set very many dogs so that he might not enter your gate, might not come to your well. But what is it that you say? Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water, and not to bring water? so the water is near: and if it is near, why do you not take it from close by? why? because your hands are bound, deservedly, rich man, because when Lazarus's hands were loosened by infirmity you disdained to help. Man ought, he ought to share his limbs with the feeble: and Job, since he did not give them but paid them back, said: I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame; I was a father of the infirm (Job 29:15–16). Man, if you have no coin, give the poor man your hand, because he shows greater mercy who leads the feeble poor man by the hand to his own table. He gave himself to the poor man who fitted himself to the service of the poor man, fitted himself to the poor man's servitude. Again, brothers, let us put off the fullness of the present word, so that at a third hearing we may set forth what sentence the rich man received from most blessed Abraham.

Sermo CXXIII.

De eisdem

Inverecundi debitoris est, aut differre credita, aut promissa denegare; honesti, sine mora et mox utraque persolvere. Promisimus ut omne quod restat de illo divite redderemus, qui cum in Lazarum visus sit immitis, in se magis saevus exstitit et crudelis. Hactenus quid dives ad Abraham locutus fuerit, et sanctus evangelista, et noster sermo, in quantum potuit, declaravit. Dictum est: Et elevans oculos suos cum esset in tormentis, vidit Abraham a longe, et clamans dixit: Pater Abraham, miserere mei, et mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aqua, et refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma.

Cui nunc respondit Abraham, Fili, recepisti bona in vita tua. O mira pietas! adhuc vocat filium, quem degenerasse propria crudelitate sic respicit. O singularis bonitas! adhuc vocat filium, quem vidit inferni vernulam, poenarum sobolem, extremum mancipium jam gehennae. Sed vocat filium, ut magis magisque filii prodatur impietas, quando cum tali etiam paterni sermonis pietas perseverat. Tu vocas patrem, ego voco filium ut te graviter doleas perdidisse quod natus es. Adhuc voco filium, ut amarius doleas perdidisse te quod tibi gratia dederat et natura; quia non habuisse doloris non est tanti, quanti habita moeroris est perdidisse. Voco filium, ut intelligas judicii esse quod pateris, non furoris: voco filium, ut in me mea patientia, et in te tua maneat poena.

Sed iste, fratres, intelligit se non esse filium, qui fatetur et pensat de suo merito esse quod tam pii patris perdidit de natura. Qui tunc utique respondisset generi, si pius, si hospitalis, si misericors, in pauperem si fuisset humanus. Qui genitoris opera non facit, negat genus, Domino sic docente: Si filii Abrahae essetis, opera Abrahae faceretis. Ille fidem generis probat, qui paterni operis assertor assistit. Sed quid dicit Abraham? Fili, recepisti bona in vita tua. Si tantum divitis hujus istud est crimen, quia recepit bona; quantum reus, qui invadit indebita?

Sermon CXXIII.

On the same

It is the mark of a shameless debtor either to put off what was lent or to deny what was promised; of an honest one, to pay both without delay and at once. We promised that we would pay back all that remains on that rich man, who, though he was seen to be harsh towards Lazarus, proved more savage and cruel towards himself. Thus far both the holy Evangelist and our sermon, as far as it could, have made plain what the rich man said to Abraham. It was said: And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham far off, and crying out he said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame (Luke 16:23–24).

To him Abraham now answered: Son, you received back good things in your life (Luke 16:25). O wonderful piety! he still calls him son, whom he sees to have so degenerated by his own cruelty. O singular goodness! he still calls him son, whom he saw to be the home-born slave of hell, the offspring of punishments, already the lowest chattel of Gehenna. But he calls him son, so that the son's impiety may be exposed more and more, when even towards such a one the piety of a father's word perseveres. "You call me father, I call you son, so that you may grieve bitterly at having lost what you were born. I still call you son, so that you may grieve more bitterly at having lost what grace and nature had given you; for not to have had is not so great a pain as to have lost what one had is a sorrow. I call you son, so that you may understand that what you suffer is of judgement, not of fury: I call you son, so that in me my patience, and in you your punishment, may remain."

But this man, brothers, understands that he is not a son, he who acknowledges and weighs that it is by his own merit that he lost what by nature he had of so kind a father. He would surely then have answered to his race, if he had been kind, if hospitable, if merciful, if he had been humane towards the poor man. He who does not do the works of his begetter denies his race, as the Lord teaches: If you were children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham (John 8:39). He proves himself true to his race who stands by as the champion of his father's work. But what does Abraham say? Son, you received back good things in your life. If the crime of this rich man is only this, that he received back good things, how guilty is he who seizes what is not his due?

Si tantum criminosus qui sua claudit, qui non largitur accepta, quam poenalis est, qui et suis incubat, et aliena pervadit?

Fratres, demus nostra, si tamen nostra; demus tamen quae putamus nostra; vitemus aliena, declinemus extranea; certe si cui aliquid tulimus, tota celeritate reddamus: ne hic relinquentes omnia, illuc censu pauperes, crimine divites, ad istum divitem perducamur. Discat tamen dives quia recepit bona, non accepit. Videtis, fratres, quia Abrahae sancti verbo istius divitis animus proditur, sensus arguitur, intellectus punitur, qui non sibi data, sed reddita credidit quaecumque Domino largiente possedit. Intelligite quo sensu incesserit, quo corde ambulaverit, qui Deum sibi credidit debitorem, et dominum suum male dives usuris suis addixit obnoxium: ignorans quia Dominus, etsi pauper incessit in terra, dives tamen ascendit in coelum. Et dedit ille, non accepit in fenore, qui dedit uni quinque talenta, alii duo, alii unum; unde et promittit se exacturum, non redditurum usuram, cum dicit ad servum: Serve nequam et piger, dedisses pecuniam meam nummulariis, et ego venissem, et exegissem eam utique cum usuris. Hinc autem plus impius dives iste, quia non in alium pius exstitit: qui etsi recepit bona, non pro bonis bona, sed pro malis bona recepit indignus.

Sed transeamus ad Lazarum, et quaeramus quid est quod dicit: Et Lazarus similiter recepit mala. Et id sufficiat ad meritum, abundet ad gloriam, si non fecit bona, sed recepit mala. Plane beatus est, fratres, qui se a Deo accipere bona, mala recipere fideliter credit. Beatus qui Deo semper reddit debita: certe si non potest, vel dimitti sibi debita tota humilitate deposcat, ipso Domino sic docente: Dicite: Dimitte nobis debita nostra. Beatus qui Deo debita, et cum non intelligit se contraxisse persolvit, altius propheta instituente cum dicit: Quae non rapui tunc exsolvebam. Beatus qui se apud Deum semper ut excuset, accusat, Scriptura taliter admonente: Justus in primordio sermonis sui accusator existit. Et si justus, quare se justus accusat? quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens. Homo coram homine de justitia, de innocentia, de merito forsitan glorietur; coram Deo qui se de innocentia jactat, de sua justitia gloriatur homo non est. Hinc est, quod ille Pharisaeus cum non orat, sed justitias suas computat, imputat, ructat, injustus et publicano deterior abscedit.

If he is so criminal who shuts up what is his own, who does not bestow what he has received, how liable to punishment is he who both broods over his own and seizes what belongs to others?

Brothers, let us give what is ours, if indeed it is ours; let us at least give what we think is ours; let us shun what is others', keep away from what is not ours; and surely, if we have taken anything from anyone, let us give it back with all speed: lest, leaving everything here, poor there in wealth, rich in crime, we be brought to this rich man. Yet let the rich man learn that he received back good things, not that he received them. You see, brothers, that by the word of holy Abraham the mind of this rich man is betrayed, his sense convicted, his understanding punished, for he believed that whatever he possessed by the Lord's bounty was not given to him, but paid back. Understand with what sense he went about, with what heart he walked, he who believed God to be his debtor, and, rich to his own harm, bound his Lord over as liable to his interest: not knowing that the Lord, though he walked poor on earth, yet ascended rich into heaven. And he gave, he did not receive on loan, who gave to one five talents, to another two, to another one; hence he also promises that he will exact interest, not pay it, when he says to the servant: You wicked and slothful servant, you should have given my money to the bankers, and I would have come and would surely have exacted it with interest (Matt 25:26–27). But this rich man is the more impious for this, that he was not pious towards another: for though he received back good things, he received back, unworthy as he was, good things not for good but for evil.

But let us pass on to Lazarus, and ask what it is that he says: And Lazarus likewise received back evil things. And let this suffice for merit, abound for glory, if he did not do good things, but received back evil things. Plainly blessed, brothers, is he who faithfully believes that from God he receives good things and receives back evil things. Blessed is he who always pays God his debts: surely, if he cannot, let him at least ask with all humility that his debts be forgiven him, as the Lord himself teaches: Say: Forgive us our debts (Matt 6:12). Blessed is he who pays God his debts even when he does not understand that he has contracted them, as the Prophet teaches more deeply when he says: What I did not seize, I then paid back (Ps 69:5). Blessed is he who before God always accuses himself so as to excuse himself, as the Scripture admonishes thus: The just man is an accuser at the beginning of his speech (Prov 18:17). And if he is just, why does the just man accuse himself? because no one living will be justified in your sight (Ps 143:2). Before man a man may perhaps glory in his justice, in his innocence, in his merit; before God there is no man who boasts of his innocence, who glories in his own justice. Hence it is that that Pharisee, since he does not pray but counts up his just deeds, puts them to account, belches them out, goes away unjust and worse than the publican (Luke 18:11–14).

Sed accedamus ad reliqua. Nunc autem hic consolatur, ait, tu vero cruciaris. Videte, fratres, intelligite, fratres, ex his quae dicta sunt, quia justos et injustos etsi discretio locorum, una tamen inferni adhuc regio continebat; atque eos etsi chaos jam magnum, nondum tamen coelestis habitatio separabat; et si dividebat illos hiatus tristis, nondum tamen deputata superius angelis altitudo. Flammea romphaea (sicut legislator refert) paradisi volvebatur in janua, ne illuc homini pateret accessus: aereis januis et ferreis vectibus portae inferi obseratae claudebantur, ne animabus, quae illuc jactatae fuerant de supernis, ullus pateret egressus.

Nam et chirographum paterni debiti, quod morti singulos adjiciebat, stylo culpae et reatus ipsius atramento tenebatur ascriptum, et ad sobolis noxam multa temporum currebat usura. Nec erat idoneus qui paradisum introiret, flammam exstingueret divinitus institutam, aut aperiret januas inferni coelitus obseratas, aut solveret chirographum, quod in arca legali Dei praecepto tenebatur inclusum. Hinc est quod ipse Dominus, primi hominis, id est, contumacis servi, exsulator advenit; ipse Dominus qui obseravit paradisum, qui clausit infernum, ad terras et ad inferos tota potestate descendit, ut accensa exstingueret, clausa protinus aperiret, protoplasti facinus aboleret. Hinc est quod arietem suae crucis portat aggressurus infernum, ut conterat et confringat ipsas tartari januas aere munitas, et ferro. De latere fundit aquam, ut paradisi viam temperet; ignem ex parte sanctorum exstinguat inferni, totum chirographum debiti diluat, et solvat antiquum, et patiendo hoc remittat ipse, quod ipse intulit importando.

Agnoscite, fratres, laetamini, fratres, post triumphum Christi sanctorum custodiam dissolutam et in sanctos ultra inferni nil deberi: quando Christus ut justos, non injustos absolveret, ad inferos usque penetravit. Intelligamus, fratres, quantum Christus profuerit; immo quam sine Christo in nullo fuerit salus, cum praeter istam corporum solutionem, sanctorum quoque animae apud inferos tenebantur astrictae. Beatus ergo Lazarus, qui totum Deo debuit, ut crimini nil deberet. Beatus quod hic recepit tot mala, ut ibi bona omnia possideret.

But let us come to the rest. But now this man is comforted, he says, and you are tormented. See, brothers, understand, brothers, from what has been said, that, though the distinction of places held the just and the unjust apart, one region of hell still contained them; and though a great chasm already separated them, the heavenly dwelling did not yet separate them; and though a sad gulf divided them, the height above assigned to the angels did not yet divide them. A flaming sword (as the lawgiver relates) turned at the gate of paradise, so that no access might lie open to man there (Gen 3:24): with gates of bronze and bars of iron the gates of the underworld were bolted shut, so that no way out might lie open to the souls that had been flung there from on high.

For the bond of the father's debt, too, which assigned each one to death, was held written with the pen of fault and with the ink of guilt itself, and for the harm of the offspring the long interest of the ages kept running. Nor was there anyone fit to enter paradise, to quench the flame set there by God, or to open the gates of hell barred from heaven, or to discharge the bond that was kept shut up in the ark of the Law by the command of God. Hence it is that the Lord himself came, he who had banished the first man, that is, the stubborn servant; the Lord himself, who had barred paradise, who had shut hell, came down with all his power to the earth and into the underworld, to quench what had been kindled, at once to open what had been shut, to abolish the misdeed of the first-formed man. Hence it is that he carries the battering ram of his cross as he goes to attack hell, to crush and break the very gates of Tartarus, fortified with bronze and with iron. From his side he pours out water, to temper the way to paradise; to quench the fire of hell on the side of the saints, to wash out the whole bond of the debt, and to discharge the old one, and that by suffering he himself might remit what he himself had brought in by imposing it.

Recognise, brothers, rejoice, brothers, that after the triumph of Christ the custody of the saints was dissolved, and that nothing further is owed to hell in respect of the saints: since Christ penetrated even into the underworld to set free the just, not the unjust. Let us understand, brothers, how much Christ has profited us; or rather, how without Christ there was salvation in nothing, since, besides this dissolution of bodies, the souls of the saints too were held bound in the underworld. Blessed then is Lazarus, who owed everything to God, so as to owe nothing to crime. Blessed, because here he received back so many evils, so that there he might possess all good things.

Et adjecit Abraham, dicens: Neque hinc ad vos transire neque huc transmeare quis potest. Terret, fratres, terret nimis hujus vocis auditus, quae ostendit post mortem, et semel apud inferos poenali custodiae deputatos ad sanctorum quietem non posse transferri, nisi Christi gratia jam redempti, ab hac desperatione sanctae Ecclesiae intercessione solvantur; ut quod sententia negat, Ecclesia mereatur, praestet gratia.

Hic tamen dives rogat adhuc, et dicit: Pater Abraham. Adhuc vocat Patrem, qui meritis suis et patrem et patriam sic amisit. Pater Abraham. Hic miser et in poena mentitur. Pater Abraham, mitte eum in domum patris mei. Si vere hunc patrem vocat, cujus domum patris alterius tunc requirit? nisi forte eum se in absentia habere patrem credit, quem in praesenti se taliter conspicit perdidisse: et sic sibi credit ejus patris domum ejus gratia custodiri, cujus ibi negari sibi sinum videt, videt requiem pernegari.

Pater Abraham, mitte eum. Quem? Nempe Lazarum. Ubi? In domum patris mei. Modo, et tarde, dives Lazarum ad domum patris sui non misericors, sed miserandus invitat, quem toto tempore substantiae miseratione suis incumbentem januis non recepit; et sub specie pietatis ad pristina vulnera, ad praeteritos gemitus Lazarum vult redire, quem prima petitione ad suos devocare non potuit cruciatus. Ante dixit: Mitte ad me. Modo dicit, Mitte ad fratres meos. Dolet, agit infelix, ne videat felicem, quem aliquando putaverat infelicem, Mitte ad fratres meos. Ubi? In domum patris mei. Ut quid? Habeo enim, inquit, quinque fratres, ut testetur illis, ne et ipsi veniant in hunc locum tormentorum. Cui pius, qui sibi sic impius? Impudenter praesumit aliis impetrare poenitentiam, qui sibi tam crudeliter ad veniam nil providit.

Mitte Lazarum in domum patris mei, habeo enim quinque fratres. Et putas quod quinque fratribus tuis sufficiat Lazarus, qui tibi tanto tempore, tot vulneribus suis, toto clamans corpore nil profecit? Merito ei respondit Abraham: Habent Moysen et prophetas, audiant illos. Sine Lazarum tantos requiescere post labores, et tu defle tuas, quas tuo merito sustines, poenas. Deus autem fratribus tuis et omnibus, non pro tuo consilio, sed pro suo munere olim prospexit ad salutem: dedit per Moysen legem, prophetiam largitus est per Eliam; audiant ergo illos, ne tuos sentiant cruciatus.

And Abraham added, saying: No one can cross from here to you, nor pass over from there to here (Luke 16:26). It terrifies, brothers, the hearing of this word terrifies us exceedingly, which shows that after death those once assigned to penal custody in the underworld cannot be transferred to the rest of the saints, unless, already redeemed by the grace of Christ, they are released from this despair by the intercession of the holy Church; so that what the sentence denies, the Church may merit, grace may grant.

Yet here the rich man still asks, and says: Father Abraham. He still calls him father, who by his merits has so lost both father and fatherland. Father Abraham. Here the wretch lies even in punishment. Father Abraham, send him to my father's house (Luke 16:27). If he truly calls this man father, the house of what other father is he then asking for? unless perhaps he believes that he has as a father in his absence him whom in his presence he sees he has so lost: and so he believes that his father's house is kept for him by the favour of him whose bosom he sees denied him there, sees his rest refused him.

Father Abraham, send him. Whom? Lazarus, of course. Where? To my father's house. Now, and late, the rich man, not merciful but to be pitied, invites Lazarus to his father's house, whom all that time, as he lay at his gates for the pity of his substance, he did not take in; and under a show of piety he wants Lazarus to go back to his former wounds, to his past groans, whom by his first request he could not call down to his own torments. Before he said: Send to me. Now he says, Send to my brothers. He feels pain; the unhappy man acts so as not to see happy him whom he once thought unhappy: Send to my brothers. Where? To my father's house. To what end? For I have five brothers, he says, that he may testify to them, lest they too come into this place of torments (Luke 16:28). To whom is he pious, who is so impious to himself? Shamelessly he presumes to obtain penance for others, he who so cruelly made no provision of pardon for himself.

Send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. And do you think that Lazarus will be enough for your five brothers, who for so long a time, with so many wounds, crying out with his whole body, achieved nothing with you? Rightly Abraham answered him: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them (Luke 16:29). Let Lazarus rest after such labours, and you, weep for your punishments, which you bear by your own merit. But God long ago provided for the salvation of your brothers and of all, not by your counsel but by his own gift: he gave the Law through Moses, he bestowed prophecy through Elijah; let them hear them, then, so that they may not feel your torments.

Respondit dives: Non, pater Abraham, sed si quis ex mortuis resurrexerit, credent ei. Cui respondit Abraham: Si Moysi et Eliae non credunt, neque si quis ex mortuis resurrexerit credent ei. Nihil tam verum, fratres, qui de coelo loquenti per legem, de coelo venienti Christo credere noluit, jam non merebitur credere ab inferis revertenti. Ipse Christus, fratres, Deus et Dominus noster ad Moysen est locutus de coelo, ipse in terra terreno est locutus in corpore, ipse cum terreno corpore ab inferis est reversus: et tamen referenti quae bona in coelis, quae sint apud inferos mala, fratres, divitis illius, qui Judaicis intelliguntur in populis credere tota obstinatione noluerunt.

Verum, fratres, quia nos, qui sit dives, aut quis Lazarus pauper, et qui sint quinque divitis fratres, dicere nunc tempus excludit, nec quid in hac historia spiritualis intelligentiae lateat aperire permittit, edocti per Christum, quid apud ipsum justos maneat, quid apud inferos exspectet injustos, agamus, curramus verbo, opere, misericordia, ut et superna bona apprehendere, et mala perterriti vitare et declinare possimus.

The rich man answered: No, father Abraham, but if someone rises from the dead, they will believe him (Luke 16:30). Abraham answered him: If they do not believe Moses and Elijah, neither will they believe if someone rises from the dead (Luke 16:31). Nothing is so true, brothers: he who would not believe Christ speaking from heaven through the Law, coming from heaven, will no longer deserve to believe him returning from the underworld. Christ himself, brothers, our God and Lord, spoke to Moses from heaven, he himself spoke on earth in an earthly body, he himself returned from the underworld with an earthly body: and yet, when he told what good things are in heaven, what evils there are in the underworld, the brothers of that rich man, who are understood as the Jewish peoples, would not believe him with all their obstinacy.

But, brothers, since time now prevents us from saying who the rich man is, or who Lazarus the poor man, and who are the rich man's five brothers, and does not allow us to open what spiritual understanding lies hidden in this story, let us, taught by Christ what awaits the just with him, what awaits the unjust in the underworld, act, let us run, by word, by deed, by mercy, so that we may lay hold of the good things above, and, struck with terror, avoid and turn aside from the evil things.

Sermo CXXIV.

De eisdem

Quoties nobis a Deo dives ingeritur purpuratus, quoties vulneratus pauper apponitur, toties nobis misericordiae σκάμμα panditur, toties nobis stadium pietatis aperitur; ut de spectaculo coelesti possimus attendere, quam brevi quantumvis pauper ad palmam, dives pervenit ad ruinam. Homo, inquit, erat dives, et induebatur purpura et bysso, et epulabatur quotidie splendide. Et erat quidam mendicus nomine Lazarus, qui jacebat ad januam ejus, cupiens saturari de micis quae cadebant de mensa divitis. Induebatur dives purpura, pauper livore; dives bysso, pauper squalore; auro dives, pauper fetore; dives plumeo decumbebat in sigmate, jacebat durissima pauper in terra; dives ructabat epulas, sanie pauper anhelabat; fundebat vina dives, pauper lacrymas; exsatiatus dives projiciebat panes, micas pauper esuriens non habebat; pascebat oblatrantes pauperem dives ferculis suis, pauper vulneribus suis saturabat divitis canes.

Ac ne plurimis, ad divitem bona omnia, ad pauperem mala omnia perlegimus provenisse; neque tamen pauperem fregerunt adversa, aut diviti omnia secunda profuerunt: immo pauperem provexit ad philosophiam paupertas, ad virtutem dolor, contemptus ad patientiam, necessitas ad voluntatem, fames ad jejunium, sitis ad tolerantiam, ad vitam mors, ad praemium poena, ad coelum terra, egestas ad regnum; et divitem sic extulit purpura ad superbiam, byssus ad luxum, ad inhumanitatem copia, abundantia ad impietatem, unguenta ad marcorem, ad caecitatem splendor, sublimitas ad ruinam. Ergo neque prospera ignavos erigunt, neque fortes adversa prosternunt: quia neque divitiae, neque paupertates, sed animus aut ducit gratos ad praemium, aut ad poenam deducit ingratos.

Januae divitis pauper apponitur ulceribus plenus: ac fit hoc non humano casu, judicio fit divino, ut divitis et pauperis conflictus esset in terra, spectaculum maneret in coelo. Dives totus indutus divitiarum stabat armis; et contra pauper jacebat ipsa vestitus in carne, nisi forte lorica erat illi, unum totius corporis vulnus. Dives morabatur servorum in choris, pauper exutus cute dolorum stimulis agebatur.

Sermon CXXIV.

On the same

As often as a rich man in purple is set before us by God, as often as a wounded poor man is placed before us, so often is a skamma of mercy laid open for us, so often a stadium of piety opened to us; so that from the heavenly spectacle we may observe in how short a time the poor man, however poor, comes to the palm, the rich man to ruin. A man, he says, was rich, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted splendidly every day (Luke 16:19). And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, longing to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table (Luke 16:20–21). The rich man was clothed in purple, the poor man in bruises; the rich man in fine linen, the poor man in filth; the rich man in gold, the poor man in stench; the rich man reclined on a couch of down, the poor man lay on the hardest ground; the rich man belched his feasts, the poor man panted out pus; the rich man poured out wines, the poor man tears; the rich man, sated, threw away loaves, the hungry poor man had not even crumbs; the rich man fed with his dishes those that barked at the poor man, the poor man filled the rich man's dogs with his wounds.

And, not to say more, we have read that all good things came to the rich man, all evil things to the poor man; and yet adversity did not break the poor man, nor did all prosperity profit the rich man: on the contrary, poverty advanced the poor man to philosophy, pain to virtue, contempt to patience, necessity to will, hunger to fasting, thirst to endurance, death to life, punishment to reward, earth to heaven, want to the kingdom; and so purple raised the rich man to pride, fine linen to luxury, plenty to inhumanity, abundance to impiety, ointments to languor, splendour to blindness, loftiness to ruin. So prosperity does not raise up the slothful, nor does adversity lay low the brave: because it is not riches, nor poverty, but the mind that either leads the grateful to reward, or brings the ungrateful down to punishment.

At the rich man's gate the poor man is placed, full of sores: and this happens not by human chance, it happens by divine judgement, so that the conflict of the rich man and the poor man might take place on earth, the spectacle remain in heaven. The rich man stood clad all over in the armour of riches; and against him the poor man lay clothed in his flesh alone, unless perhaps his breastplate was the one wound of his whole body. The rich man lingered among choirs of servants; the poor man, stripped of his skin, was driven by the goads of pains.

Jaciebat impietatis tela dives, clypeum miserationis Lazarus opponebat, crudelitatem suam dives pauperis vibrabat in vulnus, frustrabatur diviti sontem animam pauperis robur, quia corpore se deserente, totus migravit in animam, et calcata carne in spiritum totus armiger supernus ascendit, ne ubi possit ferire divitis crudelitas inveniret.

Ob hoc enim egerat Deus ut dives pauperis, pauper divitis in oculis semper essent, quatenus vicissim sibi ambo curam de vario languore praestaret. Aegrotabat pauper corpore, mente dives. Hinc est quod differebatur cura pauperis, ut dives sumeret de vulnere medicinam, de gemitu compunctionem, de lacrymis poenitentiam, de patientia exemplum, de fame misericordiam, de siti sensum; ad summam, coeleste de terrena compassione consortium: certe ut tantis dives bonis fultus Deo gratus esset, quando gratus Deo pauper in malis omnibus, vidente divite, permanebat. Merito ergo portabatur ab angelis qui jacebat; qui lugebat, Abrahae consolabatur in gremio; et vivit Deo semper, qui se sibi vivere nec scivit in mundo.

Factum est, inquit, ut moreretur pauper, et portaretur ab angelis in sinu Abrahae. Mortuus est autem dives, et sepultus est in inferno. Miser accepit ante animae, quam corporis sepulturam, nec ante quieti corporis quam poenali traditus est sepulcro; ut vivat poenae semper, cum sit semel mortuus vitae.

Et sepultus est in inferno: et vidit Abraham de longe, et Lazarum in sinu ejus. Immutatio quanta rerum! quo descendit dives! quo pauper ascendit! Respicit ibi sursum, quem despexerat hic deorsum; et videt eum de inferno in sinu Abrahae, quem jacentem se coram superbo de sigmate non videbat. Pater Abraham, miserere mei. Stulte petit a patre misericordiam, quam negaverat fratri. Miserere mei. Quid illi cum misericordia, cui jam totum cessit in poenam? Aut quae illi supplicatio apud patrem poterit subvenire, cui in sinu patris residet accusator? Pectus patris Lazarus tenet, et totam sancti cordis pulsat aequitatem, quatenus se filii patrem boni, mali judicem servet.

The rich man hurled the darts of impiety, Lazarus held up the shield of tender mercy; the rich man brandished his cruelty to wound the poor man; the poor man's strength foiled the rich man's guilty soul, because, as his body forsook him, he passed wholly into his soul, and, trampling on the flesh, he ascended wholly into the spirit, an armour-bearer of heaven, so that the rich man's cruelty might find nowhere to strike.

For God had brought it about for this reason, that the rich man should always be before the poor man's eyes, the poor man before the rich man's, so that each in turn might render the other a cure for their different sickness. The poor man was sick in body, the rich man in mind. Hence it is that the cure of the poor man was put off, that the rich man might take from the wound medicine, from the groaning compunction, from the tears penance, from the patience an example, from the hunger mercy, from the thirst feeling; in sum, heavenly fellowship from earthly compassion: surely, that the rich man, supported by such great goods, might be grateful to God, when the poor man remained grateful to God in all evils, the rich man looking on. Rightly, then, he who lay there was carried by the angels; he who mourned was comforted in the lap of Abraham; and he lives to God for ever who did not even know how to live for himself in the world.

It came to pass, he says, that the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). But the rich man died, and was buried in hell. The wretch received the burial of his soul before that of his body, and he was not given over to the rest of his body before he was given to the sepulchre of punishment; so that he might live for punishment for ever, since he has once died to life.

And he was buried in hell: and he saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom (Luke 16:23). What a reversal of things! where the rich man went down! where the poor man went up! There he looks up at him whom he had looked down on here; and from hell he sees in Abraham's bosom him whom, as he lay before him, he did not see from his proud couch. Father Abraham, have mercy on me (Luke 16:24). Foolishly he asks of the father the mercy which he had refused to his brother. Have mercy on me. What has he to do with mercy, for whom everything has already turned to punishment? Or what supplication before the father will be able to help him, whose accuser sits in the father's bosom? Lazarus holds the father's breast, and beats upon the whole equity of his holy heart, so that he may keep himself father of the good son, judge of the bad one.

Pater Abraham, miserere mei: et mitte Lazarum ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aqua, et refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma. Mitte Lazarum: ut ipse qui cruciatus mei causa est, jam refrigerii minister extremum digiti sui solamen modo ipse porrigat, cui ego jacenti manus meae totius solatium tunc negavi. Et mitte Lazarum ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aqua, et refrigeret linguam meam. Sitit itaque guttam, qui vini lacus cum pauper sitiret, effudit; et stilla digiti extremi credit gehennae flammas exstinguere, qui mensuris per totam diem ebrietatis non exstinxit incendia. Sed hanc sibi guttam ad refrigerium dari petit, ad ardorem pauperis quam negarat. Ista gutta est, dives, quae te facit crudelem; ista gutta est, quae os Lazari a te negata siccavit, quia ad refrigerium corporis et gutta sufficit, et mica.

Cupiens, inquit, saturari de micis, quae cadebant de mensa. Spargebatur panis, fundebatur vinum, et quod ad extremam vitam pauperis negabatur, hoc totam diviti peribat ad pompam. Et mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aqua; et refrigeret linguam meam. Lingua in capite, caput mali; ipsa derogat egeno, insultat pauperi, pietatem latrat, misericordiam carpit: et merito prima est in gehenna, in cruciatu praevia, dux poenarum, quia ipsa interdixit misericordiam, cui datum fuerat ut juberet.

Et quamvis series lectionis et me compellat dicere, et vos invitet audire, qui sit purpuratus dives, qui sit Lazarus pauper, qui sint quinque fratres divitis, quomodo ante diem judicii dives cruciatus sentiat gehennae; attamen dolor revocat ad dicendum: Mortuus est dives et sepultus est in inferno.

Et si est sub terra carcer, si est καύσις ardens, si est inferus sine fine crucians, si est apparitor tristis, qui nos ad ista rapiat post saeculi labores; quid stupemus? ubi sumus? quis est iste qui nos eludit somnus? quae est ista quae nos tenet oblivio lethalis? quare non omnibus contemptis evadendi a malis talibus nobis sola sit cura, ne viventes mundo, ne aliis currentes, ad tantas, tales, tam crudeles subito rapiamur poenas?

Et si est ascendendi possibilitas ad superna, si est facultas vivendi in coelestibus, si est Abrahae sinus bonis omnibus ad requiem praeparatus, si est Lazarus in sinu patris tanti; immo quia dubium non est, ubi et loca, et personae, et nomina describuntur, quare non coelo mutamus terram? quare non caducis emimus aeterna? quare non perituris manentia comparamus? ut et supplicia devitemus inferni: et haec quae audire desideramus anguste, late videre, habere et tenere possimus.

Father Abraham, have mercy on me: and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. Send Lazarus: "that he himself, who is the cause of my torment, now a minister of refreshment, may now himself hold out the comfort of the tip of his finger, he to whom, as he lay there, I then refused the comfort of my whole hand." And send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. So he thirsts for a drop who, when the poor man thirsted, poured out vats of wine; and he believes that a drop from the tip of a finger will quench the flames of Gehenna, he who with his measures through the whole day did not quench the burnings of drunkenness. But he asks that this drop be given him for refreshment, which he had refused for the poor man's burning. It is this drop, rich man, that makes you cruel; it is this drop, refused by you, that dried up the mouth of Lazarus, because for the refreshment of the body a drop is enough, and a crumb.

Longing, he says, to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the table. Bread was scattered, wine was poured out, and what was refused to the poor man for the last extremity of his life was all lost to the rich man in pomp. And send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue. The tongue is in the head, the head of evil; it disparages the needy, insults the poor, barks at piety, carps at mercy: and rightly it is first in Gehenna, foremost in torment, leader of punishments, because it forbade mercy, the tongue to which it had been given to command it.

And although the order of the reading both compels me to speak and invites you to hear who the rich man in purple is, who Lazarus the poor man is, who the rich man's five brothers are, how before the day of judgement the rich man feels the torments of Gehenna; yet grief calls me back to say: The rich man died and was buried in hell.

And if there is a prison under the earth, if there is a burning kausis, if there is an underworld tormenting without end, if there is a grim officer to snatch us away to these things after the labours of this age, why are we dazed? where are we? what is this sleep that mocks us? what is this deadly forgetfulness that holds us? why, despising all things, is our one care not to escape such evils, lest, living for the world, running for others, we be suddenly snatched away to punishments so great, so many, so cruel?

And if there is a possibility of ascending to the things above, if there is the power of living in the heavens, if there is the bosom of Abraham prepared for the rest of all good men, if Lazarus is in the bosom of so great a father; or rather, since there is no doubt, where places, and persons, and names are described, why do we not exchange earth for heaven? why do we not buy eternal things with perishable ones? why do we not purchase lasting things with things that will perish? so that we may both avoid the punishments of hell, and may see broadly, have and hold, these things that we long to hear about in narrow measure.

Sermo CXXV.

De villico iniquo

Omnium quidem ciborum sal salubre est condimentum, si mensura non desit: alioqui sine modo et ipsum perit, et quod salierit perdit; amarat enim nimietas quod poterat condire mensura. Sic qui in nobis est sensus, si teneat modum, dat saporem, intellectum parit, prudentiam generat, cor dilatat, auget ingenium, maturat dicenda, audienda componit, fitque sibi dulcis, fit degustantibus tota dulcedinis plenitudo; et plane erit ille melleus sensus, qui ore profert nil amarum. Hoc praemisimus, ut sit nobis in evangelicis sensibus nostri sensus constringenda mensura: quatenus vitalem cibum, divinum pastum, coelestem saporem non violet, sed cautissima nobis sobrietate custodiat, juxta illud Apostoli: Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem.

Sed jam quid Dominus dixerit audiamus: Homo quidam erat dives. Et quis erat homo iste, nisi Christus? Quis dives, nisi ipse, qui in paupertate nostra totas creaturae divitias possidebat? Homo quidam erat dives. Hoc Judaeis saepius inculcabat, ut intelligerent quod inesset ei locuples deitas, cui erat humana paupertas. Erat dives. Erat in majestate sua dives, qui oculis Judaeorum erat pauper. Et quomodo dives non erat, cui ministrabant angeli, virtutes parebant, elementa serviebant, et quae non erant, fiebant jussa, vocata veniebant?

Homo quidam erat dives: et habebat villicum. Quem nisi hominem, cui ad colendum mundum tota fuerat commissa possessio? Homo quidam erat dives, et habebat villicum: et hic diffamatus est apud illum. Quasi non praescierit, quasi non praeviderit, cui occulta nota sunt, cujus oculis etiam illa nuda sunt quae teguntur.

Et hic diffamatus est apud illum. Ergo ille famae credidit? fama nuntiante cognovit? Absit. Sed quia illa quae noverat, quae pietate velabat, quaerere tunc coepit quando accusabat terra: Vox sanguinis fratris tui clamat de terra, clamabat terra, clamabat coelum, dolebant angeli, quando jam tota saeculi fama loquebatur. Et hic diffamatus est apud illum quod dissipasset substantiam ejus. Filius junior ante istius hominis lectus est substantiam dissipasse, nunc ipsius bona villicus dissipasse perhibetur.

Sermon CXXV.

On the unjust steward

Salt is a wholesome seasoning of all foods, if measure is not lacking: otherwise, without measure, it both perishes itself and spoils what it has salted; for excess makes bitter what measure could have seasoned. So the sense that is in us, if it keeps measure, gives savour, brings forth understanding, begets prudence, enlarges the heart, increases the wit, ripens what is to be said, orders what is to be heard, and becomes sweet to itself, becomes for those who taste it the whole fullness of sweetness; and plainly that sense will be honeyed which brings forth from the mouth nothing bitter. We have said this first, so that in the senses of the Gospel the measure of our own sense may be held in check: that it may not violate the food of life, the divine pasture, the heavenly savour, but keep it for us with most careful sobriety, according to that saying of the Apostle: Not to be wise beyond what one ought to be wise, but to be wise with sobriety (Rom 12:3).

But now let us hear what the Lord said: A certain man was rich (Luke 16:1). And who was this man, if not Christ? Who the rich man, if not he who in our poverty possessed all the riches of creation? A certain man was rich. This he impressed again and again upon the Jews, that they might understand that in him to whom human poverty belonged there was a wealthy Godhead. He was rich. He was rich in his majesty, who in the eyes of the Jews was poor. And how was he not rich, he to whom angels ministered, powers were obedient, the elements were servants, and things that were not came into being when bidden, came when called?

A certain man was rich: and he had a steward. Whom, if not man, to whom the whole possession had been entrusted, to cultivate the world? A certain man was rich, and he had a steward: and this man was defamed before him. As if he had not foreknown, as if he had not foreseen, he to whom hidden things are known, before whose eyes even the things that are covered are naked.

And this man was defamed before him. Did he then believe rumour? did he learn it as rumour brought the news? Far from it. But because he began to inquire into the things he knew, which he covered with his loving-kindness, at the time when the earth was accusing: The voice of your brother's blood cries out from the earth (Gen 4:10); the earth cried out, heaven cried out, the angels grieved, when the whole rumour of the world was already speaking. And this man was defamed before him for having squandered his substance. The younger son was read earlier to have squandered this man's substance; now the steward is said to have squandered his goods.

Sicut idem Deus et homo Christus, idem paterfamilias et pater; sic hunc eumdem esse et villicum constat et filium: est hic causarum diversitas, est mutatio nominum, non est varietas personarum.

Et diffamatus est apud illum quod dissipasset bona ipsius, et vocavit eum. Vocavit per Evangelium. Et ait illi. Et quid per Evangelium non agit, per quod mores arguit, occulta nudat, conscientiam pandit, commissa castigat, dinumerat mala, et in his persistenti minatur poenam, quamvis converso veniam repromittit? Et vocavit eum, et ait illi: Quid hic audio de te? Cognita velut audita imputat, quia in reum non vult accelerare sententiam; et convictum penes se, velut accusatum convenit, qui judicium gestit venia sic praeire.

Quid hoc audio de te? Redde rationem villicationis tuae, jam enim non poteris villicare. Tam piis tam severa cur jungit? cur ante a villicatione submovet quam rationem agnoscat? Redde rationem, jam enim non poteris villicare. Rationem modo instar hominis expetit, modo sicut Deus instantia denuntiat et futura. Redde rationem, jam enim non poteris villicare. Rationem petit, non ut exigat, sed relaxet; petit, ut petatur; petit hic, ne petat tibi; petit in saeculo, ne petat in judicio; petit cito, ne poenarum tempus, tempus satisfactionis excludat. Redde rationem villicationis tuae: jam enim non poteris villicare. Quare? Quia venit finis vitae, tempus mortis, jam te apparitio superna constringit, jam judicium vocat. Festina ergo, ne satisfactionis tempus perdas; qui tempus operis perdidisti.

Redde rationem. Hoc est dicere, compone rationem, compone tua, ne reddas mea; compones autem, si jam desines dissipare. Priora debita suscepi ego, cum te suscepi; solvi ego, cum te absolvi; ego cognitor pro te cognitori audiendus astiti; judicium intravi judex; rei mei reus factus sum, a poenalibus suscepi poenas, a damnatis sententiam non refugi; mortis perditor mortem excepi; penetravi inferos destructor inferni, ut te per ista non modo subducerem tuae poenae, sed et meae consortem facerem dignitatis. Age ergo, ut te quem tempus tuae villicationis exclusit, perpetuitas meae damnationis non includat.

Just as the same Christ is God and man, the same householder and father; so it is clear that this same one is both steward and son: here there is diversity of causes, there is a change of names, there is no variety of persons.

And he was defamed before him for having squandered his goods, and he called him (Luke 16:1–2). He called him through the Gospel. And he said to him. And what does he not do through the Gospel, through which he rebukes conduct, lays bare hidden things, opens the conscience, chastises what has been committed, counts up evils, and threatens punishment to one who persists in them, though to one who turns back he promises pardon? And he called him, and said to him: What is this I hear of you? He charges as heard what he knew, because he does not wish to hasten sentence against the accused; and one convicted before him he summons as one merely accused, he who longs to let pardon thus go before judgement.

What is this I hear of you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward. Why does he join things so severe to things so kind? why does he remove him from the stewardship before he hears the account? Give an account, for you can no longer be steward. Now he asks for the account like a man, now like God he announces things present and things to come. Give an account, for you can no longer be steward. He asks an account, not to exact it but to remit it; he asks, so that he may be asked; he asks here, so as not to ask it of you; he asks in this age, so as not to ask at the judgement; he asks quickly, so that the time of punishments may not shut out the time of satisfaction. Give an account of your stewardship: for you can no longer be steward. Why? Because the end of life has come, the time of death; already the summons from on high binds you, already the judgement calls. Hurry, then, lest you lose the time of satisfaction, you who have lost the time of work.

Give an account. That is to say: set the account in order, set what is yours in order, lest you pay back what is mine; and you will set it in order if you now stop squandering. "I took up your former debts when I took you up; I paid, when I absolved you; I, the examining judge, stood for you to be heard by the examining judge; the judge, I entered into judgement; I was made the accused of my accused, I took up penalties from those under penalty, I did not flee the sentence from the condemned; the destroyer of death, I received death; I penetrated the underworld, the destroyer of hell, so that by these things I might not only withdraw you from your punishment, but also make you a sharer of my dignity. Act, then, so that you, whom the time of your stewardship has shut out, may not be shut in by the perpetuity of the condemnation I pronounce."

Sed villicus quid responderit jam perscrutemur. Ait intra se: Quid faciam? Quid faciam modo? semper homo bona facere tunc cupit, quando mors faciendi tempus ademit. Ait intra se. Quaerit intra se consilium, qui foris unde sibi jam succurreret non habebat. Ait intra se. Pungit cor suum, stimulat mentem suam, et omnia vexat interna, ut a se poenitentiam quam pro se dare possit extorqueat. Fodere non valeo. Non vires isti, sed tempora defecerant ad laborem. Fodere non valeo, mendicare erubesco. Confusionem futuri judicii pertimescit, in quo jam non poenitendi tempus est, sed poenarum, et ubi reus plus de conscientia quam de gehennae erubescit incendio.

Mendicare erubesco. Et quis non erubescit in coelestibus mendicare? Miser quem temporalitas habuit divitem, mendicum sempiternitas possidebit; et habebit hunc nudum tartarus, quem locupletem suscipere coelum potuit et tenere. Praesens figura tendit ad populum, sed bonum nobis, bonum nimis, si ad nos ista aptemus singuli, si ad nos ista referamus, qui in terra nos debemus sentire villicos, dominos non putare; prorogationis temporariae ministerium suscepisse, non invenisse jus perpetuum possidendi; cavere ne ad patremfamilias fama eversae substantiae nos praecedat, juxta illud Apostoli: Quorumdam peccata manifesta sunt, praecedentia ad judicium; quosdam autem et subsequuntur. Non pervenit ad statutum terminum vitae, qui villicationis amittit tempus, quem sonarit credita dissipasse. Hinc, hinc est immaturus exitus, hinc est ante diem mors, hinc est vocatio amara, hinc est seipsa acerbior redhibitio, sicut propheta lamentatur, clamans: Viri sanguinum et dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos.

Sed utinam, quando nos de vocatione commonet aegritudo, quando febris a villicatione inclementer excludit, quando vis doloris ad reddendam villicationem properare compellit, praesentis villici factum sensumque sequeremur, converteremur ad animae consilium, ad compunctionem cordis, ad mentis poenitentiam, ad misericordiae suffragium, ad pietatis patrocinium, ad confessionis advocationem! certe peteremus Dominicorum chirographa debitorum; et si non tota, vel media, sicut iste villicus, ad nostram veniam solveremus; ut qui bona credita dissipando iniquitatis vocamur villici, in novissimis pia fraude ipsius laudem judicis consequamur.

Et laudavit, inquit, villicum iniquitatis. Et quia evangelici factum villici non parvam generat quaestionem, qui reus de multis unam legitur placuisse per fraudem: quare placuerit sic, vel quis sit iste, sequenti per Deum plenius sermone pandemus.

But now let us examine what the steward answered. He said within himself: What shall I do? (Luke 16:3) What shall I do now? Man always longs to do good things at the moment when death has taken away the time for doing them. He said within himself. He seeks counsel within himself, who outside had nothing now with which to help himself. He said within himself. He pricks his heart, goads his mind, and stirs up everything within, to wring from himself the penance that he could give for himself. To dig I am not able. It was not his strength but his time for labour that had failed. To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. He dreads the confusion of the judgement to come, in which there is no longer a time for repenting but for punishments, and where the accused is more ashamed of his conscience than of the fire of Gehenna.

To beg I am ashamed. And who is not ashamed to beg in the heavens? Wretched the man whom time held rich: eternity will possess him a beggar; and Tartarus will have him naked, whom heaven could have received and held wealthy. The present figure is aimed at a people, but it is good for us, very good, if we each apply these things to ourselves, if we refer them to ourselves, who on earth ought to feel ourselves stewards, not think ourselves masters; to have received the ministry of a temporary paying-out, not to have found a perpetual right of possessing; to beware lest the report of substance wasted go before us to the householder, according to that saying of the Apostle: The sins of some men are manifest, going before to judgement; and some men they also follow (1 Tim 5:24). He does not reach the appointed end of life who loses the time of his stewardship, he who is rumoured to have squandered what was entrusted to him. Hence, hence comes the untimely departure, hence death before its day, hence the bitter summons, hence the giving back more bitter than itself, as the Prophet laments, crying: Men of blood and deceit shall not live out half their days (Ps 55:24).

But would that, when illness warns us of our summons, when fever harshly shuts us out of our stewardship, when the force of pain drives us to hasten to render up our stewardship, we followed the deed and the mind of the present steward, turned to the counsel of the soul, to compunction of heart, to penance of mind, to the support of mercy, to the patronage of piety, to the advocacy of confession! surely we would ask for the bonds of the Lord's debtors; and if not all, at least the half, like this steward, we would remit for our own pardon; so that we who, by squandering the goods entrusted to us, are called stewards of iniquity, may at the last, by a pious fraud, obtain the praise of the judge himself.

And he praised, he says, the steward of iniquity (Luke 16:8). And since the deed of the steward in the Gospel raises no small question, he who, accused of many things, is read to have pleased by a single fraud: why he pleased in this way, or who he is, we shall set forth more fully, God helping, in the following sermon.

Sermo CXXVI.

De eodem

Quam sit commodum, quam lucrosum debitorum nodos solvere, cautionum vincla laxare, praesentis villici nos edocet et informat exemplum: qui dum chirographorum cumulos prudenti moderatur assensu, non modo evasit arctissimas discussionis angustias, sed etiam discussoris laudem mansuram saeculis conquisivit. Et nos, fratres, quod de praesenti lectione vobis fecit promissio me debere, auditu piissimo temperate, ne me vosque simul oneret severa discussio, quos intelligentia poterit benigne relevare. Unde quae supersunt lectionis jam sequamur, et consilium villicus quod invenerit audiamus.

Ait, inquit, intra se: Quid faciam, quia dominus meus aufert a me villicationem? Fodere non valeo, mendicare erubesco. Scio quid faciam... Convocatis itaque singulis debitoribus domini sui, dicebat primo: Quantum debes domino meo? At ille dixit: Centum cados olei. Dixitque illi: Accipe cautionem tuam; et sede cito, scribe quinquaginta. Deinde dixit alii: Tu vero quantum debes? Qui ait: Centum coros tritici. Et ait illi: Accipe litteras tuas, et scribe octoginta. Et laudavit dominus villicum iniquitatis, quod prudenter fecisset.

Vel nunc liquet in evangelicis lectionibus obscuratas mysteriis divinis, supernis velatas sensibus, contineri quamplurimas quaestiones, nec facile humano intellectui subjacere quod ore Christi de coelestibus profertur arcanis. Et laudavit, inquit, dominus villicum iniquitatis, quod prudenter fecisset. Rogo quid hoc loco mundanus capit animus? quid hic communis capit et recipit auditus? ubi inter villicum et dominicos debitores versutae fraudis laudatur inventio, ubi debitoris honestas tollitur, aufertur pudor, violatur innocentia, verecundia tota sepelitur, ubi villicus reddendae rationis tempore plus ardet in fraude, quam tempore villicationis anhelavit in luxu; in articulo discussionis ipsum dominicum plus in dispendium saevit quam diebus suae fudit et disperdidit actionis; et qui ante substantiam vacuaverat dissipando, vacuando chirographo quod remanserat plus evertit; nec curat unde possit sarcire quod deerat, sed quod remansit, quemadmodum minorare possit, excogitat.

Sermon CXXVI.

On the same

How advantageous, how profitable it is to loosen the knots of debtors, to slacken the chains of securities, the example of the present steward teaches and instructs us: who, while he moderates the heaps of bonds with prudent consent, not only escaped the narrowest straits of the examination, but even won the praise of the examiner, a praise to endure for ages. And you, brothers, temper with most kindly hearing what my promise has made me owe you on the present reading, lest a severe examination weigh upon me and you together, whom understanding will be able to relieve kindly. So let us now follow what remains of the reading, and hear what counsel the steward found.

He said, he says, within himself: What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? (Luke 16:3) To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I shall do... (Luke 16:4). So, calling together each of his master's debtors, he said to the first: How much do you owe my master? (Luke 16:5) And he said: A hundred jars of oil. And he said to him: Take your security; and sit down quickly, write fifty (Luke 16:6). Then he said to another: And you, how much do you owe? (Luke 16:7) He said: A hundred measures of wheat. And he said to him: Take your writing, and write eighty. And the master praised the steward of iniquity, because he had acted prudently (Luke 16:8).

Even now it is plain that in the Gospel readings very many questions are contained, darkened by divine mysteries, veiled by heavenly senses, and that what is uttered by the mouth of Christ from the heavenly secrets does not easily submit to human understanding. And the master praised, he says, the steward of iniquity, because he had acted prudently. I ask, what does a worldly mind grasp in this place? what does the common hearing grasp and receive here? where between the steward and the master's debtors the invention of a cunning fraud is praised, where the debtor's honesty is taken away, shame removed, innocence violated, all modesty buried, where the steward, at the time for rendering his account, burns more in fraud than he panted in luxury in the time of his stewardship; at the moment of the examination he rages against the master's very property, to its loss, more than he poured out and squandered in the days of his administration; and he who before had emptied the substance by squandering, by emptying the bond overthrows more of what remained; nor does he care how he might make good what was lacking, but contrives how he might lessen what remained.

Dicebat debitori: Quantum debes domino meo? Non dicebat, quantum debes mihi? Conveniebat conscientiam, testabatur debitoris animum, sic dicendo. Et quid est quod sine respectu domini, debitorem ad tantam fraudem villicus provocabat? Quantum debes domino meo? Dicit ille: Centum cados olei. Accipe cautionem tuam, et scribe quinquaginta. Ad tantam fraudem villicus conspirabat et agebat, ut totam fidem perderet, dum meditat cautionem. Quantum debes domino meo? Sciebant ambo quia praesens erat ubique et semper supernus creditor, nec poterat fraude praeveniri; sed neque in oculis dominicis desinit, semel coeperit qui furari. Esto tamen sit humani moris ut debitor quaerat compendia fraudulenta, et villicus sibi consulat, sic furando: dominus iterum quare probat fraudem? furta collaudat? praedicat falsitatem? Quod est nequitia, prudentiam dicit, et hoc pium judicat quod multis pessimum falsitatis praestat exemplum? Sapiat ita carnalibus sensibus; spiritualibus, quod est divini luminis, jam lucescat.

Iterata est parabola per villicum, quae fuerat juniorem praelibata per filium. Villicus iniquitatis a mammona iniquo gentium populus nuncupatur. Facite vobis, inquit, amicos de mammona iniquitatis, qui relicto Creatore totum se mammonae tradiderat servituti. Quisquis est ab hujus mammonae captivitate liber, et pecuniae jam crudeli pondere non gravatur, consistat in specula coelesti, et inde despectet mammonam mundo, et mundanis tyrannico furore dominantem. Imperat gentibus, jubet regnis, bella mandat, comparat bellatores, sanguinem vendit, agit mortes, prodit patrias, urbes destruit, subdit populos, arces urget, vexat cives, foro praesidet, jus delet, fas nefasque confundit, et ad mortes usque tendendo, fidem tentat, violat veritatem, famam carpit, honestatem dissipat, solvit affectus, innocentiam tollit, pietatem sepelit, necessitudinem scindit, amicitiam subruit. Et quid plura? Hoc est mammona, dominus iniquitatis, qui inique humanis et corporibus dominatur et mentibus.

Hujus ergo mammonae villicus, hoc est gentilis populus dissipatae taliter substantiae reus a Domino per Evangelium convenitur, ut reddat rationem villicationis suae, id est, naturalis boni. Cui tunc dicitur: Jam non poteris villicare. Quando ei finis saeculi nuntiatur. Credit denique juxta Apostolum figuram praeterire mundi, transire tempora villicationis humanae; et intra se, in se reversus, quid facere deberet, interrogat. Ait intra se, Quid faciam?

He said to the debtor: How much do you owe my master? He did not say: "How much do you owe me?" He was appealing to the conscience, calling the debtor's mind to witness, by speaking thus. And why is it that, with no regard for the master, the steward was provoking the debtor to so great a fraud? How much do you owe my master? He says: A hundred jars of oil. Take your security, and write fifty. To so great a fraud the steward conspired and acted, so as to lose all good faith, while he contrives the security. How much do you owe my master? Both knew that the creditor on high was present everywhere and always, and could not be forestalled by fraud; but even under the master's eyes he who has once begun to steal does not stop. Granted, however, that it is the way of men that a debtor should seek fraudulent short cuts, and that a steward should look after himself by stealing so: why, again, does the master approve the fraud? applaud the thefts? proclaim the falsehood? Does he call prudence what is wickedness, and judge pious what affords many a very bad example of falsehood? Let it savour so to carnal senses; to spiritual ones, which belong to the divine light, let it now begin to shine.

The parable that had been given beforehand through the younger son is repeated through the steward. The steward of iniquity is the people of the Gentiles, named from the mammon of iniquity. Make friends for yourselves, he says, of the mammon of iniquity (Luke 16:9): the people that, having forsaken the Creator, had given itself wholly over to the servitude of mammon. Whoever is free from the captivity of this mammon and is no longer weighed down by the cruel weight of money, let him take his stand on a heavenly watchtower, and from there look down on mammon lording it over the world and the worldly with tyrannical fury. It commands nations, gives orders to kingdoms, decrees wars, hires warriors, sells blood, works deaths, betrays fatherlands, destroys cities, subjugates peoples, presses on fortresses, harasses citizens, presides over the forum, blots out law, confounds right and wrong, and, reaching even to deaths, tempts faith, violates truth, carps at good name, squanders honour, loosens affections, takes away innocence, buries piety, cuts the ties of kinship, undermines friendship. And what more? This is mammon, the master of iniquity, who unjustly lords it over human bodies and minds.

So the steward of this mammon, that is, the Gentile people, guilty of substance thus squandered, is summoned by the Lord through the Gospel to render an account of his stewardship, that is, of the natural good. To him it is then said: You can no longer be steward. When the end of the age is announced to him. Indeed he believes, according to the Apostle, that the figure of the world passes away (1 Cor 7:31), that the times of human stewardship pass; and within himself, returning to himself, he asks what he ought to do. He said within himself: What shall I do?

Ingemuit cor, doluit mens, respondit fides, credulitas dedit consilium salutare, ut villicus ad verum dominum jam rediret, et erogando mammonam saevum dominum suae victor subderet servituti, ut fieret salutis occasio, quod perditionis exstiterat instrumentum.

Pergit ergo villicus gentilis quondam jam Christianus, ad primum debitorem domini sui. Quem? Judaeum debitorem, quem quid quantumque domino suo debeat interrogat; quasi nesciat modum debiti. Portitor cautionis noverat jam per Evangelium, sed interrogando confessionem taliter requirebat; denique et qualitatem, et quantitatem debiti confitetur, dicens: Centum cados olei. Quare non argenti, vel auri pondus? quare non centum decem, aut nonaginta, sed centum? Ut et de debito et de numero coeleste luceat sacramentum. Debebat Judaeus oleum, quod chirographo legis ad ungendos reges, prophetas et sacerdotes, Christiani chrismatis acceperat in figuram, donec ad ipsum regum, et prophetarum, et sacerdotum principem perveniret, cui tota reddenda et infundenda erat centenaria chrismatis plenitudo. Sed quia contra cautionis fidem debitor, ne debitum redderet, occidit impius creditorem, legalis ipsa cautio pervenit ad gentes, hoc est lex: ut Judaeus convictus per gentilem, quia debitum convertit in crimen, poenitentiae solvat usuram.

Vides ergo quia villicus non fraudem, sed poenitentiam suadet: sollicitat ad acquirendam misericordiam, non impellit ad falsum, cum dicit: Accipe cautionem tuam, sede cito, et scribe quinquaginta. Quinquagesimum numerum ad misericordiam pertinere David pandit, cum psalmum quinquagesimum cantat, clamans: Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. Quinquagesimus numerus patefecit misericordiam, dum quinquagesimum annum, qui est jubilaeus, lex debitorum omnium, omnium contractuum delere et solvere ligamenta perscribit. Villicus ergo iste agit, ut per misericordiam Christi idoneus sit Judaeus, qui per cautionem legis insolubilibus confusus debitis tenebatur. Debet Judaeus oleum, qui juxta Apostolum feracis in se olivae pinguedinem incredulitatis sterilitate siccaverat. Unde et evangelicae fidei calore jam tota redit in ramos Christianos, totamque reviviscit in gratiam.

The heart groaned, the mind felt pain, faith answered, belief gave saving counsel, that the steward should now return to the true master, and by paying out mammon should, a victor, subject the cruel master to his own servitude, so that what had been the instrument of perdition might become an occasion of salvation.

So the steward, once a Gentile, now a Christian, goes to his master's first debtor. Whom? The Jewish debtor, whom he asks what and how much he owes his master, as if he did not know the measure of the debt. The one who carried the security already knew it through the Gospel, but by asking he was seeking in this way a confession; indeed, the debtor confesses both the kind and the amount of the debt, saying: A hundred jars of oil. Why not a weight of silver or of gold? why not a hundred and ten, or ninety, but a hundred? So that both from the debt and from the number a heavenly mystery may shine out. The Jew owed oil, which by the bond of the Law he had received for anointing kings, prophets and priests, as a figure of the Christian chrism, until it should reach the very prince of kings and of prophets and of priests, to whom the whole hundredfold fullness of chrism was to be rendered and poured out. But since the debtor, against the good faith of the security, impiously killed the creditor so as not to pay the debt, the security of the Law itself, that is, the Law, passed to the Gentiles: so that the Jew, convicted through the Gentile, because he turned his debt into a crime, may pay the interest of penance.

You see, then, that the steward urges not fraud but penance: he invites to the gaining of mercy, he does not drive to falsehood, when he says: Take your security, sit down quickly, and write fifty. That the fiftieth number belongs to mercy David makes plain when he sings the fiftieth psalm, crying: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy (Ps 51:3). The fiftieth number laid open mercy, in that the Law prescribes that the fiftieth year, which is the jubilee, blots out and loosens the ties of all debtors, of all contracts (Lev 25:10). This steward, then, acts so that through the mercy of Christ the Jew may become solvent, he who through the security of the Law was held fast, confounded by unpayable debts. The Jew owes oil, he who, according to the Apostle, had dried up in himself the fatness of the fruitful olive by the barrenness of disbelief (Rom 11:17). Hence too, by the warmth of the Gospel faith, it now returns whole into the Christian branches and revives whole into grace.

Deinde alii dicebat: Tu vero quantum debes? Qui ait: Centum coros tritici. Posteaquam granum tritici, quod est Christus, satum est in terra nostrae carnis, et ad ubertatem supernam per Dominicam fecundatum est sepulturam, factum est ut homo centesimum fructum suo jam debeat auctori. Nisi, inquit, granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet. Videns ergo villicus satis providet, cum dicit: Accipe cautionem tuam, et scribe octoginta. Quia sicut quinquagesimus misericordiam confert, ita octogesimus totam fidem praefigurat et gratiam. Hic est numerus, in quo decalogum legis esse et ogdoadem gratiae satis gnarus legis, satis studiosus Evangelii lector intelligit. Itaque villicus cum dicit, Scribe octoginta, id agit, ut per gratiam solvat quod reddere non poterat per naturam. Bene ergo iste villicus meruit laudem domini sui, qui in chirographis non fraudem molitus est, sed salutem.

Quod autem dixit: Prudentiores sunt filii saeculi in generatione sua quam filii lucis, ita intelligendum est, quia qui erant filii saeculi quondam, id est, gentiles, nunc electi sunt Dei: et qui erant filii Dei, hoc est Judaei, nunc in filiis saeculi sunt relicti. In generatione sua. Qua renati sunt, non qua nati sunt. Scribantur haec, inquit, in generatione altera. Altera haec est generatio quaerentium Dominum. Deus autem scientiae et illuminationis illuminet corda vestra, et totam scientiae suae plenitudinem in vestrae mentis infundat arcanum.

Then he said to another: And you, how much do you owe? He said: A hundred measures of wheat. After the grain of wheat, which is Christ, was sown in the earth of our flesh and was made fruitful for the abundance on high through the Lord's burial, it came about that man now owes his author the hundredfold fruit. Unless, he says, the grain of corn falling into the ground dies, it remains alone (John 12:24). Seeing this, then, the steward makes good provision when he says: Take your security, and write eighty. For as the fiftieth confers mercy, so the eightieth prefigures the whole of faith and grace. This is the number in which the reader well versed in the Law and well studied in the Gospel understands that there are the Decalogue of the Law and the ogdoad of grace. So when the steward says, Write eighty, he acts so that through grace he may pay what he could not pay back through nature. Rightly, then, this steward deserved the praise of his master, he who in the bonds contrived not fraud, but salvation.

But as to what he said: The children of the age are more prudent in their generation than the children of light (Luke 16:8), it is to be understood thus: that those who were once children of the age, that is, the Gentiles, are now the chosen of God; and those who were children of God, that is, the Jews, are now left among the children of the age. In their generation. That by which they were reborn, not that by which they were born. Let these things be written, he says, for another generation (Ps 102:19). This other generation is that of those who seek the Lord. May the God of knowledge and of enlightenment enlighten your hearts, and pour the whole fullness of his knowledge into the secret place of your mind.

Sermo CXXVII.

De decollatione D. Joannis Baptistae

Hodie nobis Joannis virtus, Herodis feritas dum refertur, concussa sunt viscera, corda tremuerunt, caligavit visus, intellectus hebuit, aufugit auditus. Aut quid constat in sensibus humanis, quando perdidit virtutum magnitudinem criminum magnitudo?

Herodes, inquit, tenuit Joannem et alligavit eum, et posuit in carcere. Joannes virtutum schola, magisterium vitae, sanctitatis forma, norma justitiae, virginitatis speculum, pudicitiae titulus, castitatis exemplum, poenitentiae via, peccatorum venia, fidei disciplina; Joannes major homine, par angelis, legis summa, Evangelii sanctio, apostolorum vox, silentium prophetarum, lucerna mundi, praeco judicis, praecursor Christi, metator Domini, Dei testis, totius medius Trinitatis, datur incestae, traditur adulterae, addicitur saltatrici. Merito ergo concussa sunt viscera, corda tremuerunt.

At Herodes ipse est qui profanavit templum, sacerdotium sustulit, confudit ordinem, temeravit regnum, corrupit quidquid erat religionis; quod vitae, quod legis, quod morum, quod fidei, quod disciplinae, perdidit et confudit. Herodes sicarius in cives, in nobiles latro, populator in socios, in domesticos praedo, interemptor plebis, occisor filiorum, homicida in extraneos, in proprios parricida, inebrians cruore terram, in siti sanguinis permanebat. Hinc est quod Joannis sanguinem pium ingenti poculo crudelitatis absorbuit: sed ipsa lectio jam loquatur.

Herodes, inquit, tenuit Joannem, et alligavit eum. Qui vincula solverat peccatorum, peccatoris vinculis alligatur, ut vincta venia locum veniae non relinquat. Alligavit eum et posuit in carcere. Herodes, tu adulterium facis, et in carcerem vadit Joannes? Sic judicas sedens in loco judicis reus, in loco vindicis innocentiae persecutor? Rogo ubi rerum facies? ubi fama? ubi pudor? ubi existimatio publici cognitoris? certe ubi Deus? ubi homo? ubi fas? ubi lex? ubi ipsius jura naturae? Simul omnia sunt, Herodes, te agente, te judicante, te jubente confusa.

Sermon CXXVII.

On the beheading of Saint John the Baptist

Today, while the virtue of John and the savagery of Herod are told us, our inmost parts were shaken, our hearts trembled, our sight grew dim, our understanding was dulled, our hearing fled. Or what stands firm in human senses, when the greatness of crimes has destroyed the greatness of virtues?

Herod, he says, seized John and bound him, and put him in prison (Matt 14:3). John, the school of virtues, the teaching of life, the pattern of holiness, the rule of justice, the mirror of virginity, the title of modesty, the example of chastity, the way of penance, the pardon of sins, the discipline of faith; John, greater than man, equal to the angels, the sum of the Law, the sanction of the Gospel, the voice of the apostles, the silence of the prophets, the lamp of the world, the herald of the judge, the forerunner of Christ, the harbinger of the Lord, the witness of God, in the middle of the whole Trinity, is given to an incestuous woman, handed over to an adulteress, consigned to a dancing girl. Rightly, then, our inmost parts were shaken, our hearts trembled.

But Herod is the one who profaned the temple, took away the priesthood, confounded order, violated the kingdom, corrupted whatever there was of religion; whatever there was of life, of law, of morals, of faith, of discipline, he destroyed and confounded. Herod, an assassin against his citizens, a robber against the nobles, a ravager against his allies, a plunderer against his household, a slayer of the people, a killer of his sons, a homicide against strangers, a parricide against his own, making the earth drunk with gore, remained in thirst for blood. Hence it is that he drained the pious blood of John in a huge cup of cruelty: but let the reading itself now speak.

Herod, he says, seized John, and bound him. He who had loosed the chains of sins is bound with the chains of a sinner, so that pardon, bound, may leave no room for pardon. He bound him and put him in prison. Herod, you commit adultery, and John goes to prison? Is this how you judge, sitting, the accused, in the place of the judge, the persecutor of innocence in the place of its avenger? I ask, where is the face of things? where is good name? where is shame? where is the repute of the public examining judge? surely, where is God? where is man? where is right? where is law? where are the very rights of nature? All things together, Herod, are confounded, by your acting, by your judging, by your commanding.

Tenuit, inquit, Joannem, et alligavit eum, et posuit in carcere. Herodes, te causa petit, te arguunt vincula, te carcer accusat, te divulgat producta in publicum Joannis injuria: causam custodiae qui requirit, invenit in te quod puniat, et in Joanne quod doleat. Joannes orbi notus, fama virtutis cognitus, celebratissimus sanctitate, dum trahit ad se suae inquisitores injuriae, facit ut tuus cunctis innotescat incestus; agit ut te habeat confusio publica, quem corrigere non potuit secreta correctio. Herodem Joannes monitis, non accusatione pulsabat; corrigere voluit, non perire: sed Herodes facibus libidinis ardens perire maluit quam redire, et uxorem fratris illicite possidere.

Captivis criminum, innocentiae inimicis odiosa fit semper libertas, virtus contraria vitiosis, sacrilegis exosa sanctitas, inimica castitas impudicis, corruptis integritas poena, luxuriosis adversa frugalitas, crudelibus misericordia, pietas impiis, injustis justitia non ferenda. Probat hoc evangelista cum dicit: Dicebat enim illi Joannes, non licet tibi habere uxorem Philippi fratris tui. Ecce unde Joannes offendit, ecce unde Herodes furit: malos qui monet, offendit; incurrit odium, qui arguit criminosos. Dicebat Joannes quod erat legis, quod justitiae, quod salutis; certe quod erat non odii, sed amoris: ecce qualem consecutus est ab impio pro pietate mercedem.

Volens, inquit, occidere eum, timuit populum. Facile deviat a justitia, qui in causis non Deum, sed homines pertimescit. Hic timor peccandi facultatem differre potest, auferre non potest voluntatem: unde etiam quos suspenderit a crimine, avidiores reddit ad crimen, et aestuat animo quousque perficiat, quod cogitat malum. Solus est Dei timor, qui mentes corrigit, fugat crimina, innocentiam servat, perpetem tribuit facultatem.

Sed audiamus ipsam Joannis beatissimi passionem. Die natalis Herodis saltavit Herodiadis filia in medio triclinio, et placuit Herodi: unde jurejurando pollicitus est dare ei quodcumque postulasset ab eo. At illa praemonita a matre sua, da mihi, inquit, hic in disco caput Joannis Baptistae. Haec est mulieris antiqua malitia, quae Adam ejecit de paradisi deliciis; haec coelestes homines fecit esse terrenos, haec humanum genus misit in infernum, haec vitam abstulit mundo propter unius arboris pomum. Hoc malum quod homines ducit ad mortem, hoc malum fugit Elias propheta; et cujus lingua clavis facta est coeli, tamquam reus fugit a facie mulieris; haec invenit verum laborem et pressuram, quae nunc occidit Joannem Baptistam, dejicit pueritiam, perdit juventutem, illicit et inquietat emortuam senectutem.

He seized John, he says, and bound him, and put him in prison. Herod, the case pursues you, the chains convict you, the prison accuses you, the wrong done to John, brought out in public, spreads it abroad of you: whoever inquires into the cause of his custody finds in you what to punish, and in John what to grieve over. John, known to the world, recognised by the fame of his virtue, most renowned for his holiness, while he draws to himself those who inquire into the wrong done him, makes your incest known to all; he brings it about that public confusion holds you, whom secret correction could not correct. John pressed Herod with warnings, not with accusation; he wanted to correct him, not that he should perish: but Herod, burning with the torches of lust, preferred to perish rather than to return, and to possess unlawfully his brother's wife.

To the captives of crimes, to the enemies of innocence, freedom is always hateful, virtue opposed to the vicious, holiness detested by the sacrilegious, chastity hostile to the unchaste, integrity a punishment to the corrupt, frugality adverse to the dissolute, mercy unbearable to the cruel, piety to the impious, justice to the unjust. The Evangelist proves this when he says: For John said to him: It is not lawful for you to have the wife of Philip your brother (Matt 14:4). See why John gives offence, see why Herod rages: he who warns the wicked offends; he who rebukes the criminal incurs hatred. John spoke what was of the Law, of justice, of salvation; surely what was not of hatred but of love: see what reward he obtained from the impious man for his piety.

Wishing, he says, to kill him, he feared the people (Matt 14:5). He easily turns aside from justice who in his causes fears not God but men. This fear can put off the opportunity of sinning, it cannot take away the will: hence even those whom it has held back from crime it makes more eager for crime, and a man seethes in his mind until he accomplishes the evil he plans. It is the fear of God alone that corrects minds, puts crimes to flight, keeps innocence, grants a lasting opportunity.

But let us hear the very passion of most blessed John. On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst of the banqueting hall, and pleased Herod: whence he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask of him (Matt 14:6–7). But she, prompted beforehand by her mother: Give me, she says, here on a dish the head of John the Baptist (Matt 14:8). This is the ancient malice of woman, which cast Adam out of the delights of paradise (Gen 3:23); this made heavenly men earthly, this sent the human race into hell, this took life away from the world for the fruit of one tree. This evil that leads men to death, this evil Elijah the prophet fled (1 Kgs 19:3); and he whose tongue was made the key of heaven fled like a guilty man from the face of a woman; this found true toil and distress, this that now kills John the Baptist, casts down childhood, ruins youth, entices and disquiets old age that is already dead.

Praemonita a matre sua, Da mihi, inquit, in disco caput Joannis Baptistae. De matris pectore dans rugitum nova bellua, contempta corporis praeda, caput ipsum truncatura pervadit. Et contristatus est rex, propter jusjurandum tamen, et propter discumbentes jussit dari, misitque decollari Joannem, et allatum est caput ejus in disco, et datum est puellae, et puella dedit matri suae. Audistis, fratres, quanta sit nata de voluptate crudelitas, de libidine impietas.

Et allatum est caput ejus in disco. In arenam vertitur domus, mensa migrat in caveam; fiunt de pransoribus spectatores, furore mutatur convivium; fit cibus caedes, vinum transit in sanguinem, finis apponitur natali; in ortu exhibetur occasus, convivium in homicidium commutatur, organa tragoediam personant saecularem; intrat bestia, non puella; quaerit amputare, non saltare; discurrit fera, non femina; spargit jubas per cervicem, non capillos; membra dilatat anfractibus, saevitiae crescit augmentis; fit grandis crudelitate, non corpore; et singularis fera usque dum capiat praedam, fremit ore, dentibus frendit; ferrum non suscipit, sed producit.

Verum ne quis existimet declamare nos velle de talibus, nos non declamare volumus, sed clamare, ut festivitatum gaudia sint cauta vestrarum, nataliumque vestrorum solemnitas teneat in exsultatione mensuram, epulis nostris intersit Christus, in facie prandeatur auctoris; honestate convivii natura ipsa, quae vos produxit, honoretur; laetitia mensae vestrae pertingat ad pauperes, familia vestra innocentiae tripudiet disciplina, luxus absistat, fugetur effusio; saltatricum pestis, lenocinia cantorum, voluptatum fomenta, ventris onera, naufragia mentium cum Herodiadis conviviis abscindantur; ut praesens gaudium vestrum ad laetitiam perveniat sempiternam.

Hodie, fratres, sermonem tulimus, non in Herodem tantum, sed etiam in Herodiadem; quia satis auditor intelligit quanta sit felicitas martyris, quando miseriam persecutoris audierit: scire tamen nos convenit quia et Joannes de morte sua natus est, et de natali suo mortuus est Herodes.

Prompted beforehand by her mother: Give me, she says, on a dish the head of John the Baptist. From her mother's breast, roaring, a new beast, scorning the prey of the body, goes straight for the head itself, to cut it off. And the king was saddened, yet because of the oath, and because of those at table, he commanded it to be given, and sent and had John beheaded, and his head was brought on a dish, and given to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother (Matt 14:9–11). You have heard, brothers, how great a cruelty is born of pleasure, how great an impiety of lust.

And his head was brought on a dish. The house is turned into an arena, the table moves into the cavea; the diners become spectators, the banquet is changed by fury; the food becomes slaughter, the wine passes into blood, an end is set to the birthday; at the rising a setting is displayed, the banquet is changed into homicide, the instruments sound out a worldly tragedy; in comes a beast, not a girl; she seeks to cut off, not to dance; a wild animal runs about, not a woman; she tosses a mane over her neck, not hair; she spreads her limbs in windings, she grows with the increase of her savagery; she becomes great in cruelty, not in body; and the singular wild beast, until she seizes her prey, roars with her mouth, gnashes with her teeth; she does not receive the steel, but draws it.

But lest anyone think that we wish to declaim about such things, we do not wish to declaim, but to cry aloud: that the joys of your festivities may be cautious, and the solemnity of your birthdays may keep measure in its rejoicing; that Christ may be present at our feasts, that we may dine before the face of the author; that by the decency of the banquet nature itself, which brought you forth, may be honoured; that the gladness of your table may reach the poor, that your household may dance with the discipline of innocence, that luxury may keep away, extravagance be put to flight; that the plague of dancing girls, the allurements of singers, the kindlings of pleasures, the burdens of the belly, the shipwrecks of minds may be cut off together with the banquets of Herodias; so that your present joy may come to everlasting gladness.

Today, brothers, we have brought our sermon not against Herod only, but also against Herodias; because the hearer understands well how great is the happiness of the martyr when he has heard the misery of the persecutor: yet it is fitting for us to know that John was born of his death, and Herod died of his birthday.

Sermo CXXVIII.

In divum Apollinarem episcopum et martyrem

Beatus Apollinaris, primus sacerdotio, solus hanc Ecclesiam Ravennatem vernaculo atque inclyto martyrii honore decoravit. Merito Apollinaris, quia juxta mandatum Dei sui, hic perdidit animam suam, ut eam inveniret in vitam sempiternam. Beatus qui ita cursum consummavit, fidem servavit, ut vere primus a credentibus suo reperiretur in loco. Nec eum quisquam confessoris vocabulo minorem credat esse quam martyrem, quem Dei nutu quotidianum et multiplicem reversum conspicit ad agonem. Audi Paulum dicentem: Quotidie morior. Semel mori parum est eum qui potest regi suo gloriosam saepe de hostibus referre victoriam. Non tam mors quam fides et devotio martyrem facit, et sicut virtutis est in acie, in conflictu, pro regis amore succumbere, ita perfectae virtutis est diu agere et consummare certamina. Non ideo persecutus est martyrem, quia non statim intulit mortem; sed probavit martyrem, quia non elicuit fidem; injecit tela quae potuit, et omnia armorum suorum genera callidus exegit inimicus: nec tamen fortissimi ductoris movere mentem potuit, aut temerare constantiam.

Summum est, fratres, pro Domino praesentem vitam, si necesse sit, contemnere, sed gloriosum est etiam cum vita mundum suo temnere et conculcare cum principe. Festinabat Christus ad martyrem, martyr suum festinabat ad regem. Bene diximus festinabat, juxta illud prophetae: Exsurge in occursum mihi, et vide. Sed ut propugnatorem suum sibi Ecclesia sancta retineret, Christo vehementer occurrit, ut vincenti justitiae reservaret coronam, et sibi belli tempore praeliatoris sui praesentiam condonaret. Fundebat saepe confessor sanguinem suum, suisque vulneribus, fide mentis suae, testabatur auctorem.

Coelum suspiciens carnem despiciebat et terram. Vicit tamen, tenuit, et a suo desiderio retardari martyrem tenera adhuc Ecclesiae impetravit infantia. Infantiam dico, fratres, quae totum semper obtinet, quae plus lacrymis quam virium ratione contendit. Neque enim tantum vultus et sudor fortium quantum possunt lacrymae parvulorum, quia ibi corpora, hic corda franguntur; ibi mentis judicia vix moventur, hic tota pietas inclinata descendit.

Sermon CXXVIII.

On Saint Apollinaris, bishop and martyr

Blessed Apollinaris, first in the priesthood, alone adorned this church of Ravenna with the home-born and illustrious honour of martyrdom. Rightly Apollinaris, for according to the command of his God he lost his soul here, so as to find it for life everlasting. Blessed is he who so finished his course, kept the faith (2 Tim 4:7), that he was truly found by the believers first in his place. Nor let anyone believe him less than a martyr because of the name of confessor, him whom he sees, at God's bidding, returned daily and many times to the contest. Hear Paul saying: I die daily (1 Cor 15:31). To die once is little for one who can often bring back to his king a glorious victory over his enemies. It is not so much death as faith and devotion that makes a martyr; and as it is a mark of virtue to fall in the battle line, in the conflict, for love of one's king, so it is a mark of perfect virtue to carry on and complete the contests for a long time. It is not that he did not persecute the martyr, because he did not inflict death at once; rather he proved him a martyr, because he did not wring his faith from him; the cunning enemy hurled what darts he could, and exhausted every kind of his weapons: yet he could not move the mind of that bravest of leaders, nor violate his constancy.

It is a supreme thing, brothers, to despise the present life for the Lord, if need be; but it is glorious also, while living, to scorn the world and trample it underfoot together with its prince. Christ was hastening to the martyr, the martyr was hastening to his king. Rightly did we say "was hastening", according to that saying of the Prophet: Rise up to meet me, and see (Ps 59:5). But that she might keep her champion for herself, the holy Church ran vehemently to meet Christ, so as to reserve the crown for victorious justice, and to grant herself the presence of her warrior in time of war. The confessor often shed his blood, and with his wounds, by the faith of his mind, bore witness to his author.

Looking up to heaven, he looked down on the flesh and the earth. Yet the still tender infancy of the Church prevailed, held him, and obtained that the martyr should be held back from his desire. Infancy, I say, brothers, which always obtains everything, which contends more by tears than by reckoning of strength. For the countenance and the sweat of the strong cannot do as much as the tears of little ones can, because there bodies are broken, here hearts; there the judgements of the mind are scarcely moved, here all piety bends down and descends.

Et quid plura, fratres? Egit, egit Ecclesia sancta mater, ut nusquam a suo separaretur antistite. Ecce vivit, ecce ut bonus pastor suo medius assistit in grege, nec umquam separatur spiritus, qui corpore praecessit ad tempus; praecessit dico habitu, caeterum ipsa inter nos corporis sui habitatione quiescit. Exstinctus est diabolus, persecutor occubuit: ecce regnat et vivit, qui pro rege suo desideravit occidi, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saeculorum saecula.

And what more, brothers? Holy mother Church strove, strove, that she might never be separated from her prelate. See, he lives; see, like the good shepherd he stands in the midst of his flock, nor is his spirit ever separated, which went before in body for a time; went before, I say, in outward form, but for the rest he rests among us in the very dwelling of his body. The devil is extinguished, the persecutor has fallen: see, he reigns and lives who desired to be slain for his king, who lives and reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Sermo CXXIX.

In D. Cyprianum martyrem

Quoniam hodie Deo in natali sancti Cypriani martyris convenimus, in quo miro certamine de diabolo triumphavit, et quia nobis virtutum suarum gloriosum reliquit exemplum; ideo exsultare nos convenit et laetari. Natalem ergo sanctorum cum auditis, charissimi, nolite putare illum dici quo nascuntur in terram de carne, sed de terra in coelum, de labore ad requiem, de tentationibus ad quietem, de cruciatibus ad delicias, non fluxas, sed fortes, et stabiles et aeternas, de mundanis risibus ad coronam et gloriam. Tales natales digne martyrum celebrantur. Cum ergo hujusmodi festivitas agitur, noli aestimare, charissime, quod in solis prandiis et profusioribus epulis natales martyrum celebrentur: sed imitandum tibi proponitur quod in memoria martyris celebras.

Aspice ergo, charissime, alacritatem populi circumstantis. In hac enim die aliquando turba astitit impiorum, cum sanctus Cyprianus jussu tyranni feriretur, turbae erant malorum, exspectantium chori; nunc multitudo fidelium ad collaetandum devota confluxit: tunc turba saevientium, nunc exsultantium; tunc desperatorum, nunc sperantium. Idcirco ergo natales martyrum annua laetitia celebrantur, ut quod semel actum est, per omne aevum in memoria maneat devotorum. Gesta res est, charissime, ne te diceres ignorare; celebrantur annua, ne dicas, oblitus sum.

Ad haec ergo imitanda vos animate, charissimi, hanc magnanimitatis gratiam concupiscite; hoc petite dari vobis, quod ille meruit adipisci. Omnes enim coelestia cupientes terrenorum bonorum laqueis irretiri non possunt, quia conversationem suam in coelestibus statuerunt: sicut ait sanctus Apostolus: Nostra autem conversatio in coelis. Dirigatur ergo cordis nostri desiderium ad habitationem coelestem, ubi cum dispersus fuerit pauperibus thesaurus vester, illic erit et cor vestrum. Thesaurus autem bonorum omnium Christus est, qui vos cum Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto donis coelestibus, et nunc, et in aeternum cumulare et replere dignetur.

Sermon CXXIX.

On Saint Cyprian, martyr (of doubtful authorship)

Since today we have come together to God on the birthday of the holy martyr Cyprian, on which he triumphed over the devil in a wonderful contest, and since he has left us a glorious example of his virtues, it is fitting therefore that we exult and rejoice. So when you hear of the birthday of the saints, my dearest ones, do not think that that day is meant on which they are born from the flesh into the earth, but that on which they are born from the earth into heaven, from labour to rest, from temptations to quiet, from torments to delights, not fleeting, but strong, and stable, and eternal, from worldly laughter to the crown and to glory. Such birthdays of the martyrs are worthily celebrated. So when a festival of this kind is kept, do not think, my dearest one, that the birthdays of the martyrs are celebrated with dinners alone and with more lavish feasts: but what you celebrate in the memory of the martyr is set before you to imitate.

Look, then, my dearest one, at the eagerness of the people standing round. For on this day once a crowd of the impious stood by, when holy Cyprian was struck down at the tyrant's command; there were crowds of the wicked, choirs of onlookers waiting; now a multitude of the faithful has flocked together devoutly to rejoice together: then a crowd of those who raged, now of those who exult; then of the hopeless, now of the hopeful. This is why the birthdays of the martyrs are celebrated with yearly gladness, that what was done once may remain through every age in the memory of the devout. The deed was done, my dearest one, so that you might not say that you did not know; they are celebrated every year, so that you may not say, "I have forgotten."

Rouse yourselves, then, my dearest ones, to imitate these things; long for this grace of greatness of soul; ask that this be given you which he merited to obtain. For all who desire heavenly things cannot be entangled in the snares of earthly goods, because they have set their way of life in the heavens: as the holy Apostle says: But our way of life is in heaven (Phil 3:20). Let the desire of our heart, then, be directed to the heavenly dwelling, where, when your treasure has been scattered to the poor, there will your heart be also (Matt 6:21). But the treasure of all good things is Christ, who with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit may deign to heap up and fill you with heavenly gifts, both now and for ever.

Sermo CXXX.

In consecratione episcopi

Sicut magnae promissionis longa exspectatio accendit animum, mentem fatigat, ita sensus omnes, et interna ipse viscerum suscitat optatus promissionis effectus. Hinc est quod hodie, sicut dixit Isaias, Ecclesia mater sancta festiva, tota gaudens et compta processit, induit se tunicam jucunditatis suae; et sicut sponsa imposuit sibi mitram, ac vario se composuit et decoravit ornatu, ut coelum stellis fulget luminibus, et terra vernat floribus suis; et ut hortus producit germina sua, ita produxit laetitia in conspectu omnium filiorum suorum.

Quia juxta pollicitationem David: Hodie pro patre natus est ei filius, qui eam non pondere inclinet, non auctoritate deterreat, non commotione sollicitet, non asperitate conturbet, sed fideli sustentet obsequio; cura pervigili faciat persecuram, sollicito labore necessaria procuret, familiam blanda institutione componat, hospitibus occurrat, parentibus serviat, regibus obtemperet, potestatibus collaboret, det senibus reverentiam, pueris gratiam, fratribus amorem, parvulis impendat affectum, liberam per Christum cunctis exhibeat servitutem.

David dixit: Audi, filia, et vide. Ego dicam: Audi, mater, et vide, pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii. Sint prudentia senes, gravitate patres, charitate filii, virtute juvenes, dulcedine soboles, innocentia infantes, malitia parvuli, quae mundi sunt nescientes: totam regni Dei praesentiam possidentes, attestante Domino, cum dicit: Sinite parvulos venire ad me, talium est enim regnum coelorum. Tales generat perpetuae virginitatis copula, tales generat coelestis vitae conjunctio, sexus nescia, conceptus conscia, gnara partus, corruptionis ignara, pudore integra, integritate clausa, casta pignoribus, fecunditate diffusa. Haec tam pia mater dum unius germinis sui hodie natalitia festa celebrat, sinus aperit, extendit amplexus, emittit vocem, divinis cantat in canticis, ut omnes advocet, omnes capiat, omnes ad congaudendum sibi gremio charitatis includat.

Sermon CXXX.

At the consecration of a bishop

As the long expectation of a great promise kindles the heart and wearies the mind, so the longed-for fulfilment of the promise itself rouses all the senses and the inmost parts of the bowels. Hence it is that today, as Isaiah said, holy mother Church, festive, all rejoicing and adorned, has come forth, has put on the tunic of her gladness; and as a bride she has set a mitre upon herself, and has arrayed and adorned herself with varied ornament, as the sky shines with the lights of the stars, and the earth blooms with its flowers; and as a garden brings forth its shoots, so has she brought forth with gladness in the sight of all her sons (Isa 61:10–11).

Because, according to the promise of David, today in place of the father a son has been born to her (Ps 45:17), who is not to bow her down with weight, nor frighten her with authority, nor trouble her with agitation, nor disturb her with harshness, but to sustain her with faithful service; to make her wholly secure with watchful care, to provide what is needful with solicitous labour, to order the household with gentle instruction, to go to meet guests, to serve parents, to obey kings, to work together with the powers, to give reverence to the old, grace to children, love to brothers, to bestow affection on the little ones, to show to all a free servitude through Christ.

David said: Hear, O daughter, and see (Ps 45:11). I shall say: "Hear, O mother, and see": in place of your fathers sons have been born to you (Ps 45:17). Let them be old men in prudence, fathers in gravity, sons in charity, young men in virtue, offspring in sweetness, infants in innocence, little ones in malice, not knowing the things of the world: possessing the whole presence of the kingdom of God, as the Lord bears witness when he says: Let the little ones come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matt 19:14). Such does the tie of perpetual virginity beget, such does the joining of the heavenly life beget, knowing nothing of sex, conscious of conception, acquainted with childbirth, ignorant of corruption, whole in modesty, closed in integrity, chaste in her children, spread wide in fruitfulness. This mother, so pious, while today she celebrates the birthday feast of one of her offspring, opens her bosom, extends her embrace, sends forth her voice, sings in divine canticles, to call all, to take in all, to enclose all in the lap of charity to rejoice with her.

Adest ipsa etiam mater Christiani perennis et fidelis imperii, quae dum fide, opere misericordiae, sanctitate in honore Trinitatis beatam sectatur et imitatur Ecclesiam, procreare, amplecti, possidere, augustam meruit Trinitatem. Sic remunerat Trinitas in sui amore et ardore ferventes, ista meruit ut daret sibi honorem, gauderet quod sibi fecit Dei gratia religionem consimilem. Ista meruit ut genitricis dignitas per genitricem redundaret in posteros. Orate, fratres, ut Christiani principes, quia pia devotione dignantur nostris occurrere gaudiis, nostris solemnitatibus interesse, ipsos quoque pari gratia omnium sacerdotum longo in tempore obsecratio devota commendet.

There is present too the mother herself of the Christian empire, perennial and faithful, who, while by faith, by works of mercy, by holiness, in honour of the Trinity, she follows and imitates the blessed Church, has merited to bring forth, embrace and possess an august trinity. Thus the Trinity rewards those who are fervent in its love and ardour: she has merited that honour should be given her, that she should rejoice that the grace of God had made for her a religion like her own. She has merited that the dignity of the bearer should overflow through the bearer to her descendants. Pray, brothers, that the Christian princes too, since with pious devotion they deign to come to our joys, to be present at our solemnities, may be commended for a long time, with like grace, by the devout entreaty of all the priests.

Sermo CXXXI.

De Deo, ut videatur; de livore et pertinacia Judaeorum, deque hominis morte

Saepe diximus quod Deus corporeis oculis non videtur, quod divinitas non clauditur mente carnali, quod humana ratio rerum non capit conditorem, sed Deum sola fides attingit, credulitas sentit tota, nec quantus est, sed quia est, hominis, quantuscumque est, intuetur aspectus. Denique Moyses, qui de servo in amicum, de homine promovetur in Deum, Dei faciem quaerit, sed non invenit; petit, sed non accipit; et ut posteriora tantum Dei videat, admonetur: quatenus homo Deum quaerat sequi, non praecedere; neque ante Deum quae sint quaerere praesumat; sed quod per Deum sint omnia adorator agnoscat.

Crebro Deus hominibus formam hominis demonstrat, et magnitudinem suam tantam, brevem nostri operis colligit in figuram, ut praesentiam divinam possit infirmus noster oculus intueri, angustus noster recipere possit aspectus. Sic ad Abraham Deus venit in hominis forma, succedit hospitis in figura, et lassi viatoris in morem accepit pedibus suis aquam; sed et invitatus ad mensam vituli et panis appositione saturatur: et ita se totus humano credit et committit obsequio, ut ipso tactu, visu, verum hominem videatur explere, et hoc eo tempore quo verus Deus sterilitati extremae senis desperatae patefactis visceribus in partum sobolem largiturus advenit. Sic Jacob vianti conviator occurrit, et ita se humano collegio socium praebet, ut provocanti homini Deus totus in luctam inseratur, et tunc videbatur nervis aut lacertis vincere, quando victor coelestia dat dona, munera dat divina.

Sic Isaias Deum regali habitu sedere conspexit, ut agnosceret nisi a Deo rege regantur reges, ipsos cum sint homines, nihil regere posse rectores. Sic Daniel Deum Patrem, crine niveo, senectute reverenda, antiquitate terribilem, septum angelis, ignitum sede, ad judicandum residere conspicit. Sic ipsum Filium Dei in hominis filio venientem cum coeli nubibus intuetur, ut ignotum ante tantis perfidis Christum, fidelibus notum semper fuisse cognoscat. Si toties Deus ab hominibus in figura hominis videtur, quid est quod Judaeus modo hominem videns Christum, sic exasperatur, nisi forte figura, honor, veritas, putatur injuria?

Sermon CXXXI.

On God, how he is seen; on the spite and stubbornness of the Jews; and on the death of man

We have often said that God is not seen with bodily eyes, that divinity is not enclosed by the carnal mind, that human reason does not grasp the Maker of things, but faith alone reaches God, belief wholly perceives him, and the sight of man, however great it is, beholds not how great he is, but that he is. Indeed Moses, who from servant is advanced to friend, from man into God, seeks the face of God, but does not find it; asks, but does not receive; and he is told that he may see only the back of God (Exod 33:23): so that man may seek to follow God, not to go before him; nor presume to seek what things are before God; but as a worshipper acknowledge that all things are through God.

Often God shows men the form of a man, and gathers his so great magnitude into the small figure of our making, so that our weak eye may be able to behold the divine presence, our narrow sight may be able to receive it. So God came to Abraham in the form of a man, comes in the figure of a guest, and in the manner of a weary traveller received water for his feet; and, invited to table, he is filled with the setting-out of the calf and the bread: and so he wholly entrusts and commits himself to human service, that by touch itself, by sight, he seems to fill out a true man, and this at the time when the true God came to give offspring to the extreme barrenness of a hopeless old woman, opening her womb for childbirth (Gen 18:1–10). So he meets Jacob, a fellow traveller to the traveller, and so offers himself as a companion in human fellowship, that God puts himself wholly into the wrestling with the man who challenges him, and he seemed to win by sinews or muscles at the very time when, the victor, he gives heavenly gifts, gives divine bounties (Gen 32:25–30).

So Isaiah saw God sitting in royal attire (Isa 6:1), that he might recognise that unless kings are ruled by God the king, the rulers themselves, since they are men, can rule nothing. So Daniel sees God the Father, with snowy hair, in venerable old age, terrible in his antiquity, surrounded by angels, fiery on his seat, sitting down to judge (Dan 7:9–10). So he beholds the Son of God himself coming in the son of man with the clouds of heaven (Dan 7:13), that he might know that Christ, unknown before to so many unbelievers, had always been known to the faithful. If God is so often seen by men in the figure of a man, why is it that the Jew, now seeing Christ to be man, is so exasperated, unless perhaps figure, honour, truth is thought an injury?

Retulit evangelista hodie Christum dixisse: Si quis sermonem meum servaverit, non videbit mortem in aeternum. Ad quod verbum responderunt Judaei: Nunc cognovimus quia daemonium habes: Abraham pater noster mortuus est et prophetae; et tu dicis: Si quis sermonem meum servaverit, non gustabit mortem in aeternum. Numquid tu major es patre nostro Abraham? Quem teipsum facis?

Omnes perfidia qualiter excepit! o qualiter oculos claudit livor! quantum judicium cordis nequitia praejudicata confundit! o quam dure amputat obstinatio rationem! sensus humanus perversus audire non potest, quod semel statuit odisse, malis bonitas exosa, justitia injustis inimica. Hinc est quod homines mendaces cognoscere nequeunt veritatem, judex animus invenire verum non potest inter nuntia falsitatum. Quod vult, non quod est, audit semper, qui decrevit errare. Dixerat Christus: Si quis sermonem meum servaverit, mortem non videbit in aeternum. Judaeus non discutit audita, interpretari sibi dicta non quaerit: quod ipse impossibile aestimat, exigit ut ille astruat qui promittit; sed mox de conceptu mentis blasphemiam parturit, serit injurias, maledicta diffundit, et auctoritatem dicentis ita contumeliis vacuare nititur, ut et aeterna dare posse mortalibus non credatur, qui sic humanis videtur subjacere.

Nunc scimus quoniam daemonium habes. Daemon mali auctor, mala promittit, non bona; occidere, non vivificare consuevit; nec vult aeternos esse homines, quos nec temporales esse permittit. Ergo non est daemon, sed Deus est Christus, qui redonat quam donaverat vitam, et verbo suo aeternos facit homines, quos diabolus persuasione sua fecerat temporales.

Abraham, inquit, mortuus est et prophetae, et tu dicis: Si quis sermonem meum servaverit, mortem non videbit in aeternum. Audiat fidelis, ut fide revelante cognoscat quod infidelis nescit audire, quod videre non potest qui semet incredulitatis demersit obscuro. Dixit Christus: Mortem non videbit. Obstinatio tua, Judaee, merito dicere falsitatem quaerit. Abraham et prophetae verbum audientes tenaciter servaverunt, sed tamen mortui sunt, sed non in aeternum. Ergo cum dicit: Mortem non videbit, et addidit In aeternum, resurrectionem promittit, non temporaliter negat esse morituros. Judaee, quos mors in praesenti saeculo faciebat non esse, nos resurrectio perpetuos reficit in futurum. Audi apertius hoc dicentem: Omnis qui crediderit, non morietur in aeternum, sed transibit de morte ad vitam. Quomodo non moritur? Quia de morte transit ad vitam. Moritur ergo, moritur omnis qui nascitur de conditione mortali; sed vivit, et in aeternum vivit, omnis qui renascitur de generatione vitali.

The Evangelist has told us today that Christ said: If anyone keeps my word, he will not see death for ever (John 8:51). To which word the Jews answered: Now we know that you have a demon: Abraham our father is dead, and the prophets; and you say: If anyone keeps my word, he will not taste death for ever (John 8:52). Can it be that you are greater than our father Abraham? (John 8:53) Whom do you make yourself?

How unbelief has seized them all! O how spite shuts the eyes! how greatly wickedness, having judged beforehand, confounds the judgement of the heart! O how harshly obstinacy cuts off reason! human sense, perverted, cannot hear what it has once resolved to hate: to the wicked goodness is hateful, justice an enemy to the unjust. Hence it is that lying men cannot know the truth, and the mind, as judge, cannot find what is true amid the reports of falsehoods. He who has decided to err always hears what he wants, not what is. Christ had said: If anyone keeps my word, he will not see death for ever. The Jew does not examine what he has heard, does not seek to interpret to himself what was said: what he himself thinks impossible he demands that the one who promises should prove; but at once from the conception of his mind he gives birth to blasphemy, sows insults, spreads curses, and strives so to empty the authority of the speaker with abuse that he who seems thus subject to human things may not be believed able to give eternal things to mortals.

Now we know that you have a demon. A demon, the author of evil, promises evil things, not good; he is accustomed to kill, not to give life; nor does he want men to be eternal, whom he does not allow even to be temporal. So Christ is not a demon, but God, who gives back the life he had given, and by his word makes men eternal, whom the devil by his persuasion had made temporal.

Abraham, he says, is dead, and the prophets, and you say: If anyone keeps my word, he will not see death for ever. Let the faithful man hear, so that by the revealing of faith he may know what the faithless man does not know how to hear, what he cannot see who has plunged himself into the darkness of disbelief. Christ said: He will not see death. Your obstinacy, Jew, rightly seeks to call it falsehood. Abraham and the prophets, hearing the word, kept it tenaciously, but yet they died, but not for ever. So when he says, He will not see death, and has added, for ever, he promises resurrection; he does not deny that they will die in time. Jew, us whom death in the present age made not to be, resurrection remakes everlasting for the future. Hear him saying this more openly: Everyone who believes will not die for ever, but will pass from death to life (John 5:24; 11:26). How does he not die? Because he passes from death to life. He dies, then, everyone dies who is born of a mortal condition; but he lives, and lives for ever, everyone who is reborn of the life-giving generation.

Sed dico, qui potuit auferre mortem, quare hominem voluit transire per mortem? gratior enim videtur medicus qui anticipat morbos, quam qui morbis ingerit seram et non sine dolore medicinam. Judaee, fecisset et hoc medicus Christus, si medico aegrotus non fuisset ingratus. Ille et vitam dedit, et homini mortem venire praedixit: sed ille qui adversa non senserat, prospera servare nescivit. Bona, quam sint bona, scire, nisi malorum cognitione non possumus. Ergo magnificabitur Christus, qui et ante inhabitam vitam dedit, et perditam modo reddit: et homo plus gnarus vitae, erit sibi cautior, erit plus gratus auctori.

Numquid major es, inquit, patre nostro Abraham? Plane major et tanto major, quantum servo dominus, quantum Deus homine, quantum factura factor, quantum vivificans mortuo, quantum suscitans suscitato. Respondit Jesus, Abraham exsultavit ut videret diem meum; vidit, et gavisus est. Ille, ut ostenderet vivere Abraham, dixit illum vidisse diem suum, id est diem quo mundo natus est Christus. Dierum conditor non tenetur die, temporis auctor tempora nescit; sed Christus propter hominem homo natus, et diem suscepit et tempus. Abraham exsultavit ut videret diem meum. Si Moyses et Elias in monte occurrunt, ut promissum conspicerent Christum, quomodo nec Abraham occurrit ad partum Virginis, ut promissam benedictionem in gentibus, id est, in semine suo, patientissimus exspectator intenderet?

Amen, amen, inquit, dico vobis quia ante Abraham ego sum. Si omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil, et hic est cui Pater dixit: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram, quomodo Abraham non vidit? Faciamus hominem ad imaginem, et similitudinem nostram. Angelus et Deus, ut diversa est substantia, sic imago. Ergo non nisi ad Filium loquitur Pater, cum dicit: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram, quibus est imago eadem, eademque substantia.

Tulerunt lapides, ut mitterent in illum. Et aedificantes turrem, ut altius caderent, ipsi sibi lapides providerunt; et isti lapides, non ut Deum occiderent, sed unde se occiderent, miserabiles attulerunt. Jesus abscondit se. Non timens, sed ignoscens: Deus peccatorem cum fugit, parcit; Deus rebellem non vult perdere, cum declinat.

But I say: why did he who could take away death wish man to pass through death? for the physician who forestalls diseases seems more welcome than he who applies to diseases a late medicine, and not without pain. Jew, Christ the physician would have done this too, if the sick man had not been ungrateful to the physician. He both gave life and foretold to man that death would come: but he who had not felt adversity did not know how to keep prosperity. How good good things are we cannot know except by the knowledge of evils. So Christ will be magnified, who both gave life before, when it was not yet possessed, and now gives it back when lost: and man, more knowing of life, will be more careful of himself, will be more grateful to his author.

Can it be that you are greater, he says, than our father Abraham? Plainly greater, and as much greater as a master than a servant, as God than man, as the maker than the thing made, as the life-giver than the dead, as the raiser than the raised. Jesus answered: Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad (John 8:56). He, to show that Abraham lives, said that he had seen his day, that is, the day on which Christ was born to the world. The Maker of days is not held by a day, the author of time knows no times; but Christ, born man for man's sake, took up both day and time. Abraham rejoiced to see my day. If Moses and Elijah run to meet him on the mountain to behold the promised Christ (Matt 17:3), how should Abraham not also run to meet the Virgin's childbearing, so that, the most patient of watchers, he might fix his eyes on the blessing promised among the nations, that is, in his seed?

Amen, amen, he says, I say to you, before Abraham I am (John 8:58). If all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made (John 1:3), and this is he to whom the Father said: Let us make man to our image and likeness (Gen 1:26), how did Abraham not see him? Let us make man to our image, and likeness. As the angel and God differ in substance, so do they in image. So it is to none but the Son that the Father speaks when he says: Let us make man to our image and likeness, they who have the same image and the same substance.

They took up stones to throw at him (John 8:59). Those who built the tower, too, so as to fall from higher up, provided themselves with stones; and these wretched men brought stones not to kill God, but with which to kill themselves. Jesus hid himself. Not fearing, but forgiving: God, when he flees the sinner, spares him; God does not want to destroy the rebel when he turns aside.

Sermo CXXXII.

De unitate fidelium

Si perfecta omnia, si robusta, si nullius indiga gigneret et proferret natura, profecto aboleretur pietas, ingenium deficeret, ars periret, aurum obscuraretur in terra, gemma occultaretur in lapide: utraque tamen invenit, purgat, distinguit, elimat opifex disciplina; et ars eadem usque ad murenulae pretiosae speciem, gratiamque perducit; et quod terra naturae largo de fonte producit, aut asperatur sentibus, aut agresti luxuria dominante silvescit, nisi illud ad cultum suum solers agricolae revocet industria; et ne longius evagemur, uno et vernaculo ea in quibus nitimur afferamus exemplo. In cunabulis jam natus homo in homine est, sed latet; est corpus, et non est; membra videntur, et non sunt; vivunt quae non vigent sensu; inclinatur pietas, desudat industria, ars laborat; et ut plenius dicam, quot membra hominis, tot magisteria ut hominem perficiant, elaborant. Et quid plura? cuncta quae natura generat vel producit, pietas nutrit, industria excolit, ars decorat.

Et quid mirum, fratres, si Deus, qui pati propter hominem voluit, ut hominis honoraret industriam, in rebus praesentibus infirmari voluit et naturam? Hinc est quod sensus in littera latet, occultatur divinum in humano sermone mysterium; ut quae credentibus adhuc futura jam patent, perfidis et non credentibus obscurentur, ac si infidelium poena fidelium redundet ad gloriam. Non enim parvi est cruciatus visa non cernere, audita nescire, salutifera velut noxia declinare, virtutes quasi vitia sic cavere, dicente ipso Domino: In parabolis loquor, ut videntes non videant, et audientes non audiant; et ad fideles: Vobis autem datum est nosse mysterium Dei.

Nulli ergo, fratres, simplicitate sua aut communis aut vilis sermo evangelicus habeatur, praesertim cum ipsa personans evangelicae lectionis tuba bene petentibus et pie cupientibus praedixerit denegandum, dicendo: Quia si duo ex vobis convenerint super terram, de omni re, quamcumque petierint, fiet illis a Patre meo. Audistis quantum possit et praevaleat sanctae petitionis assensus: non dixit illud aut illud, sed totum se promittit quidquid unitas postulationis concupierit, praestaturum, cum dicit: De omni re, quamcumque petierint, fiet illis.

Sermon CXXXII.

On the unity of the faithful

If nature begot and brought forth all things perfect, all strong, all needing nothing, then surely piety would be abolished, talent would fail, art would perish, gold would lie dark in the earth, the gem would be hidden in the stone: yet the artificer's discipline finds both, cleanses, sets apart, polishes; and the same art brings them to the beauty and grace of a precious necklace; and what the earth brings forth from the generous spring of nature either grows rough with thorns or runs wild under a rustic luxuriance that masters it, unless the skilful industry of the farmer calls it back to its cultivation; and, not to wander further, let us bring forward the things on which we rely by one example, and that a home-grown one. In the cradle the newborn man is already man in man, but hidden; there is a body, and there is not; limbs are seen, and they are not limbs; things live that are not strong in sense; piety bends down, industry toils, art labours; and to say it more fully, as many limbs as a man has, so many teachings labour to bring the man to completion. And what more? all things that nature begets or brings forth, piety nurses, industry cultivates, art adorns.

And what wonder is it, brothers, if God, who willed to suffer for man's sake, so as to honour man's industry, willed that in present things nature too should be weak? Hence it is that the sense lies hidden in the letter, the divine mystery is concealed in human speech; so that what already lies open to believers, though still to come, may be obscured for the unbelieving and for those who do not believe, as though the punishment of the faithless overflowed to the glory of the faithful. For it is no small torment not to perceive what is seen, not to know what is heard, to shun saving things as harmful, to beware of virtues as if they were vices, as the Lord himself says: I speak in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear (Luke 8:10); and to the faithful: But to you it has been given to know the mystery of God (Mark 4:11).

Let no one, then, brothers, hold the word of the Gospel common or cheap because of its simplicity, especially since the very trumpet of the Gospel reading, sounding forth, has proclaimed beforehand what is not to be denied to those who ask well and desire piously, saying: If two of you agree on earth about anything whatever they ask, it will be done for them by my Father (Matt 18:19). You have heard how much the agreement of holy petition can do and prevail: he did not say this or that, but promises that he will grant all, whatever the unity of the petition desires, when he says: About anything whatever they ask, it will be done for them.

Salva tamen ea cautela et reverentia, ut a Deo, quae Deo digna sunt, postulentur; qui enim mala a Deo postulat, Deum mali judicat et sentit auctorem: et quia vilia et indigna precatur, praestantis potestatem et potentiam degener petitor ignorat. Non ergo impia, sed pia; non terrena, sed coelestia; non illecebris, sed virtuti congrua; non digna odiis, sed apta concordiae, a tali semper exoranda sunt largitore.

Ubi sunt qui praesumunt Ecclesiae conventum posse contemni, et solitarias preces venerandae congregationi autumant anteferri, si duobus vel tribus simul positis medium se futurum, et omnia se promittit quae postulatus fuerit praestaturum? Qui nil negat tam paucis, quid in conciliis et congregatione sanctorum poscentibus denegabit? Sic credens propheta hoc adeptum se gloriatur cum dicit: Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo, in concilio justorum et congregatione. Toto corde confitetur, qui totum sibi in concilio sanctorum quod poposcerit, audit esse praestandum.

Sed nonnulli sub specie fidei, contemptus sui excusare nituntur ignaviam; ut neglecto venerandi coetus et congregationis ardore, illud se tempus orationi deputasse confingant, quod domesticis dederint et impenderint curis; et dum propriis desideriis mancipantur, divina contemnunt et despiciunt instituta. Isti sunt qui corpus Christi dissipant, membra dispergunt: nec ad decorem suum patiuntur formam Dominici habitus pervenire, quam propheta cum vidisset in spiritu, sic canebat: Speciosus forma prae filiis hominum. Habent quidem singula membra proprium sui munus officii, quod tamen tunc implere poterunt, si connexa sibi et compaginata perfecti corporis perveniant ad decorem. Hoc ergo interest inter congregationis plenitudinem gloriosam, et separationis praesumptam de ignorantia aut negligentia vanitatem; quod in salute et honore integri corporis species est unitas membrorum et in separatione viscerum est foeda, lethalis et horrenda pernicies.

Homo, quid aliud te docuit in tuo corpore, aut sic divisa conjunctio, aut tam conjuncta divisio, nisi ut ex multis unus, et unus in multis viveres? Est membrorum commercio salutari pretiosus oculus, sed si perseverat in corpore; alioqui ubi corpori defuerit, sibi non aderit: debent illi membra omnia suae lucis obsequium; sed et ipse oculus sentit corpori se debere quod lux est, qui utique cum omnibus membris ministerium membrorum provideat, evulsus a corpore nec videt.

With this caution and reverence kept, however, that what is worthy of God be asked of God; for he who asks evil things of God judges and thinks God the author of evil: and since he prays for cheap and unworthy things, the degenerate petitioner does not know the power and might of the giver. Not impious things, then, but pious; not earthly, but heavenly; not things suited to allurements, but to virtue; not things worthy of hatred, but fit for concord, are always to be entreated from such a giver.

Where are those who presume that the assembly of the Church may be despised, and claim that solitary prayers are to be preferred to the venerable congregation, when he promises that he will be in the midst of two or three gathered together, and will grant all things for which he has been asked (Matt 18:20)? He who denies nothing to so few, what will he deny to those who ask in the assemblies and congregation of the saints? So the Prophet, believing, glories that he has obtained this, when he says: I will confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart, in the assembly of the just and in the congregation (Ps 111:1). He confesses with his whole heart who hears that the whole of what he has asked in the assembly of the saints is to be granted him.

But some, under a show of faith, strive to excuse the sloth of their contempt; so that, neglecting the ardour of the venerable gathering and congregation, they pretend that they have assigned to prayer the time which they have given and spent on household cares; and while they are enslaved to their own desires, they despise and look down on divine institutions. These are they who scatter the body of Christ, disperse its members: nor do they allow the form of the Lord's condition to come to its beauty, which the Prophet, when he had seen it in the spirit, sang thus: Beautiful in form above the sons of men (Ps 45:3). Each member indeed has the proper task of its own office, which, however, they will be able to fulfil only if, joined to one another and fitted together, they come to the beauty of a perfect body. This, then, is the difference between the glorious fullness of the congregation and the vanity of separation, presumed out of ignorance or negligence: that in the health and honour of an entire body its beauty is the unity of the members, and in the separation of the vitals there is a foul, deadly and horrible ruin.

Man, what else has your own body taught you, either a joining so divided, or a division so joined, but that out of many you should live as one, and as one in many? The eye is precious through the saving commerce of the members, but if it remains in the body; otherwise, when it is missing from the body, it will not be present to itself: all the members owe it the service of its light; but the eye itself too feels that it owes to the body that it is light, for, though it provides the ministry of the members together with all the members, torn from the body it does not even see.

Quisquis ille est qui se putat esse aliquid, tali institutus exemplo maneat in Ecclesia, ut sit aliquid; alioqui ubi defuerit illi, sibi esse mox definit. Quod qui plenius nosse desiderat, Apostoli de corpore Christi loquentis perlegat instituta, quia nos illa percurrere sermonis brevitas amica non patitur.

Lex est data non uni, sed omnibus. Christus non pro uno, nec ad unum, sed ad omnes, et pro omnibus venit; ut redintegraret omnes in unum, solum bonum, solum jucundum propheta futuri praescius, sic proclamat: Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum. Quia Deo non singularitas est accepta, sed unitas. Spiritus sanctus apostolis in unum congregatis ubertate tota sui fontis illabitur, cujus ut simul discipuli operirentur adventum Dominica sunt praeceptione commoniti. Fratres, amittit divina munera, perdit gratiae largitatem, charitatis fraudatur bonis, unitatis illum benedictio non manebit, qui de se maleficus, et ex defectu suo stulte sibi sufficiens, sic praeter Ecclesiam vitam quaerit, quam in ipsa tantum esse propheta testatur, dicendo: Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum; quia illic mandavit Dominus benedictionem et vitam usque in saeculum.

Whoever he is who thinks himself to be something, let him, taught by such an example, remain in the Church, that he may be something; otherwise, when he is missing from her, he at once ceases to be anything to himself. Whoever desires to know this more fully, let him read through the teachings of the Apostle speaking of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12–27), for the friendly brevity of the sermon does not allow us to run through them.

The Law was given not to one, but to all. Christ came not for one, nor to one, but to all, and for all; that he might restore all into one: the Prophet, foreknowing the future, proclaims thus this one good, this one pleasant thing: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity (Ps 133:1). For to God not singularity is acceptable, but unity. The Holy Spirit glides down with all the abundance of his fount upon the apostles gathered into one (Acts 2:1–4), whose coming the disciples had been admonished by the Lord's precept to await together (Acts 1:4). Brothers, he loses the divine gifts, forfeits the bounty of grace, is defrauded of the goods of charity, the blessing of unity will not remain with him, who, an evil-doer of himself, and foolishly sufficient to himself out of his own failing, thus seeks life outside the Church, the life which the Prophet testifies is in her alone, saying: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity; for there the Lord has commanded blessing and life for ever (Ps 133:1, 3).

Sermo CXXXIII.

In D. Andream apostolum

Beatus Andreas merito natus hodie creditur, quando non ad praesentem vitam materno est effusus ex utero, sed conceptu fidei, martyrii partu, coelestem noscitur generatus ad gloriam. Quando non eum materna cunabula suscepere vagientem, sed superna triumphantem secreta receperunt; quando non infirmum lactis pastum genitricis trahit ex pectore, sed pro rege suo devotissimus miles virtutis sanguinem fudit. Vivit, quia mortem coelestis militiae bellator occidit.

Sequitur hic moriendo Domino aestuans et anhelans, ac toto virtutis gradu Dominicis incumbit haerere vestigiis, ne eum cursus faciat disparem fratri, quem natura similem, vocatio socium, parem gratia ipsa perfecerat. Ad unam vocem Domini sicut ille patrem, patriam, censum reliquit: laboribus, opprobriis, itineribus, contumeliis, vigiliis, Christo largiente, se indefesse germani societati donavit: solum est quod tempore Dominicae Passionis fugit, sed neque hoc impar, quia fugit. Negare autem si aliqua putatur culpa, non est gravius fugere quam negare. Sed tacenda sunt alia: aequavit, fratres, venia, quos sic discreverat culpa.

Et subsecutus martyrii fervor devotos perprobavit, quos metus improbaverat antecedens. Nam crucem quam refugerant, postea conjunctis viribus ardenter invadunt, ut unde reatum sumpserant, inde conscenderent coelum, inde praemium sumerent et coronam. Petrus namque crucem, arborem conscendit Andreas; ut qui Christo compati gestiebant, in semetipsis figuram formamque ipsius exprimerent passionis; et redempti ligno, consummarentur ad palmam. Sic Andreas noster etsi cedit ordini, praemio tamen non cedit et labori.

Sermon CXXXIII.

On Saint Andrew, apostle

Blessed Andrew is rightly believed to have been born today, since he was not poured forth from his mother's womb into the present life, but is known to have been begotten to heavenly glory by the conception of faith and the childbirth of martyrdom. Since no mother's cradle took him up wailing, but the secret places on high received him triumphing; since he does not draw the weak nourishment of milk from his bearer's breast, but as a most devoted soldier of virtue has shed his blood for his king. He lives, because as a warrior of the heavenly service he slew death.

He follows here the Lord in dying, burning and panting, and with the whole stride of his virtue he presses on to cling to the Lord's footsteps, lest his course should make him unlike his brother, whom nature had made like him, the calling his companion, grace itself his equal. At one word of the Lord, like him he left father, fatherland, wealth: in labours, reproaches, journeys, insults, vigils, by Christ's bounty, he gave himself untiringly to his brother's company: the one thing is that in the time of the Lord's Passion he fled; but not even in this was he unequal, for he fled. But if denying is thought any fault, fleeing is not more grievous than denying. But other things must be passed over in silence: pardon, brothers, made equal those whom fault had thus set apart.

And the fervour of martyrdom that followed proved fully devoted those whom the fear that went before had disproved. For the cross from which they had shrunk back they afterwards rush upon ardently with joined strength, so that from where they had taken on guilt, from there they might climb to heaven, from there take their reward and crown. For Peter climbed a cross, Andrew a tree; so that those who longed to suffer with Christ might express in themselves the figure and form of his Passion, and, redeemed by the wood, might be brought to fulfilment in the palm. Thus our Andrew, though he yields in rank, yet does not yield in reward and labour.

Sermo CXXXIV.

In D. Felicitatem martyrem

Quoniam varios martyrum multiplicesve triumphos, quos persecutoris crudelitas toties illusa cumulavit, tempus nos dinumerare non patitur, ad illam tota nostri sermonis confugit oratio, quae meruit filios tot habere quot dies mundus accepit. Vere mater luminum, fons dierum, quae septenario corusco germinis sui toto orbe splendet. Beata, quae non solum pro lege patitur, sed ipsius legis heptalismum meruit mater sancta generare: heptalismum, fratres, qui non unius et temporalis tabernaculi illustraret arcanum, sed Ecclesiam sempiternam sacro illuminaret incenso. Felix, quae meruit portare tot virtutum pignora quot illa arca praeceptorum volumina sacrata gestavit; et ut illa verbo, ita haec doceret exemplo. Jam tunc eos, fratres, martyres genuit, quando eos partus sui septenario numero consecravit et mystico.

Huc, huc sanctus Paulus veniat, qui adhuc parturit donec Christus formetur in homine. Ecce mulier iterum atque iterum parturit, donec in virtutem mutetur infirmitas, caro transcendat in spiritum, terra transferatur in coelum. Ardebat, anhelabat, ut eos uno die sacros martyres pareret, quos vix parvulos per annorum curricula generabat. Ecce mulier, ecce mater, quam vita filiorum fecit anxiam, mors securam. Beata, cui in futura gloria tot astant candelabra, quot germina; beata, quae tot praemisit ad regnum; beatior, quae suum in saeculo nil amisit. Discurrebat laetior inter confossa cadavera quam inter cunabula chara filiorum, quia internis oculis tot cernebat bravia quot vulnera; quot tormenta, tot praemia; quot victimas, tot coronas. Et quid plura, fratres? Non est, non est vera mater, quae nescit filios sic amare.

Sermon CXXXIV.

On Saint Felicity, martyr

Since time does not allow us to count up the various and manifold triumphs of the martyrs, which the cruelty of the persecutor, mocked so many times, has heaped up, the whole discourse of our sermon takes refuge in her who merited to have as many sons as the days the world received. Truly the mother of lights, the fountain of days, who shines through the whole world with the sevenfold flash of her offspring. Blessed is she who not only suffers for the Law, but as a holy mother merited to bring forth the sevenfold band of the Law itself: a sevenfold band, brothers, which would light up not the secret of one temporal tabernacle, but would illumine the everlasting Church with holy incense. Happy is she who merited to carry as many pledges of virtues as the sacred volumes of the commandments that the ark of old carried (Exod 25); and that, as the ark taught by the word, so she might teach by example. Even then, brothers, she bore them as martyrs, when she consecrated them by the sevenfold and mystical number of her childbearing.

Here, here let holy Paul come, who is still in labour until Christ be formed in man (Gal 4:19). Behold, a woman again and again is in labour, until weakness be changed into power, flesh pass over into spirit, earth be transferred into heaven. She burned, she panted to bring forth in one day as holy martyrs those whom as little ones she had scarcely brought forth through the course of years. Behold the woman, behold the mother, whom the life of her sons made anxious, their death secure. Blessed is she, beside whom in the glory to come there stand as many lampstands as there were offspring; blessed is she who sent so many ahead to the kingdom; more blessed is she who lost nothing of her own in this world. She ran about more gladly among the pierced corpses than among the dear cradles of her sons, because with inward eyes she saw as many prizes as wounds; as many rewards as torments; as many crowns as victims. And what more, brothers? She is not, she is not a true mother who does not know how to love her sons so.

Sermo CXXXV.

In D. Laurentium

Hodiernus dies baptismi martyris Laurentii corona illustratur, cujus egregii martyris merita nulla pars Romani orbis ignorat. Passus est in ipso capite gentium, id est, in ipsa urbe Romana. Ibi enim diaconus ministravit, et in ipso juventutis suae flore decorem juventutis suae sanguine purpuravit. Passio ejus insignis est, multumque mirabilis: hanc breviter, Domino adjuvante, narrabo.

Illo tunc archidiacono beatus Sixtus erat episcopus, cujus triumphus martyrii ante triduum fuit. Cum ergo sanctus Laurentius episcopum suum Sixtum pergentem ad martyrium sequeretur, fide fultus, tristis affectu, non quia ille patiebatur, sed quia ab illo ipse deserebatur, respexit venerabilis senex venerabilem juvenem, et ait illi: Noli esse tristis, fili, post triduum me sequeris. Tunc ille ebibita prophetia, jam corde paratissimus, ex spiritu ebrius, certum speravit futurum quod praedixerat ille qui noverat.

Deinde apprehensus, est adductus: et quoniam erat archidiaconus, apud illum esse utique credebantur opes Ecclesiae, quas desiderabat persecutor, non tam avarus quam furiosus. Oderat quem occidebat: sed amabat apud eum quod ille contemnebat. Erat autem sanctus Laurentius pauper opibus, dives moribus: non se negavit Ecclesiae habere divitias, sed ut eas ostenderet, tridui dilationem petiit, deinde mandavit congregari agmina pauperum. Tunc deinde ipso die coronae suae praesentatus examini, tamquam demonstraturus quod ille quaerebat, demonstravit quod habebat. Tunc ait persecutor: Ubi sunt Ecclesiae facultates? At ille manum extendens in pauperes: Hae sunt, inquit, Ecclesiae facultates.

Verum dixit, sed amarum. Quid autem mirum, si veritas auxit odium? Irrisum se dolens crudelis tyrannus et avarus inimicus, qui forte mitiorem poenam cogitaverat, ferro interficere venerabilem juvenem, parari flammas praecepit; plus ardebat quam urebat; urebat in carne, ardebat in corde. Supplicium ejus tanto erat gravius, quanto interius. Tunc oblata est torrenda, et ut verius dicam, assanda martyrio nobilis illa Laurentii craticula: astrictus est ferro, sed ille craticulam supplicii, lectum quietis putabat: supplicium dixi, secundum animum punientis, non secundum conscientiam patientis.

Sermon CXXXV.

On Saint Lawrence

Today's day is made illustrious by the crown of the baptism of the martyr Lawrence, the merits of which illustrious martyr no part of the Roman world is ignorant of. He suffered in the very head of the nations, that is, in the city of Rome itself. For there he ministered as deacon, and in the very flower of his youth he dyed the beauty of his youth purple with his blood. His passion is renowned and greatly to be wondered at: I will tell it briefly, with the Lord's help.

When he was then archdeacon, blessed Sixtus was bishop, whose triumph of martyrdom was three days before. When, then, holy Lawrence was following his bishop Sixtus as he went to martyrdom, upheld by faith, sad in his affection, not because the other was suffering, but because he himself was being left behind by him, the venerable old man looked back at the venerable young man and said to him: "Do not be sad, son; after three days you will follow me." Then he, having drunk down the prophecy, already most ready in heart, drunk with the spirit, hoped for as certain the future that he who knew it had foretold.

Then he was seized and brought in: and since he was archdeacon, the riches of the Church were surely believed to be with him, riches that the persecutor desired, not so much greedy as raging. He hated the man he was killing: but he loved in his keeping what that man despised. Now holy Lawrence was poor in riches, rich in character: he did not deny that he had the riches of the Church, but in order to show them he asked for a delay of three days, then he ordered the throngs of the poor to be gathered. Then, on the very day of his crown, presented for examination, as if about to show what the other was looking for, he showed what he had. Then the persecutor says: "Where are the means of the Church?" But he, stretching out his hand towards the poor: "These," he says, "are the means of the Church."

He spoke the truth, but a bitter one. But what wonder, if truth increased hatred? The cruel tyrant and greedy enemy, smarting at having been mocked, who had perhaps intended a milder penalty, to kill the venerable young man with the sword, ordered flames to be made ready; he blazed more than he burned; he burned in the flesh, he blazed in the heart. His torment was the heavier, the more inward it was. Then that noble gridiron of Lawrence was brought forward, to toast, and to speak more truly, to roast him for martyrdom: he was bound to the iron, but he thought the gridiron of torment a bed of rest: I said torment according to the mind of the one punishing, not according to the conscience of the one suffering.

Nullum est enim supplicium damnati, ubi non est poena peccati. Itaque beatissimus martyr ostendens quam quiete jaceret in illo ignito ferro, ait circumstantibus: Jam me versate, et si una pars cocta est, vorate.

Miramur patientiam, donum Dei miremur. Ibi fides non solum non arsit, sed et consolabatur ardentem. Quare fides consolabatur ardentem? Quia fidelem tenebat promittentem. Ut fides non deficeret, ut spes non averteretur, ut charitas inter poenas igneas corporales plus accenderetur, Dei dona erant. Fratres mei, nemo arroget potentiae suae quod non dat nisi Deus. Merito Apostolus alloquens martyres, ut in Epistola ejus hodie cum legeretur, audistis: Vobis, inquit, donatum est pro Christo, non solum ut credatis in eum, sed etiam ut patiamini pro eo. Ergo martyrum merita velut Dei dona laudemus, amemus, oremus, subinferamus voluntatem nostram. Voluntas enim sequitur, non praevenit. Sed tamen non deest charitas, si non desit voluntas; ipsa enim ardens voluntas vocatur charitas. Quis est qui timeat volens? quis est qui amet nolens? ferveat oratio, et festum martyris celebretur: sed ut non sit inanis qui celebrat, imitetur.

For there is no torment of the condemned where there is no penalty of sin. And so the most blessed martyr, showing how quietly he lay on that fiery iron, said to those standing round: "Turn me now, and if one side is cooked, eat."

We wonder at his patience: let us wonder at the gift of God. There faith not only did not burn, but even consoled the one who was burning. Why did faith console the one who was burning? Because it held fast the One who promised as faithful. That faith should not fail, that hope should not be turned away, that charity should be kindled the more among the fiery penalties of the body, these were gifts of God. My brothers, let no one claim for his own power what none but God gives. Rightly does the Apostle, addressing the martyrs, as you heard when it was read today in his Epistle: To you, he says, it has been granted for Christ, not only that you believe in him, but also that you suffer for him (Phil 1:29). Therefore let us praise the merits of the martyrs as gifts of God, let us love them, let us pray, let us bring in our will after them. For the will follows, it does not go before. But yet charity is not lacking, if the will is not lacking; for the burning will itself is called charity. Who is there who fears while willing? who is there who loves while unwilling? let prayer be fervent, and let the martyr's feast be celebrated: but so that he who celebrates may not be empty, let him imitate.

Sermo CXXXVII.

De praedicatione D. Joannis Baptistae

Posteaquam legis vomere et jugi cultu exinanita Judaici cespitis est ubertas, beatus Joannes gentium convolans ad desertum, sentes criminum spiritus igne succendens, infructuosas arbores excidens ultionis securi, complanans asperos superbiae colles, humilitatis convalles erigens exaequando, et planitiem terrae totam (gramine perdito) aptans, nutricibus submittens irrigua Jordanis: ac sic Evangelico semini novalia diffusa praeparat, fecunda componit. Factum est, inquit, verbum Domini super Joannem Zachariae filium in deserto. Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis. Super Joannem? Quare non ad Joannem, sed super Joannem? Quia quod desursum est, super omnes est. Factum est verbum Domini super Joannem. Quia Joannes vox est, Deus Verbum. Factum est verbum Domini super Joannem. Deus super Joannem, super servum Dominus, super vocem verbum. Sed dicis mihi: Quid, quod vox praecedit verbum? Praecedit, sed non praecellit: antecedit ad sequentis obsequium, non ad propriae potestatis indicium. Vox non est ipsa judex, sed est nuntia judicantis: verbum judicat, vox praetonat: jubentem potestas respicit, non clamantem. Sed hoc fateatur, testetur, asserat vox ipsa, praeco ipse, qui clamat: Qui post me venit, inquit, fortior me est. Quare? Quia in me terror est, in illo est sententia.

Venit in omnem regionem Jordanis. Venit ad Jordanem, quia Judaicas sordes non poterat hydria jam lavare, sed flumen. Sicut scriptum est: Erant, inquit, hydriae lapideae secundum purificationem Judaeorum. Venit ad Jordanem. Ut poenitentes portaret aqua, non vino. Venit in omnem regionem Jordanis, praedicans baptismum poenitentiae in remissionem peccatorum. Erat penes Joannem venia, sed non sine poenitentia; erat remissio, sed luctibus comparata; erat cura vulneris cum dolore; erat baptisma quod culpam tolleret, conscientiam non deleret. Et quid plura? Per baptisma Joannis purificabatur homo ad poenitentiam, non promovebatur ad gratiam. At vero Christi baptisma sic regenerat, sic immutat, sic hominem reddit ex vetere novum, ut praeterita nesciat, non recordetur antiqua, qui de terreno coelestis jam coelestia possidet et divina.

Sermon CXXXVII.

On the preaching of Saint John the Baptist

After the richness of the Jewish soil had been exhausted by the ploughshare of the Law and by constant tilling, blessed John, flying to the desert of the Gentiles, setting fire to the briars of crimes with the fire of the spirit, cutting down the unfruitful trees with the axe of vengeance, levelling the rough hills of pride, raising the valleys of humility as he made them even, and fitting the whole plain of the earth (the grass being lost), laying beneath it the waters of the Jordan to nurse it: and so he prepares wide fallow fields for the seed of the Gospel, and makes them fruitful. The word of the Lord came, he says, upon John the son of Zechariah in the desert (Luke 3:2). The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us (John 1:14). Upon John? Why not to John, but upon John? Because what is from above is above all. The word of the Lord came upon John. Because John is a voice, God the Word. The word of the Lord came upon John. God upon John, the Lord upon the servant, the word upon the voice. But you say to me: "What of the fact that the voice goes before the word?" It goes before, but does not go beyond: it goes ahead for the homage of the one who follows, not as a sign of its own power. The voice is not itself the judge, but the messenger of the one who judges: the word judges, the voice thunders before: power regards the one who commands, not the one who cries out. But let the voice itself acknowledge this, bear witness to it, affirm it, the herald himself, who cries out: He who comes after me, he says, is mightier than I (Matt 3:11). Why? Because in me there is terror, in him there is the sentence.

He came into all the region of the Jordan (Luke 3:3). He came to the Jordan, because a water jar could no longer wash the Jewish filth, but a river could. As it is written: There were, he says, stone water jars, according to the purification of the Jews (John 2:6). He came to the Jordan. So that he might carry the penitent by water, not by wine. He came into all the region of the Jordan, preaching a baptism of penance for the remission of sins (Luke 3:3). With John there was pardon, but not without penance; there was remission, but bought with mourning; there was the cure of the wound, with pain; there was a baptism that would take away the fault, but would not blot out the conscience. And what more? Through John's baptism man was purified for penance, he was not advanced to grace. But the baptism of Christ so regenerates, so changes, so renders man new out of the old, that he does not know what is past, does not remember the things of old, he who, made heavenly out of earthly, now possesses heavenly and divine things.

Hinc est, quod redeunti post luxuriam filio pater immortalitatis reddit stolam primam, annulum libertatis imponit, occidit vitulum saginatum, aquas poenitentiae, gratiae convertit in vinum, ut convivium gratiae jam pocula mera satiarent: quatenus conscientiae dolores, poenitentiae gemitus, peccatorum lamenta, sobria Dominici calicis aboleret ebrietas: dicente propheta: Et calix tuus inebrians, quam praeclarus est. Quantum enim terrena ebrietas est deformis, tantum praeclara et decora ebrietas est coelestis.

Dicebat ergo ad turbas quae exibant ut ab illo baptizarentur: Progenies viperarum, quis ostendit vobis fugere ab ira ventura? Facite ergo dignos fructus poenitentiae, et ne coeperitis dicere, Patrem habemus Abraham. Dico enim vobis, quod potens est Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahae. Jam enim securis ad radices arborum posita est. Omnis arbor non faciens fructum bonum excidetur, et in ignem mittetur. Progenies viperarum. Exemplo corripit, comparatione notat, figura prodit, ut jam non mores solum, sed ipsam naturam possit venenosi germinis immutare. Progenies viperarum. Quia quos Deus creaverat homines, fecerat filios Abrahae, malitia peperit et convertit in viperas; et quos conditor coelestis dulcedine pietatis infuderat, hos impietas amara fecit lethales vomitus, serpentinum virus effundere; et infando crudelitatis auspicio de morte patris concipi, matris de morte generari. Progenies viperarum. Soboles ingrata naturae, cujus ortus est genitoris exitium, cujus vita est mors parentis.

Progenies viperarum. Vipera conceptus sui tempore intra os suum receptum caput conjugis refertur abscindere, ut per cruenta oscula non fetum concipiat illa, sed crimen; ac si carnifices sceleris sui pariat filios, vindictae ordine, non naturae. Nam genimina patris concepta de caede, sanguinis antequam lactis exigunt nutrimentum, et ultionem petunt; matris namque uterum viperae dicuntur exscindere, et scelestum conceptus sui domicilium adhuc immaturis visceribus, maturo furore confringere, ut hoc sit illis vivere, matrem suam, matrem quae illos tales genuit, non videre. Compulsi latius comparationis quam sanctus Joannes fecerat typum descripsimus et figuram, ut non maledicti, sed veritatis sit, quod ab illo Judaei taliter nuncupantur.

Hence it is that to the son returning after his dissoluteness the father gives back the first robe of immortality, puts on him the ring of liberty, kills the fatted calf (Luke 15:22–23), changes the waters of penance into the wine of grace, so that undiluted cups might now satisfy the banquet of grace: so that the sober drunkenness of the Lord's cup might abolish the pains of conscience, the groans of penance, the laments for sins: as the prophet says: And your cup that inebriates, how excellent it is! (Ps 23:5) For as much as earthly drunkenness is ugly, so much is heavenly drunkenness excellent and comely.

He said therefore to the crowds that went out to be baptised by him: Offspring of vipers, who showed you how to flee from the wrath to come? (Luke 3:7) Produce therefore fruits worthy of penance, and do not begin to say: We have Abraham as father (Luke 3:8). For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up sons to Abraham (Luke 3:8). For already the axe has been laid to the roots of the trees (Luke 3:9). Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire (Luke 3:9). Offspring of vipers. He rebukes by an example, he brands by a comparison, he exposes by a figure, so that he may now change not only their ways, but the very nature of the venomous brood. Offspring of vipers. Because those whom God had created men, had made sons of Abraham, malice brought forth and turned into vipers; and those whom the heavenly Maker had filled with the sweetness of loving-kindness, bitter impiety made to pour out deadly vomit, serpent's venom; and, by an unspeakable omen of cruelty, to be conceived from the death of the father, to be begotten from the death of the mother. Offspring of vipers. An offspring ungrateful to nature, whose birth is the ruin of its begetter, whose life is the death of its parent.

Offspring of vipers. The viper, at the time of her conceiving, is said to bite off the head of her spouse when she has taken it inside her mouth, so that through bloody kisses she conceives not a foetus but a crime; as if she bore sons as the executioners of her own wickedness, by the order of vengeance, not of nature. For the brood, conceived from the slaughter of the father, demand the nourishment of blood before that of milk, and seek vengeance; for the vipers are said to cut open their mother's womb, and with entrails still unripe, with ripe fury, to break the wicked abode of their conception, so that for them to live is this: not to see their mother, the mother who bore them such as they are. Compelled, we have described more broadly the type and figure of the comparison that holy John had made, so that it may be a matter not of abuse but of truth that the Jews are so named by him.

Progenies viperarum. Synagogam, fratres, ejusque filios tales fuisse demonstrat, ad quam Christus affectu conjugis cum venisset, dicente Joanne: Qui sponsam habet, sponsus est: inter amplexus et oscula cruenta Judae, Christi caput est expetitum, et ore petitum, cum dicitur: Crucifige, crucifige. Unde pignora sanguine concepta, tanto mox ad matris armantur interitum, ut disrupto synagogae utero, ad vocem Joannis concurrerent et regenerarentur ad Dei progeniem. Progenies viperarum, quis ostendit vobis fugere a ventura ira? Quae est ista ira ventura? Illa quae non habet finem, quae hominem non absolvit morte, sed colligat: nec jam veniae spem habere permittit, quam semel tartari deputarit ad poenam.

Admoniti taliter, cognoscunt et genus, et crimen, et ideo responderunt, dicentes: Quid faciemus ut salvemur? Qui respondens, ait illis. Quod dicturus est, fratres, timeo dicere, ne quot auditores hodie video contemptores, ille tot faciat contumaces. Quid faciam? Dicere timeo, tacere non possum: aliud me prohibet pietas, ad aliud impellit utilitas: pietas, ne auditor dum contemnit, incurrat: utilitas, ne qui facturus sit non audiat, et per hoc doctor offendat. Dico, fratres, ut et nudus se vestiat, et ego me exuam. Qui habet, inquit, duas tunicas, det non habenti; et qui habet escas, similiter faciat. Putasne satis petit, qui de duabus tunicis unam petit? Non satis petit, quia non petit gemmam, sed tunicam; non aurum, sed panem. Et si qui de duabus tunicis non dederit unam, reus est; qualis est unam de plurimis qui negarit, qui ad hoc vestes suas carcerat, et panem claudit, ut pauper fame pereat, frigore consumetur? Ille vestes sepelit, non reponit; non credit diligentiae, sed sepulcris: qui quod negat pauperi, dat tineis: et ipse vestibus suis corporis vorator est, dicente Domino: Vermis eorum non morietur, quia Christum concussit pauperis fames; dolor hominis Dei prosilivit ad viscera, captivi gemitus ad Christi penetravit interna, inopis contemptus ad creatoris sui redundavit injuriam, profitente ipso, cum dicit: Esurivi, et non dedistis mihi manducare, nudus fui, et non vestistis me.

Offspring of vipers. He shows, brothers, that the Synagogue and her sons were such, to whom Christ had come with the affection of a spouse, as John says: He who has the bride is the bridegroom (John 3:29): amid the embraces and the bloody kisses of Judas, the head of Christ was demanded, and sought with the mouth, when it is said: Crucify, crucify (John 19:6). Whence the pledges conceived in blood are at once so armed for their mother's destruction, that, the womb of the Synagogue being burst open, they ran together at the voice of John and were reborn to the offspring of God. Offspring of vipers, who showed you how to flee from the wrath to come? What is this wrath to come? That which has no end, which does not release man by death, but binds him: nor does it allow him any longer to have hope of pardon, whom once it has assigned to the penalty of Tartarus.

Warned in this way, they recognise both their kind and their crime, and so they answered, saying: What shall we do, that we may be saved? (Luke 3:10) And he answered and said to them (Luke 3:11). What he is about to say, brothers, I fear to say, lest he make as many defiant as the despisers I see among my hearers today. What shall I do? I fear to speak, I cannot keep silent: piety forbids me one thing, usefulness drives me to another: piety, lest the hearer, while he despises, should fall under it; usefulness, lest he who would do it should not hear, and through this the teacher should fail. I speak, brothers, so that both the naked man may clothe himself and I may strip myself. He who has two tunics, he says, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise (Luke 3:11). Do you think he asks much who asks one of two tunics? He does not ask much, because he does not ask a jewel, but a tunic; not gold, but bread. And if he who does not give one of two tunics is guilty, what is he who has refused one out of very many, who imprisons his clothes and shuts up his bread for this purpose, that the poor man may perish of hunger, be consumed by cold? That man buries his clothes, he does not store them; he trusts them not to care but to sepulchres: what he refuses the poor man he gives to the moths: and he himself, through his clothes, is the devourer of his own body, as the Lord says: Their worm shall not die (Isa 66:24); because the hunger of the poor man has struck Christ; the pain of man has leapt to the entrails of God, the groan of the captive has pierced to the inmost parts of Christ, the contempt of the needy has overflowed into an injury to his Creator, as he himself declares when he says: I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was naked, and you did not clothe me (Matt 25:42–43).

Venerunt et Publicani dicentes: Quid faciemus? Audiant publicani: Nihil amplius quam constitutum est vobis petatis. Prodidit quae res reum faciat publicanum, ne amplius petatis. Qui plus petit, fraudis exactor est, non tributi: cogitent quam Deo reus est, qui defessum et depressum publicat; magis ac magis sua fraude deprimit et fatigat, et ad debita vix sufficienti superimponit, et auget indebita. Venerunt et milites, dicentes. Audiant et milites quid etiam militibus interrogantibus responderit hic magister: Et nos quid faciemus? Et ait illis: Neminem concutiatis, neque calumniemini, contenti estote stipendiis vestris. Verus miles est, qui non concutit, sed defendit; qui calumniam non ingerit, sed repellit; qui currit ad regis stipendia, non qui currit ad praedam.

Beatus Joannes sic divina docuit, ut non turbaret humana: instituit rempublicam, non dimovit; probavit a Deo ordinata esse quae docuit, posse facere et servare justitiam. Quid sit autem inter baptisma Joannis, et Christi baptisma, quia latius explanandum est, nunc tacemus.

The publicans also came, saying: What shall we do? (Luke 3:12) Let the publicans hear: Ask nothing more than what has been appointed you (Luke 3:13). He has disclosed what makes a publican guilty: that you ask no more. He who asks more is an exactor of fraud, not of tribute: let them consider how guilty before God he is who sells up the weary and the downtrodden; more and more he presses them down and wears them out with his fraud, and on one scarcely able to meet his debts he lays more, and increases what is not owed. The soldiers also came, saying. Let the soldiers too hear what this master answered the soldiers also when they asked: And we, what shall we do? (Luke 3:14) And he said to them: Extort from no one, nor accuse falsely; be content with your pay. He is a true soldier who does not extort, but defends; who does not bring a false accusation, but repels it; who runs for the king's pay, not he who runs for plunder.

Blessed John so taught divine things as not to disturb human things: he set the commonwealth in order, he did not overturn it; he proved that what he taught was ordained by God, that one is able to do and keep justice. But what lies between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ, since it must be explained more fully, we leave unsaid now.

Sermo CXXXIX.

De remittendo fratri delicto

Sicut in terra latet aurum, ita divinus sensus verbis celatur humanis: et ideo quoties Dominica nobis eloquia panduntur, mens evigilet, animus intendat, ut intellectus possit scientiae coelestis intrare secretum. Quare Dominus hodie sic coeperit, audiamus. Attendite, inquit, vobis. Quid sibi ista novitas elocutionis? Quo ista tendit admonitio praeter usum? Attendite, inquit, vobis. Ille attendit sibi, qui non alienis actibus importunus, impudens, curiosus intendit. Attendite, inquit, vobis. Vagus oculus, lascivus intuitus, improbus aspectus, suas non respicit ad ruinas, alienos currit, et decurrit ad lapsus; sua caecus ad crimina, ad aliena errata perlucet; malorum suorum nescius, alienorum est accusator et testis; suum tepidus ad reatum, ad alterius et innocentis flammatur et excandescit examen. Et ne multis, sicut dixit Dominus: Oculus in se trabem non videns, videt in alio festucam. Nonne oculus praevaricationis est auctor? Et vidit, inquit, mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad manducandum, et quod gratum oculis ad videndum. Mortis janua, invidiae fax, livoris caminus, toto cupiditatis incendio velocius per aliena percurrit, quam currit ignis arida et terrena per gramina. Dei est quod oculus in orbem sic apertus arctatur angustissimus in pupillam, quatenus moderate visum videat, non invideat; praevideat, non proripiat; prospiciat, non despiciat: oculus sit animae fenestra, speculum sit mentis, sit lumen corporis, membrorum dux sit, non introitus vitiorum.

Sed ad praefata redeamus. Attendite, inquit, vobis. Vobis, non dixit tibi, quia quidquid alii attenderit homo, attendit sibi; et quantum videbit ipse alteri, videbit alter ipsi, sicut ex sequentibus elucescit: Si peccaverit, inquit, in te frater tuus, increpa illum; et si poenitentiam egerit, dimitte illi. Age, homo, mandante Deo, dimitte, dimitte peccata: esto misericors ad delicta, in te commissorum tu remissor esto peccatorum, tu modo ne perdas in te divinae infulas potestatis; quidquid in alio tu non remiseris, tibi in alio tu negabis.

Sermon CXXXIX.

On remitting a brother his offence

As gold lies hidden in the earth, so the divine sense is concealed in human words: and therefore, whenever the Lord's sayings are opened to us, let the mind awake, let the heart attend, so that the understanding may enter the secret of heavenly knowledge. Let us hear why the Lord began so today. Look to yourselves, he says (Luke 17:3). What is this newness of speech? Where does this warning tend, beyond the common usage? Look to yourselves, he says. He looks to himself who does not intrude upon the acts of others, importunate, shameless, curious. Look to yourselves, he says. The wandering eye, the wanton gaze, the shameless look does not look back at its own ruins, it runs, and runs down, to the falls of others; blind to its own crimes, it sees clear through to others' errors; ignorant of its own evils, it is the accuser and witness of others'; lukewarm towards its own guilt, it flames and blazes up at the examination of another's, and an innocent man's. And, not to say much, as the Lord said: The eye that does not see the beam in itself sees the speck in another (Matt 7:3). Is not the eye the author of transgression? And the woman saw, he says, that the tree was good to eat, and pleasing to the eyes to look upon (Gen 3:6). The gate of death, the torch of envy, the furnace of spite, with the whole blaze of greed it runs over the things of others faster than fire runs through dry and earthy grass. It is God's doing that the eye, opened so into a sphere, is narrowed, very narrow, into the pupil, so that it may see what it sees with measure, not look on it with envy; foresee, not seize; look out, not look down: let the eye be the window of the soul, the mirror of the mind, the light of the body, the leader of the members, not the entrance of vices.

But let us return to what was said before. Look to yourselves, he says. To yourselves: he did not say "to yourself", because whatever a man has looked to for another, he looks to for himself; and as much as he himself will see to for another, the other will see to for him, as is clear from what follows: If your brother sins against you, he says, rebuke him; and if he does penance, forgive him (Luke 17:3). Come, man, at God's command, forgive, forgive sins: be merciful towards offences, be yourself the remitter of the sins committed against you; only do not lose in yourself the insignia of divine power; whatever you do not remit in another, you will deny to yourself in another.

Si peccaverit in te frater tuus, inquit, increpa illum. Increpa ut judex, ut frater remitte, quia juncta libertati charitas, charitati mixta libertas, et terrorem comprimit, et suscitat fratrem: fratrem frater est in febre cum laedit, est in furore proximo cum delinquit, est sui nescius, est humanitatis extraneus: huic qui per compassionem non subvenit, hunc qui per patientiam non curat, non per veniam sanat, sanus non est, aegrotat, infirmatur, viscera non habet, et ab humano sensu monstratur alienus. Furit frater, ascribe aegritudini, tu illum juva ut frater; ascribe tu, quod sic geritur, febri, et fratri non poteris imputare commissum; dabisque tu prudenter infirmitati culpam, fratri veniam; ut illius sanitas ad tuam gloriam recurrat, illius venia tuum redundet ad praemium.

Si peccaverit, inquit, in te frater tuus, increpa illum; si poenitentiam egerit, dimitte illi. Nemo ista audiens censuram sibi remittens assumat, et imponat fratri delinquenti vana praesumptione personam: ac sic durum putet remittere delicta. Se peccatorem, peccaturum se homo cogitet: et tunc incipit amare veniam, non amare vindictam. Audis tu quia remittere debeas, et quia tibi remitti debeat non audis. Peccabis et tu illi cras, qui tibi hodie peccavit; et erit tibi judex, qui tibi erat reus ante, et reddet tibi veniam, si dedisti: si non dedisti, aut negabit veniam, aut si dederit, imputabit amplius quam donabit. Remitte peccanti, remitte poenitenti, ut cum tu peccaveris, repensetur in venia, non donetur. Bona semper venia, sed tunc dulcissima cum debetur. Vicit poenam, judicem praevenit, evasit judicium, qui remittendo ante sibi veniam quam delinqueret jam providit.

Et si septies, inquit, in die peccaverit in te, et septies in die conversus fuerit ad te, dicens: Poenitet me, dimittes illi. Quare veniam lege constringit, angustat numero, fine concludit, quam sic pulsat per misericordiam, per gratiam sic relaxat: si septies, si octies? vincit numerus gratiam? bonitati calculus obsistit? et addicit una culpa poenae quem commissa septem veniae jam dederunt? Absit. Nam sicut felix ille qui septies remisit, ita felicior est iste septuagies septies qui remisit. Petrus mandati immemor hujus interrogat Dominum, dicens: Si peccaverit in me frater meus, quoties remittam illi? septies? Respondit Dominus: Non solum septies, sed septuagies septies. Praescriptus ergo numerus non angustat veniam, sed dilatat, et quod praecepto finit, sine fine relinquit arbitrio; ut si quantum jusserit remiseris, et tantum sit obedientiae, sit praemii.

If your brother sins against you, he says, rebuke him. Rebuke as a judge, as a brother remit, because charity joined to frankness, frankness mingled with charity, both checks terror and raises up the brother: a brother is in a fever when he hurts his brother, he is in a frenzy when he does wrong to his neighbour, he does not know himself, he is a stranger to humanity: he who does not help him by compassion, who does not care for him by patience, does not heal him by pardon, is not healthy, he is sick, he is weak, he has no feeling within, and is shown to be estranged from human sense. Your brother rages: ascribe it to illness, help him as a brother; ascribe what is happening so to the fever, and you will not be able to impute the wrong done to your brother; and you will prudently give the fault to the illness, the pardon to the brother; so that his health may come back to your glory, his pardon overflow to your reward.

If your brother sins against you, he says, rebuke him; if he does penance, forgive him. Let no one who hears this, remitting the censure to himself, in vain presumption take on a part and impose it on his brother who does wrong: and so think it hard to remit offences. Let a man think of himself as a sinner, as one who will sin: and then he begins to love pardon, not to love vengeance. You hear that you ought to remit, and you do not hear that it ought to be remitted to you. You too will sin tomorrow against him who sinned against you today; and he will be your judge who before was your accused, and he will give you back pardon if you gave it: if you did not give it, either he will deny pardon, or, if he gives it, he will charge more than he will forgive. Remit to the one who sins, remit to the one who repents, so that, when you sin, it may be repaid you in pardon, not given. Pardon is always good, but sweetest when it is owed. He has overcome the penalty, forestalled the judge, escaped judgement, who by remitting has already provided pardon for himself before he does wrong.

And if seven times in a day, he says, he sins against you, and seven times in a day turns to you, saying: I repent, you shall forgive him (Luke 17:4). Why does he bind by law, narrow by number, close with a limit the pardon that he so urges through mercy, so sets free through grace: if seven times, if eight times? does a number overcome grace? does a reckoning stand against goodness? and does one fault hand over to penalty one whom seven wrongs committed have already given over to pardon? Far from it. For as he is happy who has remitted seven times, so he is happier who has remitted seventy times seven. Peter, unmindful of this command, asks the Lord, saying: If my brother sins against me, how often shall I remit to him? Seven times? (Matt 18:21) The Lord answered: Not only seven times, but seventy times seven (Matt 18:22). The prescribed number, then, does not narrow pardon but widens it, and what it ends by a precept it leaves without end to choice; so that, if you have remitted as much as he commanded, there may be so much of obedience, and of reward.

Verum septimus numerus, qui numerus videtur parvus, invenitur amplissimus sacramento: nam septimus numerus per dies gradiens sabbatum facit, quod benedixit Dominus, et deputavit ad requiem, tam sui operis quam laboris humani. Septimus numerus per ogdoadas currens, sic septemplicat septimanas, ut Pentecosten nobis impletam mysterii solemnitate concludat, totumque sancti Spiritus imbrem in ecclesiasticam segetem coelesti sonitu tunc effundat. Septimus numerus, cum per menses properat, septimi mensis festa consecrat tota nobis jejunii sanctitate. Septimus numerus cum vadit per annos, septimanas facit, facit annum qui requiem dat terrae, nexus omnes fraternae obligationis absolvit. Septimus numerus annorum cum circuit septimanas, annum quinquagesimum, qui jubilaeus vocatur, ad plenitudinem totam veniae et remissionis adducit; ut tollatur servitus, redeat libertas; ut cautionum documenta et monumenta rumpantur; resurgat debitor, debitum sit sepultum; redeat ut ager pauperis, ut pereat divitis totus de cupiditate contractus.

Et si septimus numerus septemplicatus per dies, per menses, per annos, totum contulit remissionis et veniae, septemplicatus septuagies septies septimus numerus quid afferre possit, Christianus aestimet et advertat auditor. Tunc vere cessabit crediti contractus et debiti, tunc vere abolebitur tota conditio servitutis, tunc illa, illa veniet sine fine libertas, tunc aeternus ager victurus semper remeabit. Veniet, veniet remissio tunc vera, quando abolebitur etiam necessitas ipsa peccandi, quando pereunte immunditia vere mundus jam vocabitur mundus, quando redeunte vita mors non erit, quando regnante Christo diabolus jam peribit. Orate, fratres, et ut nobis Dominus augeat fidem, quatenus haec bona credere, videre, et tenere possimus.

But the seventh number, a number that seems small, is found most ample in mystery: for the seventh number, stepping through the days, makes the Sabbath, which the Lord blessed and assigned to rest, both from his own work and from human labour. The seventh number, running through ogdoads, so multiplies the weeks sevenfold as to close for us Pentecost, fulfilled with the solemnity of the mystery, and then to pour the whole shower of the Holy Spirit upon the Church's harvest with a heavenly sound. The seventh number, when it hastens through the months, consecrates for us the feasts of the seventh month with the whole holiness of fasting (Lev 23). The seventh number, when it goes through the years, makes weeks, makes the year that gives rest to the land, and looses all the ties of brotherly obligation (Deut 15). The seventh number of years, when it goes round the weeks, brings the fiftieth year, which is called the jubilee, to the whole fullness of pardon and remission (Lev 25); that servitude may be taken away, liberty return; that the documents and records of securities may be torn up; that the debtor may rise again, the debt be buried; that the poor man's field may return, that the rich man's whole contract made out of greed may perish.

And if the seventh number, multiplied sevenfold through days, through months, through years, has conferred the whole of remission and pardon, let the Christian hearer reckon and consider what the seventh number multiplied seventy times seven can bring. Then truly the contract of what is lent and owed will cease, then truly the whole condition of servitude will be abolished, then that, that liberty without end will come, then the eternal field will return, to live for ever. It will come, then will come the true remission, when even the very necessity of sinning will be abolished, when, as uncleanness perishes, the world (mundus) will truly now be called clean (mundus), when, as life returns, death will be no more, when, as Christ reigns, the devil will now perish. Pray, brothers, that the Lord may also increase faith in us, so that we may be able to believe, to see and to hold these good things.

Sermo CXL.

De Annuntiatione D. Mariae Virginis

Satis modo sit oculorum nostrorum pura acies, ut possit in divini ortus intendere claritatem: nam si nascentis jubar solis oculorum nostrorum vix suffert sanitas tota, vel puritas, quanta interni visus est praeparanda sinceritas, ut splendorem sui ferre possit orientis et radiantis auctoris? In Sexto autem mense missus est, inquit, angelus Gabriel in civitatem Galilaeae cui nomen Nazareth, ad virginem desponsatam viro cui nomen erat Joseph. Locum, tempus, personam, sanctus evangelista designat, ut relationis veritas manifestis ipsarum rerum comprobetur indiciis.

Missus est, inquit, angelus ad virginem desponsatam. Ad virginem Deus aligerum portitorem mittit: nam dat arrham, dotem suscipit, qui fert gratiam; fidem refert, et tradit munera virtutis, qui mox virginei consensus resolvit sponsionem. Pervolat ad sponsam festinus interpres, ut a Dei sponsa humanae desponsationis arceat et suspendat affectum, neque auferat a Joseph virginem, sed reddat Christo, cui est in utero pignorata cum fieret. Christus ergo suam sponsam recipit, non praeripit alienam; nec separationem facit, quando suam sibi totam jungit in uno corpore creaturam.

Sed quid egerit angelus audiamus: Ingressus ad eam, dicit: Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. In hac voce oblatio est, oblatio muneris, non simplex salutationis officium. Ave. Hoc est accipe gratiam. Ne trepides, ne sis sollicita de natura. Gratia plena. Quia in aliis gratia, in te tota gratiae pariter veniet plenitudo. Dominus tecum. Quid est in te Dominus? Quia ad te non visitandi studio venit, sed in te novo nascendi illabitur sacramento. Adjecit congrue: Benedicta tu in mulieribus. Quia in quibus Eva maledicta puniebat viscera, tunc in illis gaudet, honoratur, suspicitur Maria benedicta. Et facta est vere nunc mater viventium per gratiam, quae mater exstitit morientium per naturam.

Sermon CXL.

On the Annunciation of Saint Mary the Virgin

Let the gaze of our eyes now be pure enough to be able to look into the brightness of the divine rising: for if the whole health or purity of our eyes can scarcely bear the radiance of the sun as it is born, how great a clearness of inward sight must be prepared, so that it can bear the splendour of the author rising and shining forth? But in the sixth month, he says, the angel Gabriel was sent into a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph (Luke 1:26–27). The holy Evangelist marks out the place, the time, the person, so that the truth of the account may be proved by the manifest evidence of the facts themselves.

The angel was sent, he says, to a virgin betrothed. God sends to the virgin a winged carrier: for he who brings grace gives the earnest and receives the dowry; he who at once discharges the pledge of the virgin's consent brings back the troth and hands over the gifts of power. The swift interpreter flies to the bride, to keep off and hold back from the bride of God the affection of a human betrothal, and not to take the virgin away from Joseph, but to give her back to Christ, to whom she was pledged in the womb when she was being made. Christ, then, receives his own bride, he does not snatch away another's; nor does he make a separation, when he joins to himself in one body his own creature whole.

But let us hear what the angel did: Having come in to her, he says: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you (Luke 1:28). In this word there is an offering, the offering of a gift, not the simple courtesy of a greeting. Hail. That is: receive grace. Do not tremble, do not be solicitous about nature. Full of grace. Because in others there is grace, in you the whole fullness of grace will come at once. The Lord is with you. What is this: the Lord in you? Because he comes to you not with the purpose of visiting, but glides down into you by a new mystery of being born. He fittingly added: Blessed are you among women (Luke 1:28). Because in those in whom Eve, accursed, punished the womb, in them now Mary, blessed, rejoices, is honoured, is looked up to. And she has truly been made now the mother of the living through grace, who was the mother of the dying through nature.

Quae cum audisset, turbata est in sermone ejus. Quid est quod personam videt, et de sermone turbatur? Quia venerat angelus blandus in specie, fortis in bello, mitis in habitu, in sermone terribilis, humana proferens, divina repromittens. Unde et virginem, quam leviter visus sollicitaverat, nimium turbavit auditus; et quam missi praesentia parum moverat, concussit toto pondere mittentis auctoritas. Et quid plura? Mox sensit in se supernum suscipi Judicem, ubi ante jam coelestem vidit et contemplata est metatorem. Quamvis enim blando motu, affectu pio, virginem sibi Deus in matrem, servam sibi verteret Dominus in parentem, turbata sunt tamen viscera, mens refugit, ipsa est tremefacta conditio, cum Deus, quem tota creatura non capit, totum se intra pectus recepit et condidit humanum.

Et cogitabat, ait, Virgo quae esset ista salutatio. Advertat vestra charitas, ut diximus, consensisse Virginem salutationi, non verborum, sed rerum; et vocem fuisse non communis obsequii, sed supernae vim totam fuisse virtutis. Cogitat ergo Virgo, quia cito respondere est facilitatis humanae, cogitare vero ponderis est maximi et judicii permaturi. Quantus sit Deus satis ignorat ille qui hujus Virginis mentem non stupet, animum non miratur: pavet coelum, tremunt angeli, creatura non sustinet, natura non sufficit, una puella sic Deum in sui pectoris capit, recipit, oblectat hospitio, ut pacem terris, coelis gloriam, salutem perditis, vitam mortuis, terrenis cum coelestibus parentelam, ipsius Dei cum carne commercium, pro ipsa domus exigat pensione, pro ipsius uteri mercede conquirat, et impleat illud prophetae: Ecce haereditas Domini, filii merces fructus ventris. Sed jam se concludat sermo, ut de partu Virginis, donante Deo, et indulgente tempore, gratius proloquamur.

When she had heard, she was troubled at his word (Luke 1:29). Why is it that she sees the person and is troubled at the word? Because the angel had come gentle in appearance, strong in war, mild in bearing, terrible in speech, uttering human things, promising divine things. Hence also the virgin, whom the sight had stirred but lightly, the hearing troubled exceedingly; and her whom the presence of the one sent had moved little, the authority of the one sending shook with all its weight. And what more? At once she felt the Judge from on high being received within her, where she had already seen and beheld the heavenly harbinger. For though, with a gentle motion and a loving affection, God was turning a virgin into a mother for himself, the Lord a servant into a parent for himself, yet her inward parts were troubled, her mind shrank back, her very condition trembled, when God, whom the whole creation does not contain, withdrew and hid himself whole within a human breast.

And the Virgin, he says, was pondering what this greeting might be (Luke 1:29). Let your charity note, as we said, that the Virgin consented to a greeting not of words but of things; and that the voice was not one of common homage, but was the whole force of power from on high. So the Virgin ponders, because to answer quickly belongs to human facility, but to ponder belongs to the greatest weight and to a fully ripened judgement. He is very ignorant of how great God is who is not astonished at the mind of this Virgin, does not wonder at her heart: heaven takes fright, angels tremble, creation does not bear it, nature does not suffice, one girl so contains God in her breast, receives him, delights him with hospitality, that as the rent for that house she demands peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, kinship of the earthly with the heavenly, the commerce of God himself with flesh, gains them as the wage for that very womb, and fulfils that word of the Prophet: Behold, the inheritance of the Lord, sons; the reward, the fruit of the womb (Ps 127:3). But let the sermon now close, so that, by God's gift and with time permitting, we may speak more pleasingly of the Virgin's childbearing.

Sermo CXLI.

De Incarnatione Christi

Quantum secretum cubiculi sit regalis, quali reverentia, quo tremore locus habeatur, ubi ipsa principis requiescit potestas, quam nulli extraneo, immundo nemini, nulli infideli pateat illuc et permittatur accessus; quam munda, quam casta, quam fidelia, ibidem praestolentur obsequia, imperialis aulae manifestis docetur insignibus. Quis ad ipsas palatii fores vilis, quis propinquat indignus? Certe ad thalamum sponsi nisi satis proximus, nisi satis intimus, nisi bonae conscientiae, nisi laudabilis famae, nisi probabilis vitae nullus admittitur. Intra thalamum vero ipsum virginem Deus capit solam, suscipitur sola virginitas illibata.

Unde, o homo, his admonitus exemplis, aestima quis sis, quantus sis, qualis sis, et tunc demum cogita utrum possis Dominicae nativitatis penetrare secretum, utrum merearis ad illius pectoris cubiculum pervenire, ubi tota superni Regis, tota divinitatis requiescit majestas; utrum debeas humanis oculis, corporeis sensibus, conceptum virginis temerarius discussor attendere; utrum possis ipsas Dei manus operantes sanctum sibi corporis templum intra alvum genitricis audax et curiosus arbiter intueri, conspectibus tuis absconditum saeculis nudare mysterium, revelare tibi ipsis angelis invisibile sacramentum; et ita coelesti fabricae praesidere, ut deprehendas liquido tu quomodo Deus penetrale clausae carnis intraverit, quemadmodum sacri corporis in illo venerabili utero praeter Virginis conscientiam lineamenta pinxerit, quomodo praeter concipientis sensum mansura saeculis ossa solidaverit; qualiter, praeter hominis ordinem, hominis veram produxerit formam; quemadmodum, praeter carnis sollicitudinem, totam carnis assumpserit veritatem; qua ratione, praeter naturam nostrae carnis, integram susceperit qualitatem: et si ad haec tibi liber non perpatuerit accessus, jam Deus ex carne nunc assumere non potuit, quod in principio assumpsit ex limo? Immo quia totum Deo est possibile, et tibi ne ad minima quidem operum Dei possibile est pervenire, conceptum Virginis noli discutere, sed crede; Deum voluisse nasci pie senti, quia facis injuriam si requiris; magnum Dominicae nativitatis sacramentum fide percipe, quia ne minima quidem operum Dei assequi poteris sine fide, dicente Scriptura: Omnia opera ejus in fide.

Sermon CXLI.

On the Incarnation of Christ

How great is the secrecy of a royal bedchamber, with what reverence, with what trembling the place is held where the very power of the prince takes its rest, how to no stranger, to no unclean man, to no faithless man is access open there and permitted; how clean, how chaste, how faithful the homage that waits there: this is taught by the manifest insignia of the imperial court. Who that is base, who that is unworthy draws near to the very doors of the palace? Certainly no one is admitted to the bridegroom's chamber unless he is very near, very intimate, of good conscience, of praiseworthy repute, of approved life. But within that very chamber God takes the virgin alone; virginity untouched alone is received.

Hence, O man, warned by these examples, reckon who you are, how great you are, of what kind you are, and only then consider whether you can penetrate the secret of the Lord's nativity, whether you merit to come to the chamber of that breast where the whole majesty of the King on high, the whole majesty of divinity rests; whether you ought, a rash examiner, to look with human eyes, with bodily senses, into the virgin's conception; whether you can, a bold and curious arbiter, gaze upon the very hands of God as they work for themselves the holy temple of a body within the womb of the bearer, lay bare to your sight the mystery hidden from the ages, reveal to yourself the sacrament invisible to the angels themselves; and so preside over the heavenly building as to grasp clearly how God entered the inner sanctum of closed flesh, how in that venerable womb he painted the features of the sacred body without the Virgin's awareness, how without the sense of her who conceived he made firm the bones that would last for ages; how, beyond the order of man, he brought forth the true form of a man; how, without the solicitude of the flesh, he assumed the whole truth of flesh; by what reason, beyond the nature of our flesh, he took up its quality entire: and if free access to these things has not lain open to you, could God not now assume from flesh what in the beginning he assumed from slime? Rather, because everything is possible to God, and it is not possible for you to reach even the least of God's works, do not examine the Virgin's conception, but believe; think piously that God willed to be born, because you do injury if you inquire; grasp by faith the great mystery of the Lord's nativity, because you will not be able to attain even the least of God's works without faith, as Scripture says: All his works are in faith (Ps 33:4).

Sed tu hic totum vis de ratione constare, ubi totum consistit ex fide, quod tamen non sine ratione subsistit, sed ratione Dei, non tua, homo. Quid tam rationabile, nisi ut Deus quidquid voluerit possit? Qui quod vult non potest, Deus non est. Quae ergo mandat Deus, exsequitur angelus, implet Spiritus, efficit virtus, Virgo credit, natura suscipit, coeli narrant, annuntiat firmamentum, ostendunt stellae, magi praedicant, pastores adorant, pecora cognoscunt, attestante propheta: Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe Domini sui. Tu homo, si non mox cum angelis, agnosce vel tardissime cum jumentis; ne dum moraris, ipsis jumentis, quibus ante comparatus fueras, postponaris. Ecce jumenta adulantur caudis, blandiuntur auribus, linguis lambunt, et motu quo possunt auctorem suum fatentur contra naturam in tuam venisse naturam; et tu cum Judaeis discutis, carpis, qui excluserunt a diversoriis suis Dominum suum, quem jumenta suis in praesepibus susceperunt. Unde si tandem vel angelis es pium praestaturus auditum, quae ab angelo dicenda sunt, si non feliciter vel dignanter admitte: quod nos hodie differre, et sequenti referre sermone, sancti fratres, satis vobis necessarius sermo compellit.

But you want everything here to stand on reason, where everything consists of faith; which yet does not subsist without reason, but by God's reason, not yours, man. What is so reasonable as that God can do whatever he has willed? He who cannot do what he wills is not God. What God commands, then, the angel carries out, the Spirit fulfils, power effects, the Virgin believes, nature receives, the heavens tell, the firmament announces, the stars show, the Magi proclaim, the shepherds adore, the cattle know, as the prophet bears witness: The ox knew its owner, and the ass its Lord's manger (Isa 1:3). You, man, if not at once with the angels, acknowledge him at least very late with the beasts; lest, while you delay, you be placed after the very beasts to which you had earlier been compared. See, the beasts fawn with their tails, coax with their ears, lick with their tongues, and with what motion they can they acknowledge that their author has come, against nature, into your nature; and you, with the Jews, examine and carp, who shut out their Lord from their lodgings, whom the beasts received in their mangers. Hence, if at last you are going to lend a pious hearing at least to the angels, admit, if not happily, at least graciously, what the angel has to say: which a word very necessary for you compels us, holy brothers, to put off today and to relate in the following sermon.

Sermo CXLII.

De Annuntiatione D. Mariae Virginis

Audistis hodie, fratres charissimi, angelum cum muliere de hominis reparatione tractantem. Audistis agi, ut homo cursibus eisdem quibus dilapsus fuerat ad mortem, rediret ad vitam. Agit, agit cum Maria angelus de salute, quia cum Eva angelus egerat de ruina. Audistis angelum de carnis nostrae limo templum divinae majestatis arte ineffabili construentem. Audistis in terris Deum, in coelis hominem sacramento incomprehensibili collocari. Audistis inaudita ratione in uno corpore Deum hominemque misceri. Audistis fragilem nostrae carnis naturam ad portandam totam deitatis gloriam angelica exhortatione roborari.

Denique ne tanto ponderi coelestis fabricae in Maria, subtilis nostri corporis arena succumberet, et in virgine totius generis humani portatura fructum virga tenuis frangeretur, fugatura metum vox angeli mox praecessit, dicens: Ne timeas, Maria. Ante causam dignitas virginis annuntiatur ex nomine: nam Maria Hebraeo sermone, Latine, domina nuncupatur: vocat ergo angelus dominam, ut dominatoris genitricem trepidatio deserat servitutis, quam nasci, et vocari dominam ipsa sui germinis fecit et impetravit auctoritas.

Ne timeas, Maria, invenisti enim gratiam. Verum est, quia qui invenit gratiam, nescit timere. Invenisti gratiam. Apud quem? Apud Deum. Beata quae inter homines audire sola meruit prae omnibus. Invenisti gratiam. Quantam? quantam superius dixerat: plenam. Et vere plenam, quae largo imbre totam funderet et infunderet creaturam. Invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum. Haec cum dicit, et ipse angelus miratur, aut feminam tantum, aut omnes homines vitam meruisse per feminam: stupet angelus totum Deum venire intra virginalis uteri angustias, cui tota simul angusta est creatura. Hinc est quod remoratur angelus, hinc est quod Virginem vocat de merito, de gratia compellat, vix causam prodit audienti, sane ut sensum promoveat, vix longa trepidatione componit. Aestimate, fratres, qua reverentia, quo tremore nos tanto interesse deceat et conveniat sacramento, quando ipse angelus non sine metu metum discutit audientis.

Sermon CXLII.

On the Annunciation of Saint Mary the Virgin

You have heard today, dearest brothers, the angel treating with a woman of the restoration of man. You have heard it being dealt with, that man by the same courses by which he had slipped down to death might return to life. The angel treats, treats with Mary of salvation, because an angel had treated with Eve of ruin. You have heard the angel building out of the slime of our flesh, with an ineffable art, a temple of the divine majesty. You have heard God being placed on earth, man in heaven, by an incomprehensible mystery. You have heard that in an unheard-of way God and man are mingled in one body. You have heard the frail nature of our flesh strengthened by the angel's exhortation to carry the whole glory of the Godhead.

Indeed, lest the fine sand of our body should give way in Mary under so great a weight of the heavenly building, and lest in the virgin the slender rod that was to carry the fruit of the whole human race should be broken, the voice of the angel, to put fear to flight, at once went before, saying: Do not be afraid, Mary (Luke 1:30). Before the cause, the dignity of the virgin is announced from her name: for Mary in the Hebrew tongue is called in Latin lady (domina): the angel therefore calls her lady, so that the trembling of servitude might leave the bearer of the Ruler (dominator), whom the very authority of her offspring caused and obtained to be born, and to be called lady.

Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace (Luke 1:30). It is true that he who has found grace does not know how to fear. You have found grace. With whom? With God. Blessed is she who alone among human beings merited to hear it, before all. You have found grace. How much? as much as he had said above: full. And truly full, since with a generous shower it would pour over and pour into the whole creation. For you have found grace with God. When he says this, the angel himself wonders, either that a woman alone, or that all men through a woman, had merited life: the angel is astonished that the whole God comes within the narrow confines of a virgin's womb, God to whom the whole creation together is narrow. Hence it is that the angel lingers, hence it is that he calls the Virgin from her merit, addresses her from grace, scarcely discloses the cause to her as she listens, so as to bring her understanding forward, scarcely frames it, with long trembling. Consider, brothers, with what reverence, with what trembling it befits and becomes us to be present at so great a mystery, when the angel himself, not without fear, dispels the fear of her who listens.

Ecce concipies in utero. Bene concipies, quod caro nescit, conditio non habet, non admittit natura. Ecce concipies in utero. Quis ante ad fructum pervenit quam terrae laborem sentiat et sudorem? Quis ante poma carpit quam plantae suam tribuat et impendat industriam? Quis praeter viam ad ullam pervenit mansionem? Quis praeter naturam naturae suscipit incrementum? Beata ergo et vere beata Maria, quae praeter generandi curas, praeter materni doloris fastidia, tantam germinis pervenit ad gloriam. Beata, quam divinum pignus sic suo suscepit et servavit in pectore, ut illud tota corporis externa nesciret. Beata, quae quod de supernis angelo referente susceperat sic menti suae solae commisit et credidit. Intra domum Virginis negotium coeleste sic geritur, ut manentibus claustris, ipsa domus septa non sentiant.

Concipies, et paries filium. Qui ingreditur et egreditur, et introitus sui et exitus nulla vestigia relinquit, divinus habitator est, non humanus; et qui conceptu suo virginem servat, et ortu suo relinquit virginem, non terrenus homo est, sed coelestis. Nostrae ergo carnis ordo secedat; hic sibi natura nostra nil vindicet, ubi ad divinam progeniem coelestis ordo divinam instituitur in naturam. Conceptus et partus sermo audientis animum non fatiget, nec leviter sensum moveat Christiani, ubi ad coelestem progeniem virtutis Dei divina peraguntur insignia.

Concipies et paries filium. Non dixit tibi, dixit tuum. Quare? Quia sanctum vocabitur Filius Dei. Virgo te gratia matrem praestitit, non natura; genitricem te dici pietas voluit, quam non sinebat integritas; in tuo conceptu, in tuo partu crevit pudor, aucta est castitas, integritas roborata est, est solidata virginitas, omnes perseveravere virtutes. Virgo, si tibi salva sunt omnia, quid dedisti? Si virgo, quomodo mater? Si sponsa, genitrix quomodo? Ille, quo tibi aucta sunt omnia, nil minuit, Virgo. Virgo, concipitur ex te auctor tuus, tua ex te oritur origo, in tuo germine est genitor tuus, in tua carne est Deus tuus, et ipse lucem mundi per te recepit qui lucem mundo dedit. Monita ergo per angelum, Virgo, ne praesumas hunc vocare filium tuum, sed mox ut genueris, invoca salvatorem: quia virginitas non sibi parit filium, sed parit pignus auctoris, et integritas suum gestat dominum, non alumnum, dicente angelo: Et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum, quod Salvator Latino vocabulo nuncupatur.

Dixit autem Maria ad angelum, Quomodo fiet istud? Ecce Maria interrogat: et si qui interrogat, dubitat, cur solus Zacharias velut querulus percunctator incurrit? Quia pectorum cognitor non verba, sed corda pervidit; non quid dixerint, sed quid senserint, judicavit; erat enim interrogantium causa dissimilis, species perdivisa.

Behold, you will conceive in the womb (Luke 1:31). Rightly will you conceive what flesh does not know, condition does not have, nature does not admit. Behold, you will conceive in the womb. Who comes to the fruit before he feels the labour and the sweat of the earth? Who picks apples before he bestows and spends his toil on the plant? Who comes to any dwelling without a road? Who, beyond nature, receives the increase of nature? Blessed then, and truly blessed is Mary, who without the cares of begetting, without the loathings of a mother's pain, came to such glory of offspring. Blessed is she who so received and kept the divine pledge in her own breast, that the whole outside of the body did not know of it. Blessed is she who so entrusted to her mind alone, and confided to it, what she had received from on high as the angel told it. Within the Virgin's house the heavenly business is so carried out that, the bars remaining, the very enclosures of the house do not feel it.

You will conceive, and bear a son (Luke 1:31). He who enters and goes out, and leaves no traces of his entrance and his going out, is a divine inhabitant, not a human one; and he who by his conception keeps the virgin and by his birth leaves her a virgin is not an earthly man, but a heavenly one. Let the order of our flesh, then, withdraw; let our nature claim nothing for itself here, where for a divine offspring a heavenly order is established in a divine nature. Let the words conception and childbirth not weary the mind of the listener, nor lightly move the sense of the Christian, where for a heavenly offspring the divine insignia of God's power are carried out.

You will conceive and bear a son. He did not say "for you"; he said "yours". Why? Because the holy one shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Virgin, grace made you a mother, not nature; loving-kindness willed that you be called a bearer, which integrity did not allow; in your conception, in your childbearing modesty grew, chastity was increased, integrity was strengthened, virginity was made firm, all the virtues persevered. Virgin, if all things are kept safe for you, what did you give? If a virgin, how a mother? If a bride, how a bearer? He by whom all things were increased for you diminished nothing, Virgin. Virgin, your author is conceived of you, your origin arises from you, in your offspring is your begetter, in your flesh is your God, and he who gave light to the world received the light of the world through you. Warned therefore by the angel, Virgin, do not presume to call him your son, but as soon as you have borne him, call on the saviour: because virginity does not give birth to a son for itself, but gives birth to the pledge of the author, and integrity carries its own lord, not a nursling, as the angel says: And you shall call his name Jesus (Luke 1:31), which in the Latin word is called Saviour.

And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be? (Luke 1:34) See, Mary asks: and if he who asks doubts, why does Zechariah alone incur blame as a complaining questioner? Because the examining judge of breasts saw through not the words but the hearts; he judged not what they said, but what they meant; for the case of those who asked was unlike, the manner wholly different.

Haec contra naturam credidit, ille dubitat pro natura; haec integrae rei ordinem quaerit, ille quae Deus jubet fieri non posse perscribit; ille impellentibus exemplis non accedit ad fidem, haec sine exemplo percurrit ad fidem; haec miratur de partu virginis, ille de conceptu disputat conjugali. Merito ergo haec loquitur, haec Deum suo cognoscit et confitetur in corpore; ille tacet, donec Joannem quem negabat, convictus proprio redderet ex corpore.

Quomodo fiet istud? Quare? Quia virum non cognosco. Mulier, quem virum quaeris? quem tu in Paradiso perdidisti? Redde virum, mulier, redde depositum Dei, redde ex te quem perdidisti per te: praetermitte naturae ordinem, recognosce ordinem Creatoris. Ille ex te assumet et faciet virum, qui in principio te fecit et assumpsit ex viro; ne quaeras virum, cesset opus hominis, quia ad reparationem hominis sufficit ars divina. Hinc est quod Deus ipse ad te venit, quia te poenituit ad hominem pervenisse.

Nec jam caro ad carnem; sed Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te. Quia quod de carne natum est, caro est; et quod de Spiritu, spiritus est. Qui ergo de Spiritu nascitur, sine controversia Deus est, quia Spiritus est Deus. Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te, et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi. Obumbrat Dei virtus, ne portatura Deum, fragilitas humana succumbat. Et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi. Aestus nostri corporis nescit quam divinae protegit umbra virtutis; nec secretum mundanae habitationis inquirit, quae se septam superni splendoris circumspicit velamento.

Propterea quod nascetur ex te sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei. Nemo hic communiter accipiat sanctum, sed illa singularitate qua clamatur in coelestibus: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Mittitur autem Maria ad Elisabeth, virgo ad sterilem, infans ad anum, ut certamine pio sumant ambae, percipiant pariter, altera de novitate fidem, altera de necessitate virtutem.

His auditis, respondit Maria: Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Quae vocatur ab angelo domina, ipsa se cognoscit et confitetur ancillam. Quia devotus animus infulis beneficiorum crescit ad obsequium: augetur ad gratiam, non ad arrogantiam prosilit, non ad superbiam pertumescit. Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Quae credit verbo, merito concipit Verbum: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum; et ad totam rem pervenit, quae secretum fidei consentit auditu.

She believed against nature, he doubts on behalf of nature; she asks the order of a matter left whole, he writes it down that what God commands cannot be done; he, with examples urging him on, does not come to faith, she without an example runs through to faith; she wonders at the childbearing of a virgin, he disputes about a conception in marriage. Rightly, then, she speaks, she knows and confesses God in her body; he is silent, until, convinced, he should give back from his own body John, whom he had denied.

How shall this be? Why? Since I do not know man (Luke 1:34). Woman, what man are you looking for? the one you lost in Paradise? Give back the man, woman, give back God's deposit, give back from you the one you lost through you: pass over the order of nature, recognise the order of the Creator. He will assume from you and make a man, who in the beginning made you and assumed you from a man; do not look for a man, let the work of man cease, because for the restoration of man the divine art suffices. Hence it is that God himself comes to you, because you repented of having come to man.

No longer flesh to flesh; but the Holy Spirit will come upon you (Luke 1:35). Because what is born of the flesh is flesh; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6). He, then, who is born of the Spirit is without dispute God, because the Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). The power of God overshadows, lest human frailty, about to carry God, should give way. And the power of the Most High will overshadow you. She does not know the heat of our body, whom the shade of divine power protects; nor does she seek the secret of a worldly dwelling, who sees herself enclosed round with the veil of the splendour from on high.

Therefore the holy one that will be born of you shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Let no one here take "holy" in a common sense, but in that singularity with which it is cried in the heavens: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Sabaoth (Isa 6:3). Mary, moreover, is sent to Elizabeth, a virgin to a barren woman, a girl to an old woman, so that in a loving contest both might take, might receive alike, the one faith from the newness, the other power from the necessity.

When she had heard these things, Mary answered: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word (Luke 1:38). She who is called lady by the angel herself knows and confesses herself a handmaid. Because a devout mind grows into homage with the bands of benefits: it is increased towards grace, it does not leap up into arrogance, does not swell into pride. Be it done to me according to your word. She who believes the word rightly conceives the Word: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1); and she comes to the whole matter, who consents by hearing to the secret of faith.

Quantum peccat haereticus, qui post causam non credit, cum tantum hanc credidisse conspicit ante causam?

How greatly the heretic sins who does not believe after the fact, when he sees that she believed it so before the fact!

Sermo CXLIII.

De eadem

Debetur quidem vobis natalitius sermo, sed ineffabile Nativitatis Dominicae sacramentum credere magis convenit quam referre. Virgo peperit. Quod natura non habet, usus nescit, ignorat ratio, mens non capit, pavet coelum, stupet terra, creatura miratur, quomodo sermo narrabit humanus? Denique evangelista conceptum Virginis, Virginis partum sicut humano sermone pandit, ita divino claudit arcano: et hoc facit ut homo, quod credere jussus est, discutere non praesumat. Quis attingit arcanum Dei, partum Virginis, rerum causas, saeculorum negotium, commercium divinitatis et carnis, hominem Deumque unum Deum?

Evangelista sic ait: Missus est angelus Gabriel a Deo in civitatem Galilaeae cui nomen erat Nazareth, ad virginem desponsatam viro cui nomen erat Joseph, et nomen virginis Maria. Missus est angelus a Deo; ubi mediator est angelus, humana cesset opinio; ubi coelestis est nuntius, interpretatio terrena pellatur. Curiositas humana torpescat, ubi supernus habetur interpres. Missus est angelus a Deo. Qui audit attentius, quia a Deo missus sit, deitatis refugit perscrutari secretum. Quod per angelum Deus mandat, ille meretur scire, qui timet scire. Audi Dominum dicentem: Super quem respiciam nisi super humilem, et mansuetum, et trementem verba mea? Humilem, et mansuetum: quantum mansuetus est ille qui jussis obtemperat, immansuetus tantum est ille qui jussa discutit.

Missus est angelus ad virginem. Quia semper est angelis cognata virginitas. In carne praeter carnem vivere non terrena vita est, sed coelestis. Et si vultis scire, angelicam gloriam acquirere majus est quam habere; esse angelum felicitatis est, virginem esse virtutis; virginitas enim hoc obtinet viribus quod habet angelus ex natura. Angelus ergo et virgo divinum agunt officium, non humanum.

Sermon CXLIII.

On the same

A sermon on the birth is indeed owed to you, but it is more fitting to believe the ineffable mystery of the Lord's Nativity than to relate it. The Virgin has given birth. What nature does not have, use does not know, reason is ignorant of, the mind does not grasp, heaven takes fright at, earth is astonished at, creation wonders at, how will human speech tell it? Indeed the Evangelist, just as he opens the Virgin's conception, the Virgin's childbearing in human speech, so he closes it in a divine secret: and he does this so that man may not presume to examine what he has been commanded to believe. Who attains to the secret of God, the Virgin's childbearing, the causes of things, the business of the ages, the commerce of divinity and flesh, man and God one God?

The Evangelist says thus: The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee whose name was Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, and the virgin's name was Mary (Luke 1:26–27). The angel was sent from God; where an angel is the mediator, let human opinion cease; where the messenger is heavenly, let earthly interpretation be driven away. Let human curiosity grow numb, where the interpreter is one from on high. The angel was sent from God. He who hears more attentively that he was sent from God shrinks from searching out the secret of the Godhead. What God commands through an angel, he merits to know who fears to know. Hear the Lord saying: Upon whom shall I look, but upon the humble and the meek, and him who trembles at my words? (Isa 66:2) The humble and the meek: as meek as is he who obeys commands, so unmeek is he who examines commands.

The angel was sent to a virgin. Because virginity is always akin to the angels. To live in the flesh beyond the flesh is not an earthly life, but a heavenly one. And if you wish to know, to acquire angelic glory is greater than to have it; to be an angel is a matter of happiness, to be a virgin a matter of virtue; for virginity obtains by strength what the angel has by nature. The angel, then, and the virgin perform a divine office, not a human one.

Ingressus, inquit, angelus ad eam dixit: Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu inter mulieres. Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum: videtis quibus est virgo oppignorata muneribus. Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Ave, hoc est accipe. Quid? Virtutes munerum, non pudoris. Ave, gratia plena. Haec est gratia quae dedit coelis gloriam, terris Deum, fidem gentibus, finem vitiis, vitae ordinem, moribus disciplinam. Hanc gratiam detulit angelus, accepit Virgo salutem saeculis redditura. Ave, gratia plena. Quia singulis gratia se est largita per partes, Mariae vero simul se totam dedit gratiae plenitudo. Omnes, inquit evangelista, de plenitudine ejus accepimus. Unde et David dicit: Descendit sicut pluvia in vellus. Vellus cum sit de corpore, nescit corporis passiones; sic virginitas cum sit in carne, vitia carnis ignorat. Coelestis ergo imber virgineum in vellus placido se fudit illapsu, et tota divinitatis unda bibulo se nostrae carnis celavit in vellere, donec per patibulum crucis expressum terris omnibus in pluviam salutis effunderet. Et sicut stillicidia stillantia super terram. Ut vitalibus partita stillicidiis tempora fidei rigarent germina, non necarent.

Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Missus est angelus a Deo, et quid dicit? Dominus tecum. Ergo erat cum Virgine, qui ad Virginem miserat. Praecessit nuntium suum Deus, sed a Deo non recessit: teneri locis non potest, qui omnibus habetur in locis; et totus ubique est, sine quo nihil est totum. Benedicta tu inter mulieres. Vere benedicta virgo, quae et virginitatis possidet decus, matris et pertulit dignitatem. Vere benedicta, quae et superni conceptus meruit gratiam, et sustulit integritatis coronam. Vere benedicta, quae et divini germinis suscepit gloriam, et regina totius exstitit castitatis. Vere benedicta, quae fuit major coelo, fortior terra, orbe latior; nam Deum quem mundus non capit, sola cepit. Portavit eum qui portat orbem, genuit genitorem suum, nutrivit omnium viventium nutritorem.

Sed videamus quid ait evangelista: Maria, inquit, ut vidit angelum, turbata est in sermone ejus. Turbata est caro, concussa sunt viscera, mens tremuit, tota cordis obstupuit altitudo: quia in ingressu angeli virgo sensit divinitatis ingressum. Turbabatur humani corporis templum, et carnalis domicilii movebantur angustiae, cum se in virgineo pectore tota Dei conderet magnitudo.

Having come in, he says, the angel said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women (Luke 1:28). Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you: you see with what gifts the virgin has been pledged. Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Hail: that is, receive. What? The powers of gifts, not of modesty. Hail, full of grace. This is the grace that gave glory to the heavens, God to the earth, faith to the nations, an end to vices, order to life, discipline to morals. This grace the angel brought, the Virgin received, to give back salvation to the ages. Hail, full of grace. Because to individuals grace has given itself in parts, but to Mary the fullness of grace gave itself whole at once. We all, says the Evangelist, have received of his fullness (John 1:16). Hence David too says: He came down like rain upon the fleece (Ps 72:6). The fleece, though it is from a body, does not know the passions of the body; so virginity, though it is in the flesh, is ignorant of the vices of the flesh. The heavenly shower, then, poured itself with a gentle gliding down into the virginal fleece, and the whole wave of divinity hid itself in the absorbent fleece of our flesh, until, wrung out through the gibbet of the cross, it should pour itself upon all the earth as a rain of salvation. And like drops dripping upon the earth (Ps 72:6). So that the times, divided by life-giving drops, might water the seedlings of faith, not drown them.

Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you. The angel was sent from God, and what does he say? The Lord is with you. So he was with the Virgin, who had sent to the Virgin. God went before his messenger, but did not withdraw from God: he cannot be held by places who is held in all places; and he is whole everywhere, without whom nothing is whole. Blessed are you among women. Truly blessed is the virgin who both possesses the beauty of virginity and has borne the dignity of a mother. Truly blessed is she who both merited the grace of a conception from on high and carried off the crown of integrity. Truly blessed is she who both received the glory of a divine offspring and stood forth as queen of all chastity. Truly blessed is she who was greater than heaven, stronger than the earth, wider than the world; for God, whom the world does not contain, she alone contained. She carried him who carries the world, she bore her own begetter, she nourished the nourisher of all the living.

But let us see what the Evangelist says: Mary, he says, when she saw the angel, was troubled at his word (Luke 1:29). The flesh was troubled, the inward parts were shaken, the mind trembled, the whole depth of the heart was stunned: because at the entrance of the angel the virgin felt the entrance of divinity. The temple of the human body was troubled, and the narrow confines of the fleshly abode were stirred, when the whole greatness of God was hiding itself in a virgin's breast.

Sed si placet, priusquam fidei Christianae penetremus arcanum, loquamur ad eos qui partum virginis, qui magnum pietatis sacramentum, qui reparationem salutis humanae referunt ad divinitatis injuriam. Venit ad virginem Deus, hoc est, ad opus suum opifex, creator ad creaturam suam. Quando ad opificis honorem operis restauratio non redundat? Quando honor non deputatur ad gloriam, si factor facturam suam reparet? Ne amittat quis opus suum, nonne cum veterascit revocat, et cum cadit erigit, et cum destruitur in melius non reformat? Ergo quod in partu virginis agitur, non est Creatoris injuria, sed salus est creaturae. Si Deus fecit hominem, quis arguit cur refecit? et quod ex limo formasse digne creditur, quare ex carne reformasse judicatur indignum? Quid pretiosius, caro aut limus? Ergo reparationis nostrae quanto pretiosior materia, tanto major est gloria.

Aut quando Deus non in utero plasmator est hominis? Audi Job: Manus tuae fecerunt et finxerunt me. Et post: Ut caseum coagulasti me: ossibus et nervis inseruisti me, vitam et misericordiam dedisti mihi Et David: Tu formasti me, et posuisti super me manum tuam. Et ad Jeremiam Deus: Priusquam esses in utero, novi te, et in vulva sanctificavi te. Si ergo parentis in alvo Job lineamenta depinxit, si matris in utero David membra compegit, si Jeremiam genitricis sanctificavit in vulva, si Joannem sterilis in utero replevit Spiritu sancto, quid mirum modo, si virginis habitavit in utero, qui mulierem hominis sumpsit ex latere? Ipse hominem mulieris resumpsit ex utero, qui virginem viri formavit ex corpore; ac perinde, homo, quae tibi videntur nova, Deo habentur antiqua.

Sed dicis: Quae nascendi necessitas Deo cui suppetit faciendi potestas? Quae? Ut ipsam naturam nascendo reficeret, quam fecerat operando: quia quae facta fuerat ut generaret ad vitam, ipsa generabat ad mortem. Per peccatum primi hominis natura lethale vulnus accepit, et coepit esse origo mortis, quae erat initium vitae. Hoc ergo negotium nativitatis quod nasci compulit Christum, ut naturae curam nativitas daret auctoris, et naturae curatio esset vivificatio filiorum.

But, if you please, before we penetrate the secret of the Christian faith, let us speak to those who refer the virgin's childbearing, the great mystery of godliness (1 Tim 3:16), the restoration of human salvation, to an injury to divinity. God came to the virgin, that is, the artificer to his work, the Creator to his creature. When does the restoration of the work not redound to the honour of the artificer? When is it not counted honour and glory, if a maker repairs what he has made? Lest anyone should lose his work, does he not call it back when it grows old, and raise it when it falls, and re-form it for the better when it is destroyed? Therefore what is done in the virgin's childbearing is not an injury to the Creator, but is the salvation of the creature. If God made man, who blames him for remaking him? and since it is worthily believed that he formed him from slime, why is it judged unworthy that he re-formed him from flesh? Which is more precious, flesh or slime? Therefore, the more precious the material of our restoration, the greater the glory.

Or when is God not the moulder of man in the womb? Hear Job: Your hands have made me and fashioned me (Job 10:8). And after: Like cheese you curdled me: with bones and sinews you knit me together, you gave me life and mercy (Job 10:10–12). And David: You formed me, and laid your hand upon me (Ps 139:5). And God to Jeremiah: Before you were in the womb I knew you, and in the womb I sanctified you (Jer 1:5). If, then, he drew Job's features in his parent's belly, if he put together David's limbs in his mother's womb, if he sanctified Jeremiah in the womb of his bearer, if he filled John with the Holy Spirit in the womb of a barren woman, what wonder now if he dwelt in the womb of a virgin, he who took woman from the side of man? He took back man from the womb of woman, who formed the virgin from the body of man; and accordingly, man, what seems new to you is held old by God.

But you say: "What necessity of being born had God, who has the power of making at hand?" What necessity? That by being born he might remake the very nature that he had made by working: because she who had been made to beget for life was herself begetting for death. Through the first man's sin nature received a deadly wound, and began to be the origin of death, she who was the beginning of life. This, then, is the business of the nativity that compelled Christ to be born: that the nativity of the author might give nature its cure, and that the curing of nature might be the quickening of her sons.

Sermo CXLIV.

De eadem

De nativitate Christi nos comperendinare sermonem altitudo rei facit, et cogit mysterii magnitudo. Virgo peperit, quis loquetur? Verbum caro factum est, quis narrabit? Si Verbum Dei infantiae dat vagitum, homo imperfectus quomodo clamabit in verbo? Quantam stella magis nocte dedit quaerentibus lucem, tantam doctoris sermo ortus Dominici praebet audientibus claritatem: ut Christum invenisse gaudeant, discurrere non praesumant, honorent muneribus infantiam, non minorent. Sed orate, fratres, ut qui nostro sensim crevit in corpore, paulatim nostro crescere dignetur in verbo.

Evangelista hodie angelum retulit sic locutum: Ne timeas, Maria, invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum. Ne timeas, Maria, quare? Quia invenisti gratiam. Timet non qui invenit, sed qui perdit. Invenit, invenit haec concipiendo superni germinis gratiam, quae pariendo non perdidit virginitatis insignia. Ne timeas, Maria. Quid timet, quae securitatem rerum concipit, parit gaudia saeculorum? Timor non est, ubi divinum est negotium, non humanum; ubi virtutis conscientia est, non pudoris. Quid timet, quae suscepit eum quem timent omnia quae timentur? Quid timet, cui judex causae est assertor, integritas testis innocentiae? Ne timeas, Maria, invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum. Quod erat in principio apud Deum, Verbum Deum intra se virgo reperit, et factum est magnum deitatis templum, quae erat pusillum humanitatis hospitium, et quem non capiebat pusillitas humani corporis, coepit virginalis uteri magnitudo.

Ecce inquit, concipies in utero. Propter reverentiam dixisse suffecerat concipies; quod exaggerat, in utero, quid est? Ut conceptus esset veritas, non figura; ut partus esset proprietas, non imago, ut sicut de Deo vero Deus verus natus est, sic de vero conceptu veritas humani corporis nasceretur. In ortu Christi, fratres, humani corporis injuria sublata est, non natura; nec est creatura deleta, sed culpa damnata. Est ergo haeresis, quae Christum aerium corpus assumpsisse mentitur: nec habuisse carnem, sed hominem simulasse confingit.

Sermon CXLIV.

On the same

The depth of the matter makes us adjourn the sermon on the nativity of Christ, and the greatness of the mystery compels it. The Virgin has given birth: who will speak of it? The Word was made flesh (John 1:14): who will tell of it? If the Word of God gives wailing to infancy, how will imperfect man cry out in a word? As great a light as the star gave the Magi seeking by night, so great a brightness does the teacher's sermon on the Lord's birth give to its hearers: that they may rejoice to have found Christ, may not presume to range about, may honour the infancy with gifts, not lessen it. But pray, brothers, that he who grew little by little in our body may deign to grow little by little in our word.

The Evangelist related today that the angel spoke thus: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace with God (Luke 1:30). Do not be afraid, Mary: why? Because you have found grace. It is not he who finds that fears, but he who loses. She found, she found, by conceiving, the grace of an offspring from on high, she who by giving birth did not lose the insignia of virginity. Do not be afraid, Mary. Why should she fear, who conceives the security of things, gives birth to the joys of the ages? There is no fear where the business is divine, not human; where there is the consciousness of virtue, not of shame. Why should she fear, who received him whom all things fear that are feared? Why should she fear, whose champion is the judge of the case, her integrity the witness of her innocence? Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace with God. What was in the beginning with God, the Word, God, the virgin found within herself, and she became a great temple of the Godhead, she who was a tiny guest-house of humanity; and him whom the littleness of the human body could not hold, the greatness of a virginal womb began to hold.

Behold, he says, you will conceive in the womb (Luke 1:31). For reverence' sake it would have been enough to say "you will conceive"; what is it that he heightens, "in the womb"? That the conception might be truth, not figure; that the childbirth might be the reality, not an image; that, as true God was born of true God, so from a true conception the truth of a human body might be born. In the birth of Christ, brothers, the injury of the human body was taken away, not its nature; nor was the creature destroyed, but the fault condemned. There is, then, a heresy that falsely says that Christ assumed an airy body: it pretends that he did not have flesh, but feigned a man.

Concipies in utero, et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum. Quod Hebraice Jesus, Graece Σωτὴρ, hoc dicitur Latine Salvator. Merito ergo Virgini salva sunt omnia, quae omnium genuit Salvatorem. Et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum, quia in hoc nomine deitatis tota adoratur majestas: omnes qui commorantur in coelis, universi qui habitant terram, cuncti qui in profundo tenentur inferni, huic prosternuntur nomini, hoc adorant. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, coelestium, terrestrium et infernorum. Hoc nomen quod dedit caecis visum, auditum surdis, claudis cursum, sermonem mutis, vitam mortuis, totamque diaboli potestatem de obsessis corporibus virtus hujus nominis effugavit. Et si nomen tantum est, quanta potestas? Sed quis est iste qui vocatur hoc nomine? Jam dicat angelus. Et Filius Altissimi vocabitur. Videtis quia quod concipit Virgo, non terrenum germen est, sed coeleste. Virgo peperit, sed Deus suscepit Filium. Ergo qui de hac nativitate humano modo disputat, ad omnem tendit tanti genitoris injuriam.

Et dabit, inquit, ei Dominus sedem David patris sui. Hinc haereticus generat perfidiae suae nebulas, hinc sibi fingit erroris materiam. Ecce, inquit, non ego dico, sed angelus, Dabit illi Dominus Deus; numquid non major est qui dat, quam qui accipit? et qui accipit, antequam acciperet non habebat. Sed nos ista, fratres, audiamus, non ut perfidi, sed ut fideles; et sit nobis argumentum fidei, quod illis est erroris occasio. Dabit illi Dominus Deus. Quis dat, aut cui dat? utique Deus homini dat, divinitas carni. Dabit illi Dominus Deus. Quis Deus? utique Verbum quod erat in principio semper Deus. Cui dat? quod caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis. Audi Apostolum dicentem: Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi. Sibi utique non alii. Hic ergo Deus, qui in Christo erat, regnum sibi dabat in Christo, et conferebat suscepto corpori quod semper sua divinitate possederat, sicut ex ipso angeli probatur eloquio.

Dabit illi Dominus Deus sedem David patris sui. Vides, quia quando accipit, David filius dicitur; quando dat, Dei Filius nuncupatur, ipse dixit: Omnia quae habet Pater, mea sunt. Et quae necessitas accipiendi, ubi est habendi potestas? Ait, omnia quae habet Pater, mea sunt. Quis accipit quae sua sunt? Aut in gratia dantis est, si accipientis est quod donatur?

You will conceive in the womb, and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. What is Jesus in Hebrew, Soter in Greek, is said in Latin Salvator. Rightly, then, all things are kept safe (salva) for the Virgin who bore the Saviour (Salvatorem) of all. And you shall call his name Jesus, because in this name the whole majesty of the Godhead is adored: all who dwell in the heavens, all who inhabit the earth, all who are held in the depth of hell, prostrate themselves before this name, adore it. Hear the Apostle saying: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven, on earth and in the underworld (Phil 2:10). This name, which gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, running to the lame, speech to the dumb, life to the dead, and the power of this name has put to flight the whole authority of the devil from possessed bodies. And if the name is so great, how great the power? But who is this who is called by this name? Let the angel now say it. And he shall be called the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32). You see that what the Virgin conceives is not an earthly offspring, but a heavenly one. The Virgin gave birth, but God took up the Son. Therefore he who disputes about this nativity in a human way is aiming at every injury to so great a Begetter.

And the Lord, he says, will give him the throne of David his father (Luke 1:32). From here the heretic breeds the clouds of his unbelief, from here he fashions for himself the material of his error. "Behold," he says, "it is not I who say it, but the angel: The Lord God will give him; is not he who gives greater than he who receives? and he who receives did not have it before he received." But let us hear these things, brothers, not as unbelievers but as believers; and let what is to them an occasion of error be to us an argument for faith. The Lord God will give him. Who gives, or to whom does he give? Surely God gives to man, divinity to flesh. The Lord God will give him. Which God? Surely the Word who was in the beginning, always God. To whom does he give? To what was made flesh, and dwelt in us (John 1:14). Hear the Apostle saying: God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). To himself, surely, not to another. This God, then, who was in Christ, was giving the kingdom to himself in Christ, and conferring on the body taken up what he had always possessed by his divinity, as is proved from the very words of the angel.

The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. You see that when he receives, he is called the son of David; when he gives, he is named the Son of God; he himself said: All that the Father has is mine (John 16:15). And what necessity is there of receiving, where there is the power of having? He says: All that the Father has is mine. Who receives what is his own? Or is it of the giver's grace, if what is given belongs to the one who receives?

Fatemur quia accepit, sed iste qui natus est, qui suscepit carnem, qui suscepit infantiam, qui cunabula pertulit, qui suscepit aetates, qui laborem sustinuit, qui famem sensit, qui sitim passus est, qui tot injuriarum genera non refugit, qui ascendit crucem, qui subiit mortem, qui intravit sepulcrum: haeretice, huic quod accepit ascribe. At putas quod honorem a Deo dedignatur accipere, qui ab hominibus tantas accepit injurias? Aut existimas quod conferri sibi regnum a patre fastidit, qui ab inimicis poenas, mortemque suscepit? Haeretice, quod est injuriae, quod infantiae, quod aetatis, quod temporis, quod dati, quod accepti, quod minorationis, quod mortis, si intellexeris non esse divinitatis, sed corporis, tu nullam Filio irrogabis injuriam, nullam tu facies in Trinitate distantiam.

Sed revertamur ad nos, et quae sunt nostra jam loquamur. Dabit illi, inquit, Dominus Deus sedem David patris sui, et regnabit in domo Jacob in aeternum, et regni ejus non erit finis. Qui in coelo semper consedit Patri, nunc sedem David accepit in terra: qui regnabit sibi semper, modo nobis in domo Jacob regnum sortitus est aeternum. Gaudeamus, fratres, quia qui sibi regnavit regnaturus est nobis; gaudeamus, quia venit regnaturus in terra, ut nos cum illo regnare possimus in coelo. Audi Apostolum: Si compatimur, et conregnabimus. Nobis natus est, nobis utique regnum venit donaturus, ipso promittente, cum dicit: Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum, quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi. Vobis dixit, non mihi. Venit, ut sit nobiscum semper, ut nostris sit semper in oculis, qui nunc tantum nostris habetur in cordibus. Veniet, ut quibus est gloria de regno, sit de familiaritate fiducia.

Et regni ejus non erit finis. Qui ejus adventum credis, gaude, quia regnum sine fine promisit, ubi est sine successore militia, ubi sunt perpetuae dignitates. Sed quid est quod permansura non ambiunt qui ambiunt transitura? Quid est? Quid est quod caducos honores auro comparant, et nolunt gratis accipere sempiternos? Fratres, hic parantur officia, hic decernuntur loca, hic honores designantur, hic qui non de Evangelii fide acceperit codicillos, ibi aeternarum infulas non habebit dignitatum. Ergo si delectat militia, si volumus semper militare, arripiamus arma Christi, vigilemus, sobrii simus, vincamus diabolum, prosternamus vitia, ut possimus accipere praemia pariter et coronas ab ipso Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum Deo Patre regnat nunc et semper, et per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

We acknowledge that he received, but it is he who was born, who took up flesh, who took up infancy, who bore the cradle, who took up the ages, who endured labour, who felt hunger, who suffered thirst, who did not flee from so many kinds of injuries, who climbed the cross, who underwent death, who entered the sepulchre: heretic, ascribe to him what he received. But do you think that he disdains to receive honour from God, who received such injuries from men? Or do you reckon that he scorns to have the kingdom conferred on him by a father, who took up penalties and death from enemies? Heretic, what belongs to injury, what to infancy, what to age, what to time, what to the given, what to the received, what to lessening, what to death, if you understand that it belongs not to divinity but to the body, you will inflict no injury on the Son, you will make no distance in the Trinity.

But let us return to ourselves, and now speak of what is ours. The Lord God, he says, will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32–33). He who in heaven always sat with the Father has now received the throne of David on earth: he who will reign for himself always has now been allotted an eternal kingdom for us in the house of Jacob. Let us rejoice, brothers, because he who reigned for himself is going to reign for us; let us rejoice, because he came to reign on earth, so that we may be able to reign with him in heaven. Hear the Apostle: If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him (2 Tim 2:12). He was born for us; for us surely he came to give the kingdom, as he himself promises when he says: Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the origin of the world (Matt 25:34). He said "for you", not "for me". He comes, that he may be with us always, that he may always be before our eyes, he who now is held only in our hearts. He will come, so that those who have glory from the kingdom may have confidence from familiarity.

And of his kingdom there will be no end. You who believe in his coming, rejoice, because he has promised a kingdom without end, where there is service without a successor, where the dignities are perpetual. But how is it that those who canvass for things that will pass do not canvass for things that will last? How is it? How is it that they buy fleeting honours with gold, and will not receive everlasting ones freely? Brothers, here the offices are prepared, here the places are decreed, here the honours are assigned; here, he who has not received his letters of appointment from the faith of the Gospel will not have there the insignia of the eternal dignities. Therefore, if service delights us, if we wish to serve as soldiers for ever, let us take up the arms of Christ, let us keep watch, let us be sober, let us conquer the devil, let us lay low the vices, so that we may receive rewards and crowns alike from our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who reigns with God the Father now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CXLV.

De generatione Christi, et de Joseph Mariam dimittere volente

Audituri estis hodie, fratres, quemadmodum nobis beatus evangelista generationis Christi retulit sacramentum. Christi, inquit, generatio sic erat: Cum esset desponsata mater ejus Maria Joseph, antequam convenirent, inventa est in utero habens de Spiritu sancto; Joseph autem vir ejus cum esset justus, et nollet eam traducere, voluit occulte dimittere eam. Et quomodo justus, qui conceptum sponsae duxit non discutere? Suspecti non exquirit causam pudoris, conjugii famam non vindicat, sed requirit? Voluit occulte dimittere eam. Hoc pio magis videtur convenire quam justo; sed humano judicio, non divino. Penes Deum neque pietas sine justitia est, neque sine pietate justitia; coelesti sensu sine bonitate aequitas, sine aequitate bonitas non habetur. Virtutes si separatae fuerint, dilabuntur; aequitas sine bonitate saevitia est, et justitia sine pietate crudelitas. Joseph ergo merito justus, quia pius; et pius, quia justus. Denique dum pietatem cogitat, crudelitate caruit; dum causam temperat, judicium custodivit; dum vindictam differt, crimen evasit; dum refugit accusatorem, fugit sententiam. Aestuabat animus sanctus negotii novitate perculsus, stabat sponsa praegnans sed virgo; stabat plena pignore, sed non vacua pudore; stabat de conceptu sollicita, sed de integritate secura; stabat vestita materno munere, sed non honore virginitatis exclusa.

Sponsus quid faceret ad ista? Accusaret de crimine? Sed erat ipse innocentiae testis. Culpam diceret? Sed erat ipse custos pudoris. Urgeret adulterium? Sed erat ipse virginitatis assertor. Quid faceret ad ista? Cogitat dimittere, quia non poterat vel foris prodere, vel intus quod evenerat continere. Cogitat dimittere, et dicit Deo totum, quia quod homini diceret non habebat. Et nos, fratres, quoties res turbat, fallit species, facit color negotii interna nescire, declinemus judicium, subtrahamus vindictam, sententiam fugiamus, dicamus Deo totum, ne dum facile innocentum forte gestimus in poenam, ipsi nobis noxiam sententiam proferamus, dicente Domino: In quo judicio judicaveritis, judicabitur de vobis.

Sermon CXLV.

On the generation of Christ, and on Joseph wishing to put Mary away

You are going to hear today, brothers, how the blessed Evangelist has related to us the mystery of the generation of Christ. The generation of Christ, he says, was thus: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to have in the womb from the Holy Spirit; but Joseph her husband, since he was just and did not wish to expose her, wished to put her away secretly (Matt 1:18–19). And how is he just, who decided not to examine the conception of his bride? He does not inquire into the cause of a modesty under suspicion, he does not vindicate the good name of the marriage, but feels its loss? He wished to put her away secretly. This seems to suit a pious man more than a just one; but by human judgement, not divine. With God neither is piety without justice, nor justice without piety; in the heavenly sense equity is not had without goodness, nor goodness without equity. Virtues, if they are separated, fall apart; equity without goodness is savagery, and justice without piety is cruelty. Joseph, then, was rightly just, because he was pious; and pious, because just. Indeed, in that he thinks of piety, he was free of cruelty; in that he tempers the case, he kept judgement; in that he puts off vengeance, he escaped crime; in that he shuns the accuser, he fled the sentence. His holy mind was in turmoil, struck by the newness of the matter; there stood his bride, pregnant but a virgin; she stood full with a pledge, but not empty of modesty; she stood troubled about the conception, but secure about her integrity; she stood clothed with a mother's gift, but not shut out from the honour of virginity.

What was the bridegroom to do at this? Accuse her of a crime? But he himself was the witness of her innocence. Speak of a fault? But he himself was the guardian of her modesty. Press a charge of adultery? But he himself was the champion of her virginity. What was he to do at this? He thinks of putting her away, because he could neither betray her outside nor keep within what had happened. He thinks of putting her away, and he tells God everything, because he had nothing to tell man. And we, brothers, whenever a matter troubles us, the appearance deceives, the colour of the affair keeps us from knowing what lies within, let us decline judgement, withhold vengeance, flee from sentencing, tell God everything; lest, while we are perhaps too easily eager for the punishment of the innocent, we pronounce a harmful sentence on ourselves, as the Lord says: With what judgement you judge, it will be judged of you (Matt 7:2).

Certe si nos tacuerimus, clamabit Deus, respondebit angelus, qui Joseph, ne innocentiam desereret, sic praevenit: Joseph, inquit, fili David, noli timere accipere Mariam conjugem tuam; quod enim in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est. Pariet autem filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum; ipse enim salvum faciet populum suum a peccatis eorum. Joseph fili David. Videtis, fratres, in persona genus vocari, videtis in uno totam prosapiam nuncupari, videtis in Joseph seriem Davidici stemmatis jam citari. Joseph fili David. Vicesima octava generatione natus, quomodo David filius dicitur, nisi quia generis aperitur arcanum, fides promissionis impletur, superna conceptio coelestis partus virginea jam signatur in carne? Joseph fili David. Tali voce ad David prolata fuerat promissio Dei Patris: Juravit Dominus David veritatem, et non frustrabitur eum: de fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam. Quod factum quidem tali gloriatur in cantico: Dixit Dominus Domino meo, Sede a dextris meis. De fructu ventris tui, bene fructus ventris tui, bene de utero, quia coelestis hospes, supernus habitator sic in uteri descendit hospitium, ut corporis claustra nesciret; sic de habitaculo ventris exiit, ut virginalis janua non pateret, et impleretur illud quod cantatur in Cantico Canticorum: Hortus clausus, soror mea sponsa; hortus clausus, fons signatus.

Joseph fili David, noli timere. Sponsae causas sponsus ne timeat admonetur; et vere pius animus dum compatitur, plus pavescit. Joseph fili David, noli timere. Ne cum de conscientia securus sis, de sacramenti cognitione succumbas. Joseph fili David, noli timere. Quam vides virtus est ista, non crimen; hic non humanus lapsus est, sed est divinus illapsus; hic praemium est, non reatus; hic incrementum coeli est, non corporis detrimentum; hic non est proditio personae, judicis est secretum; hic palma cognitoris est, non supplicii poena; hic hominis furtum non est, thesaurus est Dei; hic non est mortis causa, sed vitae. Et ideo noli timere quia quae vitam parturit, non meretur occidi. Joseph fili David, noli timere Mariam conjugem tuam accipere. Sponsam vocari conjugem legis est hoc divinae: sicut ergo manente virginitate mater est, ita conjux dicitur pudore permanente.

Joseph fili David, noli timere accipere Mariam conjugem tuam; quod enim in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est. Veniant, audiant, qui requirunt quis sit quem Maria genuit. Quod in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est. Veniant, audiant, qui Graeco turbine Latinam nubilare nisi sunt puritatem, ἀνθρωποτόκον, χριστοτόκον, ut θεοτόκον tollerent, blasphemantes. Quod in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est. Et quod de Spiritu sancto natum est, spiritus est, quia Deus spiritus est.

Certainly, if we keep silent, God will cry out, the angel will answer, who forestalled Joseph thus, lest he should abandon innocence: Joseph, he says, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife; for what has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20). She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus; for he will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Joseph, son of David. You see, brothers, a race called in one person, you see a whole lineage named in one man, you see the line of David's pedigree now cited in Joseph. Joseph, son of David. Born in the twenty-eighth generation, how is he called the son of David, unless because the secret of the race is opened, the faith of the promise fulfilled, the conception from on high of the heavenly birth now sealed in virginal flesh? Joseph, son of David. With such a word the promise of God the Father had been uttered to David: The Lord swore truth to David, and he will not disappoint him: of the fruit of your womb I will set upon your throne (Ps 132:11). Which deed indeed glories in such a song: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand (Ps 110:1). Of the fruit of your womb: rightly "the fruit of your womb", rightly "of the womb", because the heavenly guest, the inhabitant from on high, so came down into the guest-house of the womb as not to know the bars of the body; so went out from the dwelling of the womb that the virginal door did not open, and that was fulfilled which is sung in the Song of Songs: A garden enclosed, my sister, my bride; a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed (Song 4:12).

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid. The bridegroom is warned not to fear his bride's case; and truly a pious mind, while it suffers with another, takes more fright. Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid. Lest, though you are secure in conscience, you give way at the knowledge of the mystery. Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid. What you see is power, not crime; here is not a human lapse (lapsus), but a divine gliding in (illapsus); here is a reward, not guilt; here is an increase of heaven, not a loss to the body; here is not the betrayal of a person, it is the secret of the judge; here is the palm of the examining judge, not the penalty of torment; here is not a man's theft, it is God's treasure; here is not a cause of death, but of life. And so do not be afraid, because she who is in labour with life does not deserve to be killed. Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife. To call a bride a wife is of divine law: as therefore, virginity remaining, she is a mother, so, modesty remaining, she is called wife.

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife; for what has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit. Let them come, let them hear, who ask who it is whom Mary bore. What has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit. Let them come, let them hear, who have striven with a Greek whirlwind to cloud the Latin purity, Anthropotokos, Christotokos, so as to take away Theotokos, blaspheming. What has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit. And what is born of the Holy Spirit is spirit, because God is spirit (John 3:6; 4:24).

Quid ergo requiris quis est qui de Spiritu sancto natus est, cum tibi quia Deus est, Deus ipse respondeat? cum te Joannes increpet, qui dicit: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum, et Verbum Deus caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis, et vidimus gloriam ejus. Joannes vidit gloriam, respicit infidelis injuriam. Quod in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est. Et vidimus gloriam ejus. Cujus ejus? qui natus est de Spiritu sancto, ejus qui Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis. Quod in ea natum est de Spiritu sancto est. Virgo concepit, sed de Spiritu; virgo parturiit, sed eum quem praedixit Isaias: Ecce virgo in utero accipiet, et pariet filium, et vocabunt nomen ejus Emmanuel, quod interpretatur Nobiscum Deus. Nobiscum Deus, cum illis homo. Et maledictus homo, qui spem ponit in homine.

Audiant qui requirunt quis est qui natus est de Maria? Paries filium, inquit angelus, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum. Quare Jesum? Apostolus dicit: Ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, coelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum; et tu quis sit Jesus, dolosus cognitor nunc requiris? Omnis jam lingua confitetur quia Dominus Jesus in gloria est Dei Patris; et tu adhuc inquiris quis est Jesus?

Paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum; ipse enim salvum faciet populum suum. Non alterius salvum faciet. Unde? A peccatis eorum. Esse Deum, qui peccata donat, si Christianis non credis, crede infidelissime vel Judaeis dicentibus: Cum sis homo, facis teipsum Deum. Quis potest peccata dimittere, nisi solus Deus? Illi eum negabant Deum, qui eum peccata dimittere non credebant; tu ab eo peccata dimitti credis, et Deum dubitas confiteri?

Verbum caro factum est, ut hominis caro promoveretur in gloriam Dei, non ut Deus in carnis verteretur injuriam, sicut dicit Apostolus: Qui se jungit Domino, unus spiritus est. Et quomodo non quando se jungit Deus homini, unus est Deus? Humanae leges intra triginta annos litigiosas omnes interimunt quaestiones, et Christus circa quingentos annos nativitatis suae causas praestat, ortus sui lites patitur, status sui sustinet quaestiones? Haeretice, desine judicare judicem tuum, et adora in coelis Deum, quem Deum magus adoravit in terris.

Why, then, do you ask who he is that was born of the Holy Spirit, when God himself answers you that he is God? when John rebukes you, who says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word, God, was made flesh, and dwelt in us, and we saw his glory (John 1:1, 14). John saw the glory; the faithless man looks at the injury. What has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit. And we saw his glory. Whose? His who was born of the Holy Spirit, his who, the Word, was made flesh, and dwelt in us. What has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit. The virgin conceived, but of the Spirit; the virgin was in labour, but with him whom Isaiah foretold: Behold, a virgin shall receive in the womb, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted, God with us (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23). God with us, with them man. And cursed is the man who puts his hope in man (Jer 17:5).

Let those who ask hear: who is he that was born of Mary? You will bear a son, says the angel, and you shall call his name Jesus (Luke 1:31). Why Jesus? The Apostle says: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven, on earth, and in the underworld (Phil 2:10); and do you, a crafty examining judge, now ask who Jesus is? Every tongue now confesses that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:11); and do you still inquire who Jesus is?

You will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus; for he will save his people. He will not save another's. From what? From their sins. That he who forgives sins is God, if you do not believe Christians, believe, most faithless man, at least the Jews, who say: Since you are a man, you make yourself God (John 10:33). Who can forgive sins, but God alone? (Mark 2:7) They denied that he was God, who did not believe that he forgave sins; you believe that sins are forgiven by him, and do you hesitate to confess him God?

The Word was made flesh, that the flesh of man might be advanced into the glory of God, not that God might be turned into the injury of the flesh, as the Apostle says: He who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor 6:17). And how, when God joins himself to man, is he not one God? Human laws put an end to all contentious questions within thirty years, and is Christ, for about five hundred years, to answer the cases of his nativity, suffer lawsuits over his birth, sustain questions about his state? Heretic, cease to judge your judge, and adore God in the heavens, the God whom the magus adored on earth.

Sermo CXLVI.

De eadem, ac Joseph sponso, et sponsa matre

Quoties transcursis anni metis dies Dominicae Nativitatis adventat, et virginei partus fulgor toto orbe diffunditur flammeo corusco, voluntatis, non pavoris est quod tacemus. Quae mens in ipso ortu divini regis objicere se praesumat? Solis radii cum erumpunt, visus hebetatur humanus; radiante Deo, quomodo non totus animorum sauciatur aspectus? Reparatis ergo sensibus novi luminis post stuporem, tempus est quo jam nos visa Christi generatione per carnem ipsius etiam divinitatis contemplemur arcana.

Christi, inquit evangelista, generatio sic erat. Fratres, si volumus intelligere quae dicuntur, divina verba modis non pensemus humanis; seponendus est humanus sensus ubi totum quod dicitur est divinum. Sic Christus quod nascitur non est consuetudo, sed signum; non est natura, sed virtus; non ordo est, sed potestas; et est coeleste miraculum, ratio non humana. Hic mundana scientia quid capiet? hic carnis intelligentia quid requiret? Christi, inquit, generatio sic erat. Non dixit, Sic facta est, sed Sic erat, quia Christi generatio erat apud Patrem, quando generabatur ex matre. Quod erat, semper erat; quod factum est, hoc reddebatur: erat Deus, reddebatur homo; ex utero nos suscepit ille, qui nos plasmaverat ex luto.

Cum desponsata esset mater ejus Maria. Suffecerat dixisse, cum desponsata esset Maria. Quid sibi vult sponsa mater? si mater, non sponsa; si sponsa, non adhuc mater. Cum desponsata esset Maria mater ejus. Virginitate sponsa, fecunditate mater; mater viri nescia, partus conscia. Aut quomodo non ante conceptum mater, quae post partum virgo mater? Aut genitrix quando non, quae saeculorum generavit auctorem, principium dedit rebus? Natura virgo mater semper, sic semper noverca corruptio. Est ergo muneris virginalis ut regeneret per Deum virgo quod per Deum virgo generavit: Deus et integritas est coeleste consortium, virginitas juncta Christo copula est perfecta virtutis. Quod Virgo concipit, est honor Spiritus, non onus est carnis; quod parturit Virgo, secretum est Dei, non est ministerium conjugale; quod nascitur Christus, divinae majestatis est, non est imbecillitatis humanae: est gloria deitatis tota, ubi nulla carnis sentitur injuria.

Sermon CXLVI.

On the same, and on Joseph the bridegroom, and the bride a mother

Whenever, the turning posts of the year having been passed, the day of the Lord's Nativity draws near, and the brightness of the virginal childbearing is spread through the whole world with a flaming flash, it is of our will, not of fright, that we keep silent. What mind would presume to set itself in the way at the very rising of the divine king? When the sun's rays burst forth, human sight is dulled; when God shines forth, how is the whole gaze of our minds not wounded? With our senses restored, then, after the stupor of the new light, it is time for us now, having seen the generation of Christ through the flesh, to contemplate also the secrets of his divinity.

The generation of Christ, says the Evangelist, was thus (Matt 1:18). Brothers, if we wish to understand what is said, let us not weigh divine words by human measures; human sense must be set aside where all that is said is divine. So, that Christ is born is not custom, but sign; not nature, but power; not order, but authority; and it is a heavenly miracle, a reason not human. Here what will worldly knowledge grasp? here what will the understanding of the flesh look for? The generation of Christ, he says, was thus. He did not say, "Thus it was made", but "Thus it was", because the generation of Christ was with the Father when he was being begotten from his mother. What was, always was; what was made, this was being rendered: he was God, he was being rendered man; he took us up from the womb, he who had moulded us from clay.

When his mother Mary had been betrothed. It would have been enough to say: when Mary had been betrothed. What does "bride mother" mean? if mother, not bride; if bride, not yet mother. When Mary his mother had been betrothed. Bride by virginity, mother by fruitfulness; a mother not knowing man, knowing childbirth. Or how was she not a mother before the conception, who after the childbirth is a virgin mother? Or when was she not a bearer, who begot the author of the ages, gave a beginning to things? Nature, a virgin, is ever a mother; so corruption is ever a stepmother. It belongs, then, to the virginal gift that a virgin should regenerate through God what a virgin begot through God: God and integrity are a heavenly fellowship; virginity joined to Christ is the perfect tie of virtue. That the Virgin conceives is the honour of the Spirit, not the burden of the flesh; that the Virgin is in labour is the secret of God, not a conjugal service; that Christ is born belongs to the divine majesty, not to human feebleness: it is the whole glory of the Godhead, where no injury of the flesh is felt.

Cum esset desponsata mater ejus Maria Joseph, antequam convenirent, inventa est in utero habens de Spiritu sancto. Quid est quod ad sponsam, et non ad liberam coelestis innocentiae destinatur arcanum? Quid est quod sic zelo sponsi, sponsae periculum comparatur? Quid est quod virtus tanta putatur crimen, salus certa discrimen? Quid est, quod inter innocentes taliter laborat pudor, verecundia succumbit, fatigatur castitas, sauciatur fides, exstat accusatio, urget causa, facultas tota excusatione aufertur? Quis excusat sponsam, quam conceptus accusat? Aut quid proficiet defensor externus, quando facti testis internus assistit? Quid tenemus, fratres? Non apices, non litterae, non syllabae, non verbum, non nomina, non personae in Evangelio divinis vacua sunt figuris. Sponsa quaeritur, ut jam tunc Ecclesia Christi sponsa signetur, juxta illud Oseae prophetae: Sponsabo te mihi in justitia et judicio, et in misericordia et miserationibus, et desponsabo te mihi in fide. Hinc Joannes ait: Qui habet sponsam, sponsus est. Et B. Paulus: Sponsavi vos uni viro virginem castam exhibere Christo. Vere sponsa, quae virginali partu novam Christi regignit infantiam.

Procurator Joseph sponsus, ut iste in illo Joseph Christi figuram impleat passionis; Joseph prophetalibus somniis incurrit zelum, Christus propheticis visionibus suscepit invidiam; Joseph missus in lacum mortis, vivus emergit a lacu, Christus mortis sepulcro datus, vivus remeat a sepulcro. Joseph venumdatus est, pretio taxatus est Christus, Joseph transducitur in Aegyptum, ad Aegyptum fugatur Christus; Joseph esurientibus populis panem copiose ministrat, Christus coeli pane manentes orbe toto exsaturat nationes. Sic lucet cur Joseph iste coelestis sponsi typum praetulerit, portaverit imaginem, ambulaverit in figuram.

Maria mater vocatur, et quando non Maria mater? Congregationes, inquit, aquarum appellavit Maria. Nonne haec exeuntem populum de Aegypto concepit uno utero ut emergeret coelestis in novam creaturam renata progenies juxta illud apostoli: Patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt, et omnes mare transierunt, et omnes in Moyse baptizati sunt in nube et in mari. Et ut semper Maria humanae praevia sit salutis, populum quem unda generatrix emisit in lucem, ipsa jure praecessit in cantico. Maria, inquit, soror Aaron sumens tympanum in manu sua, dixit: Cantemus Domino, gloriose enim honorificatus est. Nomen hoc prophetiae germanum est, hoc renascentibus salutare, hoc virginitatis insigne, hoc pudicitiae decus, hoc indicium castitatis, hoc Dei sacrificium, hoc hospitalitatis virtus, hoc collegium sanctitatis; merito ergo matris Christi nomen est hoc maternum.

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to have in the womb from the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18). Why is it that the secret of heavenly innocence is directed to a bride, and not to a free woman? Why is it that the bride's danger is thus brought about by the bridegroom's jealousy? Why is it that so great a power is thought a crime, sure salvation a peril? Why is it that among the innocent modesty so labours, shame gives way, chastity is wearied, faith is wounded, accusation stands forth, the case presses, all room for excuse is taken away? Who excuses the bride whom her conception accuses? Or what will an outside defender avail, when an inside witness of the deed stands by? What do we hold, brothers? Not the strokes of letters, not letters, not syllables, not a word, not names, not persons in the Gospel are empty of divine figures. A bride is sought, so that even then the Church might be signified as the bride of Christ, according to that saying of the prophet Hosea: I will betroth you to myself in justice and judgement, and in mercy and tender mercies, and I will betroth you to myself in faith (Hos 2:19–20). Hence John says: He who has the bride is the bridegroom (John 3:29). And blessed Paul: I have betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor 11:2). Truly a bride, who by virginal childbearing begets anew the new infancy of Christ.

Joseph the bridegroom is a steward, so that this one may fulfil in that Joseph the figure of Christ's Passion: Joseph by his prophetic dreams incurred jealousy, Christ by prophetic visions received envy; Joseph, sent into the pit of death, comes up alive from the pit, Christ, given to the sepulchre of death, returns alive from the sepulchre. Joseph was sold, Christ was valued at a price; Joseph is taken over into Egypt, Christ is driven into Egypt; Joseph ministers bread abundantly to hungry peoples, Christ fills with the bread of heaven the nations dwelling through the whole world. So it shines out why this Joseph bore the type of the heavenly bridegroom, carried his image, walked as his figure.

Mary is called mother, and when is Mary not mother? The gatherings of the waters, he says, he called seas (maria) (Gen 1:10). Did not she conceive in one womb the people going out of Egypt, that a heavenly offspring, reborn, might emerge into a new creature, according to that saying of the Apostle: Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised in Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor 10:1–2)? And so that Mary might always go before human salvation, the people whom the begetting wave sent forth into the light she herself rightly went before in song. Mary, he says, the sister of Aaron, taking a timbrel in her hand, said: Let us sing to the Lord, for he has been gloriously honoured (Exod 15:20–21). This name is akin to prophecy, this is saving to those who are reborn, this is the badge of virginity, this the beauty of purity, this the sign of chastity, this the sacrifice of God, this the virtue of hospitality, this the college of holiness; rightly, then, this maternal name is the name of the mother of Christ.

Diximus quare mater sponsa, quare Joseph sponsus, quare Mariae maternum nomen, ut totum circa ortum Christi fuisse mysticum panderemus: nunc quare sponsa quaesita sit ad partum Christi, aliis prodamus ex causis. Praedixerat Isaias et virginem parere Deum coeli, regem terrae, orbis Dominum, reparatorem mundi, mortificatorem mortis, redditorem vitae, perpetuitatis auctorem: hoc quam esset mundanis triste, terribile regibus, pavendum Judaeis, ipse Dominicae nativitatis probavit eventus. Namque ubi natum Christum nuntiantibus magis audivit Judaea, Herodes didicit, mox perdere Judaei, Herodes occidere molitus est Christum; et dum successorem sibi timent, omnium perdere conati sunt salvatorem. Denique quia ipsum invenire nequierunt, delent patriam, lac miscent sanguini, coaevos ejus parricidali furore collidunt; laniant innocentiae socios, quia culpae participes invenire non poterant quos punirent. Et si jam nato Christo haec faciunt, concepto Christo tanta feritas quid fecisset? Hinc est quod providetur sponsus, providetur maritalis species, ut celet miraculum, ut tegat signum, ut velet Virginis partum, ut crimini non det locum, ut furentis insidias sic eludat. Christus quamvis morti deditus, in utero si fuisset exstinctus, mors praeceps quod nostrae saluti venerat, abstulisset. Et quia locus iste multa nobis conferre poterit si dicatur, praelibasse nos hodie, fratres, Dominicum sufficiat sacramentum.

We have said why the mother is a bride, why Joseph is the bridegroom, why the maternal name is Mary's, to show that everything about the birth of Christ was mystical: now let us set out from other causes why a bride was sought for the childbearing of Christ. Isaiah had foretold that a virgin would bear God of heaven, king of the earth, Lord of the world, restorer of the world, slayer of death, giver back of life, author of everlastingness (Isa 7:14): how sad this would be to the worldly, how terrible to kings, how fearful to the Jews, the very event of the Lord's nativity proved. For when Judaea heard from the Magi announcing it that Christ was born, Herod learned it, at once the Jews set about destroying Christ, Herod about killing him (Matt 2:1–16); and while they fear a successor for themselves, they tried to destroy the saviour of all. Indeed, because they could not find him, they wipe out his homeland, mix milk with blood, dash his contemporaries together in parricidal fury; they tear in pieces the companions of his innocence, because they could not find partners in fault to punish. And if they do these things when Christ is already born, what would such savagery have done when Christ was conceived? Hence it is that a bridegroom is provided, a husband's appearance is provided, to hide the miracle, to cover the sign, to veil the Virgin's childbearing, to give no room to the charge of crime, to elude thus the snares of the raging one. Christ, though given over to death, if he had been extinguished in the womb, headlong death would have taken away what had come for our salvation. And since this passage could bring us much if it were expounded, let it suffice, brothers, that we have had a foretaste of the Lord's mystery today.

Sermo CXLVII.

De Incarnationis sacramento

Dominum Christum, fratres, quae res fecerit terreni corporis inire commercium, intrare humanae carnis angustias, habitare virginalis uteri mansionem, quia ante hac audire coepimus, hodie plenius audiamus. Vos mihi vita, vos mihi salus, vos mihi gloria: et ideo non patior nescire vos quod Deus mihi dederit scire.

Deum scivit evangelista cum dicit: Deum nemo vidit umquam. Ergo Deum quem sciebat, agnoscebat, sentiebat: quia videre non poterat creatura, ferebatur servitute dura, triste exhibebat obsequium pro invisibili majestate; obsederat pavor omnia; timor solverat universa; cuncta concusserat terror; in coelo divinus splendor prostraverat angelos; in terra tonitrua et fulmina corda mortalium quassabant. Sic minus pavor amorem dominantis exclusit; angelos fugavit ad terras; homines traxit ad idola; mundum vanis erroribus occupavit: fecit omnes Creatorem fugere, colere creaturas. Amare non potest, qui satis timet: hinc est quod mundus perire maluit quam timere; pavore mors ipsa levior. Denique Cain ubi parricidali coepit terrore vexari, mortem petit, requiem credit si periret. Et quid dicam Cain? Elias ille ubi sensit toto se timore aspergi, repetebat quam fugerat mortem, melius existimans morti succumbere quam timori. Petrus quoque Dominicae virtutis timore turbatus, Christum ut a se discederet, supplicabat: Discede, inquit, a me, quia homo peccator sum. Hoc dicebat, quia quidquid erat amoris et fidei, pondus pavoris exstinxerat; sic timor nisi amore fuerit temperatus, quamvis devotam servitutem efficit contumacem.

Videns ergo Deus mundum labefactari timore, continuo agit ut cum amore revocet, invitet gratia, charitate teneat, et constringat affectu. Hinc est quod inveteratam malis terram abluit ulciscente diluvio, et Noe novi saeculi vocat parentem, blando sermone compellat, dat familiarem fiduciam, pie de praesentibus instruit, consolatur per gratiam de futuris; et jam non jussis, sed participato labore una in arca claudit totius saeculi partum, ut societatis amor, timorem servitutis auferret, et servaretur amore communi quod fuerat communi labore salvatum.

Sermon CXLVII.

On the mystery of the Incarnation

What it was, brothers, that made the Lord Christ enter into the commerce of an earthly body, enter the narrow confines of human flesh, dwell in the lodging of a virginal womb, since we began to hear it before, let us hear more fully today. You are my life, you are my salvation, you are my glory: and so I do not allow you to be ignorant of what God has given me to know.

The Evangelist knew God when he says: No one has ever seen God (John 1:18). So the God whom he knew, he acknowledged, he felt: because creation could not see him, it was carried along by hard servitude, it rendered a sad homage on account of the invisible majesty; fright had besieged all things; fear had loosened the universe; terror had shaken everything; in heaven the divine splendour had laid the angels low; on earth thunders and lightnings were shaking the hearts of mortals. Thus fright, too great, shut out love for the One who rules; it drove the angels to the earth; it drew men to idols; it filled the world with vain errors: it made all flee the Creator, worship creatures. He cannot love who fears greatly: hence it is that the world preferred to perish rather than to fear; death itself is lighter than fright. Indeed Cain, when he began to be harassed by the terror of his parricide, asks for death, believes it rest if he should perish (Gen 4:14). And why should I speak of Cain? That Elijah, when he felt himself sprinkled with the whole of fear, sought again the death he had fled, thinking it better to give way to death than to fear (1 Kgs 19:4). Peter too, troubled by fear of the Lord's power, begged Christ to depart from him: Depart from me, he says, for I am a sinful man (Luke 5:8). He said this because the weight of fright had extinguished whatever there was of love and faith; so fear, unless it is tempered by love, makes even a devoted servitude defiant.

God, then, seeing the world tottering through fear, at once acts to call it back with love, invite it by grace, hold it by charity, and bind it with affection. Hence it is that he washes the earth, grown old in evils, with an avenging flood, and calls Noah the parent of a new age, addresses him with gentle speech, gives him a familiar confidence, instructs him lovingly about the present, consoles him through grace about the future; and now no longer by commands, but by a shared labour, he shuts up in one ark the offspring of the whole world (Gen 7), so that the love of companionship might take away the fear of servitude, and what had been saved by common labour might be preserved by common love.

Hinc est quod Abraham vocat de gentibus, auget nomine, patrem fidei facit, comitatur via, inter exteros servat, ditat rebus, honorat triumphis, promissis oppignorat, eripit injuriis, hospitalitate blanditur, mirificat germine desperato; ut tot repletus bonis, tanta divinae illectus dulcedine charitatis, Deum diligere disceret, non timere; amando colere, non pavendo. Hinc est quod Jacob fugientem solatur in somnis, redeuntem pro certamine provocat, luctatoris constringit amplexu; ut amaret patrem certaminis, non timeret.

Hinc est quod Moysen patria voce vocat, paterna alloquitur charitate, ut sit plebis suae liberator invitat. Et quid plura? Deum facit, dedit eum in Deum Pharaonis; Deum facit, munit signis, armat virtutibus, jussis bella expugnat, militem ipso verbo vincere tribuit, praeceptis triumphare concedit atque per omnes virtutum coronas ad amicitiam suam promovet, coelestis regni praestat esse participem, et ut ipse sit legislator indulget, totum tamen ut amaret accepit: denique tantum esset Dei amore succensus, ut ipse ardenter diligeret, et alios ut diligerent sic moneret: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, ex tota anima tua, et ex tota virtute tua. Quidquid est cordis, quidquid mentis, quidquid virtutis humanae, ita Dei amore voluit possideri, ut hominis mundanus non haberet quid violaret affectus.

Sed per haec quae memoravimus, ubi humana corda flamma divinae charitatis accendit, et humanis sensibus amoris Dei tota se fundit ebrietas, saucia mente coeperunt Deum carnalibus velle oculis intueri. Deum quem mundus non capit, angustus quomodo capere poterat humanus aspectus? Quid erit, quid debeat, quid possit, non respicit jus amoris. Amor ignorat judicium, ratione caret, modum nescit. Amor non accipit de impossibilitate solatium, non recipit de difficultate remedium. Amor nisi ad desiderata pervaserit, necat amantem; et ideo vadit quo ducitur, non quo debeat. Amor parit desiderium, gliscit ardore, ardor ad inconcessa pertendit. Et quid plura? Amor quod amat non potest non videre: hinc est quod omnes sancti omnia quae meruerant parva duxerunt, si Dominum non viderent. Et revera, fratres, quomodo pro beneficiis reddet obsequium, si beneficiorum non videat largitorem? Aut quomodo credit a Deo se amari, cujus non meretur aspectum? Hinc est quod amor qui cupit videre Deum, et si non habet judicium, habet tamen studium pietatis. Hinc est quod Moyses audet dicere: Si inveni gratiam coram te, ostende mihi faciem tuam.

Hence it is that he calls Abraham from among the Gentiles, increases him in name, makes him the father of faith, accompanies him on the way, keeps him among strangers, enriches him with goods, honours him with triumphs, binds him with the pledge of promises, rescues him from injuries, caresses him with hospitality, makes him wonderful by an offspring past hope (Gen 12); so that, filled with so many good things, drawn by such sweetness of divine charity, he might learn to love God, not to fear him; to worship by loving, not by taking fright. Hence it is that he consoles Jacob in dreams as he flees (Gen 28), challenges him to a contest as he returns, binds him in the wrestler's embrace; so that he might love the father of the contest, not fear him.

Hence it is that he calls Moses with a father's voice, speaks to him with a father's charity, invites him to be the liberator of his people (Exod 3). And what more? He makes him God: he gave him to be God of Pharaoh (Exod 7:1); he makes him God, he fortifies him with signs, arms him with mighty works, wins wars by his commands, grants the soldier to conquer by his very word, allows him to triumph by precepts, and through all the crowns of the virtues advances him to his friendship, grants him to be a partaker of the heavenly kingdom, and grants that he himself be the lawgiver; yet he received all this that he might love: indeed, he was so kindled with the love of God that he himself loved ardently, and so admonished others to love: You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole strength (Deut 6:5). Whatever there is of heart, whatever of mind, whatever of human strength, he willed to be so possessed by the love of God that man's worldly affection should have nothing to violate.

But through these things we have recalled, when the flame of divine charity kindled human hearts, and the whole intoxication of the love of God poured itself into human senses, with wounded mind they began to wish to gaze on God with fleshly eyes. God, whom the world does not contain, how could narrow human sight contain? What will be, what it ought, what it can: the right of love does not regard. Love does not know judgement, lacks reason, knows no measure. Love does not accept consolation from impossibility, does not receive a remedy from difficulty. Love, unless it reaches what it desires, kills the lover; and therefore it goes where it is led, not where it ought. Love gives birth to desire, swells with ardour, ardour stretches towards things not granted. And what more? Love cannot not see what it loves: hence it is that all the saints counted as small all that they had merited, if they did not see the Lord. And indeed, brothers, how will one render homage for benefits, if he does not see the giver of the benefits? Or how does one believe that he is loved by God, whose sight he does not merit? Hence it is that love, which longs to see God, even if it has no judgement, has yet the zeal of piety. Hence it is that Moses dares to say: If I have found grace before you, show me your face (Exod 33:13).

Hinc est quod alius dicit: Ostende faciem tuam. Denique et ipsi gentiles ob hoc simulacra finxerunt, ut in ipsis erroribus oculis cernerent quod colebant.

Sciens ergo Deus visendi se desiderio cruciari, lassarique mortales, unde se visibilem faceret hoc elegit, quod esset et terrenis magnum, et non minimum supernis. Nam quod in terra a Deo sibi simile factum est, in coelo non poterat honorificum non haberi? Faciamus, inquit, hominem ad imaginem, et similitudinem nostram. Perfecta devotio hoc debet imagini, quod debet et regi. Si de coelo sumpsisset angelum, nihilominus invisibilis haberetur: si de terra minus homine, et divinitatis esset injuria, et dejecisset hominem, non levasset. Nemo ergo, charissimi, Dei credat injuriam, si Deus ad homines per hominem venit, et assumpsit ex nobis, ut videretur a nobis qui vivit et regnat Deus nunc, et per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Hence it is that another says: Show your face (Ps 80:4). Indeed, even the Gentiles themselves made images for this reason, that in their very errors they might see with their eyes what they worshipped.

God, then, knowing that mortals were tormented and wearied by the desire of seeing him, chose this means of making himself visible, which would be both great to the earthly and not least to those on high. For what had been made on earth by God like himself, could it fail to be held honourable in heaven? Let us make man, he says, to our image and likeness (Gen 1:26). Perfect devotion owes to the image what it owes also to the king. If he had taken an angel from heaven, he would nonetheless be held invisible; if from the earth something less than man, it would both be an injury to divinity, and would have cast man down, not lifted him up. Let no one, then, my dearest ones, think it an injury to God, if God came to men through a man, and assumed from us, so that he might be seen by us, he who lives and reigns, God, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CXLVIII.

De eodem

Hodie, fratres, hesternum debemus redhibere sermonem, hodie Dominicae nativitatis laetitiam debemus iterare: quando concipit Virgo, virgo parit, manet virgo, non est consuetudo, sed signum; non est ratio, sed virtus; auctor est, non natura; non est commune, sed solum; divinum est, non humanum. Cesset ergo inanis philosophiae labor, nasci Christum non fuit necessitas, sed potestas; fuit honor, injuria non fuit; sacramentum pietatis fuit, deitatis non fuit detrimentum; fuit reparatio salutis humanae, imminutio substantiae non fuit hoc divinae. Qui non nascendo ex intacto limo fecit hominem, nascendo ipse hominem de corpore fecit intacto; manus quae in nostrum plasma lutum dignanter assumpsit, ad reparationem nostram dignanter assumpsit et carnem. Ergo quod Creator in creatura sua, quod Deus invenitur in carne, creaturae honor est, non est Creatoris injuria.

Sed hoc contumeliam credit, qui credit lutum pretiosius esse quam carnem. Fortasse poenitet de luti injuria in honorem carnis, in hominis gloriam se mutatum? Homo, quare tibi tam vilis es, qui tam pretiosus es Deo? Quare sic honoratus a Deo teipsum taliter inhonoras? Quare quaeris unde factus sis, et ad quid factus sis non requiris? Nonne tota ista quam vides tibi facta est mundi domus? Tibi infusa lux circumfusas removet tenebras, tibi est temperata nox, tibi dimensus est dies: tibi coelum, solis, lunae, stellarum vario fulgore radiatum est; tibi terra floribus, nemoribus, fructibus est depicta; tibi creata est in aere, campis, in aqua speciosa continens mirabilis animantium multitudo, ne gaudium novi saeculi tristis solitudo confunderet.

Hinc est quod fecit te esse de terra, ut esses tu dominus terrenorum, et esses ipsis in ipsius substantiae communione communis: nec tamen te terrenum terrestribus sic aequavit, ut non etiam coelestibus animatum te coelitus exaequaret: et ut esset tibi cum Deo ratio communis, corpus commune cum jumentis, dedit tibi animam de coelo, dedit tibi corpus de terra, ut in te nexa coeli terraeque concordia servaretur.

Sermon CXLVIII.

On the same

Today, brothers, we must repay yesterday's sermon, today we must repeat the joy of the Lord's nativity: when the Virgin conceives, the virgin gives birth, the virgin remains, it is not custom, but sign; it is not reason, but power; it is the author, not nature; it is not common, but unique; it is divine, not human. Let the labour of empty philosophy cease, then: that Christ was born was not necessity, but power; it was honour, it was not injury; it was the mystery of godliness, it was not loss to the Godhead; it was the restoration of human salvation, it was not a diminishing of the divine substance. He who, not by being born, made man from untouched slime, by being born himself made man from an untouched body; the hand that graciously assumed clay into our handiwork graciously assumed flesh too for our restoration. So, that the Creator is found in his creature, that God is found in flesh, is the honour of the creature, it is not an injury to the Creator.

But he believes this an insult who believes clay to be more precious than flesh. Does he perhaps repent of having been changed from the injury of clay into the honour of flesh, into the glory of man? Man, why are you so cheap to yourself, you who are so precious to God? Why, so honoured by God, do you so dishonour yourself? Why do you ask from what you were made, and do not inquire for what you were made? Was not this whole house of the world that you see made for you? For you the light poured in removes the darkness poured round, for you the night is tempered, for you the day is measured: for you the sky is made radiant with the varied brightness of sun, moon and stars; for you the earth is painted with flowers, groves, fruits; for you was created in the air, in the fields, in the water, the beautiful, unbroken and wonderful multitude of living things, lest a sad solitude should confound the joy of the new world.

Hence it is that he made you to be from the earth, so that you might be lord of earthly things, and might be in common with them in the communion of that same substance: and yet he did not so make you, earthly, equal to the earthly, as not also to make you, animated from heaven, equal to the heavenly: and so that you might have reason in common with God, a body in common with the beasts, he gave you a soul from heaven, he gave you a body from the earth, so that in you the knit concord of heaven and earth might be preserved.

Adhuc tamen quid adjiciat ad honorem tuum tuus Creator excogitat: in te imaginem suam ponit, ut terris invisibilem conditorem visibilis imago praesentem poneret, et in terrenis dedit tibi vices suas, ut non fraudaretur Domini vicario mundi tam larga possessio. Et si ista ita sunt, quare modo putatur injuria, quando Deus quod per se fecit in te, in se clementer excepit, et in homine se vere videri voluit, in quo ante imaginario voluit se videri; deditque ut proprietas esset ipse, qui ante ut similitudo esset acceperat?

Concepit virgo, virgo peperit, non te conceptus turbet, partus te non confundat auditus, quando virginitas quidquid est humani pudoris excusat. Aut quae ibi verecundiae laesio, ubi init deitas cum amica sibi semper integritate consortium; ubi est interpres angelus, fides pronuba, desponsatio castitas, donatio virtus, judex conscientia, causa Deus, conceptus integritas, virginitas partus, virgo mater? Nemo ergo judicet humano modo quod divino geritur sacramento, nemo mysterium coeleste discutiat ratione terrena, nemo ex usu tractet novitatis arcanum, nemo quod singulare est metiatur exemplo, nemo contumeliam de pietate componat, nemo periculum subeat de salute.

Certe qui scire desiderat altiora, recurrat ad legem, per legem legis scientiam quaerat, auctoris factum auctoritate cognoscat auctoris. Lex refert quod Deus hominem propriam creavit ad vitam, quod homini terram jussit proferre fructus spontanea servitute; quod bestias, pecudes, armenta, humanae jussit potestati subjacere, non arti, ut homo laboris nescius, doloris ignarus, beatus delicias possideret. Sed omnia haec ne haberet homo, angelus, qui inter primos habebatur, invidit, maluitque in diabolum commutari, ne hominem plenum gloria sic videret. Denique hoc livore succensus aggreditur dolis feminam, virginemque ut vetitum degustaret pomum inducit: inducta virgo inducit virginem mox maritum, ac dejecit vitae statum, mortis cibum, peccati pabulum, dum ministrat; et ipsa fit totius materia ruinae, quae facta fuerat ad solatium singulare. Hinc peccatum primum, hinc origo mortis, hinc labor, hinc dolor, hinc gemitus, hinc amara propagata est nostrae conditio servitutis. Namque homo ante dominus omnium, in omnium dejectus est servitutem, et timet omnes qui timebatur ab omnibus; et vix arte valet, qui potestate regnabat.

Hinc est, fratres, hinc est, quod Christi talis est ordo nascentis: ad virginem diabolus venerat, venit angelus ad Mariam; ut quod malus dejecerat angelus, bonus angelus allevaret. Perfidiam suasit ille, hic fidem: suasori credidit illa, ista credit auctori.

Yet still your Creator devises what he may add to your honour: he places his image in you, so that the visible image might make the invisible Maker present to the earth, and in earthly things he gave you his own stead, so that so wide a possession of the world might not be denied to the Lord's vicar. And if these things are so, why is it now thought an injury, when God took into himself in his clemency what he had made in you by himself, and willed to be truly seen in man, in whom before he had willed to be seen by way of an image; and granted that he should himself be the reality, who before had received to be the likeness?

The virgin conceived, the virgin gave birth: let the conception not trouble you, let the hearing of the childbirth not confound you, since virginity clears whatever there is of human modesty. Or what wound to shame is there, where the Godhead enters into fellowship with integrity, ever its friend; where the angel is the interpreter, faith the bridesmaid, chastity the betrothal, virtue the marriage gift, conscience the judge, God the cause, integrity the conception, virginity the childbirth, a virgin the mother? Let no one, then, judge in a human way what is done by a divine sacrament, let no one examine a heavenly mystery by earthly reason, let no one treat the secret of newness by custom, let no one measure by an example what is singular, let no one make an insult out of loving-kindness, let no one run into danger from salvation.

Certainly he who desires to know higher things, let him go back to the Law, let him seek through the Law the knowledge of the Law, let him learn the deed of the author by the authority of the author. The Law relates that God created man for a life of his own, that he commanded the earth to bring forth fruits for man in a spontaneous servitude; that he commanded wild beasts, cattle, herds to be subject to human power, not to skill, so that man, knowing no labour, ignorant of pain, might possess delights in blessedness (Gen 2). But that man might not have all these things, the angel who was held among the first envied him, and preferred to be changed into the devil, lest he should see man so full of glory. Indeed, kindled by this spite, he attacks the woman with guile, and leads the virgin on to taste the forbidden fruit: the virgin, led on, at once leads on the virgin, her husband, and cast down the state of life, while she serves the food of death, the fodder of sin; and she herself becomes the material of the ruin of all, she who had been made for a singular solace. Hence the first sin, hence the origin of death, hence labour, hence pain, hence groaning, hence the bitter condition of our servitude was propagated. For man, once the lord of all, was cast down into the servitude of all, and fears all, he who was feared by all; and scarcely prevails by skill, he who reigned by power.

Hence it is, brothers, hence it is that such is the order of Christ's birth: the devil had come to a virgin, an angel came to Mary; so that what the bad angel had cast down, the good angel might lift up. That one urged unbelief, this one faith: she believed the persuader, this one believes the author.

Nascitur Christus, ut nascendo corruptam redintegret naturam; infantiam suscepit ille, patitur nutrimenta, percurrit aetates, ut unam perfectam, manentem, quam ipse fecerat, instauraret aetatem: portat hominem, ne jam cadere homo possit; quem terrenum fecerat, fecit esse coelestem; animatum humano spiritu, spiritum vivificat in divinum: et sic eum totum tollit in Deum, ut in eo quod peccati, quod mortis, quod laboris, quod doloris, quod terrae est, nil relinquat, praestante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum Patre vivit, et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, nunc, et semper, et per immortalia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Christ is born, that by being born he may restore the corrupted nature; he took up infancy, he endures nourishment, he runs through the ages, that he might establish the one perfect, enduring age which he himself had made: he carries man, so that man may no longer be able to fall; him whom he had made earthly, he made to be heavenly; animated with a human spirit, he quickens the spirit into the divine: and so he lifts him whole into God, that in him he leaves nothing of what belongs to sin, to death, to labour, to pain, to earth, by the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, now and always, and through the immortal ages of ages. Amen.

Sermo CL.

De fuga Christi in Aegyptum

Si conceptum Virginis, Virginis partum sermo non aperit, sensus non recipit, non capit mens humana, Deum fugisse ut hominem quis loquatur? Apparuit, inquit, Angelus Domini in somnis Joseph, dicens: Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Si pietatis esse diximus, quod natus est Christus, Christus quod fugisse legitur, quid dicemus? Forte sicut natum diximus, ut repararet naturam, dicamus quod ut fugaces revocaret aufugit. Et revera si, ut revocet errantem ovem, in montibus ipse errat, quomodo ipse non fugit fugientes populos ut reducat? Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Quid est quod sic coelestis causa tractatur, ut sensus confundatur humanus, lassetur animus, laboret intelligentia, hebetetur auditus, fides nutet, spes titubet, credulitas ipsa succumbat?

Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Persequente homine, Deus fugit; saeviente terra, coelum trepidat; et volitante pulvere, pavore turbantur angeli, et pavor patris filio fugiente monstratur. Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. David persequente Saul, ad Judaeam confugit, recepit vicinia; domus unius viduae Eliae sufficit ad latebras. Christo fugiente locus deest, provincia deficit, non subvenit patria. Dum migrat, non vicinae gentes, non finitimae sufficiunt regiones: sed Aegypti tristem locum, extorrem habitu, lingua, moribus barbarum procurat exsilium. Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Si rerum refugium fugit, auxilium latescit omnium; si formidat fortitudo cunctorum, si se universorum defensio non defensat, quare humana notatur fuga, arguitur trepidatio, formido culpatur? Quare vocatur in crimen Petrus qui negat, Joannes qui expavescit et fugit, discipuli omnes, quia deserunt per pavorem?

Et ista, fratres, esto facta sint, quare litteris mandantur, quare referuntur in libris, quare recitantur saeculis, quare quotidianis lectionibus innotescunt, quare omnes panduntur in gentes? Numquid ut divinum timorem lingua, locus, aetas, tempus, universa cognoscant? Sicut enim cum virtutes leguntur, animos erigunt ad profectum, ita deponunt animos cum recitantur infirma. Quid sibi vult ergo evangelista, quod haec scribit ad memoriam sempiternam?

Sermon CL.

On the flight of Christ into Egypt

If no word lays open, no sense takes in, no human mind grasps the conception of the Virgin, the childbearing of the Virgin, who could speak of God having fled as a man? The angel of the Lord appeared, he says, to Joseph in sleep, saying: Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt (Matt 2:13). If we have said that it was of loving-kindness that Christ was born, what shall we say of what we read, that Christ fled? Perhaps, as we said that he was born to restore nature, let us say that he fled away to call back those who flee. And indeed, if to call back the straying sheep he himself strays on the mountains, how should he himself not flee the fleeing peoples, so as to lead them back? Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. Why is it that the cause of heaven is so handled that human sense is confounded, the mind wearies, the understanding labours, the hearing is dulled, faith wavers, hope stumbles, belief itself gives way?

Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. Man persecutes, and God flees; the earth rages, and heaven trembles; the dust flies, and the angels are troubled with fright, and the father's fright is shown as the son flees. Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. When Saul persecuted David, he fled for refuge to Judaea, and the neighbourhood took him in (1 Sam 21–22); the house of one widow was enough for Elijah to hide in (1 Kgs 17). When Christ flees, there is no place, the province falls short, the homeland gives no help. While he migrates, the neighbouring nations, the bordering regions are not enough: but he seeks for his exile the sad place of Egypt, foreign in dress, barbarous in tongue and in manners. Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. If the refuge of all things flees, the help of all goes into hiding; if the strength of all is in terror, if the defence of the universe does not defend itself, why is human flight censured, trembling rebuked, terror blamed? Why is Peter charged with a crime, who denies, and John, who is terrified and flees, and all the disciples, because they desert through fright (Matt 26; Mark 14)?

And granted, brothers, that these things happened: why are they committed to writing, why are they told in books, why are they read out to the ages, why are they made known in the daily readings, why are they spread among all the nations? Can it be so that every tongue, place, age, time, all things should come to know a divine fear? For as deeds of valour, when they are read, raise minds to advance, so things of weakness, when they are recited, cast minds down. What then does the Evangelist mean, writing these things for everlasting memory?

Devoti militis est regis sui tacere fugam, referre constantiam, virtutes loqui, timores silere, aperire fortia, infirma reticere, adversa delere, praedicare victorias, quo et hostium frangere ausus possit, et sociorum excitare virtutem. Evangelista igitur referendo talia, videtur excitasse haereticorum latratus, defensionem fidelibus sustulisse.

Tolle, ait, puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Mandatur fuga, non profectio; imponitur necessitas, non voluntas: indicit angelus latentem peregrinationem, non liberum commeatum; ut via, quae est per se molesta, semper esset molestior per timorem. Ergo ob quam causam haec nobis scripta sint, jam tempus est ut quaeramus. Tolle puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Bellicosus quod in bello fugit artis est, non timoris; Deus quando fugit hominem, sacramenti est, non pavoris: potens quando se subducit infirmo, insequentem non pavet, sed foris producit; vult enim in aperto vincere, qui publicam referre cupit ex hoste victoriam; occultum se non patitur inire conflictum, qui mandare suum saeculis vult triumphum. Secreta victoria, virtusque latens exemplum posteris non relinquunt. Hinc est, quod Christus fugit, ut cedat tempori, non Herodi: neque enim mortem fugit, qui venerat de hoste reportare victoriam; neque humanas insidias expavescit, qui totas venerat diabolicae fraudis aperire versutias; neque tunc timuit, quando infans, et secundum hominem timere nescivit, et secundum Deum potuit non timere. Christus, fratres, si mactatus in illo grege lactentium tunc fuisset, mors ei casus fuerat, non voluntas; non virtus fuerat, sed infirmitas; necessitas fuerat, non potestas; et innocentiae fuisset praemium, majestatis gloria non fuisset. Certe ubi esset, quod a Deo dictum est: Non coques agnum in lacte matris suae?

Futurum est, inquit, ut Herodes quaerat puerum. Herodes quaerebat, sed quaerebat diabolus per Herodem, qui videbat sibi magos, quos habebat in erroribus suis principes, aufugisse. Christus si vinctus pannis, si sub matris uberibus occupatus, si tacens lingua, si latens opere, si gressu nullus, diaboli signiferos, hoc est magos in duces fidelissimos commutavit, perfectae aetatis Christus quid posset facere diabolus jam videbat: et ideo movebat Judaeos, instigabat Herodem, ut Christi suspectam sibi praeveniret infantiam, ut futura virtutis ejus anticiparet insignia, ut peremptorium sibi nobis victoriosissimum vexillum crucis callidus machinator auferret.

It belongs to a devoted soldier to keep silent about his king's flight, to tell of his steadfastness, to speak of his valour, to be silent about his fears, to lay open his feats of strength, to keep back his weaknesses, to blot out his reverses, to proclaim his victories, so that he may both break the boldness of the enemy and rouse the valour of his comrades. The Evangelist, then, by recording such things, seems to have roused the barking of heretics and to have taken away their defence from the faithful.

Take, he says, the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. Flight is commanded, not a journey; necessity is imposed, not will: the angel enjoins a sojourn abroad in hiding, not free passage; so that the way, which is troublesome in itself, should be ever more troublesome through fear. So it is time now for us to ask for what reason these things were written for us. Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. When a warrior flees in battle, it is a matter of skill, not of fear; when God flees from man, it is a matter of mystery, not of fright: when the mighty withdraws before the weak, he does not fear his pursuer, but draws him out into the open; for he who desires to bring back a public victory over the enemy wishes to conquer in the open; he who wishes to hand on his triumph to the ages does not allow himself to engage in a hidden combat. A secret victory and a hidden valour leave no example to posterity. Hence it is that Christ flees, to yield to the time, not to Herod: for he did not flee death, he who had come to carry off the victory from the enemy; nor does he take fright at human plots, he who had come to lay open all the cunning of the devil's fraud; nor did he fear then, when an infant, since both as man he did not know how to fear, and as God he was able not to fear. Christ, brothers, if he had been slaughtered then in that flock of sucklings, death would have been a mischance for him, not his will; it would have been not power, but weakness; it would have been necessity, not authority; and it would have been the reward of innocence, it would not have been the glory of majesty. Surely, where then would be what was said by God: You shall not cook a lamb in its mother's milk (Exod 23:19; 34:26)?

It will come to pass, he says, that Herod will seek the child (Matt 2:13). Herod was seeking, but the devil was seeking through Herod, for he saw that the Magi, whom he held as princes in his errors, had fled from him. If Christ, bound in swaddling-clothes, occupied at his mother's breasts, silent of tongue, hidden in deed, with no power to walk, changed the devil's standard-bearers, that is, the Magi, into most faithful leaders, the devil already saw what Christ could do at full age: and therefore he stirred up the Jews, he incited Herod, to forestall the infancy of Christ that he suspected, to anticipate the future insignia of his power, so that the cunning schemer might take away the standard of the cross, deadly to himself, most victorious for us.

Sentiebat diabolus, sentiebat quod Christus doctrinis, virtutibus, vitam mox repararet, et mundum totum, qui adhuc vagiens, ipsum quod erat mundani verticis, occuparet, juxta illud prophetae: Priusquam sciat puer vocare patrem aut matrem, accipiet et virtutem Damasci, et spolia Samariae. Et ut, ipsis probantibus Judaeis, cum dicunt: Videtis, quia nihil proficimus, ecce mundus totus post ipsum vadit, Christus se in carne venturum, ascensurum per aetatum gradus, annuntiaturum gloriam coelestis regni, praedicaturum fidei doctrinam, et imperio verbi solo fugaturum daemones, daturum caecis visum, claudis cursum, mutis verbum, auditum surdis, peccatoribus remissionem, mortuis vitam, per legem promiserat, et per prophetas.

Unde haec Christus impleturus vir, infans mortem distulit, non fugit. Denique fugam ejus non de periculi metu, sed de prophetiae venisse mysterio evangelista asserit, sic dicendo: Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Et post: Ut impleretur quod dictum est a Domino per prophetam dicentem: Ex Aegypto vocavi filium meum. Christus ergo fugit, ut staret legis veritas, prophetiae fides, Psalmistae testimonium, dicente ipso Domino: Necesse erat impleri omnia quae scripta sunt in lege Moysi, et prophetis, et psalmis de me. Christus fugit, nobis, non sibi; Christus fugit, ut dispensanda temporibus sacramenta servaret.

Christus fugit, ut futuris virtutibus subveniret, et perfidis materiam tolleret excusandi, et credituris fidei fiduciam largiretur, quia in persecutione melius est fugere, quam negare. Denique Petrus, quia fugere noluit, abnegavit; Joannes ne abnegaret, aufugit.

The devil sensed, he sensed that Christ by his teachings, by his mighty works, would soon restore life, and that he who, still wailing, had seized the very summit of the world would seize the whole world, according to that word of the prophet: Before the child knows how to call father or mother, he shall receive the strength of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria (Isa 8:4). And, as the Jews themselves prove when they say: You see that we gain nothing; behold, the whole world goes after him (John 12:19), Christ had promised through the Law and through the prophets that he would come in the flesh, would climb the steps of the ages of life, would announce the glory of the heavenly kingdom, would preach the teaching of faith, and by the sole command of his word would put demons to flight, would give sight to the blind, a running step to the lame, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, remission to sinners, life to the dead.

Hence Christ, who was to fulfil these things as a grown man, as an infant put off death; he did not flee it. Indeed, the Evangelist asserts that his flight came not from fear of danger, but from the mystery of prophecy, saying thus: Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. And after: That what was said by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, who says: Out of Egypt I have called my son (Matt 2:15; Hos 11:1). Christ therefore fled, so that the truth of the Law might stand, the faith of prophecy, the testimony of the Psalmist, as the Lord himself says: It was necessary that all things be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me (Luke 24:44). Christ fled for us, not for himself; Christ fled to keep the mysteries that were to be dispensed in their times.

Christ fled to provide for the mighty works to come, to take away from the unbelieving the matter for excuse, and to give to those who were to believe the confidence of faith, since in persecution it is better to flee than to deny. Indeed Peter, because he would not flee, denied; John, so as not to deny, fled away (Mark 14).

Sermo CLI.

De eadem

Hodierna lectio movit corda, concussit viscera, stupefecit auditum. Ecce, inquit, angelus Domini apparuit Joseph in somnis, dicens: Surge, accipe puerum, et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Cui nascenti virginitas non resistit, non obviat ratio, non contradicit natura, quae potestas, quae vis, quod discrimen praevalet, ut compellatur ad fugam? Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. Reverentius diceret, Vade in Aegyptum, ut esset profectio, non fuga; voluntas, non necessitas; judicium, non metus; humanum saltem, si non divinum: at nunc mandatur fuga, mandatur coelitus, mandatur per angelum, ut videatur coelum timor ante tenuisse quam terram.

Accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum. In Aegyptum fuge a tuis ad extraneos, ad sacrilegos a sanctis; a templo tuo ad daemonum fana, ad idolorum patriam a regione sanctorum. Sic Judaeae non sufficit latitudo, sic angustatur saeculi diffusa possessio, non capit secretum templi. Sacerdotum turba non suscipit, non abscondit numerositas investigabilis cognatorum, ut ad deitatis latebras profana Aegyptus conducatur: sic res urget, si non vacat intueri verecundiam virginis, laborem matris, sexus pudorem, periculum in Joseph, longinquitatis fatigationem, exitium totius domus, et, quod his durius, Judaeos peregrinaturos in gentibus, quibus nec ipsa est communio, immo est profundum legis transgressione naufragium. O quam durum est peregrinatio etiam inter cives fratresque! sapit quid sit sua domus, qui sentit alienam: et ubi est illud: Domine, refugium factus es nobis? Et, Deus noster refugium et virtus? Si refugium fugit, si timet virtus, si praesidium migrat, quae vita, quae spes, quae securitas, quod munimen? Eliae contra insidias liberi regis, vidua una sufficit; Christo contra Herodis captivi minas Judaea tota non sufficit. Elias missos ad se coelesti igne consumit, Christus sola fuga fit salvus. Hucusque fugae Christi querimonias exaggerasse sufficiat.

Sermon CLI.

On the same

Today's reading has moved hearts, shaken the inmost parts, stunned the hearing. Behold, he says, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep, saying: Arise, take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt (Matt 2:13). He at whose birth virginity offers no resistance, reason no obstacle, nature no contradiction: what power, what force, what peril prevails, so that he is driven to flight? Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. It would have been more reverent to say, "Go into Egypt", so that it might be a journey, not a flight; will, not necessity; judgement, not fear; human at least, if not divine: but now flight is commanded, commanded from heaven, commanded through an angel, so that fear seems to have taken hold of heaven before earth.

Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. Flee into Egypt, from your own to strangers, to the sacrilegious from the holy; from your temple to the shrines of demons, to the homeland of idols from the region of the saints. So the breadth of Judaea is not enough, so the wide possession of the world is narrowed, the secret place of the temple does not hold him. The crowd of priests does not take him in, the unsearchable multitude of kinsmen does not hide him, so that profane Egypt is engaged as the hiding-place of the Godhead: so the matter presses, if there is no leisure to consider the modesty of the virgin, the labour of the mother, the shame of her sex, the danger to Joseph, the weariness of the long distance, the ruin of the whole household, and, what is harder than these, Jews about to sojourn among the Gentiles, with whom they do not even have communion; or rather, for whom it is a deep shipwreck by violation of the Law. O how hard is a sojourn abroad, even among fellow citizens and brothers! He knows the savour of his own home who feels another's: and where is that word: Lord, you have become our refuge (Ps 90:1)? And: Our God is refuge and strength (Ps 46:2)? If the refuge flees, if strength fears, if the stronghold migrates, what life, what hope, what security, what defence is there? Against the plots of a king who was free, one widow was enough for Elijah (1 Kgs 17); against the threats of Herod, a captive, the whole of Judaea is not enough for Christ. Elijah consumes with fire from heaven those sent to him (2 Kgs 1); Christ is saved by flight alone. Let it suffice to have heaped up so far the complaints over the flight of Christ.

Fratres, quod fugit Christus, fuit mysterii, non timoris; fuit liberatio, non periculum Creatoris; divinae virtutis fuit, non fuit fragilitatis humanae; non fugit propter auctoris mortem, sed fugit propter saeculi vitam. Nam qui mori venerat, quare fugeret mortem? Christus totam causam nostrae salutis occideret, si se parvulum permisisset occidi. Christus venerat, ut quos praeceptis docuerat, firmaret exemplis, et ipse faceret quae facienda mandaverat; et visu probaret possibilia, quae impossibilia videbantur auditu. Venerat ut mundo notitiam suae deitatis infunderet, et humani generis ignorantiam auferret. Venerat ut pigra mortalium corda ad fidem virtutibus excitaret. Venerat diabolum publico superare conflictu; ut ab omnibus et divino vinceretur jussu, et humano prosterneretur exemplo. Venerat praesentiae suae promissa persolvere, ut quibus scire se dederat, concederet se videre. Venerat ut veniret Judaeus de contemptu legis. Venerat introducere ad fidem gentes. Venerat eligere apostolos doctores orbis, eosque coelestibus implere doctrinis, munire virtutibus, armare signis, ut signis edomarent feros, sanarent virtutibus infirmos, doctrinis dociles edocerent: et ad summum, venerat mortem perdere moriendo, penetrando inferna dissolvere, resurgendo sepulcra reserare; ascendendo ad coelos coelestibus donare terrenos. Omnia haec utique periissent nobis, si Christus, cum esset in cunabulis, non fugisset.

Sed, auditor, dicas, Cum posset aliter, quare tantis, quare talibus se summisit injuriis? Quare? Primum, quia neque sine homine poterat salvari homo, neque sine humanis injuriis injuriae humanae poterant amputari: causam suam facit, qui alteri vult cavere; qui non compatitur, amputare non potest passiones. Christus nos in se suscepit, ut se daret nobis; pertulit passiones nostras, ut nostras tolleret passiones. Hinc est quod Christus fugit, ut nostras fugas in persecutionibus temperaret. Martyr comprehensus debet tenere constantiam, non comprehensus debet fugere persequentem, ut et persecutori indulgeat resipiscendi tempus, et sibi tempus non auferat supplicandi, dicente Domino: Si vos persecuti fuerint in hac civitate, fugite in aliam. Persecutorem qui provocat, facit; corrigit qui declinat. Fugere debemus ergo, provocare non debemus, si salvari persecutores nostros volumus, pro quibus praeceptum est nos orare. Orate, inquit, pro persequentibus vos. Orandum est, fugiendum est, ut et ille qui per ignorantiam furit, sanetur; et ille qui patitur de patientia palmam subeat, non subeat de temeritate discrimen. Fratres si Saulum martyres non fugissent, Paulum martyremque non fecissent. Hoc faciendum docuit Christus, hoc nobis reliquit exemplum; ut fugiente Domino, fugere indignum non putet servus.

Brothers, that Christ fled was a matter of mystery, not of fear; it was the Creator's deliverance, not his peril; it was of divine power, it was not of human frailty; he did not flee because of the author's death, but fled for the sake of the life of the world. For he who had come to die, why should he flee death? Christ would have slain the whole cause of our salvation, if he had let himself be slain as a little child. Christ had come to confirm by examples those whom he had taught by precepts, and to do himself what he had commanded to be done; and to prove possible by sight what seemed impossible to hearing. He had come to pour into the world the knowledge of his Godhead, and to take away the ignorance of the human race. He had come to rouse the sluggish hearts of mortals to faith by mighty works. He had come to overcome the devil in public combat, so that he might be both conquered by all through a divine command and laid low through a human example. He had come to fulfil the promises of his presence, so as to grant to see him those to whom he had given to know him. He had come that the Jew might come back from contempt of the Law. He had come to bring the Gentiles into the faith. He had come to choose apostles as teachers of the world, and to fill them with heavenly teachings, to strengthen them with mighty works, to arm them with signs, so that by signs they might tame the fierce, by mighty works heal the sick, by teachings instruct the teachable: and, to crown all, he had come to destroy death by dying, to break up the underworld by penetrating it, to unbar the sepulchres by rising again; by ascending to heaven to make a gift of the earthly to the heavenly. All these things would surely have perished for us, if Christ, when he was in the cradle, had not fled.

But, hearer, you may say: "Since he could have done otherwise, why did he submit himself to injuries so many, so great?" Why? First, because neither could man be saved without man, nor could human injuries be cut away without human injuries: he makes the cause his own who wishes to protect another; he who does not suffer with another cannot cut away passions. Christ took us up into himself, to give himself to us; he bore our passions, to take away our passions. Hence it is that Christ fled, to temper our flights in persecutions. A martyr who is seized must hold to steadfastness; one not seized must flee the persecutor, so as both to grant the persecutor time to come to his senses and not to take away from himself time to pray, as the Lord says: If they persecute you in this city, flee into another (Matt 10:23). He who provokes a persecutor makes one; he who turns aside corrects him. We must therefore flee, we must not provoke, if we wish our persecutors to be saved, for whom we are commanded to pray. Pray, he says, for those who persecute you (Matt 5:44). We must pray, we must flee, so that both he who rages through ignorance may be healed, and he who suffers may come by the palm through patience, not come by peril through rashness. Brothers, if the martyrs had not fled from Saul, they would not have made him Paul, and a martyr. This Christ taught us to do, this example he left us; so that, since the Lord fled, the servant may not think it unworthy to flee.

Et alia est causa quod fugit Christus, quod infans tempus suae distulit passionis, quod crucem supra tricesimum annum vitae corporalis ascendit; ut qui ad vitam perfectum hominem fecerat, perfectam repararet in vitam; et qualem terris dederat, talem redderet coelo. Et quod ad Aegyptum fugit, aliam procedit ad causam. Fugit ad Aegyptum, ut perfidiam Judaeorum per fidem gentium castigaret: nam Dominum suum quem Judaea fugaverat, Aegyptus obsequenter accepit, ut Ecclesiam Synagogae, Judaeis gentes anteponendas in fide suam panderet per figuram.

And there is another reason why Christ fled, why as an infant he put off the time of his Passion, why he ascended the cross past the thirtieth year of his bodily life: that he who had made man perfect for life might restore him into perfect life; and such as he had given him to the earth, such he might give him back to heaven. And that he fled to Egypt goes back to another reason. He fled to Egypt to chastise the unbelief of the Jews through the faith of the Gentiles: for Egypt obediently received its Lord whom Judaea had put to flight, so that he might lay open in a figure that his Church was to be set before the Synagogue, the Gentiles before the Jews, in faith.

Sermo CLII.

De infantium nece

Zelus quo tendat, quo prosiliat livor, invidia quo feratur Herodiana hodie patefecit immanitas: quae dum temporalis regni aemulatur angustias, aeterni regis ortum molitur exstinguere, sicut ait evangelista: Tunc Herodes videns quia illusus esset a magis, iratus est valde: et mittens occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem et in omnibus finibus ejus. Videns quia illusus esset a magis. Dolet impietas se illusam, dilatam se crudelitas furit, fremit dolositas se deceptam, et in se fraus reversa colliditur. Herodes stridet cadens ipse in laqueum quem tetendit: hinc iniquitatem quam condiderat evaginat: de fide perfidiae sumit arma; terreno quaerit furore, quem natum coelitus non credit; ad sinus matrum militum cogit castra, inter ubera arcem pietatis oppugnat, in teneris uberibus ferrum durat, lac fundit antequam sanguinem, dat ante mortem sentire quam vitam, tenebras ingerit intrantibus lucem.

Sic ait magister mali, minister doli, irae artifex, inventor sceleris, impietatis auctor, pietatis praedo, inimicus innocentiae, hostis naturae, malus omnibus, suis pejor, pessimus sibi: quem Christus, non ut evaderet, sed ne videret, aufugit. In altum tendens, cadit ab alto; coelum pulsans, intrat profundum; in se vadit, qui vadit in Deum; se occidit, qui vitam conatur occidere, quia capi non potest perditione salus, occisione vita, aeternitas fine. O ambitio quam caeca semper! O quam semper praesumptio pessima! O quam perdit concessa, qui inconcessa captat! Herodes obsidens terrenum regnum, impugnat coeleste; terrenis inhians, irruit in divina, ipsamque pietatem tota impietate insectatur. Audierat natum regem, quaesierat ubi, quando, unde; et ad quid: ast qualiter debuerat non quaesivit, quia apud illum erat peccandi amor, amor innocentiae non manebat. Destinatus ad scelus, ad piaculum promptus, paratus ad crimen, causas innocentiae non requirit, jus abrogat, confundit fas nefasque, cui nequitia est sodalis, cui odiosa est aequitas, iniquitas semper est amica, qui caedibus vivit, qui se munit sanguine, qui crudelitatem sectatur, cui de timore stat totum, de amore nil constat.

Sermon CLII.

On the slaughter of the infants

Where jealousy tends, where spite leaps forth, where envy is carried, the savagery of Herod has laid open today: for in being jealous for the narrow bounds of a temporal kingdom, it strives to extinguish the birth of the eternal king, as the Evangelist says: Then Herod, seeing that he had been mocked by the Magi, was exceedingly angry: and sending, he killed all the boys who were in Bethlehem and in all its borders (Matt 2:16). Seeing that he had been mocked by the Magi. Impiety is pained that it has been mocked, cruelty rages that it has been put off, guile snarls that it has been deceived, and fraud, turned back upon itself, is dashed to pieces. Herod gnashes his teeth, falling himself into the snare he laid: hence he unsheathes the iniquity he had stored up: out of faith he takes up the arms of unbelief; with earthly fury he seeks him whom he does not believe born from heaven; to the bosoms of mothers he drives the camps of soldiers, among the breasts he storms the citadel of piety, on tender breasts he hardens the steel, he sheds milk before blood, he makes them feel death before life, he thrusts darkness on those entering the light.

So acts the master of evil, the minister of guile, the artificer of wrath, the inventor of wickedness, the author of impiety, the plunderer of piety, the enemy of innocence, the foe of nature, evil to all, worse to his own, worst to himself: whom Christ fled, not to escape him, but so as not to see him. Reaching for the heights, he falls from on high; knocking at heaven, he enters the deep; he goes against himself who goes against God; he slays himself who tries to slay life, since salvation cannot be taken by perdition, life by slaughter, eternity by an end. O ambition, how blind always! O how very evil presumption always is! O how he loses what is granted who grasps at what is not granted! Herod, besieging an earthly kingdom, attacks the heavenly; gaping after earthly things, he rushes upon the divine, and pursues loving-kindness itself with utter impiety. He had heard that a king was born; he had asked where, when, from where; and for what: but he did not ask as he ought, because with him there was love of sinning; love of innocence did not remain. Resolved upon wickedness, ready for outrage, prepared for crime, he does not inquire into the causes of innocence, he abrogates right, he confounds what is lawful and unlawful, he whose companion is malice, to whom equity is hateful, iniquity ever a friend, who lives by slaughter, who fortifies himself with blood, who pursues cruelty, for whom everything stands on fear, nothing stands on love.

Herodes tunc caecus sic Christum gladiis quaerit, investigat cruore, crudelitate rimatur, successorem timens, incessit in auctorem; peremit innocentes, volens innocentiam deperire. Rector populi, morum custos, disciplinae censor, justitiae indagator, aequitatis defensor, servator innocentiae, ampliator populi, innocentis causam facit innocentium crimen, munus vaticinatorum vertit in poenam, auctoris ortum orientum mandat occasum, negotium salvantis salvandorum jubet esse discrimen. Judex audientes vocat, interrogat loquentes, negantes arguit, urget reos, percellit noxios, conscios corripit, addit complices, sententiae dat detectos.

Infantes quid? Quorum lingua tacuit, oculi nil viderunt, nil audierunt aures, manus nil fecerunt, et quibus actus nullus est, unde culpa? Sumpserunt mortem qui vivere nescierunt, non tempus profuit, non excusavit aetas, silentium non defendit, quibus apud Herodem solum quod nati sunt, hoc fuit crimen. Et revera, quomodo non redderent naturae creditum, a quibus causa exigebatur auctoris? Infelix homo, qui sibi ad accusationem paravit omnia, ad excusandum spatium non reliquit, sed totum paravit ad poenam! Quis excusabit, quem pulsat innocentia, infantia impetit, lac ut sanguis accusat? Hoc contra Herodem.

At Christus futurorum praescius, conscius secretorum, cogitationum judex, mentium perscrutator, quare deseruit quos sciebat quaerendos esse propter se, et propter se noverat occidendos? Natus rex, et rex coelestis quare neglexit milites innocentiae suae, coaetaneum sibi quare contempsit exercitum, quare cunabulis suis deputatas excubias sic reliquit, ut regem solum quaesiturus hostis totum grassaretur in militem? Fratres, Christus non despexit suos milites, sed provexit, quibus dedit ante triumphare quam vivere, quos fecit capere sine concertatione victoriam: quos donavit coronis antequam membris: quos voluit virtutibus vitia praeterire, ante coelum possidere quam terram, nec ante humanis inserere quam divinis. Praemisit ergo Christus suos milites, non amisit; recepit suas acies, non reliquit. Beati, quos martyrio natos vidimus esse, non saeculo. Beati, qui labores in requiem, in refrigerium dolores, moerores in gaudium commutarunt. Vivunt, vivunt, qui vere vivunt, qui pro Christo merentur occidi.

Herod, blind then, thus seeks Christ with swords, tracks him with gore, searches him out with cruelty; fearing a successor, he fell upon the author; he slew the innocent, wishing innocence to perish. The ruler of the people, the guardian of morals, the censor of discipline, the investigator of justice, the defender of equity, the preserver of innocence, the enlarger of the people, makes the cause of the innocent one the crime of the innocent, turns into punishment the gift of those who foretold him, decrees that the rising of the author be the setting of those just rising, orders the business of the one who saves to be the peril of those who were to be saved. A judge summons those who hear, questions those who speak, convicts those who deny, presses the accused, strikes the guilty, rebukes those privy to the deed, adds the accomplices, hands over to the sentence those he has found out.

And the infants? Their tongue was silent, their eyes saw nothing, their ears heard nothing, their hands did nothing; and those who have no act at all, whence their fault? They took up death who did not know how to live; time did not help, age did not excuse, silence did not defend those whose only crime before Herod was this, that they were born. And indeed, how should they not pay back to nature what she had lent them, from whom the cause of the author was being exacted? Unhappy man, who prepared everything for his own accusation, left no room for excuse, but prepared the whole for punishment! Who will excuse him whom innocence assails, infancy attacks, milk accuses like blood? So much against Herod.

But Christ, who foreknows things to come, who is privy to secrets, the judge of thoughts, the searcher of minds, why did he abandon those whom he knew would be sought on his account, and knew would be slain on his account? Born a king, and a heavenly king, why did he neglect the soldiers of his innocence, why did he despise an army of his own age, why did he so leave the guard posted at his cradle that the enemy, seeking the king alone, should rage against the whole soldiery? Brothers, Christ did not despise his soldiers, but promoted them: to them he gave to triumph before living, them he made to seize the victory without a contest; them he gifted with crowns before limbs; them he willed to pass by vices with virtues, to possess heaven before earth, and not to engraft them in human things before the divine. Christ therefore sent his soldiers ahead, he did not lose them; he received back his battle-lines, he did not abandon them. Blessed are those whom we have seen born to martyrdom, not to the world. Blessed are those who have changed labours into rest, pains into refreshment, griefs into joy. They live, they live, who truly live, who merit to be slain for Christ.

Beati ventres qui portaverunt tales, beata ubera quae se talibus infuderunt, beatae lacrymae quae pro talibus fusae flentibus gratiam baptismatis contulerunt. Nam diverso modo, dono uno, in lacrymis suis matres, et suo filii sanguine baptizantur. In martyrio filiorum passae sunt matres; nam gladius filiorum pertransiens membra ad matrum corda pervenit, et necesse est ut sint praemii consortes, quae fuerunt sociae passionis. Arridebat parvulus occisori, gladio adjocabatur infantulus, nutricis loco attendebat lactans percussoris horrorem, nescia lucis aetas moritura gaudebat, infans filius omnem hominem non ut hostem respicit, sed parentem. Matres tulerunt quidquid et angoris exstitit, et doloris, et ideo non carebunt martyrii gaudio, martyrii lacrymas quae fuderunt.

Hoc loco attendat auditor, attendat, ut intelligat martyrium non constare per meritum, sed venire per gratiam. In parvulis quae voluntas, quod arbitrium, ubi captiva fuit et ipsa natura? De martyrio ergo debemus totum Deo, nil nobis. Vincere diabolum, corpus tradere, contemnere viscera, tormenta expendere, lassare tortorem, capere de injuriis gloriam, de morte vitam, non est virtutis humanae, muneris est divini. Ad martyrium qui sua virtute currit, per Christum non pervenit ad coronam: sed ipse nos coeleste perducat ad pabulum, qui nostro dignatus est jacere in stabulo, Jesus Christus Nazarenus Dominus noster, qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Blessed the wombs that bore such, blessed the breasts that poured themselves out for such, blessed the tears which, shed for such, conferred the grace of baptism on those who wept. For in different manner, by one gift, the mothers are baptised in their tears, and the sons in their blood. In the martyrdom of the sons the mothers suffered; for the sword, passing through the limbs of the sons, reached the hearts of the mothers, and it must be that they who were companions of the passion are sharers of the reward. The little one smiled at his slayer, the infant played with the sword, the suckling looked at the horror of the striker as at his nurse, the age that did not know the light rejoiced as it was about to die, the infant son looks on every man not as an enemy, but as a parent. The mothers bore whatever there was of anguish and of pain, and therefore they will not lack the joy of martyrdom, who shed the tears of martyrdom.

Here let the hearer attend, let him attend, so as to understand that martyrdom does not stand by merit, but comes by grace. In little ones, what will, what choice, where nature itself too was captive? Of martyrdom, then, we owe the whole to God, nothing to ourselves. To conquer the devil, to give up the body, to despise one's vitals, to endure torments, to tire the torturer, to win glory from injuries, life from death, is not of human virtue; it is of divine gift. He who runs to martyrdom by his own virtue does not reach the crown through Christ: but may he lead us to the heavenly pasture who deigned to lie in our stable, Jesus Christ the Nazarene, our Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CLIII.

De eadem

Fratres, humani sensus non est virginei partus aperire mysterium: quod natura non habet, auctoris est, non naturae; est opus superni spiritus, quod sentire non potest caro; ubi non est humanitatis indicium, ibi deitatis est signum, dicente propheta: Ipse Dominus Deus dabit vobis signum. Ecce virgo in utero accipiet. Ubi nil est terreni usus, est ibi coelestis ordinis totum; quod de mundo non est, mundano intellectui non potest subjacere. Conceptus qui virginem servat, partus virginem qui relinquit, divinum est quod generat, non humanum; Deus graditur, ubi vestigium nullatenus humani transitus invenitur; consuetudo deficit, miracula cum geruntur; consuetudines non respiciunt signa, singularitas non admittit exemplum, sicut hodierna pandit lectio, quae divina narrat praelia parvulorum.

Coorta regi cohors sua, magis praemori quam commori tota gestit: Christo dicati milites coeperunt ante militare quam vivere, ante pugnare quam ludere, fundere ante sanguinem quam lactis ubera peroptare: ardentes animae moras corporis non tulerunt, a gremio ad furentes hostium cuneos pervolantes, anticipant virtutibus blandimenta, vulneribus oscula, unguenta ferro, ut coelum possint ante inhabitare quam terram, praemia spiritus ante portare quam carnem, ante referre triumphos Deo quam perferre hominum nutrimenta. Vere, vere, fratres, isti sunt gratiae martyres, confitentur tacentes, nescientes pugnant, vincunt inscii, moriuntur inconscii, ignari tollunt palmas, coronas rapiunt ignorantes. Ergo sicut virginitas corruptionis nescia contulit honorem matri, sic infantia passionis ignara martyrii palmas rapuit et coronas. Sed quid dicemus quod rex ipse qui stare debuit, fugit solus, et fugit monente Patre? Fugere istud est amoris intimi, non timoris ignavi. Si stetisset Christus, haberet eos synagoga filios, hos Ecclesia martyres non haberet.

Sermon CLIII.

On the same

Brothers, it is not for human sense to lay open the mystery of the virgin childbearing: what nature does not have belongs to the author, not to nature; it is the work of the spirit from on high, which the flesh cannot perceive; where there is no indication of humanity, there is the sign of the Godhead, as the prophet says: The Lord God himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall receive in the womb (Isa 7:14). Where there is nothing of earthly usage, there all is of the heavenly order; what is not of the world cannot be subject to worldly understanding. A conception that keeps the virgin, a childbearing that leaves the virgin: what it begets is divine, not human; God walks where no footprint of human passage is found at all; custom fails when miracles are wrought; customs do not look to signs, singularity admits no example, as today's reading lays open, which tells of the divine battles of little ones.

Risen up for its king, his own cohort longs as one to die before him rather than to die with him: soldiers dedicated to Christ began to serve before they lived, to fight before they played, to shed their blood before they longed for the breasts' milk: burning souls could not bear the delays of the body; flying from the lap to the raging wedges of the enemy, they forestall caresses with feats of valour, kisses with wounds, ointments with the sword, so that they may dwell in heaven before earth, carry the rewards of the spirit before the flesh, bring back triumphs to God before taking in the nourishment of men. Truly, truly, brothers, these are the martyrs of grace: they confess while silent, they fight without knowing, they conquer unwitting, they die unaware, unknowing they take up palms, ignorant they seize crowns. Therefore, as virginity, knowing no corruption, conferred honour on the mother, so infancy, unaware of the passion, has seized the palms and the crowns of martyrdom. But what shall we say of this, that the king himself, who ought to have stood his ground, fled alone, and fled at the Father's warning? That flight is of inmost love, not of craven fear. Had Christ stood his ground, the Synagogue would have them as sons; the Church would not have them as martyrs.

Sermo CLIV.

In D. Stephanum protomartyrem

Sicut dominum praediorum limitibus affixi tituli proloquuntur, ita nomina ipsa saepe sanctorum merita indicant, testantur insignia. Ita Abraham, quod fide credidit, nominis adjectione monstravit, quando ex Abram Abraham divinitus nuncupatur: ut dilatandus genere, nomine ante dilataretur, dicente Domino: Et non vocabitur amplius nomen tuum Abram, sed Abraham erit nomen tuum, quia patrem multarum gentium posui te. Sic conjux sancta ejus cum de sterili fit fecunda, ex Sarai vocitata est Sarah, ut et ipsa ante crescat nomine quam crescat pignore; et quia permittente Domino risum edidit si vetula conciperet exarata jam rugis, si pareret desperata jam fecunditas, si sterilitas jam penes senectutis extrema praegnans fieret, risum mox quod genuit, nuncupavit; et hoc aptavit in nomine, quod sensu passa est cum rideret: Et vocavit nomen ejus Isaac, quod interpretatur risus. Sic Jacob, qui in utero coepit ante luctari quam vivere, ante viribus superare quam membris, etiam inter viscera materna ipsa supplantatoris est vocabulum consecutus, eo quod antequam nasceretur noscitur divinitus reprobatum supplantasse germanum.

Et quia longum est ire per singula, sicut Petrus a petra nomen adeptus est, quia primus meruit Ecclesiam fidei firmitate fundare; ita Stephanus vocatus est a corona, quia primus meruit pro Christi nomine subire conflictum, primus meruit sanguine militum Christi martyrium dedicare. Petrus apostolici chori vetustum teneat principatum, aperiat intrantibus regnum coelorum, reos potestate vinciat, poenitentes clementer absolvat; Stephanus est martyrum primus, Stephanus purpuratum ducat exercitum, qui pro Domini sui adhuc calente sanguine sanguinem suum avidus bellator effundit. Et quia cruore proprio tinctam sibi ipse purpuram conquisivit, merito a rege suo consecutus est post coronam, qui jam cum nasceretur nomen sortitus est a corona: vere quem praescivit et praedestinavit, ipsum nunc martyrii primum vocavit ad gloriam.

Sermon CLIV.

On Saint Stephen, the first martyr

As inscriptions fixed to the boundaries of estates proclaim their owner, so the very names of the saints often point to their merits and bear witness to their distinctions. So Abraham showed by the addition to his name what he believed by faith, when from Abram he is called Abraham by God: so that he who was to be enlarged in his race might first be enlarged in his name, as the Lord says: And your name shall no more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of many nations (Gen 17:5). So his holy wife, when from barren she becomes fruitful, from Sarai was called Sarah, so that she too might grow in name before she grew in offspring; and because, the Lord permitting, she let out a laugh at the thought that an old woman, already furrowed with wrinkles, should conceive, that a fruitfulness already despaired of should bear, that barrenness at the very end of old age should become pregnant, she straightway named what she bore Laughter; and she fitted into the name what she had undergone in her feeling when she laughed: And she called his name Isaac (Gen 21:3), which is interpreted laughter. So Jacob, who in the womb began to wrestle before he lived, to overcome by strength before by limbs, even within his mother's womb obtained the very name of supplanter, because before he was born he is known to have supplanted his brother, rejected by God (Gen 25).

And since it is long to go through each one: as Peter obtained his name from the rock, because he was the first who merited to found the Church on the firmness of faith, so Stephen was named from the crown, because he was the first who merited to undergo the combat for the name of Christ, the first who merited to inaugurate martyrdom with the blood of Christ's soldiers. Let Peter hold the ancient principate of the apostolic choir, let him open the kingdom of heaven to those who enter, bind the guilty by his power, mercifully absolve the penitent; Stephen is the first of the martyrs, let Stephen lead the purple-clad army, he who, an eager warrior, poured out his own blood for the still warm blood of his Lord. And because he himself won for himself a purple dyed with his own gore, rightly he afterwards obtained from his king the crown, he who already at his birth was allotted his name from the crown: truly, him whom he foreknew and predestined, he has now called first to the glory of martyrdom.

Sermo CLV.

De kalendis Januarii, quae varia gentium superstitione polluebantur

Ubi nostram Christus pie natus est ad salutem, mox diabolus divinae bonitati numerosa genuit et perniciosa portenta, ut ridiculum de religione componeret, in sacrilegium verteret sanctitatem, de honore Dei Deo pararet injuriam. Hinc est, fratres, hinc est quod hodie gentiles deos suos foeditatibus exquisitis, excogitato dedecore, et ipsa turpitudine turpiores videndos trahunt, distrahunt, pertrahunt, quos faciunt non videndos. Quae vanitas, qualis dementia, quanta caecitas, fateri deos, et eos ludibriis infelicibus infamare! Irrisores sunt, cultores non sunt, qui deos quos venerantur illudunt; injuriis afficiunt, non honorant, qui deos a quibus se formatos existimant, sic deformant, confundunt, non glorificant, qui eos de ipsa confusione componunt.

Vere sicut ait Apostolus, Quia non probaverunt Deum habere in notitia, tradidit illos Deus in reprobum sensum, ut faciant ea quae non conveniunt: quando eis quibus humana abrogant, dant divina, quando eos judicant dignos coelo, quando ipsos faciunt terra ipsa non dignos, vere dati sunt in reprobum sensum; et non est hoc judicii humani, est hoc sapientiae Dei, ut ipsi sint injuriarum Dei vindices, qui injuriae probantur auctores. Quae ira, quae ultio, sic in Deum de idolis exsequeretur offensam, ut eos quos vetustas aris, incenso, victimis, gemmis, auro deos esse mentita est, posteritas turpi cultu homines fuisse turpissimos judicaret, et eorum vitam, mores, actus, ipsis eorum signaret in vultibus, ac doceret tales fugiendos esse potius quam colendos!

Defleamus, fratres, et eos qui talia sunt secuti, et nos evasisse talia coelitus gaudeamus. Quorum formant adulteria in simulacris, quorum fornicationes imaginibus mandant, quorum titulant incesta picturis, quorum crudelitates commendant libris, quorum parricidia tradunt saeculis, quorum impietates personant tragoediis, quorum obscena ludunt, hos qua dementia deos crederent, nisi quia criminum desiderio, amore scelerum possidentur, deos exoptant habere criminosos? Qui peccare cupit, peccatorum colit et veneratur auctores. Hinc est quod se Veneri adulter inseruit; hinc est quod se Marti crudelis addicit.

Sermon CLV.

On the Kalends of January, which were defiled by the various superstition of the Gentiles

When Christ was born in loving-kindness for our salvation, the devil at once brought forth against the divine goodness many baneful prodigies, to make a mockery out of religion, to turn holiness into sacrilege, to prepare out of the honour of God an injury to God. Hence it is, brothers, hence it is that today the Gentiles drag out, drag about, drag along to be seen their gods, with studied foulness, with contrived disgrace, fouler than foulness itself, gods whom they make unfit to be seen. What vanity, what madness, what blindness, to acknowledge gods, and to defame them with wretched mockeries! They are mockers, they are not worshippers, who make sport of the gods they venerate; they treat them with injuries, they do not honour them, who so deform the gods by whom they think they were formed; they confound them, they do not glorify them, who compose them out of confusion itself.

Truly, as the Apostle says: Since they did not see fit to hold God in knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do what is not fitting (Rom 1:28): when they give the divine to those from whom they take away the human, when they judge worthy of heaven those whom they make unworthy of the very earth, truly they have been given up to a reprobate mind; and this is not of human judgement, it is of the wisdom of God, that they themselves should be the avengers of the injuries done to God, who are proved the authors of the injury. What wrath, what vengeance could so punish upon the idols the affront to God, that posterity, by a foul worship, should judge those whom antiquity, with altars, incense, victims, gems, gold, falsely declared to be gods, to have been the foulest of men, and should mark their life, manners, deeds on their very faces, and teach that such are to be fled rather than worshipped!

Let us weep, brothers, for those who have followed such things, and let us rejoice that we, by heaven's gift, have escaped such things. Those whose adulteries they shape in statues, whose fornications they commit to images, whose incests they set out in pictures, whose cruelties they commend in books, whose parricides they hand down to the ages, whose impieties resound in tragedies, whose obscenities they act in play: by what madness would they believe these to be gods, unless, possessed by desire of crimes, by love of wickedness, they long to have criminal gods? He who desires to sin worships and venerates the authors of sins. Hence it is that the adulterer has attached himself to Venus; hence it is that the cruel man gives himself over to Mars.

Haec diximus, fratres, ut proderemus causam: quare gentiles hodie faciant deos suos talia committere, quae sustinemus, et faciant tales qui videntibus et horrori sint et pudori; faciant ut eos aliquando et ipsi qui faciunt horreant et relinquant, et Christiani glorientur a talibus se liberatos esse per Christum: si modo non eorum ex spectaculis polluantur, si eorum non inquinent thura tactu, si hujusmodi fugiant de assensione discrimen, quia factis semper est aequalis assensus, Apostolo probante, cum dicit: Non solum qui faciunt ea, sed etiam qui consentiunt facientibus. Et si tanta est de assensione damnatio, quis satis lugeat eos qui simulacra faciunt semetipsos? Nonne isti amiserunt imaginem Dei, similitudinem perdiderunt, Christi exuti sunt indumentum, qui se simulacrorum formis sacrilegis formaverunt?

Sed dicit aliquis, Non sunt haec sacrilegiorum studia, vota sunt haec jocorum; et hoc esse novitatis laetitiam, non vetustatis errorem; esse hoc anni principium, non gentilitatis offensam. Erras, homo, non sunt haec ludicra, sunt crimina. Quis de impietate ludit, de sacrilegio quis jocatur, piaculum quis dicit risum? Satis se decipit, qui sic sentit; tyrannus est, tyranni habitum qui praesumit. Qui se deum facit, Deo vero contradictor existit; imaginem Dei portare noluit, qui idoli voluerit portare personam; qui jocari voluerit cum diabolo, non poterit gaudere cum Christo. Nemo cum serpente securus ludit, nemo cum diabolo jocatur impune.

Si quae sunt ergo viscera pietatis in nobis, si quae est in nobis contemplatio humanitatis, si quae nos habet fraternae salutis affectio, abstrahamus eos qui sic ad perditionem currunt, rapiuntur ad mortem, trahuntur ad tartara, festini sunt in gehennam. Abstrahat ergo pater filium, servum dominus, parens parentem, civem civis, homo hominem, Christianus omnes qui se bestiis compararunt, exaequarunt jumentis, aptaverunt pecudibus, daemonibus formaverunt. Et ille qui liberat, invenit praemium; qui negligit, acquirit offensam. Beatus qui suae vitae custos est, et provisor est salutis alienae.

We have said this, brothers, to lay bare the cause: why the Gentiles today make their gods commit such things as we endure, and make them such as to be a horror and a shame to those who see them; they bring it about that one day even those who make them may shudder at them and abandon them, and that Christians may glory that they have been freed from such things through Christ: provided only that they are not polluted by their spectacles, that they do not defile themselves by touching their frankincense, that they flee the peril of consenting to such things, since consent is always equal to deeds, as the Apostle proves when he says: Not only those who do them, but also those who consent to those who do them (Rom 1:32). And if the damnation for consent is so great, who could mourn enough for those who make themselves into images? Have not these lost the image of God, forfeited the likeness, been stripped of the garment of Christ, who have formed themselves into the sacrilegious forms of images?

But someone says: "These are not pursuits of sacrilege, these are vows of merriment; and this is the gladness of what is new, not the error of what is old; this is the beginning of the year, not an affront of paganism." You are wrong, man: these are not games, they are crimes. Who plays with impiety, who jests with sacrilege, who calls an outrage a laugh? He deceives himself greatly who thinks so; he is a tyrant who presumes to take the dress of a tyrant. He who makes himself a god sets himself up as a contradictor of the true God; he has refused to bear the image of God, who has chosen to bear the mask of an idol; he who has chosen to jest with the devil will not be able to rejoice with Christ. No one plays with a serpent in safety, no one jests with the devil unpunished.

If, then, there is in us any inward feeling of piety, if there is in us any regard for humanity, if any affection for the salvation of our brothers holds us, let us draw away those who so run to perdition, are swept away to death, are dragged to Tartarus, hasten into Gehenna. Let the father, then, draw away his son, the master his servant, the kinsman his kinsman, the citizen his fellow citizen, man man, the Christian all who have likened themselves to beasts, made themselves equal to cattle, fitted themselves to herds, shaped themselves into demons. And he who sets free finds a reward; he who neglects it incurs disfavour. Blessed is he who is the guardian of his own life and the provider of another's salvation.

Sermo CLVI.

De Epiphania et magis

Quoties salutaribus succis contra lethales morbos antidotum temperat peritia praecauta medicorum, si praeter artem, praeter medicinam, praeter tempus, accipere praesumat aegrotus, sit periculi causa, quod provisum est ad salutem; sic Dei verbum, si praeter magisterium, praeter doctrinam, praeter dogma fidei, scire temerarius praesumat auditor, quod est vitae materia, fit perditionis occasio. Quaerendum est, fratres, ne per audiendi imperitiam, quod ad profectum nobis divinitus scriptum est, ad animarum veniat detrimentum.

Putasne Chaldaeos siderum scrutatores, errantes per astra magos, coeli negotia in tenebris noctium perquirentes, nascendi, moriendi causas, stellarum cursibus ascribentes, bona, malave hominum de arbitrio luminarium firmantes, evangelista hodie ortum Christi absconditum saeculis stella duce docuit invenisse? Absit. Sic sentit mundus, sic gentiles intelligunt, sic facit species lectionis: caeterum sermo evangelicus non humana loquitur, sed divina; non usitata, sed nova; non arte fallentia, sed veritate subnixa; non oculis alludentia, sed cordibus infixa; non conjecturis nutantia, sed auctoritate firmata; a Deo venientia, non a fato; non collecta numeris, sed virtutibus acquisita.

Cum natus esset Jesus, inquit, in Bethlehem Judae, in diebus Herodis regis, ecce magi ab Oriente venerunt Hierosolymam, dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est Rex Judaeorum? Vidimus stellam ejus in Oriente, et venimus adorare eum. Cum nascitur Jesus, oritur origo rerum, generatur largitor generis, nascitur auctor naturae, ut repararet naturam, genus redderet, originem recrearet. Adam primus homo, pater generis, origo generationis, naturae bonum, libertatem generis et germinis vitam sic perdidit, dum deliquit, ut malum naturae, servitutem generis, germinis mortem successio lamentanda portaret.

Sermon CLVI.

On the Epiphany and the Magi

Whenever the careful skill of physicians blends an antidote of healing juices against deadly diseases, if the sick man presumes to take it outside the art, outside the prescription, outside the time, what was provided for health becomes a cause of danger; so the word of God, if a rash hearer presumes to know it outside the master's teaching, outside the doctrine, outside the dogma of faith, what is the matter of life becomes the occasion of perdition. We must take care, brothers, lest through unskilfulness in hearing, what was divinely written for our progress should turn to the harm of souls.

Do you think that the Evangelist teaches today that Chaldeans, searchers of the stars, Magi wandering through the constellations, investigating the affairs of the sky in the darkness of nights, ascribing the causes of being born and of dying to the courses of the stars, establishing the good or ill of men by the choice of the luminaries, found the birth of Christ, hidden from the ages, with a star for their guide? Far from it. So the world thinks, so the Gentiles understand, so the surface of the reading suggests: but the word of the Gospel speaks not human things, but divine; not usual things, but new; not things deceiving by art, but resting on truth; not things playing on the eyes, but fixed in hearts; not things wavering in conjecture, but made firm by authority; coming from God, not from fate; not gathered by numbers, but acquired by mighty works.

When Jesus had been born, he says, in Bethlehem of Judah, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi came from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him (Matt 2:1–2). When Jesus is born, the origin of things rises, the bestower of the race is begotten, the author of nature is born, to restore nature, give back the race, re-create the origin. Adam, the first man, father of the race, origin of generation, so lost the good of nature, the freedom of the race and the life of the offspring when he offended, that a succession to be lamented carried the evil of nature, the servitude of the race, the death of the offspring.

Hinc est quod Christus nascendo naturam reddidit, sustulit moriendo mortem, vitam revocat dum resurgit: et qui homini animam dederat de coelo, inde hominem fecit et carne constare, ne terrena labes coelestem sensum rursum carnis demergat in lapsum, dicente Apostolo: Primus homo de terra, terrenus; secundus homo de coelo, coelestis: qualis terrenus, tales et terreni; et qualis coelestis, tales et coelestes. Et Joannes evangelista: Omnis, qui ex Deo natus est, non peccat, sed generatio Dei servat illum. Hinc est ergo quod nascitur Christus, ut jacentes in terreno germine coelestem tolleret ad naturam.

Cum natus esset Jesus in Bethlehem Judae. Bethlehem, fratres, Hebraice domus panis vocatur. His ergo vocabulis Judae signatur domus, genus vocatur, ut promissionis fides, ut prophetiae veritas impleatur, dicente Jacob: Juda, te laudabunt fratres tui, manus tuae supra dorsum inimicorum tuorum, adorabunt te filii patris tui. Et post: Non deficiet princeps ex Juda, nec dux ex femoribus ejus, donec veniat cui reposita sunt, et ipse erit exspectatio gentium. Unde et David, Juda rex meus.

Cum natus esset Jesus in Bethlehem Judae in diebus Herodis regis. Quid est, quod tempore regis nefandi Deus descendit ad terras? miscetur divinitas carni? fit terreno corpori coeleste commercium? Quid est? et quando non verus rex expulsurus tyrannum, vindicaturus patriam, instauraturus orbem, libertatem redditurus adventat? Herodes refuga gentis Judaicae invasit regnum, libertatem sustulit, profanavit sancta, confudit ordinem; quidquid disciplinae, quidquid cultus est, abolevit; merito ergo genti sanctae, quia humana desunt, divina succurrunt, et adest Deus ipsi, cui homo non erat qui adesset. Sic iterum Christus veniet, ut Antichristum subruat, liberetur orbis, paradisi patria reddatur, mundi perpetuetur libertas, saeculi servitus tota tollatur.

Ecce magi ab Oriente venerunt. Ab Oriente ad Orientem veniunt magi, ut susciperet venientes ipse qui jusserat ut venirent: quando enim Deum magus, nisi Deo jubente perquireret? quando regem coeli nisi revelante Deo astrologus invenisset? quando unum Deum sine Deo Chaldaeus adoraret in terra, qui in coelo diis totidem quot sideribus serviebat? Plus coeleste de magis quam de stella signum est, quod Judaeae regem, quod legis auctorem magus scit, nescit Judaeus; Chaldaea defert, non defert Judaea; Hierosolyma aversatur et refugit; Syria sequitur et adorat.

Hence it is that Christ by being born gave back nature, by dying took away death, in rising calls back life: and he who had given man a soul from heaven made man from there to consist also of flesh, so that the earthly stain might not again sink the heavenly sense into the fall of the flesh, as the Apostle says: The first man from the earth, earthly; the second man from heaven, heavenly: as is the earthly, such also are the earthly; and as is the heavenly, such also are the heavenly (1 Cor 15:47–48). And John the Evangelist: Everyone who is born of God does not sin, but the generation of God keeps him (1 John 5:18). Hence it is, then, that Christ is born, to raise to the heavenly nature those lying in an earthly offspring.

When Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judah. Bethlehem, brothers, in Hebrew is called house of bread. By these words, then, the house of Judah is marked, the race is named, so that the faith of the promise, the truth of the prophecy might be fulfilled, as Jacob says: Judah, your brothers shall praise you, your hands on the back of your enemies, the sons of your father shall worship you (Gen 49:8). And after: A prince shall not fail from Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until he comes for whom these things are laid up, and he shall be the expectation of the nations (Gen 49:10). Whence David too: Judah, my king (Ps 60:9).

When Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judah in the days of King Herod. Why is it that in the time of a wicked king God comes down to earth? that divinity is mingled with flesh? that a heavenly commerce comes about with an earthly body? Why is it? And when does the true king not come to drive out the tyrant, to set free his homeland, to restore the world, to give back freedom? Herod, a renegade of the Jewish nation, had seized the kingdom, taken away freedom, profaned the holy things, confounded order; whatever there is of discipline, whatever of worship, he abolished; rightly, then, since human help is lacking to the holy nation, divine help comes to its aid, and God himself stands by it, which had no man to stand by it. So Christ will come again, to overthrow the Antichrist, that the world may be set free, the homeland of paradise be given back, the freedom of the world made perpetual, the whole servitude of the age taken away.

Behold, Magi came from the East. From the East to the East the Magi come, so that he who had bidden them come might himself receive them as they came: for when would a magus seek out God, unless God bade him? when would an astrologer have found the king of heaven, unless God revealed him? when would a Chaldean on earth worship one God without God, he who in heaven served as many gods as there are stars? It is a more heavenly sign from the Magi than from the star, that the magus knows the king of Judaea, the author of the Law, and the Jew does not know him; Chaldea announces him, Judaea does not announce him; Jerusalem turns away and flees back; Syria follows and worships.

Ecce magi ab Oriente venerunt, dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus stellam ejus. Et quid tamen est quod videtur? Vere sicut dixit Apostolus: Cum esset dives, pauper factus est; cum esset in deitate sua dives, nostra fit pauper in carne; et habere coepit stellam unam, totam qui fecit, habet et continet creaturam. Vidimus stellam ejus. Aliquando videt magus illum qui habet stellam, non habetur a stella; nec ipse agitur cursu stellae, sed ipse stellae agit cursum, cujus per coelum sic cursum dirigit, sic moderatur incessum, sic viam temperat, ut magorum serviat et mittatur ad gressum. Nam ambulante mago, stella ambulat: sedente mago, stat stella; mago dormiente, excubat stella: sic sentit magus, ut quibus viandi par conditio est, par sit necessitas serviendi; et stellam jam non Deum credit, sed judicat esse conservam, quam cernit taliter suis obsequiis mancipatam.

Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus stellam ejus in oriente, et venimus adorare eum. Dicendo, ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum, non interrogant, sed insultant: quando scientes interrogant nescientes, non ipsi ignorant, sed negligentes arguunt, increpant desides, malos produnt, contumaces verberant, servos Domino non occurrisse accusant. Nam quid ab hominibus quaerunt, qui per Deum noverant quod quaerebant? Ut quid illis ad hoc humanae demonstrationis officium, quibus ad hoc coeli sidera serviebant? Quo illis lucerna templi, quibus coeli sidus mirabile perlucebat?

Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Hoc est dicere: Cur rex Judaeorum in praesepe jacet, et non decumbit in templo? Cur non fulget in purpura, sed squalet in pannis? Cur latet in specu, et manifestus in sanctuario non habetur? Receperunt jumenta in praesepi, quem in domo sua recipere vos sprevistis. Agnovit, sicut scriptum est, bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe domini sui; tu autem, Israel, tuum Dominum non quaesisti.

Vidimus stellam ejus. Apparuit stella non volens, sed jussa; non coeli nutu, sed Divinitatis impulsu; non lege siderum, sed novitate signorum; non coeli climate, sed virtute nascentis; non ab arte, sed a Deo; non astrologi scientia, sed praescientia Conditoris; non arithmetica ratione, sed sanctione divina; superna procuratione, non curiositate Chaldaea; non arte magica, sed Judaica prophetia.

Behold, Magi came from the East, saying: Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star. And yet what is it that is seen? Truly, as the Apostle said: Though he was rich, he became poor (2 Cor 8:9); though he was rich in his Godhead, he becomes poor in our flesh; and he began to have one star, he who made, has and holds the whole creation. We have seen his star. At last the magus sees him who has the star, who is not had by the star; nor is he driven by the course of the star, but he himself drives the course of the star, whose course he so directs through heaven, so governs its going, so tempers its way, that it serves the steps of the Magi and is sent to their pace. For when the magus walks, the star walks; when the magus sits, the star stands; when the magus sleeps, the star keeps watch: so the magus perceives that for those whose condition of travelling is equal, the necessity of serving is equal; and now he believes the star to be not God, but judges it to be a fellow servant, which he sees thus bound over to his services.

Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him. In saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews, they do not ask, but insult: when those who know ask those who do not know, they are not themselves ignorant, but they convict the negligent, rebuke the idle, expose the wicked, scourge the stubborn, accuse the servants of not having gone out to meet their Lord. For what do they seek from men, who through God knew what they were seeking? What need had they for this of the service of a human showing, whom the stars of heaven served for this? What use to them was the lamp of the temple, for whom the wondrous star of heaven was shining?

Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? That is to say: Why does the king of the Jews lie in a manger, and not recline in the temple? Why does he not shine in purple, but lies squalid in swaddling-clothes? Why does he lie hidden in a cave, and is not openly held in the sanctuary? The beasts received in a manger him whom you disdained to receive in his own house. The ox has recognised, as it is written, its owner, and the ass its lord's manger (Isa 1:3); but you, Israel, have not sought your Lord.

We have seen his star. The star appeared not of its own will, but at command; not at the nod of heaven, but at the impulse of the Divinity; not by the law of the stars, but by the newness of signs; not by the clime of heaven, but by the power of the one being born; not from art, but from God; not by the science of the astrologer, but by the foreknowledge of the Maker; not by arithmetical reckoning, but by divine decree; by heavenly provision, not by Chaldean curiosity; not by magic art, but by Jewish prophecy.

Sic ubi vidit magus humanas periisse curas, suas defecisse artes, mundanae sapientiae exinanitos labores, omnium sudores obriguisse sectarum, totius philosophiae thesauros esse vacuatos, fugisse paganam noctem, opinionum nebulas concidisse, ipsas daemonum delituisse umbras, stellam non ut cometam incirconfuso crine occultare quod nuntiat, obscurare quod lucet, sic dicit: Fas est, ut te novo radio, signifero lumine, splendore certo radiare videam in Judaeam, atque illic natum regem, praeter mundi legem, praeter carnis ordinem, praeter humanam monstrare naturam. Sic deposito errore, sequitur, currit, pervenit, invenit, gaudet, procidit, adorat; quia non per stellam, non per artem, sed per Deum, Deum se invenisse humana miratur in carne. Ergo, fratres, lectione praesenti non est firmatus error magicus, sed solutus. Sed sufficiant ista hodie, ut per Deum quae sunt in sequentibus clare elucescant.

So, when the magus saw that human cares had perished, that his own arts had failed, the labours of worldly wisdom been emptied, the sweat of all the schools gone stiff, the treasures of all philosophy been drained, that the pagan night had fled, the clouds of opinions fallen, the very shadows of the demons hidden themselves, that the star did not, like a comet, hide with the hair spread about it what it announces, darken what it lights up, he speaks thus: "It is right that I should see you, with a new ray, with a signal light, with a sure splendour, shine upon Judaea, and show there a king born beyond the law of the world, beyond the order of the flesh, beyond human nature." So, his error laid aside, he follows, runs, arrives, finds, rejoices, falls down, worships; because not through the star, not through art, but through God, he marvels that he has found God in human flesh. Therefore, brothers, by the present reading the error of magic has not been confirmed, but dissolved. But let this suffice for today, so that through God what follows may shine out clearly.

Sermo CLVII.

De eisdem

Dominicae festivitates causas suas suis vocabulis eloquuntur: nam sicut nascendo Christus diem dedit natalem, et resurgendo resurrectionis diem dedit; sic lumine signorum diem suae illuminationis ostendit. Qui enim nascendo ante humano corpore se velavit, postea operando ipse se coelesti revelavit arcano: post Deus ipse apparuit trino modo, qui homo in partu patuit singularis. Merito ergo solemnitas praesens Epiphaniae vocabulo nuncupatur, in qua illuxit deitas, quae nostra nobis obscurabatur in carne.

Ista est, fratres, ista est festivitas quae, concepta tempore diverso, peperit tria deitatis insignia. Per Epiphaniam magi Christum Dominum muneribus mysticis confitentur, et cultores siderum, noctis incolae, auctorem lucis densis inveniunt in tenebris: ut sit hoc auctoris gratia, non sit hoc industria sic quaerentis; non sit stellae, sed Dei; sit Creatoris donum, non sit beneficium creaturae; non sit humanae artis, muneris sit divini.

Ecce magi, inquit, ab Oriente venerunt, dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus enim stellam ejus in Oriente, et venimus adorare eum. Vidimus stellam ejus. Et quid non ejus? Stella ejus est, non ille stellae. Stellam ejus. Quae accepit esse, sed non dedit; stellam, cujus ortum tenebat auctor, non quae ortum tenebat auctoris. Stellam ejus. Venientem, non a genesi, sed a genitore; mandato, non fato; non a computatore, sed ab auctore; non quae daret ortum, sed quae sustineret occasum. Stellam non legiferam, sed signiferam; ferentem non dierum ordinem, sed noctium lumen. Stella haec ministra viae, non vitae; comes magorum, non cognata Christi; non Dominantis domina, sed ancillula servorum.

Sed dicit aliquis: Quare magi? Quare per stellam? si cum stellis, cum origine nulla causa est, nulla ratio cum natura? Quare magi? Quare stella? Ut per Christum ipsa materia erroris sic fieret salutis occasio: quemadmodum per Christum mortis causa, causa facta est vitae. Hostem proprio mucrone turbare singulare est insigne virtutis. Apud magos in culpa erat ignorantia, non voluntas; et erat in crimine non studium, sed error. Quaerere Deum, et nescire quaerere, necessitas magis est quam reatus. Fuit ergo pium, ut et Deus invenire se a quaerentibus daret et culpam deputaret errori.

Sermon CLVII.

On the same

The Lord's feasts declare their causes by their names: for as Christ by being born gave the birthday, and by rising gave the day of resurrection, so by the light of signs he showed the day of his illumination. For he who by being born first veiled himself in a human body, afterwards, by working, revealed himself by a heavenly secret: afterwards God himself appeared in a threefold manner, who in his birth was shown to be a single man. Rightly, then, the present solemnity is named by the word Epiphany, in which the Godhead shone forth, which for us was darkened in our flesh.

This, brothers, this is the feast which, conceived at different times, has brought forth three insignia of the Godhead. At the Epiphany the Magi confess Christ the Lord with mystic gifts, and worshippers of the stars, dwellers of the night, find the author of light in thick darkness: so that this may be the author's grace, not the diligence of one seeking in this way; not of the star, but of God; may be the gift of the Creator, not the kindness of a creature; not of human art, but of divine gift.

Behold, Magi, he says, came from the East, saying: Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him (Matt 2:1–2). We have seen his star. And what is not his? The star is his, not he the star's. His star. One which received being, but did not give it; a star whose rising the author held, not one which held the rising of the author. His star. Coming not from a horoscope, but from the Begetter; by command, not by fate; not from a reckoner, but from the author; not one to give a rising, but one to undergo a setting. A star not law-bearing, but sign-bearing; bearing not the order of days, but the light of nights. This star is a minister of the way, not of life; the companion of the Magi, not the kinswoman of Christ; not the lady of the Ruler, but the little handmaid of servants.

But someone says: "Why Magi? Why through a star, if with the stars, with birth, there is no cause, no reason with nature?" Why Magi? Why a star? So that through Christ the very matter of error might thus become the occasion of salvation: just as through Christ the cause of death has been made the cause of life. To rout the enemy with his own sword is a singular mark of valour. With the Magi the fault lay in ignorance, not in will; and in the crime there was not intent, but error. To seek God and not to know how to seek is necessity rather than guilt. It was therefore an act of loving-kindness that God should both let himself be found by those who sought him and impute the fault to error.

Denique Paulus judicio tali de persecutore factus est praedicator, quia per zelum legis impugnabat legem, et in Deum Dei amore peccabat. Hinc est quod fides currit ad Paulum, perfidia ad ignorantiam recurrit.

Sed adhuc dicit auditor: Esto quod stella, non nutu proprio, sed Dei jussu ostenderet viam quaerentibus magis: unde tanta munerum scientia mysticorum, unde donorum sacramenta tanta? Non Chaldaea arte, sed de prisca sanctorum traditione majorum: erant isti de genere Noe, de filiis Abrahae, qui Christum nasci per Deum didicerant, non per artem; eumque hominem, Deum, regem, morituram alto cognoverant sacramento. Hinc est quod apta patrum fidei munera portaverunt, ut aurum regi, incensum Deo, morituro myrrham scienter offerrent, talique munere et pietati satisfacerent et honori. Sed de magis ista sufficiant.

Per Epiphaniam Christus in nuptiis aquas saporavit in vinum, ut Christum nuptiis interfuisse virtutis fuerit, non voluptatis; non fuerit humanitatis, sed potestatis; signi fuerit causa, non ventris; ebrietatis non fuerit apparatus, fuerit deitatis ostensio. Denique ubi aqua mutavit naturam, mox patefecit auctorem, et elementorum creator mutatione revelatus est creaturae. Felices nuptiae, felices illae quibus Christus est praesens, quae non luxu, sed virtutibus consecrantur. Quid ibi non transivit in gratiam, ubi aqua transivit in vinum?

Per Epiphaniam Christus Jordanis alveum baptisma nostrum consecratus intravit, ut quos nascendo in terra susceperat, hos renascendo relevaret in coelum; in se haberet liberos, quos praeter se viderat esse captivos; faceret vitales ipse, quos culpa fecerat esse mortales; perpetuos redderet, quos mors dederat temporales; et quos diabolus exsules fecerat terrenorum, hos ipse in coelestibus sibi faceret esse consortes. Hinc est, fratres, quod Spiritus sanctus tunc toto se fudit illapsu, quando Pater de coelestibus clamat: Hic est Filius meus dilectus; ut quibus in creandis nobis operatio fuerat una cum Filio, una fieret de nostra reparatione dignatio; sicque Christus diverso tempore uno eodemque die magorum munere, aquae mutatione, atque Patris voce Deus trino testimonio nosceretur, fieretque de trina ostensione Christi Epiphaniae una et sacrata solemnitas.

Indeed Paul, by such a judgement, from persecutor was made preacher, because through zeal for the Law he attacked the Law, and sinned against God out of love of God. Hence it is that faith runs to Paul, unbelief runs back to ignorance.

But the hearer still says: "Granted that the star, not at its own nod, but at God's command, showed the way to the Magi who sought: whence so great a knowledge of mystic gifts, whence such great mysteries of the presents?" Not by Chaldean art, but from the ancient tradition of holy forefathers: these were of the race of Noah, of the sons of Abraham, who had learned through God, not through art, that Christ would be born; and by a deep mystery they had come to know him to be man, God, king, and one who was to die. Hence it is that they brought gifts fitting the faith of the fathers, so as knowingly to offer gold to the king, incense to God, myrrh to one who was to die, and by such a gift to satisfy both piety and honour. But let this suffice about the Magi.

At the Epiphany Christ at a wedding gave the water the savour of wine (John 2:1–11), so that Christ's presence at the wedding might be a matter of power, not of pleasure; not of humanity, but of authority; might be for the sake of a sign, not of the belly; might not be a provision for drunkenness, but a showing of the Godhead. Indeed, when the water changed its nature, it at once laid open its author, and the Creator of the elements was revealed to the creature by its change. Happy the wedding, happy those nuptials at which Christ is present, which are consecrated not by luxury, but by mighty works. What did not pass into grace there, where water passed into wine?

At the Epiphany Christ, consecrating our baptism, entered the bed of the Jordan (Matt 3:13–17), so that those whom by being born he had taken up on earth, by being reborn he might lift up into heaven; might have as free in himself those whom he had seen captive apart from himself; might himself make living those whom fault had made mortal; might render perpetual those whom death had made temporal; and those whom the devil had made exiles from earthly things, he himself might make his sharers in heavenly things. Hence it is, brothers, that the Holy Spirit then poured himself out in full descent, when the Father cries from heaven: This is my beloved Son (Matt 3:17); so that they whose working in creating us had been one with the Son might have one condescension for our restoration; and so Christ, at different times, on one and the same day, by the gift of the Magi, by the change of the water and by the voice of the Father, might be known to be God by a threefold testimony, and from the threefold showing of Christ there might come one sacred solemnity of the Epiphany.

Sermo CLVIII.

De eisdem

Saepe quaerimus quare sic mundum Christus intrat, ut ventris experiatur angustias, partus patiatur injuriam, sustineat vincla pannorum, cunabula toleret imbecilla, lacrymis uberum nutrimenta disquirat, aetatum gradus, necessitatesque persentiat. Et qualiter venire debuit, qui voluit apportare gratiam, timorem pellere, quaerere charitatem? Natura docet omnes quid valeat, quid meretur infantia. Infantia, quam barbariem non vincit, quam non feritatem mitigat, quam crudelitatem non comprimit, quem non compescit furorem, quam non potestatem deponit, quem non mollit rigorem, quam duritiam non resolvit, quid non amoris expostulat, quid non affectionis extorquet, quam non imponit gratiam, quam non impetrat charitatem? Hoc ita esse sciunt patres, matres sentiunt, probant omnes, viscera humana testantur. Sic ergo nasci voluit, qui amari voluit, non timeri: et tamen apud malitiam humanam sic blanda, sic pia, sic chara, audite quid proficit infantia.

Audiens, inquit, Herodes rex, turbatus est, et omnis Hierosolyma cum ipso, et congregans omnes principes sacerdotum, et scribas populi, sciscitabatur ab eis ubi Christus nasceretur. Si Hierosolyma, si rex, si scribae, si principes sacerdotum ad Christi sic turbantur infantiam, quid isti facerent, Christus perfectum mox in hominem si venisset, si fultus divitiis, et multitudine, si cum suspectis, si cum extraneis? Qui nil dant tempori, nil aetati, nil pauperi, nil parenti; sed ut audiunt natum, parant nascenti mortem, innocenti dolos, scelus pio, nudo gladios, soli milites, vagienti necem, poenam parenti: et ut vis misceatur sanguini, crudelitas acerba cunabulis bella indicit, ubera telis urget, clypeos illidit gremiis, quatenus humanam divinamque sobolem ante sepulcrum faciat intrare quam mundum.

Sermon CLVIII.

On the same

We often ask why Christ enters the world in such a way as to experience the narrowness of the womb, suffer the injury of childbirth, endure the fetters of swaddling-clothes, bear a feeble cradle, seek with tears the nourishment of the breasts, feel the steps of the ages and their necessities. And how ought he to have come, who willed to bring grace, to drive out fear, to seek charity? Nature teaches all what infancy can do, what it deserves. Infancy: what barbarism does it not conquer, what fierceness does it not tame, what cruelty does it not check, what fury does it not restrain, what power does it not make lay itself down, what harshness does it not soften, what hardness does it not dissolve, what love does it not demand, what affection does it not wring out, what favour does it not impose, what charity does it not obtain? That this is so, fathers know, mothers feel, all prove, the human heart bears witness. So, then, he willed to be born who willed to be loved, not feared: and yet hear what infancy, so winning, so gentle, so dear, gains with human malice.

On hearing, he says, King Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and gathering all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born (Matt 2:3–4). If Jerusalem, if the king, if the scribes, if the chief priests are so troubled at the infancy of Christ, what would these have done, had Christ come at once as a full-grown man, if propped up by riches and a multitude, if with suspected men, if with foreigners? They give nothing to time, nothing to age, nothing to the poor, nothing to a parent; but as soon as they hear that he is born, they prepare death for the one being born, snares for the innocent, wickedness for the pious, swords for the naked, soldiers for one alone, slaughter for one wailing, punishment for a parent: and so that force may be mingled with blood, bitter cruelty declares war on cradles, presses breasts with darts, dashes shields against laps, so as to make a human and divine offspring enter the sepulchre before the world.

Esto quod Herodes rex amore regni, successoris timore, coactus sit talia moliri; quare Hierosolyma, quare principes, quare scribae? Quia nasci non vult profanus Deum, servus dominum, judicem reus, rebellis principem, perfidus cognitorem. Hierosolyma varia se contaminatione perfuderat, sacerdotes profanaverant sancta, et peccata vendentes, in quaestum veniam pietatemque converterant. Scribae doctrinam coelestem, scientiam salutarem, vitale magisterium, in saevum sensum, in perfidiae lapsum, in lethale vaniloquium commutarant. Hinc est quod Christum nolunt nasci, vivere timent, quia noverant se mox ignominiae dandos, trahendos opprobriis, ejiciendos templo, privandos sacerdotio, oblationum munere vacuandos. Semel enim cupiditate flammati, capti pompa, vitiis sauciati, vanitate ebrii, madefacti luxu, quia de correctione nil cogitare poterant, de venia nil sperabant.

Bonus villicus quando copiosum fructum continuo labore conquirit, venire dominum suum ad lucrum suum cupit, suum concupiscit ad gaudium: diligens operarius quando opus suscepti laboris impleverit, ut mercedem percipiat, patremfamilias desiderat advenire: devotus miles post conflictum, post victoriam, praesentiam regis optat, ut praemiis sudores et vulnera remuneratione compenset; sic ad palmam suam cupit venire Christum, qui bella mundi indefessa virtute prosternit; sic Christum venire non vult, qui superatus illecebris saeculi de poena trepidat, de venia nil praesumit. Fratres, faciamus bona, declinemus a malis: fugiamus vitia, virtutes sequamur, dissimulemus praesentia, futura cogitemus, nostrum petamus ad regnum, nostram veniamus ad palmam, optemus ad gloriam, tendamus votis omnibus ad coronam.

Sed ad illa sermo quae sunt in sequentibus jam recurrat. Tunc Herodes, inquit, clam vocatis magis, diligenter didicit ab eis tempus stellae quae apparuit eis, et mittens in Bethlehem, dixit: Ite et interrogate diligenter de puero, et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi, ut et ego veniens adorem eum. Occulte vocat magos, quia palam nil audet simulata mens, conscientia dolosa. Occulte vocat magos, quia fur amat noctem, latro in occulto tendit insidias. Diligenter inquirit tempus stellae: sed cum timet regnum, signum coeli non timet, temporis non pertimescit auctorem. Quid turbaris, Herodes? Quid es tantum de successore sollicitus? Cui sidera militant, terreno imperio non tenetur.

Granted that King Herod, from love of the kingdom, from fear of a successor, was driven to plot such things: why Jerusalem, why the chiefs, why the scribes? Because the profane does not want God to be born, the servant his lord, the accused his judge, the rebel his prince, the unbeliever his examining judge. Jerusalem had drenched herself with manifold defilement, the priests had profaned the holy things, and, selling sins, had turned pardon and piety into gain. The scribes had changed heavenly doctrine, saving knowledge, life-giving teaching, into a savage sense, into the fall of unbelief, into deadly empty talk. Hence it is that they do not want Christ to be born, they fear that he should live, because they knew that they would soon be given over to ignominy, dragged to reproaches, cast out of the temple, deprived of the priesthood, emptied of the profit of the offerings. For once inflamed with greed, captured by pomp, wounded by vices, drunk with vanity, soaked in luxury, since they could think nothing of amendment, they hoped nothing of pardon.

A good steward, when by constant labour he gathers abundant fruit, longs for his master to come to his gain, longs for him to come to his joy: a diligent workman, when he has completed the work of the labour he undertook, desires the householder to come, so that he may receive his wage: a devoted soldier, after the combat, after the victory, wishes for the presence of the king, so that he may have his sweat and his wounds made good with rewards; so he longs for Christ to come to his palm who lays low the wars of the world with unwearied valour; so he does not want Christ to come who, overcome by the allurements of the world, trembles at punishment, presumes nothing of pardon. Brothers, let us do good, let us turn aside from evil: let us flee vices, follow virtues, pay no heed to things present, think on things to come; let us make for our kingdom, come to our palm, long for glory, strain with all our prayers towards the crown.

But let the sermon now return to what follows. Then Herod, he says, having called the Magi secretly, learned diligently from them the time of the star which had appeared to them, and sending them to Bethlehem, he said: Go and inquire diligently about the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, so that I too may come and worship him (Matt 2:7–8). He calls the Magi in secret, because a feigning mind, a guileful conscience, dares nothing openly. He calls the Magi in secret, because the thief loves the night, the robber lays his ambush in hiding. Diligently he inquires the time of the star: but while he fears for his kingdom, he does not fear the sign of heaven, he does not dread the author of time. Why are you troubled, Herod? Why are you so concerned about a successor? He for whom the stars do soldiers' service is not held by an earthly empire.

Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero, et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi. Herodes, erras: magus adorare jussus est, non deferre; testari venit ille, non prodere; videre illi datum est, tibi non datum est invenire. Ite, et interrogate. Quasi magos semel interrogare non sufficit. Interrogantibus pie datum est sine pietate responsum, salutis nuntius male audientibus conversus est in ruinam. Contumax servus audit natum Dominum, sed Domino nascenti parat laqueos, non honorem; mortem praeparat, ut careat servitute. Sed quia nec finiri Deus, nec perire salus, nec vita poterat interire, permanet in honore Dominus, servus remansit in crimine; et ad poenam trahitur qui ad obsequium venire contempsit; capitur ad sententiam, qui ad gratiam noluit pervenire.

Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero, et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi. Convenienter dixit renuntiate mihi, quia semper diabolo renuntiat, qui pervenire festinat ad Christum; Christianus futurus a sacerdote cum audit, Renuntias diabolo, respondit, Renuntio. Proprie ergo Herodes a magis sibi renuntiare debere dicit, qui se diaboli sciebat tenere locum, Satanae noverat implere personam. Ut et ego veniens adorem eum. Vult mentiri, sed non potest: veniet, ut ad tormenta curvetur, ad supplicia jaciatur, sternatur ad poenam, qui adorare finxerat, ut saeviret.

Sed magi, ubi Judaicae perfidiae nubila transierunt, et in Christianae fidei sereno revident, quam viderunt stellam, ipsa praevia, ipsa duce, ad ortus Dominici locum sacratissimum pervenerunt. Et apertis thesauris suis obtulerunt ei munera aurum, thus, et myrrham. Aurum regi, thus Deo, morituro myrrham, Dominicae devotioni offerunt, scientiae thesauros maximos in posterum crediturus; sic ad sua per innocentiae viam redeunt, qui iter Herodianae fraudis calcaverunt in ruinam.

Go and inquire diligently about the child, and when you have found him, bring me word. Herod, you are wrong: the magus was bidden to worship, not to inform; he came to bear witness, not to betray; to see was given to him, to find was not given to you. Go and inquire. As if it were not enough to have asked the Magi once. To those who asked piously an answer was given without piety; the messenger of salvation, for those who heard amiss, was turned into ruin. The stubborn servant hears that the Lord is born, but for the Lord at his birth he prepares snares, not honour; he prepares death, so as to be free of servitude. But because neither could God be ended, nor salvation perish, nor life die, the Lord remains in honour, the servant remained in crime; and he is dragged to punishment who disdained to come to homage; he is seized for sentence who would not come to grace.

Go and inquire diligently about the child, and when you have found him, bring me word. He said fittingly, bring me word (renuntiate mihi), because he who hastens to come to Christ always renounces (renuntiat) the devil; when the Christian who is to be hears from the priest, "Do you renounce the devil?", he answered, "I renounce." Fittingly, then, Herod says that the Magi ought to bring him word (renuntiare), he who knew that he held the place of the devil, knew that he played the part of Satan. So that I too may come and worship him. He wishes to lie, but cannot: he will come, to be bowed down to torments, thrown to tortures, laid low for punishment, he who had feigned to worship so as to rage.

But the Magi, once they passed beyond the clouds of Jewish unbelief, and in the clear sky of Christian faith see again the star they had seen, with it going before, with it leading, came to the most sacred place of the Lord's birth. And opening their treasures they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matt 2:11). Gold to the king, frankincense to God, myrrh to one who would die, they offer to the devotion due to the Lord, the greatest treasures of knowledge for those who would believe hereafter; so they return home by the way of innocence, who trampled underfoot the road of Herod's fraud to its ruin.

Sermo CLIX.

De eisdem

Ante hos dies, id est, diem octavum kalendarum mensis hujus quo crescere dies coepit, quia dies verus illuxit, in carne natum Dominum Christum Jesum, in Evangelio scriptum, facile recolunt, qui legerunt, vel qui aurem legentibus praebuerunt. Israelitici pastores super gregem suum vigilantes, angelis nuntiantibus, cognoverunt: hodie in eadem carne manifestatum gentiles magi curiosa sectantes, signis indicantibus, invenerunt. Illis ortum Dominicae nativitatis annuntians locuta est vox spiritualium ministrorum, istis stella tamquam lingua coelorum. Dicunt illi ad quos saepius prophetae missi fuerant: Transeamus usque Bethleem, et videamus hoc verbum quod factum est ad nos; dicunt isti, quibus nullus umquam locutus fuerat prophetarum, et sciscitantes interrogant: Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus stellam ejus in Oriente, et venimus adorare eum.

Accedunt ergo illi de proximo, hi veniunt de longinquo, utrique tamen ad unum eumdemque fidei locum, pia devotione conveniunt: ibique regem Christum appositum ante duo prophetica illa jumenta, duorum videlicet populorum typum figuramque gestantia, intuentur, admirantur, agnoscunt. Agnovit enim bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe domini sui Agnovit enim bos Judaeus jugo legis excusso, agnovit et asinus paganus stultitiae feritate deposita; ille deserens superfluum observationis laborem, hic relinquens vagum superstitionis errorem. Uterque agnovit, quia uterque ad unum praesepe Domini epulaturus accessit, epulaturus non fenum mortis, sed cibum salutis. Edite, edite, pia animalia, aeternae vitae cibaria: et perpetuae retributionis escam avidis quantum potestis faucibus occupate, non dividentes in frusta, sed integrum, solidumque sumentes. Non potest enim edi Christus, et dividi; integer a credentibus sumitur, integer in ore cordis recipitur. Verbum enim caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis: habitavit, ex quo uterum Virginis dignanter implevit.

Obtulerunt illi, ut scriptum est, aurum, thus et myrrham. Nos fidei thus longinquae regionis, nos proximae confessionis myrrham boni odoris, nos suaveolentia dona charitatis; tria namque ista offerimus, quando Christum, et regem, et Dominum, et hominem confitemur.

Sermon CLIX.

On the same

Some days ago, that is, on the eighth day before the Kalends of this month, from which the day began to grow because the true day had shone forth, those who have read, or have lent their ear to readers, easily recall that the Lord Christ Jesus was born in the flesh, as is written in the Gospel (Luke 2). The shepherds of Israel, keeping watch over their flock, came to know him at the angels' announcement: today the Gentile Magi, followers of curious arts, have found him manifested in the same flesh, as signs pointed him out. To those, the voice of spiritual ministers spoke, announcing the dawn of the Lord's nativity; to these, a star, as the tongue of the heavens. Those to whom the prophets had often been sent say: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see this word that has come to us (Luke 2:15); these, to whom none of the prophets had ever spoken, say, and inquiring ask: Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him (Matt 2:2).

Those, then, approach from near at hand, these come from afar; yet both meet with pious devotion at one and the same place of faith: and there they gaze at, wonder at, recognise Christ the king, laid before those two prophetic beasts which bear the type and figure of the two peoples. For the ox has recognised its owner, and the ass its lord's manger (Isa 1:3). For the Jewish ox has recognised him, the yoke of the Law shaken off; and the pagan ass has recognised him too, the wildness of folly laid aside; the one forsaking the superfluous labour of observance, the other leaving the wandering error of superstition. Each recognised him, because each came up to the one manger of the Lord to feed, to feed not on the hay of death, but on the food of salvation. Eat, eat, pious animals, the food of eternal life: and with jaws as eager as you can, take hold of the meat of perpetual reward, not dividing it into pieces, but taking it whole and entire. For Christ cannot be eaten and divided; whole he is taken by believers, whole he is received in the mouth of the heart. For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us (John 1:14): he dwelt, from the time when he deigned to fill the womb of the Virgin.

They offered, as it is written, gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matt 2:11). We, the frankincense of faith from a distant region; we, the myrrh of good odour of a near confession; we, the fragrant gifts of charity: for these three we offer when we confess Christ king, and Lord, and man.

Sed in spiritu et veritate adoremus Christum, si ei munera fidei et confessionis obtulimus: et nos sicut illi magi, qui sunt fidei nostrae duces credulitatisque principes, commoniti in somnis, id est, in hac vita, quae somno est similis, illuso Herode rege, id est, diabolo hujus mundi principe, per aliam viam, id est, per alteram vitam, ad illam nostram patriam revertamur, de qua per Adam ejecti infeliciter sumus, per Christum vero misericorditer nunc reducti.

But let us worship Christ in spirit and truth, if we have offered him the gifts of faith and confession: and let us too, like those Magi, who are the leaders of our faith and the first of our belief, warned in sleep, that is, in this life, which is like sleep, having mocked King Herod, that is, the devil, the prince of this world, by another way, that is, by another life, return to that homeland of ours from which we were unhappily cast out through Adam, but now through Christ have been mercifully led back.

Sermo CLX.

De eisdem

Quamvis in ipso Dominicae incarnationis sacramento adfuerint clara semper divinitatis insignia, Deum tamen venisse in humanum corpus multis modis aperit et revelat hodierna solemnitas, ne perdat per ignorantiam semper obscuritatibus involuta mortalitas quod tantum tenere meruit et possidere per gratiam. Nam qui nobis nasci voluit, a nobis noluit ignorari: et ideo sic aperit, ne magnum pietatis sacramentum magni fieret erroris occasio.

Hodie magus quem fulgentem quaerebat in stellis, in cunis reperit vagientem. Hodie magus clarum miratur in pannis, quem diu in astris patiebatur obscurum. Hodie magus quid ubi videat profundo stupore pervolvit: in terra coelum, in coelo terram, in Deo hominem, in homine Deum, et universo saeculo non capacem concludi corpore perpusillo. Unde magus qui scrutari non valet, capere non potest, mox adorat; videt enim non sic lucere in coelo stellas, lunam, solem, qualiter illuxisse carnem contemplatur in terris; videt in uno eodemque corpore divinitatis et humanitatis convenisse commercium. Hic dum credit Deum, sentit regem, intelligit humani generis amore moriturum, et pavida cogitatione pertractat quemadmodum possit mori Deus, qualiter possit vitae restitutor occidi. Ac sic magus cessat arte quaerere quod arte non potest invenire: et quia se in coelo diu cum astris errantibus videt errasse, gaudet in terra se ad Deum ducatu unici sideris pervenisse, et deprehendit magus cuncta quae videntur in coelo, humanis clara oculis, profundis esse obscurata mysteriis.

Jamque videns credere se, et non discutere, mysticis muneribus confitetur: thure Deum, auro regem, myrrha esse moriturum. Thure Deum, auro regem, ut eum diviti placaret obsequio, quem curioso et importuno incesserat et offenderat instituto; atque implet illud quod multi de spadone ex Aethiopia suspicantur: Aethiopia praeveniet manus ejus Deo. Videt Christum magus Judaeum praeveniens manibus suis, quia quando Christum Judaeus Herodi scelere prodebat, tunc magus Deum Christum muneribus fatebatur. Hinc est quod gentilis qui erat novissimus, factus est primus: quia tunc ex magorum fide est gentium credulitas dedicata, et Judaeorum est notata crudelitas.

Sermon CLX.

On the same

Although in the very mystery of the Lord's incarnation the insignia of divinity were always clearly present, yet today's solemnity lays open and reveals in many ways that God came into a human body, lest mortality, always wrapped in obscurities, should lose through ignorance so great a thing as it has merited to hold and possess by grace. For he who willed to be born for us did not will to be unknown by us: and therefore he so lays it open, lest the great mystery of godliness should become the occasion of a great error.

Today the magus finds wailing in a cradle him whom he sought shining in the stars. Today the magus marvels to see clear in swaddling-clothes him whom he long endured as obscure in the stars. Today the magus turns over in deep amazement what he sees, and where: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, and him whom the whole world cannot hold, enclosed in a very little body. Hence the magus, who is not able to search it out, cannot grasp it, at once worships; for he sees that the stars, the moon, the sun do not so shine in heaven as he beholds the flesh to have shone out on earth; he sees that in one and the same body the commerce of divinity and manhood has come together. He, while he believes him God, perceives him king, understands that he will die for love of the human race, and with fearful thought turns over how God can die, how the restorer of life can be slain. And so the magus ceases to seek by art what by art he cannot find: and because he sees that he has long wandered in heaven with the wandering stars, he rejoices that on earth he has come to God under the guidance of a single star, and the magus discovers that all things that are seen in heaven, clear to human eyes, are darkened by deep mysteries.

And now, seeing himself believe and not dispute, he confesses with mystic gifts: with frankincense that he is God, with gold king, with myrrh that he will die. With frankincense God, with gold king, so as to placate with a rich homage him whom he had approached and offended with a curious and importunate practice; and he fulfils that word which many suppose to be said of the eunuch from Ethiopia: Ethiopia shall come first with her hands to God (Ps 68:32). The magus, coming before the Jew with his hands, sees Christ, because when the Jew was betraying Christ to Herod with wickedness, then the magus was acknowledging with gifts that Christ was God. Hence it is that the Gentile, who was last, has been made first: because then, from the faith of the Magi, the belief of the Gentiles was inaugurated, and the cruelty of the Jews was marked.

Hodie Christus Jordanis alveum, mundi peccatum lavaturus intravit: ad hoc eum venisse Joannes ipse testatur. Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Hodie servus Dominum, homo Deum, Joannes Christum tenet; tenet accepturus veniam, non daturus. Hodie, sicut ait propheta: Vox Domini super aquas. Quae vox? Hic est Filius meus dilectus in quo mihi complacui. Hodie vox Dei super aquas, quia Pater Deus ut probaret generis fidem, ipse sui testis Filii, ipse assertor assistit. Hic est Filius meus dilectus, quia alterum qui testimonium diceret non habebat: arcanum Patris, arbitrum non habebat; testem generatio nescit divina; divinitas externam non recipit notionem, ipso Filio dicente. Nemo novit Filium, nisi Pater, neque Patrem quis novit nisi Filius.

Hodie Spiritus sanctus supernatat aquis in specie columbae, ut sicut illa columba Noe nuntiaverat diluvium discessisse mundi, ita ista indice nosceretur perpetuum mundi cessasse naufragium; neque sicut illa veteris olivae surculum portaret, sed totam in caput parentis novi chrismatis pinguedinem fundit, ut impleat illud quod propheta praedixit: Propterea unxit te Deus Deus tuus oleo laetitiae prae consortibus tuis. Hodie Dominus super aquas. Bene super aquas, et non subtus aquas, quia Christus baptismati suo non servit, sed imperat sacramentis.

Hodie Deus majestatis intonuit, et si Pater de coelo intonat, si Filius Jordanis insistit fluentis, si Spiritus sanctus corporaliter apparet de supernis; quid est quod Jordanis qui fugit ad praesentiam legalis arcae, ad totius Trinitatis praesentiam non refugit. Quid est? Quia qui pietati obsequitur, incipit non esse timori. Hic Trinitas exercet gratiam totam, totam secum loquitur charitatem: ibi elementa corripit, ut servulos instituat ad timorem. Inter haec tamen talia et tanta intrepidus stat Joannes, quia timere non potest, qui totus ad Dei amorem natus angelico testimonio comprobatur.

Today Christ entered the bed of the Jordan to wash away the sin of the world: John himself bears witness that he came for this. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Today the servant holds the Lord, man holds God, John holds Christ; he holds him to receive pardon, not to give it. Today, as the Prophet says: The voice of the Lord upon the waters (Ps 29:3). What voice? This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt 3:17). Today the voice of God is upon the waters, because God the Father, to prove the trustworthiness of the generation, himself the witness of his Son, himself the one who declares him, stands by. This is my beloved Son, because he had no other to bear witness: the secret of the Father had no arbiter; the divine generation knows no witness; divinity admits no knowledge from outside, as the Son himself says. No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son (Matt 11:27).

Today the Holy Spirit hovers over the waters in the form of a dove, so that, as that dove of Noah had announced that the flood had gone away from the world (Gen 8:11), so by this one as sign the perpetual shipwreck of the world might be known to have ceased; and not, like that one, should it bring a shoot of the old olive, but it pours the whole richness of the chrism upon the head of the new parent, so as to fulfil what the Prophet foretold: Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows (Ps 45:8). Today the Lord is upon the waters. Rightly upon the waters, and not beneath the waters, because Christ does not serve his baptism, but commands the sacraments.

Today the God of majesty has thundered; and if the Father thunders from heaven, if the Son stands in the streams of the Jordan, if the Holy Spirit appears bodily from above, why is it that the Jordan, which fled at the presence of the ark of the Law (Josh 3), does not flee back at the presence of the whole Trinity? Why is it? Because he who submits to loving-kindness begins not to be subject to fear. Here the Trinity exercises its whole grace, speaks with itself its whole charity: there it rebukes the elements, to train its little servants to fear. Amid all these things, however, so many and so great, John stands unafraid, because he cannot fear who, born wholly for the love of God, is approved by the testimony of an angel.

Hodie Christus initium dat signorum coelestium, dum convertit aquas in vinum, ut quem Pater voce Filium jam probarat, ipse se Deum virtutibus approbaret, quia auctor est elementorum qui elementa commutat; et naturam fecit ipse, qui contra naturam facere non laborat: aquam transfert in vinum, ut divinitatis in vigore naturae nostrae proficiat hebetudo. Nam qui panes quinque fragmento profluo et furtivo incremento, ad quinque millia hominum tetendit et dilatavit saginam, potuit augmentis succrescentibus ad nuptiarum festa vini ampliare et perpetuare mensuras. Sed aqua in sanguinis erat convertenda mysterium, ut mera pocula de vase corporis sui Christus bibentibus propinaret, ut impleret illud prophetae: Et calix tuus inebrians quam praeclarus est. Tribus autem modis hodie Christi deitas est probata: magorum munere, Patris testimonio, aquae mutatione in vinum; quia tribus stare omne verbum Scripturae firmavit auctoritas dicendo: In ore duorum vel trium testium stet omne verbum. Sed quia festivitas ipsa ad mensam nos Domini et calicis istius laetitiam commonet jam venire, res amplas brevi sermone sufficit conclusisse, per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui vivit et regnat nunc et semper, et per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Today Christ gives the beginning of the heavenly signs, in that he turns water into wine (John 2:11), so that he whom the Father had already proved by his voice to be the Son might himself approve himself God by mighty works, since he is the author of the elements who changes the elements; and he himself made nature, who finds no labour in acting against nature: he turns water into wine, so that in the vigour of divinity the dullness of our nature may advance. For he who with flowing fragments and secret increase stretched and widened five loaves into a feast for five thousand men (Matt 14:13–21) could, with ever-growing increases, have enlarged and made perpetual the measures of wine for the festival of the wedding. But the water was to be changed into the mystery of the blood, so that Christ might pledge cups of unmixed wine from the vessel of his body to those who drink, so as to fulfil that word of the Prophet: And your cup that inebriates, how excellent it is! (Ps 23:5) In three ways, then, today Christ's Godhead has been proved: by the gift of the Magi, by the testimony of the Father, by the change of water into wine; because the authority of Scripture has established that every word stands on three, saying: In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word stand (Matt 18:16). But since the feast itself now bids us come to the table of the Lord and to the gladness of this cup, it is enough to have concluded great matters in a short sermon, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CLXI.

De parabola servi ab agro regressi, deque hominis erga Deum gratitudine

Audistis, fratres, quemadmodum famulatum divinum Dominus exigit humanae servitutis exemplo, dicendo: Quis vestrum habens servum arantem, aut pascentem, qui regresso ab agro dicat: Statim transi, recumbe; et non dicit ei, Para quod coenem, et praecingere, et ministra mihi donec manducem et bibam, et post haec tu manducabis et bibes? Numquid gratiam habet servo illi, quia fecit quae sibi imperavit? Non puto. Sic et vos, cum feceritis omnia quae praecepta sunt vobis, dicite: Servi inutiles sumus; quod debuimus facere, fecimus.

Sic et vos. Quid simile? Immo longe dissimile. Tantum debet homo Deo, quantum debet homini homo? Absit. Nam est alter ordo, diversa causa, dissimilis fides. Deus hominem fecit esse, nasci jussit, dedit vivere, concessit sapere, donavit et tempora, distribuit aetates, concessit ad gloriam, aperuit ad honorem, praefecit animantibus, et toti terrae dominum definita lege et aetate praescripsit: et cum talia, tantaque prima homini Dei beneficia deperiissent, secunda reparavit tanto majora, quanto divina; praestantiora tanto, quanto coelestia. Nam coeli post habitatorem dedit, quem dederat ante incolam terrenorum, ut adversum nullum illi, nullus incursus, nullusque serpens terrenis latens in bonis, irrepere amplius in hominem non valeret; servaretque conditio jam certa, quem perdiderat incerta libertas; et esset homo liber omnium, sola Domini servitute, cui conditionem qua factus est debet, debet originem: quod redemptus est, quod emptus est, debet utique servitutem, dicente Apostolo: Pretio empti estis, nolite fieri servi hominum. Et propheta ut conditionem, ut originem fateretur: Ego servus tuus, inquit, et filius ancillae tuae. Deo ista, homini quid tale debet homo? Et tamen quaerit Deus vel tantum; quia reddere homo Deo nil vult, cui debet totum.

Sermon CLXI.

On the parable of the servant come back from the field, and on man's gratitude towards God

You have heard, brothers, how the Lord exacts divine service by the example of human servitude, saying: Which of you, having a servant ploughing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come back from the field: Come at once, take your place at table; and does not say to him: Prepare what I may sup on, and gird yourself, and serve me until I eat and drink, and after this you shall eat and drink? (Luke 17:7–8) Does he thank that servant, because he did what he had commanded him? I think not (Luke 17:9). So you also, when you have done all that has been commanded you, say: We are useless servants; we have done what we ought to have done (Luke 17:10).

So you also. What is alike? Rather, it is far unlike. Does man owe God as much as man owes man? Far from it. For the order is other, the cause different, the faith unlike. God made man to be, bade him be born, gave him to live, granted him to know, bestowed times on him too, distributed his ages, admitted him to glory, opened to him the way to honour, set him over the living creatures, and appointed him lord of the whole earth by a fixed law and age: and when such and so great first benefits of God to man had perished, he restored second ones, as much greater as they are divine, as much more excellent as they are heavenly. For he afterwards gave as an inhabitant of heaven him whom he had given before as a dweller among earthly things, so that nothing adverse to him, no assault, and no serpent hiding among earthly goods, could any more creep in upon man; and a condition now sure might keep him whom an uncertain freedom had lost; and man might be free of all, by the servitude of the Lord alone, to whom he owes the condition in which he was made, owes his origin: because he has been redeemed, because he has been bought, he surely owes servitude, as the Apostle says: You were bought with a price; do not become the servants of men (1 Cor 7:23). And the Prophet, to acknowledge his condition, his origin: I am your servant, he says, and the son of your handmaid (Ps 116:16). These things to God; what such thing does man owe to man? And yet God asks for even so much; because man wishes to give nothing back to God, to whom he owes everything.

Sed repetamus lectionem, et oculis nostris similitudinem proponamus ipsam, et quod diximus tunc lucebit, quia nullam Deo, homini totam dependimus servitutem. Quis vestrum habens servum arantem aut pascentem, qui regresso ab agro dicat: Statim transi, recumbe; et non dicit ei, Para quod coenem, et praecingere, et ministra mihi, donec manducem, et bibam, et post haec tu manducabis et bibes? Quam familiaris, quam vernacula, quam de quotidiano usu veniens, quam communis est ista doctrina. Si dominus est, qui audit, agnoscit talia se exigere a servo; si servus, exhibere se domino ista cognoscit.

Servus namque post vigilias antelucanas, post totius diei varios et duros labores, post trepidantes et anxios concursus, et parat Domino suo coenam, et cinctus quod paraverat subministrat: non est elatus, quia fecit, sed cum devotione singula faciens contremiscit, et apponit domino suo cibos multiplices, arte tota totius saporis conditos; ipse autem semicoctam, nec salitam forsitan coenulam gustaturus; porrigens crebra pocula, variat calices, vina mutat; ad longissimi convivii fabulas longiores stat fixus, stat moveri nescius, stat cujus lassescere non licet servituti. Et cum dominus jam partem noctis in somno deducit, peragit in quiete, servus colligit, curat, accurat, ponit, componit, reponit, et sic in rebus necessariis immoratur, ut nihil sibi, aut parum noctis ad escam reservet et soporem. Post haec omnia nisi pervigilet in crastinum, et dominum praevenerit dormientem, fessus, indefessus, manicabit ad verbera, ad praesentem poenam nihil hesterno ei subvenit de labore, quia quidquid dominus indebite, iracunde, libens, nolens, oblitus, cogitans, sciens, nesciens circa servum fecerit, judicium, justitia, lex est, imperantis ira subdito jus est, et ad libitum domini vocem non habet conditio servitutis.

Si ergo et servus sentit quid debeat homini taliter serviendo, et dominando dominus qualem servitutem Domino dominorum debeat, docetur et intelligit se magistro. Hoc implebat Paulus, qui servitutis suae titulos sic scribebat: Usque ad hanc horam esurimus, et sitimus, et nudi sumus, et colaphis caedimur. Et alibi: Lividum facio corpus meum, et servituti subjicio. Praebebat vindictam bonus servus, qui se usque ad livorem sic agens jugiter verberabat: nec laxabat frena corpori, ne per indulgentiam caro laxata alterius incurreret servitutem.

But let us repeat the reading, and set the likeness itself before our eyes, and then what we have said will shine out: that we pay no servitude to God, the whole of it to man. Which of you, having a servant ploughing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come back from the field: Come at once, take your place at table; and does not say to him: Prepare what I may sup on, and gird yourself, and serve me until I eat and drink, and after this you shall eat and drink? How familiar, how homely, how drawn from daily use, how common is this teaching! If he who hears is a master, he recognises that he exacts such things from his servant; if a servant, he knows that he renders these things to his master.

For the servant, after watches before dawn, after the varied and hard labours of the whole day, after anxious and trembling runnings to and fro, both prepares supper for his master and, girded, serves what he had prepared: he is not puffed up because he has done it, but trembles as he does each thing with devotion, and sets before his master many dishes seasoned with all art to every taste; while he himself will taste a half-cooked and perhaps unsalted little supper; offering frequent cups, he varies the goblets, changes the wines; at the stories, longer still, of a very long banquet he stands fixed, stands not knowing how to move, stands, he whose servitude is not allowed to grow weary. And when the master is now spending part of the night in sleep, passing it in rest, the servant gathers, cares for, attends, puts, composes, puts back, and so lingers over necessary things that he keeps nothing, or little, of the night for himself for food and sleep. After all this, unless he keeps watch through to the next day and is up before his master while he sleeps, weary, unwearied, he will be up at dawn for the lash; for the present punishment nothing of yesterday's labour helps him, because whatever the master has done to the servant undeservedly, angrily, willingly, unwillingly, forgetting, thinking, knowing, not knowing, is judgement, justice, law; the anger of the one who commands is right for the subject, and at the master's pleasure the condition of servitude has no voice.

If, then, the servant too perceives what he owes to man by serving in such a way, the master too, by being master, is taught and understands, with himself as teacher, what servitude he owes to the Lord of lords. This Paul fulfilled, who thus wrote out the labels of his servitude: Up to this hour we hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted with blows (1 Cor 4:11). And elsewhere: I make my body livid, and subject it to servitude (1 Cor 9:27). The good servant inflicted the punishment, so acting that he beat himself continually even to the bruise: nor did he slacken the reins of the body, lest the flesh, slackened by indulgence, should incur another's servitude.

Sed, homo, quod a servo exigis, impende ei qui te dominum fecit. Tu qui semper dormis, et a servo exigis vigilias indefessas, aliquando vigila tuo Domino pro te sine cessatione vigilanti, assiste tuo Domino vel momento uno jejunanti, cui manducanti tuus servus semper assistit; remitte servo innocenti, cui peccanti blanditur Dominus tuus; da interim veniam, cui tuus Dominus semper ignoscit. Certe si quidquam boni feceris, crede te Domino solvisse debitum, non beneficium praestitisse.

Cum feceritis, inquit, omnia quae praecepta sunt vobis, dicite, servi inutiles sumus; quod debuimus facere, fecimus. Quando per se homo utilis ad divina, qui sic sibi est inutilis ad humana? Cogitet homo cordis mala, carnis vitia, voluptatum fluctus, desideriorum procellas, irarum scopulos, naufragia criminum, et tunc quidquid in se est utile dabit Deo, sibi quidquid inutile est deputabit.

Sed ad proposita redeamus, ut quare Dominus discipulos suos admonuerit jam patescat. Apostolos suos Christus ut mitteret ad populos vario dolore languentes, dedit illis virtutem spiritus, potestatem supernam dedit, dedit gratiam sanitatum, unde perambulantes illi reddebant visum caecis, claudis cursum, surdis auditum, et ne per singula vos morer, cunctis male habentibus dabant salutem, unde redeuntes gloriabantur dicentes: Domine, etiam in nomine tuo daemonia subjecta sunt nobis. Quos Dominus temperat, dicens: Nolite gaudere quia daemonia subjecta sunt vobis: gaudete autem quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in coelis.

Ergo ne per elationem perderent quod conquisierant per laborem, et deputarent sibi quod divinitus fuerant consecuti, ad humilitatem, quae mater est doctrinae, tali revocat exemplo: Quis vestrum habens servum arantem, aut pascentem, qui regresso ab agro dicat ei, Statim transi, et recumbe, et non dicit ei, Para quod coenem, et praecingere, et ministra mihi donec manducem et bibam, et post haec tu manducabis et bibes? Post exactos labores, et magna et multa documenta virtutum, apostoli satis sibi utiles videbantur, sed versari in luto carnis, et limo corporis hujus, et quod essent inutiles, nesciebant, sed deprehenduntur cum Judas tradit, Petrus negat, Joannes fugit, relinquunt omnes, ut solus in quo erat, et ex quo erat tota utilitas appareret.

But, man, what you exact from your servant, pay out to him who made you a master. You who always sleep, and exact unwearied watches from your servant, keep watch at some time for your Lord, who watches for you without ceasing; stand by your Lord, who fasts, for even one moment, you whom your servant always stands by when you eat; let off the innocent servant, you whom your Lord coaxes when you sin; give pardon meanwhile, you whom your Lord always forgives. Surely, if you have done anything good, believe that you have paid a debt to the Lord, not bestowed a kindness.

When you have done, he says, all that has been commanded you, say: We are useless servants; we have done what we ought to have done. When is man useful of himself for divine things, who is so useless to himself for human things? Let man consider the evils of the heart, the vices of the flesh, the waves of pleasures, the storms of desires, the rocks of anger, the shipwrecks of crimes, and then whatever is useful in him he will give to God, whatever is useless he will put down to himself.

But let us return to what we set out, so that it may now be plain why the Lord admonished his disciples. To send his apostles to peoples languishing in pain of various kinds, Christ gave them the power of the spirit, gave them authority from on high, gave them the grace of healings; whence, going about, they gave sight to the blind, a running step to the lame, hearing to the deaf, and, not to detain you with each thing, they gave health to all who were ill; whence, returning, they gloried, saying: Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name (Luke 10:17). Whom the Lord restrains, saying: Do not rejoice that the demons are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

So, lest through pride they should lose what they had won by labour, and put down to themselves what they had obtained from God, he calls them back to humility, which is the mother of teaching, by such an example: Which of you, having a servant ploughing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come back from the field: Come at once, and take your place at table; and does not say to him: Prepare what I may sup on, and gird yourself, and serve me until I eat and drink, and after this you shall eat and drink? After their labours were accomplished, and so many great proofs of mighty works, the apostles seemed to themselves very useful; but that they were living in the mud of the flesh and the slime of this body, and that they were useless, they did not know; but they are found out when Judas betrays, Peter denies, John flees (Matt 26; Mark 14), all forsake him, so that he alone might appear in whom was, and from whom was, all usefulness.

Quod autem dixit: Et postea tu manducabis, monet discipulos, ut post ascensionem suam statim copulari se Domino in illa beatitudine superna gestirent. Nam denique hic relicturos omnia approbat, et praecingit ad tolerantiam passionis, et ministerii sui perficit ad laborem. Nam tunc tanto tempore ministrarunt apostoli discumbenti, quanto tempore inter peccatorum coquinas et gentium focos coenam Domini super mensas Ecclesiae in memoriam perpetem praepararunt. Hanc coenam qui fidelis est novit, qui nescit, et scire desiderat, sit fidelis.

And as for his saying, And afterwards you shall eat, he warns the disciples that after his ascension they should long to be joined at once to the Lord in that blessedness on high. For indeed here he approves those who are to leave all things, and girds them for the endurance of the passion, and completes them for the labour of his ministry. For then the apostles served him at table for as long a time as, among the kitchens of sinners and the hearths of the Gentiles, they prepared the Lord's supper upon the tables of the Church in perpetual memory. This supper he who is faithful knows; he who does not know it, and desires to know it, let him be faithful.

Sermo CLXII.

De eo qui volebat dividere haereditatem

Audistis, fratres, hodie quid a Domino haeres bonorum petierit mundanorum. Magister, inquit, dic fratri meo ut dividat mecum haereditatem. Praeceps cupiditas, et incauta, mundanae litis arbitrum credidit ipsum saeculi cognitorem; et eum fieri voluit divisionis auctorem, qui ad restituendam venerat humani generis unitatem. Magister, dic fratri meo ut dividat mecum haereditatem. Hic non magister quaestus est, sed amor.

Dic fratri meo ut dividat mecum haereditatem. Cum dicit, dic fratri meo, praemisit quod charitatem moneat, quod interpellet naturam, quod pulset affectum. Dic fratri meo ut dividat mecum haereditatem. Non potest dicere fratri, Divide, qui per prophetam docuit: Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum. Dic fratri meo ut dividat mecum haereditatem. Quae major haereditas, quae melior haereditas quam divinae vinculum charitatis? Quia haereditas aliquando perit, charitas numquam, dicente Apostolo: Charitas numquam excidit.

Sed dicit aliquis, Ergo charitas numquam perit, numquam violatur? Plane numquam, quia charitas si est, permanet; si non permanet, non est. Sicut sterilis arbor quae vernali tempore cum tota candescit in flore, fructum non dat illa, sed fallit; ita est charitas quae putatur, et non est: occasionum concussa fluctibus evanescit, ac sic laedit sollicitos et decipit incautos.

Sed ad coepta redeamus. Magister, dic fratri meo ut dividat mecum haereditatem. Haereditas mundana, ante posteris infert jurgia quam confert censum; antequam dividat facultates, scindit haeredes; antequam debitas tradat singulis portiones, successores ipsos desecat et mittit in partes. Proinde non est haereditas ista, sed pugna; et haec noverca filiorum est, non facultas. Ille ditat filios, qui relinquit filiis plenissimam charitatem.

At tu, quisquis ille es qui Dominum tali petitione compellas, Dominum provocas, Dominum producis ad litem, cum quo tibi Apostolus haereditatem docet et ostendit esse communem: Haeredes, inquit, Dei sumus, cohaeredes autem Christi. Hic tibi sic haeres est, hic est tibi frater, qui nascendi sorte, conditione crescendi, vivendi ordine, moriendi exitu, per omnia tibi voluit similis inveniri. Nam cum esset et solus Dei haeres, et Filius unicus per naturam, te participem sibi, te cohaeredem sibi voluit et fecit esse per gratiam, qui eras miser et subjectus ultimae servituti.

Sermon CLXII.

On him who wished to divide the inheritance

You have heard today, brothers, what an heir of worldly goods asked of the Lord. Teacher, he says, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me (Luke 12:13). Headlong and heedless greed believed the very examining judge of the world to be the arbiter of a worldly lawsuit; and wished him to become the author of division who had come to restore the unity of the human race. Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. He is not a teacher of gain, but love.

Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. When he says, tell my brother, he has put first what may call charity to mind, what may appeal to nature, what may knock at affection. Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. He cannot say to a brother, "Divide", who taught through the Prophet: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity (Ps 133:1). Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. What greater inheritance, what better inheritance than the tie of divine charity? For an inheritance at times perishes, charity never, as the Apostle says: Charity never fails (1 Cor 13:8).

But someone says: "Then charity never perishes, is never violated?" Plainly never, because charity, if it is, remains; if it does not remain, it is not. As a barren tree which in springtime grows all white with blossom gives no fruit, but deceives, so is the charity that is thought to be, and is not: shaken by the waves of occasions, it vanishes, and so it hurts the careful and deceives the heedless.

But let us return to what we began. Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. A worldly inheritance brings quarrels to descendants before it brings them wealth; before it divides the means, it splits the heirs; before it hands to each his due portion, it cuts up the successors themselves and sends them into factions. So this is not an inheritance, but a battle; and it is the stepmother of sons, not their means. He enriches his sons who leaves to his sons the fullest charity.

But you, whoever you are, who press the Lord with such a petition, you provoke the Lord, you draw the Lord into a lawsuit, with whom the Apostle teaches and shows you that your inheritance is common: Heirs, he says, of God we are, and co-heirs of Christ (Rom 8:17). He is thus an heir with you, he is your brother, who in the lot of being born, the condition of growing, the order of living, the end of dying, willed to be found like you in all things. For though he was both the sole heir of God and the only Son by nature, he willed and made you a partaker with himself, a co-heir with himself, by grace, you who were wretched and subject to the uttermost servitude.

Habebis itaque, et collata poteris feliciter possidere, si manseris in aula Patris, si fueris in divina haereditate communis.

Dari potest, dividi non potest sors divina, quia coelestia et qui dederit non amittit, et qui acceperit sibi singulariter non recondit. Unde homo quid hunc ad divisionem vocas, quid hunc ad discussionem miserandus invitas, quid ab eo partem petis, qui tibi quaesivit et contulit totum? Vel expertus cessa, et jam poeniteat talia te petiisse. Nam partem substantiae principalis accepisti, et acceptam peregrinus, vagus, luxuriosus cum luxuriosis helluo perdidisti. Hinc paradisi exsul, hinc haereditatis exsors, hinc extorris a vita.

Homo, dicit tibi Christus, Quod a me, et per me consecutus es, sine me non poteris possidere, quia sine me qualis fueris, jam vidisti; hoc sciens pro te Patrem ingrate omnium sic poposci: Pater, quos dedisti mihi, volo ut ubi ego sum, et illi sint mecum. Et quia nec hoc tibi sufficere poterat ad tutelam, nam cum mecum esses in paradiso, et extra me tu periisses, adjeci, dicens: Pater, sicut tu in me, et ego in te, ita et isti in nobis unum sint. Ego ut Patris bona habeam, processi de Patre, a Patre penitus non recessi: et ideo tantum te in nobis habere volo, quantum nos ipsi sumus, et manemus in nobis. Desine ergo vel superna dividere, vel de terrenis me audiente litigare, ne quem tenes et habes hodie largitorem pium, severissimum sentias postmodum cognitorem.

Sed jam quid responderit Dominus audiamus: Homo, inquit, quis me constituit judicem aut divisorem super vos? Quis me constituit judicem? Et ubi est illud quod tu dixisti, Domine: Pater neminem judicat, sed omne judicium dedit Filio? Aut divisorem super vos? Et quis dividet justos ab injustis, sicut segregat pastor oves ab haedis? Si tibi judicium debetur hominis, et per te est totius saeculi celebranda divisio, quomodo dicis, Quis me constituit judicem aut divisorem super vos?

Est quidem penes Christum, et fuit, atque erit omne judicium, sed tunc non judicaturus venerat, sed judicandus, nec addicturus reos, sed a reis innocens addicendus. In homine agebat Deum, in servo dominum, ut esset vernula temporis, qui erat et factor et cognitor saeculorum. Merito ergo respondit: Quis me constituit judicem aut divisorem super vos? Et quis eum constitueret judicem, qui constituit et restituit universa? Christus ad litigatoris arbitrium arbiter esse non poterat, qui totius judicii summa est et potestas.

You will have, therefore, and will be able happily to possess what has been bestowed, if you remain in the Father's hall, if you hold the divine inheritance in common.

The divine lot can be given, it cannot be divided, because in heavenly things he who gives does not lose, and he who receives does not hoard for himself alone. Why then, man, do you call him to a division, why, wretched man, do you invite him to a dispute, why do you ask a part from him who sought out and bestowed on you the whole? Taught by experience, at least cease, and now repent of having asked such things. For you received the portion of the principal substance, and having received it, a wanderer, a vagabond, a dissolute man with the dissolute, a glutton, you squandered it (Luke 15:13). Hence an exile from paradise, hence without share in the inheritance, hence banished from life.

Man, Christ says to you: "What you obtained from me and through me you will not be able to possess without me, for you have already seen what you were without me; knowing this, I thus asked the Father for you, most ungrateful of all: Father, those whom you gave me, I will that where I am, they also may be with me (John 17:24). And since not even this could suffice for your protection — for when you were with me in paradise, you perished outside me — I added, saying: Father, as you are in me, and I in you, so may these too be one in us (John 17:21). I, so as to have the Father's goods, proceeded from the Father, did not withdraw at all from the Father: and therefore I will to have you in us as much as we ourselves are, and remain, in us. Cease, then, either to divide the things above or to wrangle over earthly things in my hearing, lest him whom today you hold and have as a loving giver you should afterwards find a most severe examining judge."

But let us now hear what the Lord answered: Man, he says, who appointed me judge or divider over you? (Luke 12:14) Who appointed me judge? And where is that which you said, Lord: The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son (John 5:22)? Or divider over you? And who will divide the just from the unjust, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matt 25:32)? If the judgement of man is owed to you, and through you the division of the whole world is to be carried out, how do you say: Who appointed me judge or divider over you?

All judgement indeed is with Christ, and was, and will be; but then he had come not to judge, but to be judged, not to condemn the guilty, but, innocent, to be condemned by the guilty. In man he acted as God, in the servant as lord, so as to be a home-born slave of time, he who was both the Maker and the examining judge of the ages. Rightly, then, he answered: Who appointed me judge or divider over you? And who would appoint him judge, who appointed and restored all things? Christ could not be arbiter at the choice of a litigant, he who is the sum and the power of all judgement.

At illi jurgator quare non opposuit: Quomodo non invitatus a fratre taliter tu petisti? Nescis, quod justus mediator non est, qui ab una tantum eligitur parte? Verum haec non dixit; sed invisus astitit, ut adjudicantis illi fas esset, fratri non esset, resilire sententiam.

Et quia Christus correcturus venerat, non damnaturus reum, praecepto removet fomitem jurgiorum, dicendo: Videte, cavete ab avaritia. Hoc est dicere: Abjiciatur avaritia, et non erit in haereditate contentio. Avaritia, fratres, parentes negat, germanos dividit, separat socios, amicitiam solvit, excludit affectum: hanc qui intra se habuerit, erit nullius, suus non erit. Avaritia, fratres, sicut dixit Apostolus, radix est omnium malorum : quae cum radicari coeperit in corde, sic morum dissipat ornamenta, sicut arbor noxia feralibus radicibus nexa solvit, et dissipat monumenta majorum.

But why did the wrangler not object to him: "How have you, uninvited by your brother, made such a request? Do you not know that he is not a just mediator who is chosen by one party only?" But he did not say these things; but stood by unseen, so that it should be lawful for the one, and not for the brother, to withdraw from the sentence of the one adjudging.

And since Christ had come to correct, not to condemn the accused, by a precept he removes the tinder of quarrels, saying: See, beware of avarice (Luke 12:15). That is to say: Let avarice be cast away, and there will be no contention over an inheritance. Avarice, brothers, denies parents, divides brothers, separates companions, dissolves friendship, shuts out affection: he who has it within himself will be no one's, will not be his own. Avarice, brothers, as the Apostle said, is the root of all evils (1 Tim 6:10): and when it has begun to take root in the heart, it so scatters the adornments of morals as a noxious tree, bound to them with deadly roots, loosens and scatters the tombs of the ancestors.

Sermo CLXIII.

De terrenorum cura despicienda

Beati quorum corda hodiernus Dominici sermonis penetravit auditus. Beati quorum mentes promovit ad fidem tanta et talis promissio Salvatoris. Beati qui credulitate coelestium mandatorum duris absoluti sunt praesentium curis. Tali namque hodie discipulos suos, immo omnes auditores suos, Dominus voce compellat: Nolite solliciti esse animae vestrae quid manducetis, neque corpori vestro quod vestiamini.

Anima plus est quam esca, et corpus plus est quam vestimentum. Quis sic ita invidus bonis suis, quis sic deliciis suis inimicus, ut spontanea et coelitus praeparata despiciat, et concupiscat mundanis laboribus et doloribus conquisita? Degener nimis animus, mens tota servilis est, quae coquorum afflatus, squalores coquinae, hesterno horrore fetentia perquirat obsonia, cui jugiter regius deservit atque adjacet apparatus. Noli ergo, homo, inania providendo gemere, noli laborare caduca praeparando, quia prandii tui semper et ubique Deus praeparator assistit.

Quis rex devotis militibus debitam non procurat annonam? Quis dominus fidelibus servis ista cibaria non ministrat? Quis pater non dat panem filiis? Si ergo nobis Deus, et rex et Dominus, et Pater est, quid negabit? Stipendiis suis militans derogat miles regi; suis sumptibus vivens dominum servus accusat; pro se sollicitus filius culpat superstitem patrem. Noli ergo, homo, exponere Deum pro te taliter cogitando, qui et justitia regnantis, et dominantis studio, et generantis affectu, in se totam tui recepit sollicitudinem, refudit et curam, dicendo: Nolite solliciti esse animae vestrae quid manducetis.

Sed te forte mellitus imber, et singularis cibus, Judaici fastidii deterret exemplo, nec carnem credis humorum varietate concretam per solum manna sua voluntate compleri: dicis, Deus sicut corpus ex diversis voluit constare membris, ita variatis dapibus voluit et jussit enutriri. Superfluus est, o homo, iste qui te exagitat timor: nam Creatoris ad prandium tota concurrit et advolat creatura. Unde si te legalis cibi singularitas et parcitas terret, invitet et provocet evangelici convivii coelestis effusio, quae in uno ferculo manducaturo Petro totius apponit genera creaturae.

Sermon CLXIII.

On despising the care of earthly things

Blessed are those whose hearts today's hearing of the Lord's word has pierced. Blessed are those whose minds so great and such a promise of the Saviour has moved forward to faith. Blessed are those who by belief in the heavenly commands have been freed from the hard cares of the present. For with such a voice today the Lord addresses his disciples, or rather all his hearers: Do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor for your body, what you will put on (Luke 12:22).

Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing (Luke 12:23). Who is so very envious of his own goods, who so hostile to his own delights, as to despise what is offered freely and prepared from heaven, and to covet what is gained by worldly labours and pains? Very degenerate is the heart, wholly servile the mind, which seeks out the steam of cooks, the squalor of the kitchen, dishes stinking with yesterday's horror, the mind on which a royal provision constantly waits and lies ready. Do not, then, man, groan in providing empty things, do not labour in preparing perishable things, because God always and everywhere stands by as the preparer of your meal.

What king does not provide the due ration for his devoted soldiers? What master does not furnish this food to his faithful servants? What father does not give bread to his sons? If, then, God is to us both king and Lord and Father, what will he refuse? The soldier who serves at his own charges disparages the king; the servant who lives at his own expense accuses his master; the son who is solicitous for himself blames his father who is still alive. Do not, then, man, expose God by thinking in such a way for yourself, God who, with the justice of one who reigns, the zeal of one who is master and the affection of one who begets, has received into himself the whole of your solicitude and has taken back upon himself your care, saying: Do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat.

But perhaps the honeyed rain and the single food deter you by the example of the Jews' disgust, and you do not believe that flesh, compounded of a variety of humours, is filled by manna alone, according to its will: you say: "As God willed the body to consist of different members, so he willed and commanded it to be nourished with varied dishes." Superfluous, O man, is this fear that harries you: for to the meal of the Creator the whole creation runs together and flies. Hence, if the singleness and sparseness of the food of the Law frightens you, let the outpouring of the heavenly banquet of the Gospel invite and entice you, which in one dish sets before Peter, about to eat, the kinds of the whole creation (Acts 10:11–16).

Nam quidquid Noe vector novi saeculi, saeculi servavit ad semen, quidquid in aere volitat et fertur, quidquid gignitur et vivit in terra, quidquid in aquis est, et movetur, hoc uno Petri coelitus mactatur, et exhibetur ad coenam. Si ergo vis, homo, accipere et omnia manducare, despice vilia tibi providere cellaria.

Et nos quidem magnis exemplis tibi superna cogitanti carnalia non defutura probare contendimus: Deus autem pro suae majestatis insignibus de suis dubitantem promissis ad vilia et extrema remittit exempla; ut te tali examinatione redarguat, quem tanta imitatione non traxit. Considerate, inquit, corvos, quia non seminant, neque metunt, quibus non est cellarium, neque horreum, et Deus pascit illos; quanto magis vos pluris estis illis? Dubium merito infidelem ad avem mittit, amicam belli, furoris sociam, insatiatam sanguine, et in ipsos mortuos ferro gravius saevientem. Namque cessante gladio carnifex improbissimus exanime grassatur in corpus, laniat, dissipat, spargit, ne quid funeris inventum, quieti misericors sepultura commendet.

Itaque Dominus exemplo tali exaggerat dubitantis insaniam, qui putat Deum hoc piis filiis denegaturum, quod impiis avibus subministrat; et existimant relinquentibus propter se patriam, domum, parentes, filios, conjuges, victus subsidia non daturum, qui nascenti indulsit crescere, terminavit corporis incrementum. O miserum, o tota infelicitate dignissimum, cui cum detur regnum, suspirat panem; cum perpetuitate donetur, deflet potum; cum immortalitatis gloria induatur, plangit corporis vestimentum. Genuinae infelicitatis conscius, fieri non credit se felicem; et terreno enutritus in pulvere coeli incolam dubitat se futurum.

Convenienter ergo Dominus quae sequuntur adjecit: Quis autem vestrum cogitando potest adjicere ad staturam suam cubitum unum? Humanarum mentium cogitationes intimus scrutator exponit; nam omnis homo dum sui corporis pulchritudinem concupiscit, procerum se esse exoptat: sed cogitare homo hoc potest, hoc per se homo obtinere non potest; ad id credendo pervenit, ad hoc pervenire non potest cogitando. Hinc est quod Dominus humani conscius desiderii hominem Christi tetendit in formam, ut in mensuram Christi speciositate tota decorus esset, qui in brevitate sua erat ipso erubescente deformis; unde bene subjunxit: Si ergo neque quod minimum est potestis, de caeteris quid solliciti estis? Hoc est, quid cogitatione, homo, majora praesumis, qui per fidem minora desperas? Quid vestimento minus, quid majus corporis incremento? Crede ergo tibi a Deo vestitum corporis posse praestari, a quo tibi fides corporis incrementa repromittit.

For whatever Noah, the carrier of a new age, kept for the seed of the age, whatever flies and is borne in the air, whatever is begotten and lives on the earth, whatever is in the waters and moves, all this is slain from heaven in Peter's one dish and set out for supper. If, then, man, you will to receive and eat all things, scorn to provide cheap storerooms for yourself.

And we indeed strive to prove to you by great examples that, if you think on the things above, the things of the flesh will not fail you: but God, instead of the insignia of his majesty, sends one who doubts his promises back to mean and lowest examples, so as to convict you by such an examination, you whom so great a model to imitate did not draw. Consider, he says, the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap, they have no storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them; how much more are you of more value than they? (Luke 12:24) Rightly he sends the doubting, faithless man to the bird, the friend of war, the ally of fury, insatiate of blood, raging more cruelly than the steel against the very dead. For when the sword has ceased, that most wicked executioner falls upon the lifeless body, tears, scatters, strews it, so that merciful burial may not commit to rest anything found of the corpse.

So the Lord, by such an example, sets in relief the madness of the doubter, who thinks that God will deny to pious sons what he supplies to impious birds; and they think that he will not give the means of life to those who for his sake leave homeland, house, parents, sons, wives, he who granted to the newborn to grow, and set a limit to the increase of the body. O wretched man, O most worthy of all unhappiness, who, when a kingdom is given him, sighs for bread; when he is presented with perpetuity, weeps for drink; when he is clothed with the glory of immortality, laments the clothing of the body! Conscious of his inborn unhappiness, he does not believe that he can become happy; and, nourished in the earthly dust, he doubts that he will be a dweller of heaven.

Fittingly, then, the Lord added what follows: But which of you by thinking can add one cubit to his stature? (Luke 12:25) The inmost searcher sets forth the thoughts of human minds; for every man, in coveting beauty of body, longs to be tall: but this man can think, this man cannot obtain by himself; to that he comes by believing, to this he cannot come by thinking. Hence it is that the Lord, aware of human desire, stretched man out to the form of Christ, so that he might be comely with all the beauty of the measure of Christ, he who in his shortness was misshapen, himself blushing at it; whence he rightly added: If then you cannot do even what is least, why are you anxious about the rest? (Luke 12:26) That is: Why, man, do you presume greater things by thinking, you who through faith despair of lesser ones? What is less than clothing, what greater than the growth of the body? Believe, then, that clothing for the body can be granted you by God, from whom faith promises you the growth of the body.

Verum, quia Deus sic humanum diligit genus, ut ipsos quos dominantis jure corripit, mox paterno soletur, et mulceat blandimento, quos comparatione foedissimae avis exasperasse videbatur, ad floris odorati et speciosi nimium hos reducit exemplum. Considerate, inquit, lilia quomodo crescunt: non laborant, neque nent. Dico autem vobis, nec Salomon in omni gloria sua vestiebatur sicut unum ex istis. O quantum se superna pietas hominis amore deponit! Nam qui poterat praecepta sua sola auctoritate firmare, toto insinuat et astruit labore doctoris, et qui sufficiebat in sola fide promissionis suae terminum collocare, auditores ad fidem promissi suasoris perducit exemplo; dubios lilii comparatione confirmat, lilium Salomonis sublimat exemplo: quia ipso Domino testante, inter omnes mundi reges Salomon singulari gloria, ornatu unico, speciosus effulsit, et omnes terrae flores lilium vincit et praecellit in gratia; tantumque distat ab universo germine lilium, quantum regem specie, gloria, cunctis, constat excellere.

Nec a nobis latius lilii describenda est pulchritudo, cujus praerogativam Dominica testatio reddit singularem: iteranda sunt sane illa quae ad robur fidei nostrae geminato Dominus commendavit exemplo; quia Christianus de vita, de regno, de immortalitate certus, de pastus et vestitus non debet necessitate pulsari, cum videat Deum hodie nato, et perituro in crastinum germini tantam vestibus gloriam contulisse. Sed sicut ariditate ista, sicut clibani deputantur incendio, ita mortis, ita gehennae ignibus destinantur, qui praesentia sibi a Deo praestari dubitant, cum futura sibi jam sentiant contributa.

Et vos nolite quaerere quid manducetis, aut quid bibatis, et nolite in sublimia tolli; haec enim omnia gentes mundi quaerunt. Pater autem vester scit quoniam his indigetis. Verumtamen quaerite regnum Dei, et haec omnia adjicientur vobis. Cum se patrem nostrum dicit, nostri sibi piam curam comprobat non deesse: cum nos regnum coeleste jubet quaerere, subjicienda monstrat omnia; nobis quidquid coelestis exigit apparatus indicat adfuturum.

But, since God so loves the human race that those whom he chastises by the right of a master he at once consoles and soothes with a father's caress, those whom he seemed to have exasperated by the comparison with a most foul bird he leads back to the example of a fragrant and exceedingly beautiful flower. Consider, he says, the lilies, how they grow: they neither labour nor spin. But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these (Luke 12:27). O how far the heavenly loving-kindness lowers itself for love of man! For he who could make his precepts firm by authority alone instils and establishes them with all the labour of a teacher, and he who was able to rest the end of his promise on faith alone leads his hearers to faith in the promise by the example of one who persuades; he strengthens the doubtful by the comparison of the lily, he exalts the lily by the example of Solomon: because, as the Lord himself bears witness, among all the kings of the world Solomon shone out, beautiful with singular glory, with unique adornment, and the lily surpasses and excels all the flowers of the earth in grace; and the lily stands as far apart from every growing thing as the king is agreed to excel all in beauty, in glory.

Nor need the beauty of the lily be described more widely by us, whose pre-eminence the Lord's testimony renders singular: but those things must certainly be repeated which the Lord commended for the strengthening of our faith by a twofold example; because the Christian, sure of life, of the kingdom, of immortality, ought not to be driven by the necessity of food and clothing, when he sees that God has bestowed so great a glory of garments on a growth born today and to perish tomorrow. But as these things, through their dryness, are assigned to burning as in the oven (Luke 12:28), so to the fires of death, to the fires of Gehenna, are those destined who doubt that present things are granted them by God, though they already feel that things to come are bestowed on them.

And you, do not seek what you will eat or what you will drink, and do not be lifted up on high; for all these things the nations of the world seek. But your Father knows that you need these things. Yet seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you (Luke 12:29–31). When he calls himself our father, he shows that a loving care for us is not wanting to him: when he bids us seek the heavenly kingdom, he shows that all things are to be added besides; he points out that whatever the heavenly provision requires will be at hand for us.

Sermo CLXIV.

De igne coelesti, de separatione facta a Christo, et de Ecclesiae et Synagogae divisione. In illud Lucae: Ignem veni mittere in terram, etc.

Sicut febrientibus amarus est semper salutaris cibus, ita et saepe Dominicus sermo contrarius imperitis: utrisque tamen aliter, aut ex corporis, aut ex mentis infirmitate contingit. Hodie Dominus exasperasse nonnullorum videtur auditum, dicendo: Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur? Et infra: Putatis quia pacem veni mittere in terram? Non, dico vobis, sed separationem.

Et ubi est illud: Ecce Agnus Dei? Ubi illud: Sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est, et sicut agnus coram tondente se mutus, sic non aperuit os suum? Sed et illud: Dicite filiae Sion: Ecce rex tuus venit tibi mansuetus? Et quid est quod Agnus iste tam dure in praedicatione percutit? Quid sic arietat in verbo, qui in passione tanta patientia tacet, in morte tota humilitate succumbit? Et revera, fratres, mundum suum Christus per omnia mitis et mansuetus intravit, dum nascitur nostro dulcis in germine, dum cunis blande blandior ipse fovetur, dum parvulus in gremio se fundit et resolvit humano, dum parentis in collo stringitur, et stringit toto charitatis amplexu. Et ut enutriat toto dum nutritur affectu, per omnes sensim currit et adolescit aetates: pauper agit semper, solitarius semper incedit, quia pauper communis est semper; patet omnibus solitarius semper.

Et quid est quod tantum verbis spargit ignem, quod tanta et talia inflammat, et dilatat incendia, dicendo: Ignem veni mittere in terram? Quid est? Ager quoties longa incuria silvescit, et toto luxuriae agrestis sordescit horrore, peritissimi cultoris utique semper aperitur et purgatur incendio: ac studio benigno cultor ignis apponitur, ut exustis sentibus reveletur prima facies campi, praestetur agricolae libera, fiat facilis via vomeri, sit germinis ferax sterilis diu terra, et longa ac moesta otia laeto laetissima jam repenset in fructu. Ergo ubi Judaicus cespes continuo aratro legis et jugi cultu effetus ad inopiam, non respondit germini, non labori, sed pro tritico lolium reddidit, protulit pro viribus spinas, Christus ad sata gentium divini cultus convertit industriam: ac diu oppressa dumis nationum cupiens novalia purgare, ignem mittit primum maximus magister in terram,

Sermon CLXIV.

On the heavenly fire, on the separation made by Christ, and on the division of the Church and the Synagogue. On the passage of Luke: "I came to cast fire on the earth", etc.

As wholesome food is always bitter to the feverish, so too the Lord's word is often contrary to the unskilled; to each, however, this happens otherwise, from a weakness either of the body or of the mind. Today the Lord seems to have exasperated the hearing of some, by saying: I came to cast fire on the earth, and what do I will but that it be kindled? (Luke 12:49) And further on: Do you think that I came to send peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but separation (Luke 12:51).

And where is that word: Behold the Lamb of God (John 1:29)? Where is that: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before its shearer, so he did not open his mouth (Isa 53:7)? And that too: Say to the daughter of Zion: Behold, your king comes to you, meek (Matt 21:5)? And why is it that this Lamb strikes so harshly in his preaching? Why does he butt like a ram with his word, he who in the Passion keeps silent with such patience, and in death submits with all lowliness? And truly, brothers, Christ entered his world gentle and meek in all things: in being born, sweet, in our seed; in being fondly cherished in the cradle, himself more winning still; in pouring himself out as a little one and lying relaxed on a human lap; in being clasped to his parent's neck, and clasping it with the whole embrace of charity. And to nourish with his whole affection while he is nourished, he runs little by little through all the ages and grows up: he lives always poor, he always goes about alone, because a poor man is always common to all; a solitary man is always open to all.

And why is it that he scatters so much fire with his words, that he kindles and spreads fires so great and of such a kind, saying: I came to cast fire on the earth? What is it? Whenever a field runs wild through long neglect, and grows foul with all the horror of rustic overgrowth, it is always opened and cleansed by the fire of a most skilful cultivator: the cultivator applies fire with kindly care, so that, the briars burnt off, the first face of the field may be laid bare and handed back free to the farmer, an easy way may be made for the ploughshare, the land long barren may become fertile in seed, and, most glad, may now repay its long and mournful idleness with glad fruit. So when the Jewish sod, worn out to poverty by the continual plough of the Law and by unremitting tillage, did not answer to the seed nor to the labour, but gave back darnel for wheat and brought forth thorns with all its strength, Christ turned the industry of divine tillage to the sown fields of the Gentiles; and, desiring to cleanse the fallows of the nations, long choked with brambles, the supreme master first casts fire on the

et quidquid naturalis squalefecerat luxus, quidquid arefecerat brumalis rigor, artifici depurgat et consumit incendio; quatenus sola longo exhausta jejunio ipso suo cinere saginata pinguescerent, et post diuturnam duritiem tenera redderentur et mollia; ac sic evangelico apta cultu semini redderentur commoda; et felici sulco jam redderent tricesimum, sexagesimum ac centesimum fructum.

Sed hic ipse cultus non est novus agricolae veteri et coelesti, nam legem pangere, gratiam serere, ignis semper uti opere consuevit. Daturus legem ignem praemisit in rubo; sed divinum rubus portavit, non concepit incendium, jam tunc aculeis malitiae plenum et ingratum culturae legis populum praefigurans. Et nunc in arva gentium cum destinaret apostolos, sic eos igneo imbre perfudit, et ignis consedit super eos, ut possent humecta siccare, sicca infundere, decoquere cruda, frigida calefacere, accendere exstincta, comburere noxia, et in opere diverso uno atque eodem igne ad coelestem copiam tota percolere deserta terrarum, dicente propheta: In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum.

Sed ad illud jam quod sequitur transeamus. Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur? Sed baptismo habeo baptizari, et quomodo coarctor donec perficiatur? Urget aqua ignem: cogitanda est talis, tam divisa conjunctio. Urget unda flammam, multiplicat flamma undam. Quae est talis, tam concors ista discordia? Geritur hic, sicut diximus, agricolae divini species: plena namque omnia calore germinant, humore nutriuntur. Unde rerum parens Deus ignis et aquae commercio nos germinat, nos enutrit, quorum tanto ardet, calet, exaestuat, anhelat affectu. Baptismo habeo baptizari. Christus suo baptizatur in sanguine, ut quidquid ex nostra carne suscepit, diluatur, renovetur, et totam suae divinae majestatis redigatur in formam. Baptizatur Christus suae baptismate Passionis, qui totius peccatum mundi lavit, quod non nisi ab eo qui mundum fecerat, poterat aboleri.

Putatis, ait, quia pacem veni mittere in terram? Non, dico vobis, sed separationem. Quare? Quia conjunctio coelestis est in ista separatione terrena. Nemo potest connecti terrae, et jungi coelo. Grata ergo et chara sit ista terrena separatio, quae nos sic a terrenis separat, ut inserat nos divinis.

earth, and whatever natural overgrowth had made rough, whatever the frost of winter had dried up, he purges and consumes with a craftsman's fire; so that soils exhausted by a long fast might grow rich, fattened by their own ash, and after long hardness might be made tender and soft; and thus, fitted for the Gospel's tillage, might be made ready for the seed; and with a happy furrow might now yield fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold and a hundredfold.

But this very tillage is not new to the ancient and heavenly farmer, for to plant the Law, to sow grace, he has always been accustomed to use the work of fire. When he was about to give the Law, he sent fire before him in the bush (Exod 3:2); but the bush carried the divine fire, it did not conceive it, prefiguring even then a people full of the thorns of malice and ungrateful for the tillage of the Law. And now, when he was sending the apostles out into the fields of the Gentiles, he so drenched them with a fiery shower, and fire settled upon them (Acts 2:3), that they could dry what was wet, soak what was dry, cook what was raw, warm what was cold, kindle what was quenched, burn what was harmful, and, in diverse work, with one and the same fire, till all the wastes of the earth to heavenly plenty, as the Prophet says: Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world (Ps 19:5).

But let us now pass on to what follows. I came to cast fire on the earth, and what do I will but that it be kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I constrained until it is accomplished? (Luke 12:50) Water presses on fire: such a union, so divided, must be pondered. Wave presses on flame, flame multiplies wave. What is this discord, so great, so concordant? Here, as we said, the figure of the divine farmer is acted out: for all things germinate when full of warmth, and are nourished by moisture. Hence God, the parent of all things, makes us germinate and nourishes us by the commerce of fire and water, he who burns, glows, seethes and pants for us with so great an affection. I have a baptism to be baptised with. Christ is baptised in his own blood, so that whatever he took up from our flesh may be washed, renewed, and brought into the whole form of his divine majesty. Christ is baptised with the baptism of his Passion, he who washed away the sin of the whole world, which could not be abolished except by him who had made the world.

Do you think, he says, that I came to send peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but separation. Why? Because the heavenly union lies in this earthly separation. No one can be bound to the earth and joined to heaven. Let this earthly separation, then, be welcome and dear, which so separates us from earthly things that it engrafts us into divine ones.

Erunt, inquit, ex hoc quinque in domo una divisi, tres in duo, et duo in tres: dividetur pater in filium, et filius in patrem; mater in filiam, et filia in matrem; socrus in nurum suam, et nurus in socrum suam. Cum quinque dixerit ex una domo dividendos numero, nomina sex dividentur, pater, filius, mater, filia, socrus, nurus: sed quia est ipsa socrus quae mater est, certum est quinque tantum personas in his nominibus inveniri. Dividuntur autem tres in duo, dum in sponso sponsa conjuncta, socrus quae tertia est, divisa remanebit in domo. Ergo ista in qua Ecclesia conjungitur Christo Synagoga, quae mater est, et socrus, permanet suo jam marito perdivisa. Duo ergo in tres ita dividuntur, dum de isto Christi et Ecclesiae consortio altera haeres scinditur et dividitur Synagoga, ut Christus et Ecclesia divisi ab haereticis, uno maneant et jungantur in Spiritu.

Dividitur et pater in filium, et filius in patrem, dum Judaicus populus qui per carnalem Christi generationem paternum sortitus est nomen, a Christo Filio per invidiam separatur, pater lividus in odium vertit affectum, cui filii gloria jugis est poena, est continuus cruciatus, dicente Apostolo: Quorum patres, ex quibus est Christus secundum carnem, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in saecula. Dividitur et mater in filiam: est namque Synagoga mater, ex qua per Petrum et caeteros apostolos nascitur Ecclesia filia, quae ubi divini regis Christi meruit habere consortium, matrem et aemulam pertulit et novercam. Et quae filiae mater talis, qualis nurui socrus? Haec namque Synagoga mater, ubi Ecclesiam nurum vidit ex gentibus advenisse, occidit scelesta filium, nurus consortium ne videret: occidit Christum, si vel sic amorem nurus furibunda valeret exstinguere. Sed ex morte totum resurrexit in Ecclesiae conjugium Christus; ut probaret charitatem non separari morte, sed crescere.

Arguit eos autem Dominus qui faciem coeli, ortus nubium, stellarum cursus, plagas orbis student nimia curiositate perquirere, et tempus salutis suae nullis studiis, nullis indiciis nituntur agnoscere. Hypocritae, ait, faciem coeli et terrae nostis probare; et quomodo tempus istud non probatis? Oculus effusus perdit lumen, quia tota hominis intra pupillam visio continetur.

There will be, he says, from now on five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three: father will be divided against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law (Luke 12:52–53). Though he said that five out of one house were to be divided in number, six names will be divided, father, son, mother, daughter, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law: but since the mother-in-law is the very one who is the mother, it is certain that only five persons are found in these names. Three are divided against two in that, the bride being joined to the bridegroom, the mother-in-law, who is the third, will remain divided in the house. So this Synagogue, in which the Church is joined to Christ, and which is mother and mother-in-law, remains now wholly divided from her husband. And two are divided against three in this way: in that from this fellowship of Christ and the Church the Synagogue, the other heir, is cut off and divided, so that Christ and the Church, divided from the heretics, may remain and be joined in one Spirit.

Father, too, is divided against son, and son against father, in that the Jewish people, which through Christ's generation according to the flesh received the name of father, is separated by envy from Christ the Son: the father, full of spite, turns his affection into hatred, he to whom the son's glory is a perpetual punishment, is a continual torment, as the Apostle says: Whose are the fathers, of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things God blessed for ever (Rom 9:5). Mother, too, is divided against daughter: for the Synagogue is the mother, of whom through Peter and the other apostles the Church is born as daughter, who, when she merited to have the fellowship of Christ the divine King, endured her mother as rival and as stepmother. And what mother is to her daughter what a mother-in-law is to her daughter-in-law? For this Synagogue, the mother, when she saw that the Church, the daughter-in-law, had come from the Gentiles, wickedly killed her son, so as not to see the daughter-in-law's fellowship: she killed Christ, in case even so, in her fury, she might be able to quench the daughter-in-law's love. But from death Christ rose into a whole wedlock with the Church, to prove that charity is not separated by death, but grows.

Now the Lord rebukes those who are eager to search out with excessive curiosity the face of the sky, the risings of the clouds, the courses of the stars, the regions of the world, and who strive by no study, by no signs, to recognise the time of their own salvation. Hypocrites, he says, you know how to test the face of the sky and of the earth; and how is it that you do not test this time? (Luke 12:56) An eye that pours itself out loses its light, because the whole of a man's sight is contained within the pupil.

Ne ergo studeas videre multa, ut videas temetipsum; ne praesumas excelsa contueri, nec longinqua ambias conspicere, quia angustus oculus non capit multa, non penetrat excelsa, longinqua non perspicit, atque ita videt nihil, qui videre existimat totum. Agnosce ergo diem salutis, tempus acceptum per Christum Jesum Dominum nostrum, si vis a te.

...

Do not, then, be eager to see many things, so that you may see yourself; do not presume to gaze at lofty things, nor seek to behold distant ones, because the narrow eye does not take in many things, does not penetrate lofty ones, does not see through to distant ones, and so he sees nothing who thinks he sees everything. Recognise, then, the day of salvation, the acceptable time (2 Cor 6:2), through Christ Jesus our Lord, if you will, from yourself.

...

Sermo CLXV.

De consecratione D. Projecti episcopi Foro-Corneliensis

Omnibus quidem Ecclesiis venerationem debere me profiteor, et fidelissimam servitutem: sed Corneliensi Ecclesiae inservire peculiarius ipsius nominis amore compellor. Cornelius namque memoriae beatissimae vita clarus, cunctis virtutum titulis ubique fulgens, operum magnitudine notus universis, pater mihi fuit, ipse me per Evangelium genuit, ipse pius piissime nutrivit, ipse sanctus sancta instituit servitute, ipse pontifex sacris obtulit et consecravit altaribus: et ideo mihi clarum, colendum, mirabile Cornelii nomen. Amor ergo cognominis me compellit Corneliensis Ecclesiae desideriis desideranter occurrere, et Projectum venerabilem virum amabilius pontificem consecrare.

Projectum dixi, sed non abjectum, juxta illud: In te projectus sum ex utero; de ventre matris meae Deus meus es tu. Et vere iste Projectus ex utero humanae matris matris divinae in utero jugiter mansit, qui domus suae nescius, domus Dei esse perstitit habitator.

Qualiter autem, fratres, cunabulis ab ipsis gradus Ecclesiasticae militiae conscenderit et officia, quia dicere mihi longum est, sicut dicit Dominus, aetatem habet, ipse pro se loquatur, per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui vivit et regnat cum Spiritu sancto in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

Sermon CLXV.

On the consecration of Saint Projectus, bishop of Forum Cornelii

I declare that I owe veneration to all the churches, and most faithful service: but I am compelled to serve the church of Forum Cornelii more particularly by love of its very name. For Cornelius, of most blessed memory, renowned in his life, shining everywhere with every title of the virtues, known to all for the greatness of his works, was a father to me: he begot me through the Gospel (1 Cor 4:15), he, loving, most lovingly nourished me, he, holy, trained me in holy service, he as bishop offered me and consecrated me to the sacred altars: and therefore the name of Cornelius is to me illustrious, to be revered, wonderful. Love for the namesake, then, compels me to meet with desire the desires of the church of Forum Cornelii, and to consecrate Projectus, a venerable man, as bishop, the more lovingly.

Projectus I have said, but not abject, according to that word: Upon you I was cast from the womb; from my mother's womb you are my God (Ps 22:11). And truly this Projectus, from the womb of a human mother, remained continually in the womb of the divine mother, he who, knowing nothing of his own house, persevered in being a dweller in the house of God.

But how, brothers, from the very cradle he climbed the grades and offices of the Church's service, since it would take me long to tell, as the Lord says: He is of age, let him speak for himself (John 9:21), through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermo CLXVI.

De quadragesimali jejunio

Habet quidem simplicitas innocentiae suae gratiam, habet fidei suae fructum; scientiae praemium habere non potest, palmam habere non potest virtutum. Aliud est otio et securitati suae vivere, aliud est pro omnibus ferre vigilias et labores. Simplicitas civem bonum facit, non facit militem fortem: hinc est quod ille censum solvit, hic stipendia percipit et honores. Civis aut cedit aut succumbit adversis, adversa miles sustinet et propellit; ille pugnare non didicit, hic non timere; ille cavet semper, hic vincit. Haec diximus, ut quae sit distantia monstraremus inter eum qui Christianae fidei simpliciter accipit et sequitur sacramentum, et inter eum qui studet ipsius fidei et apprehendere scienter, et nosse mysterium.

Ecce Quadragesimae jejunium, quod devotione solemni die crastino suscipit universalis Ecclesia: multi putant abstinentiae tantum studio, vel nobis traditum, vel pro nobis Dominum peregisse, nec altioris intelligentiae continere mysterium, sed solummodo castigandis corporibus, resecandis vitiis, temperandis mentibus hoc provisum. Porro quadragenarius iste numerus tam sacratus esse a saeculis, tam mysticus reperitur, ut semper efficiendis rebus divinis, et maximis Dei negotiis explicandis adhibitus lege inviolabili perscribatur. Quod ut luceat ad purum copiosissimis percurramus exemplis.

Cum mundus intra generis humani primordia perdeflenda, nefando vitiorum squalore sordesceret, et totus criminum feteret horrore, ac pene ipso iniquitatis suae fumo fuscare coeli tantam contenderet claritatem, quadraginta diebus ac noctibus expiaturus terram, coelestis imber effunditur: ut, quia perire sibi mundus, quod factus fuerat, jam debebat, gauderet tali baptismate se renatum, sciretque quod est, non se naturae, sed auctoris sui gratiae, jam debere; ipsamque nostri baptismatis formam terra, nostri corporis origo, praelibaret; ut quae ante natos homines producebat ad mortem, hos ad vitam produceret jam renatos. Attendite, fratres, quantus sit quadragenarius numerus iste, qui et tunc coelum terris aperuit abluendis, et nunc fonte baptismatis orbem totum pandit gentibus innovandis. Merito nos quadraginta diebus per jejunium currimus, ut perveniamus ad fontem baptismatis et salutis.

Sermon CLXVI.

On the Lenten fast

Simplicity, indeed, has the grace of its innocence, has the fruit of its faith; the reward of knowledge it cannot have, the palm of the virtues it cannot have. It is one thing to live for one's own leisure and safety, another to bear vigils and labours for all. Simplicity makes a good citizen, it does not make a brave soldier: hence it is that the one pays tribute, the other receives pay and honours. The citizen either yields or succumbs to adversity; the soldier withstands adversity and drives it back; the one has not learnt to fight, the other has learnt not to fear; the one is always on his guard, the other conquers. We have said this to show what distance there is between him who simply receives and follows the sacrament of the Christian faith, and him who is eager both to grasp knowingly and to know the mystery of that faith.

See, the Lenten fast, which the universal Church undertakes tomorrow with solemn devotion: many think that it was either handed down to us, or carried out by the Lord for us, only out of zeal for abstinence, and that it holds no mystery of a higher understanding, but was provided only for chastising bodies, cutting back vices, tempering minds. But this number forty is found to have been so sacred from the ages, so mystical, that it is recorded by an inviolable law as always employed for accomplishing divine things and carrying out the greatest works of God. That this may shine out clearly, let us run through the most abundant examples.

When the world, in the most lamentable beginnings of the human race, grew foul with the unspeakable squalor of vices, and stank all over with the horror of crimes, and almost strove to darken the so great brightness of heaven with the very smoke of its iniquity, a heavenly rain is poured out for forty days and nights to purify the earth (Gen 7:12): so that, since the world was now bound by its own doing to perish as to what it had been made, it might rejoice to be reborn by such a baptism, and might know that what it is it owes now not to nature but to the grace of its author; and that the earth, the origin of our body, might foreshadow the very form of our baptism; so that she who before brought forth men born to death might now bring them forth reborn to life. Consider, brothers, how great this number forty is, which then opened heaven for the washing of the earth, and now with the font of baptism opens the whole world for the renewing of the nations. Rightly do we run for forty days through fasting, so that we may come to the font of baptism and of salvation.

Quadraginta annis populum Judaeorum panificus in eremo pavit imber: nec solito ministratu incrementa germinis produxit e terra, sed ipse terris potius fluxit frumenta; totumque servitutis humanae ademit laborem, qui blando rore esurientibus coelestem praebuit et evexit annonam. Quadraginta diebus terram repromissionis exploratio missa divinitus circuivit: ut hic sacratus numerus promissas Israeliticum populum evocaret ad terras, qui nos quadragenariis jejuniorum cursibus evocat, et perducit ad coelum. Namque et nostri corporis terram quadraginta diebus explorat nunc et circuit coelestis inspectio, ut expugnatis et expulsis vitiorum gentibus, regionem nostri cordis possideat turba virtutum.

Et quia nihil omittendum est, Moyses ipse dierum quadraginta jejunio ita humano defaecatus est et exinanitus a corpore, ut totus divinitatis mutaretur in gloriam; et adhuc in nostri corporis obscuro toto fulgeret lumine deitatis; neque intueri eum mortalium visus posset, qui substantia Dei diu pastus tota mortalis cibi oblitus fuerat adjumenta: unde didicit coram Deo et cum Deo commorantibus vitae subsidia non deesse. Et revera, fratres, nescit lassari, mori non potest, cui panis, cui vita Deus est. Merito hic talis legem sancire meruit, qui totum quidquid in homine lex urgere poterat, peramisit. Praestiterat hoc Moysi juge fortasse jejunium; sed nondum reddiderat talem, si defuisset quadragenarius numerus hic sacratus.

Jejunium Eliam levavit ad coelum, et purificato sic corpori ignei currus addixit obsequium; ut ostenderet gehenna, quae exurit reos, innocuis quam deservit: sed ut ad hoc perveniat et Elias, quadragenarii numeri ante viam mysticam praecurrit. Ezechiel eximius prophetarum quadraginta diebus jacens latere uno, scientibus legem loquor, captivitatem futuram dum praefigurat, absolvit: quia sacratus numerus iste suscipit iniquitates, ut deleat; captivitates ut absolvat ingreditur; vincula patitur, ut relaxet. Hinc est ergo quod Dominus, auctor a saeculis in hoc numero absconditi sacramenti, intra ipsum numerum dierum quadraginta jejunii, ut quod adumbraverat in famulis ipsa per se jam Veritas, facta et coepta perficeret, firmaret tenera, inchoata suppleret, et quae praeceptis instituerat, roboraret exemplo; non enim suffecerat hoc tantum tanti numeri sacramentum imperasse verbis, nisi commendasset et facto.

For forty years a bread-giving rain fed the people of the Jews in the desert (Exod 16:35): it did not bring forth the increase of the seed from the earth by the usual ministration, but rather itself poured grain down on the earth; and it took away the whole labour of human servitude, the rain that with gentle dew provided and brought down a heavenly ration for the hungry. For forty days the reconnaissance sent by God went round the land of promise (Num 13:25): so that this sacred number might call the Israelite people forth to the promised lands, the number that calls us forth by the forty-day courses of the fasts, and leads us through to heaven. For now too a heavenly inspection explores and goes round the land of our body for forty days, so that, the nations of the vices being overcome and driven out, the host of the virtues may possess the region of our heart.

And since nothing must be left out, Moses himself, by a fast of forty days (Exod 24:18), was so purged and emptied of the human body that he was wholly changed into the glory of divinity; and while still in the darkness of our body he shone with the whole light of the Godhead; and the sight of mortals could not look upon him, who, fed for a long time on the substance of God, had forgotten all the supports of mortal food: whence he learned that those who dwell before God and with God do not lack the means of life. And truly, brothers, he knows no weariness, he cannot die, whose bread, whose life is God. Rightly did such a man merit to sanction the Law, who had let go all that in man the Law could press upon. A perpetual fast might perhaps have achieved this for Moses; but it would not yet have made him such, had this sacred number forty been lacking.

Fasting raised Elijah to heaven (2 Kgs 2:11), and assigned to the body thus purified the service of a fiery chariot, to show how Gehenna, which burns up the guilty, serves the innocent: but that Elijah too might come to this, he first ran the mystical way of the number forty (1 Kgs 19:8). Ezekiel, eminent among the prophets, lying forty days on one side (Ezek 4:6) — I speak to those who know the Law — in prefiguring the captivity to come, releases it: because this sacred number takes up iniquities to blot them out; enters into captivities to release them; suffers chains to loose them. Hence it is, then, that the Lord, the author of the mystery hidden from the ages in this number, kept within that very number of forty days of fasting (Matt 4:2), so that the Truth himself, now by himself, might bring to perfection what he had foreshadowed in his household servants, things done and begun, might strengthen what was tender, complete what was unfinished, and confirm by example what he had established by precepts; for it had not been enough to have commanded with words this great mystery of so great a number, unless he had commended it by deed as well.

Et tamen, fratres, a tempore diluvii sacramenti hujus contendimus aperire mysterium, non ausi anteriora contingere, superiora rimari, loqui tacita, tam diu certe reposita proferre: praesertim cum mihi temerarium et vobis non necessarium videam causarum tales tantasque origines perscrutari. Verae devotionis est, fidelissimae servitutis est, quid fieri velit, non quare velit dominator, inquirere.

Si ergo quadraginta dierum simplex, purum, aequale, tantis testimoniis, sub tanti numero sacramenti traditum nobis a Domino jejunium perdocetur, unde ista varietas, unde novitas ista, unde hebdomadae nunc resolutae, nunc rigidae, nunc indulgentes nimium, nunc severae? Unde intemperati jejunii usus iste, qui aut afficiat sine venia, aut remittat ad crapulam? Hoc est, separatim calida, separatim frigida, separatim salis, separatim cibi remedia suis usibus deputare, et totum vitae negligere conditorem? Certe qui corporis cibos condiunt, sapienter discant animae pabulum temperare, ne aut plus salitum, aut penitus insulsum salutaris cibi generat lethale fastidium. Jejunium sit aequale: et, ut est nobis traditum, servetur ad corporis et animae disciplinam. Certe qui jejunare non potest, non praesumat inducere novitatem: sed fateatur esse fragilitatis propriae quod relaxat, et redimat eleemosynis quod non potest supplere jejuniis; quia illius gemitus Dominus non requirit, qui pro se gemitus pauperum sic redemit.

And yet, brothers, we have striven to open the mystery of this sacrament from the time of the flood, not daring to touch earlier things, to search out higher things, to speak of things kept silent, to bring forth things laid up, surely, for so long: especially since I see that it would be rash for me, and not necessary for you, to search out such great origins of causes. It belongs to true devotion, it belongs to most faithful service, to inquire what the master wishes to be done, not why he wishes it.

If, then, a simple, pure, even fast of forty days is shown by so many testimonies to have been handed down to us by the Lord under the mystery of so great a number, whence this variety, whence this novelty, whence weeks now relaxed, now rigid, now exceedingly indulgent, now severe? Whence this custom of an intemperate fast, which either afflicts without pardon or lets go into gluttony? That is, to assign to their own uses, separately hot things, separately cold, separately the remedies of salt, separately those of food, and wholly to neglect the seasoner (conditor) of life? Surely those who season the body's food should learn to temper wisely the soul's nourishment, lest, either too salty or wholly unsalted, it breed a deadly loathing of wholesome food. Let the fast be even: and, as it was handed down to us, let it be kept for the discipline of body and soul. Surely he who cannot fast should not presume to bring in novelty: but let him acknowledge that what he relaxes belongs to his own frailty, and redeem with alms what he cannot fill up with fasts; for the Lord does not require the groans of him who has thus redeemed for himself the groans of the poor.

Sermo CLXVII.

De D. Joanne Baptista praedicante, deque poenitentia agenda

Opportune nobis Joannes beatissimus jejunii tempore poenitentiae doctor advenit; doctor dicto factoque, magister verus, quod verbo asserit, demonstrat exemplo. Magisterium stat de scientia, sed magisterii auctoritas constat ex vita; docenda faciens, obedientem perficit auditorem. Docere factis, sola est norma doctrinae; doctrina in dictis scientia est, in factis virtus. Scientia ergo illa vera est, quae fuerit mixta virtuti; illa, illa divina est, non humana, evangelista probante, cum dicit: Quae coepit Jesus facere et docere. Praeceptor cum docenda facit, et auditu instruit, et informat exemplo.

In diebus, inquit, illis venit Joannes Baptista praedicans in deserto Judaeae, et dicens: Poenitentiam agite, appropinquavit enim regnum coelorum. Poenitentiam agite, quare non magis gaudete? gaudete magis, quia succedunt humanis divina, coelestia terrenis, temporalibus sempiterna, malis bona, secura anxiis, aerumnis beata, mansura perituris. Poenitentiam agite. Poeniteat plane, poeniteat qui divinis praetulit humana, qui servire voluit mundo, et dominationem mundi cum mundi Domino non habere. Poeniteat qui maluit perire cum diabolo, quam regnare cum Christo. Poeniteat qui virtutum libertatem fugiens, captivus voluit esse vitiorum. Poeniteat, et satis poeniteat, qui ne vitam teneret, manus tradidit morti.

Appropinquavit enim regnum caelorum. Regnum coelorum est praemium justorum, judicium peccatorum, impiis poena. Beatus ergo Joannes, qui poenitentia judicium voluit praeveniri; peccatores non judicium voluit habere, sed praemium; impios voluit regnum intrare, non poenam. Et tunc Joannes vicinum cecinit regnum coelorum, quando adhuc puer mundus aetatum conquirebat augmenta.

Sermon CLXVII.

On Saint John the Baptist preaching, and on doing penance

Fittingly, in the time of the fast, the most blessed John comes to us as teacher of penance; a teacher in word and deed, a true master, he shows by example what he asserts by word. Mastery rests on knowledge, but the authority of mastery consists in life; doing what is to be taught, he makes the hearer obedient. To teach by deeds is the only rule of teaching; teaching in words is knowledge, in deeds virtue. That knowledge, then, is true which is mingled with virtue; that, that is divine, not human, as the Evangelist proves when he says: What Jesus began to do and to teach (Acts 1:1). A teacher, when he does what is to be taught, both instructs through hearing and forms by example.

In those days, he says, John the Baptist came preaching in the desert of Judaea, and saying: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near (Matt 3:1–2). Do penance: why not rather "Rejoice"? Rejoice rather, because divine things succeed human ones, heavenly things earthly ones, everlasting things temporal ones, good things evil ones, secure things anxious ones, blessed things miseries, things that will remain things that will perish. Do penance. Let him repent indeed, let him repent who has preferred human things to divine, who has wished to serve the world, and not to have dominion over the world with the Lord of the world. Let him repent who chose to perish with the devil rather than to reign with Christ. Let him repent who, fleeing the freedom of the virtues, has wished to be the captive of the vices. Let him repent, and repent greatly, who, so as not to keep hold of life, gave up his hands to death.

For the kingdom of heaven has drawn near. The kingdom of heaven is the reward of the just, the judgement of sinners, punishment for the wicked. Blessed, then, is John, who wished judgement to be forestalled by penance; he wished sinners to have not judgement, but reward; he wished the wicked to enter the kingdom, not punishment. And John sang then of the kingdom of heaven as near, when the world, still a boy, was gaining the growth of its ages.

Modo coelorum regnum quam proximum jam scimus, quando mundus senectute fessus extrema, vacuatur viribus, membra deponit, amittit sensus, doloribus urgetur, curam respuit, vitae moritur, vivit morbis, defectum clamat, testatur finem. Nos ergo duriores Judaeis, qui fugientem sequimur mundum, qui futurorum temporum obliviscimur, praesentibus inhiamus, qui in ipso positi jam judicio non timemus, qui venienti jam Domino non occurrimus, qui volumus manere mortem, resurrectionem nolumus mortuorum, qui servire volumus, nolumus regnare, ut tantum regnum nostro Domino differamus. Ubi est illud: Cum orabitis, dicite: Veniat regnum tuum? Majori ergo poenitentia opus est nobis, et pro modo vulneris modus adhibendus est medicinae.

Poeniteamus, fratres, poeniteamus cito, quia nobis spatium temporis jam negatur, jam nobis ipsa hora concluditur, judicii praesentia jam nobis satisfactionis locum excludit. Currat poenitentia, sententia ne praecurrat: quia Dominus quod non venit adhuc, quod adhuc exspectat, quod moras facit, nos sibi redire desiderat, non perire, quos pietate tali semper est allocutus: Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut revertatur impius a via sua, et vivat. Poenitentes ergo revertamur, fratres, et ne de arcto temporis pertimescamus, quia auctor temporis nescit arctari: probat hoc evangelicus latro, qui in cruce et in hora mortis rapuit veniam, invasit vitam, effregit paradisum, penetravit ad regnum. Et nos, fratres, qui de voluntate meritum non quaesivimus, acquiramus vel de necessitate virtutem, ne judicemur judices nostri simus: poenitentiam debemus nobis, ut possimus nobis auferre sententiam.

Prima est felicitas perpetua innocentiae securitate gaudere, inviolatam servare mentis et corporis sanctitatem, nulla immunda mundi inquinamenta sentire, reatus conscientiam non habere, vulnera nescire peccati, gratiam semper possidere virtutum, semper sub spe vivere coelestium praemiorum. Sed si quo forte nostra mens jaculo fuerit confixa peccati, si caro tumescat ex crimine, si vitiorum sanie fragilitas humana corrumpatur; tunc aegris illa, quae non sanis, poenitentiae medicina succurrat, ferrum compunctionis accedat, apponatur adustio tunc doloris, adhibeantur suspiriorum tunc fomenta, tumentis conscientiae fervor evaporet; tunc reatus ulcera lacrymis abluantur, immunditiam corporis cilicia tunc detergant. Ferat, ferat amaram poenitentiae curam, qui servare debitam noluit sanitatem.

Now we know how very near the kingdom of heaven is, when the world, weary with extreme old age, is emptied of its strength, lays down its limbs, loses its senses, is pressed by pains, refuses care, dies to life, lives to diseases, cries out its failing, testifies to its end. So we are harder than the Jews, we who follow a fleeing world, who forget the times to come, gape after the present, who, placed already in the very judgement, do not fear, who do not go out to meet the Lord already coming, who wish death to remain, do not wish the resurrection of the dead, who wish to serve, do not wish to reign, so that we put off so great a kingdom for our Lord. Where is that word: When you pray, say: Your kingdom come (Luke 11:2)? We have need, then, of a greater penance, and the measure of the medicine must be applied according to the measure of the wound.

Let us repent, brothers, let us repent quickly, because the space of time is now denied us, now the very hour is closing on us, now the presence of the judgement shuts us out from the room for satisfaction. Let penance run, lest the sentence run ahead: for in that the Lord has not yet come, in that he still waits, in that he delays, he desires us to return to him, not to perish, us whom he has always addressed with such loving-kindness: I do not will the death of the sinner, but that the wicked turn from his way and live (Ezek 33:11). Let us then return as penitents, brothers, and not be terrified by the shortness of time, because the author of time knows no constraint: the thief of the Gospel proves this, who on the cross and in the hour of death seized pardon, invaded life, broke into paradise, made his way into the kingdom (Luke 23:43). And we, brothers, who did not seek merit from our will, let us acquire at least virtue from necessity; lest we be judged, let us be our own judges: we owe penance to ourselves, so that we may take the sentence away from ourselves.

The first happiness is to rejoice in the perpetual security of innocence, to keep unviolated the holiness of mind and body, to feel none of the unclean defilements of the world, not to have a conscience of guilt, to know nothing of the wounds of sin, to possess always the grace of the virtues, to live always in the hope of heavenly rewards. But if by chance our mind has been pierced by some dart of sin, if the flesh swells from crime, if human frailty is corrupted by the pus of the vices, then let that medicine of penance, which is not for the healthy, come to the help of the sick; let the knife of compunction come, then let the cautery of pain be applied, then let the poultices of sighs be laid on, let the heat of the swelling conscience evaporate; then let the ulcers of guilt be washed with tears, then let hair shirts wipe away the uncleanness of the body. Let him bear, let him bear the bitter cure of penance, who would not keep the health he owed.

Cui vita sua chara est, dura nulla est cura: medicus non sit ingratus, qui per dolorem revocat ad salutem. Qui innocentiae creditum servat, poenitentiae non solvit usuram. Dominus hoc aperit dicendo: Non est opus sanis medicus, sed male habentibus. Et qui male haberent patefecit, iterum dicens: Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores.

Revocat per poenitentiam Joannes, Christus per gratiam vocat: hinc est quod Joannes vestitu, victu, loco, totus poenitentia formatus incedit. Venit, inquit, Joannes Baptista praedicans in deserto Judaeae et dicens: Poenitentiam agite. Per deserta Judaeae poenitentiam clamat Joannes, quae legis cultum, prophetarum laborem, fecunditatem patrum, frugem Dei sua sterilitate perdebat: unde ad poenitentiam merito vocantur disciplinarum deserta, non hominum, non locorum: vocat clamor, ubi non assistit auditor.

Ipse autem Joannes habebat vestimentum de pilis camelorum. Potuit de caprarum, sed cilicio opus non erat: sed accepit tortuosissimi pilos animantis nihil habentis recti, nihil gratiae, nihil decoris, quem natura dedit labori duro, addixit magno ponderi, extremae tradidit servituti. Tali poenitentiae magister indui debuit vestimento; ut qui a recti detorserant disciplina, et deformes se totos formis reddiderant peccatorum, magnis poenitentiae sarcinis subderentur, adjicerentur duris satisfactionis angoribus; suspiria compunctionis laboriosa portarent; ut directi et attenuati in modum acus per angustum poenitentiae foramen ampla remissionis intrarent, et impleretur Dominicum dictum: Camelum per foramen acus posse transire.

Esca autem ejus erant locustae, et mel silvestre. Locusta castigandis peccatoribus attributa merito poenitentiae figuratur in pastum, ut de peccati loco exsiliens, in poenitentiae locum ad coelum possit pennis veniae pervolare. Hoc propheta senserat, qui dicebat: Sicut umbra cum declinat sublatus sum, et excussus sum sicut locustae; genua mea infirmata sunt prae jejunio, et caro mea immutata est propter misericordiam. Audis quemadmodum de peccato in poenitentiam excussus est ut locusta, et curvavit genua ut poenitentiae pondera bajularet: et adjicitur mellis cibus, ut amara poenitentiae dulcis misericordia temperaret.

To one whose life is dear to him no cure is hard: let not the physician be unwelcome who calls him back to health through pain. He who keeps the credit of innocence does not pay the interest of penance. The Lord makes this plain by saying: It is not the healthy who need a physician, but those who are ill (Matt 9:12). And he made plain who were ill, saying again: I did not come to call the just, but sinners (Matt 9:13).

John calls back through penance, Christ calls through grace: hence it is that John goes about wholly formed by penance, in dress, in food, in place. John the Baptist came, he says, preaching in the desert of Judaea and saying: Do penance. Through the deserts of Judaea, which by its barrenness was losing the worship of the Law, the labour of the prophets, the fruitfulness of the fathers, the harvest of God, John cries penance: hence it is rightly the deserts of disciplines, not of men, not of places, that are called to penance: the cry calls where no hearer stands by.

Now John himself had a garment of camels' hair (Matt 3:4). He could have had it of goats' hair, but there was no need of a hair shirt: instead he took the hair of a most crooked animal, which has nothing straight, nothing graceful, nothing comely, which nature has given to hard labour, assigned to great burdens, handed over to the utmost servitude. The master of penance had to be clothed in such a garment, so that those who had twisted away from the discipline of what is right, and had made themselves wholly deformed with the forms of sins, might be put under the great burdens of penance, be bound to the hard anguish of satisfaction, carry the laborious sighs of compunction; so that, made straight and thinned to the fashion of a needle, they might enter through the narrow eye of penance into the broad spaces of remission, and the Lord's saying might be fulfilled: A camel can pass through the eye of a needle (Matt 19:24).

And his food was locusts and wild honey. The locust, assigned to chastise sinners (Exod 10), is rightly figured as the food of penance, so that, leaping out of the place of sin into the place of penance, it may fly through to heaven on the wings of pardon. The Prophet had perceived this, who said: Like a shadow when it declines I am taken away, and I am shaken off like locusts; my knees are weakened through fasting, and my flesh is changed on account of mercy (Ps 109:23–24). You hear how he was shaken off like a locust from sin into penance, and bent his knees so as to carry the weights of penance: and the food of honey is added, so that sweet mercy might temper the bitterness of penance.

Sermo CLXVIII.

De parabola centum ovium

Sicut profunda maris ingredi, et liquentis viae calles invios transmeare artifex viator invenit; ita de Dei dictis aliquid audire, et ad divini sensus penetrare secretum dedit et docuit lex divina. Hinc est quod ratem nostrae mentis carnis a littore solventes, in pelagus evangelici sermonis intramus, credentes quod flante Spiritu sancto coelestis intelligentiae perveniamus ad portum. Dominus noster hodie spem peccatorum promovit ad veniam, et superborum murmur piissimo compressit exemplo.

Erant, inquit, appropinquantes Domino publicani et peccatores, ut audirent illum: et murmurabant Pharisaei et Scribae dicentes, quia hic peccatores recipit et manducat cum illis. Non minus invidi quam superbi malitiam de Dominica bonitate capiebant: de pietate Dei impii reddebantur, fiebant de Christi miseratione crudeles, sumebant de coelesti curatione languorem, et poenitentium veniam vertebant judicis in reatum. Peccatores recipit, et manducat cum illis. Sic videt invidus, sic superbus sentit: avarus sic sapit, intelligit sic malignus. Peccatores recipit. Non dicunt suscipit. Quid amiserat, qui recipit? Donat culpas, iram vertit in gaudium, dolorem mutat in gratiam, quicumque invenit quod amisit. Peccatores recipit. Recipit peccatores Deus, sed Deus peccatores esse non sinit, quos recipit; peccator Deum non violat appropinquans, Deus peccatorem sanctificat cum propinquat. Pharisaee, Christus peccata non recipit, cum recipit peccatorem, quia Deus non criminis, sed hominis est receptor. Unde Pharisaeus non quales venerant, sed quales redibant videre debuit peccatores. Certe Paulum, quem persecutorem miserant, praedicatorem viderunt mox rediisse.

Sed jam Deus gaudium suum de reditu peccatoris comparatione qua, qua similitudine insinuet, audiamus. Et ait ad illos parabolam: Quis ex vobis homo qui habet centum oves, et si perdiderit ex eis unam, nonne dimittit nonaginta novem in deserto, et vadit ad illam quae perierat, donec inveniat eam? Et cum invenerit eam, imponit super humeros suos gaudens; et veniens domum convocat amicos et vicinos, dicens illis: Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quae perierat. Ita, dico vobis, gaudium erit in coelis super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis, qui non indigent poenitentia.

Sermon CLXVIII.

On the parable of the hundred sheep

As a skilled traveller has found how to enter the depths of the sea and to cross the pathless tracks of a liquid road, so the divine Law has granted and taught us to hear something of God's words and to penetrate to the secret of the divine sense. Hence it is that, loosing the raft of our mind from the shore of the flesh, we enter the open sea of the Gospel word, trusting that, with the Holy Spirit blowing, we shall reach the harbour of heavenly understanding. Today our Lord advanced the hope of sinners to pardon, and checked the murmuring of the proud with a most loving example.

There were, he says, publicans and sinners drawing near to the Lord to hear him: and the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying: This man receives sinners back, and eats with them (Luke 15:1–2). No less envious than proud, they took malice from the Lord's goodness: from God's loving-kindness they were made wicked, from Christ's tender mercy they became cruel, from the heavenly cure they took sickness, and turned the pardon of penitents into the guilt of the judge. He receives sinners back, and eats with them. So the envious man sees, so the proud man feels: so the greedy man understands, so the malicious man comprehends. He receives sinners back. They do not say "takes up". What had he lost, who receives back? Whoever finds what he had lost forgives faults, turns anger into joy, changes pain into favour. He receives sinners back. God receives sinners back, but God does not allow those whom he receives back to be sinners; the sinner in drawing near does not violate God, God sanctifies the sinner when he draws near. Pharisee, Christ does not receive back sins when he receives back the sinner, because God is the receiver not of the crime, but of the man. Hence the Pharisee ought to have looked at sinners not as they were when they came, but as they were when they went back. Certainly they saw Paul, whom they had sent as a persecutor, soon come back a preacher.

But now let us hear by what comparison, by what likeness God conveys his joy at the return of the sinner. And he told them a parable: Which man of you who has a hundred sheep, and if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after the one that was lost, until he finds it? (Luke 15:3–4) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing; and coming home he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost (Luke 15:5–6). So, I tell you, there will be joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance, more than over ninety-nine just who have no need of penance (Luke 15:7).

Semper quidem cum perdita reperimus, novum capimus cumulum gaudiorum, et est jucundius nobis invenisse perdita quam non perdidisse servata. Sed haec parabola plus divinae pietatis quam consuetudinis humanae loquitur, et exprimit veritatem. Magna relinquere, amare minora, Dei potestatis est, non est cupiditatis humanae: quia Deus et quae non sunt facit esse; et perdita sic sequitur, ut teneat quae reliquit; et amissa sic invenit, ut quae servata sunt non amittat.

Ergo non terrenus pastor iste est, sed coelestis, et parabola haec tota non figurata est laboribus humanis, sed divinis est obumbrata mysteriis; sicut ex ipso numero mox lucescit cum dicit: Quis ex vobis homo qui habet centum oves, et si perdiderit ex eis unam? Quare non quinquaginta, quare non ducentas, sed centum? quare non quatuor, quare non quinque, sed unam? Ut ostenderet non ex damno fuisse, sed ex numero plus dolorem. Namque amissio unius totum dissipaverat centenarium numerum; et totum de dextera redegerat ad sinistram, ut dispendio unius et sinistra clauderet omnes, et dextera nil haberet. Nonagesimus et nonus numerus in sinistra latet clausus, constrictus haeret, tenetur oppressus: qui tamen ubi unus perceperit et senserit augmentum, mox dexterae transit ad palmam, mox centenarii numeri pervenit ad coronam; et si non habuisse centenarium numerum doloris est, cujus doloris est perdidisse? Videtis quia per unius ovis amissionem pastor iste totum gregem cecidisse de dextera, et totum in sinistram doluerat recidisse; et ideo relictis nonaginta novem, unam sequitur, unam quaerit, ut inveniret in una omnes, redintegraret omnes in una.

Sed jam coelestis parabolae pandamus secretum. Homo habens oves centum Christus est. Pastor bonus, pastor pius, qui in una ove, hoc est in Adam, posuerat totum gregem generis humani, hanc inter amoena paradisi, hanc in regione vitalis pascuae collocarat: sed illa vocem pastoris oblita est, dum lupinis ululatibus credit, et caulas perdidit salutares, et tota lethalibus sauciata vulneribus. Hanc ergo Christus veniens quaerere in mundum, in utero virgineae regionis invenit. Venit suae nativitatis in carne, et in crucem levans humeris suae imposuit Passionis, et gaudens toto resurrectionis gaudio per ascensum ad coelestem tulit et pertulit mansionem.

Et vocavit amicos et vicinos. Hoc est angelos. Dicens illis: Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quae perierat. Congratulantur et congaudent Christo angeli super ovis Dominicae reditu, nec indignantur in toto sibi praesidere solio majestatis, quia de coelestibus invidia cum diabolo fuerat jam fugata: nec poterat per Agnum qui peccatum mundi tulerat, in superna amplius invidiae penetrare peccatum.

Always, indeed, when we recover lost things, we gain a new heap of joys, and it is more pleasant to us to have found what was lost than not to have lost what was kept. But this parable speaks, and expresses the truth, of divine loving-kindness more than of human custom. To leave great things, to love lesser ones, belongs to God's power, it does not belong to human craving: because God makes even the things that are not to be; and he so follows what is lost that he keeps what he left; and so finds what was lost that he does not lose what was kept.

So this shepherd is not earthly but heavenly, and this whole parable is not shaped from human labours, but overshadowed by divine mysteries; as at once shines out from the very number when he says: Which man of you who has a hundred sheep, and if he has lost one of them? Why not fifty, why not two hundred, but a hundred? Why not four, why not five, but one? To show that the greater pain had come not from the loss, but from the number. For the loss of one had broken up the whole number of a hundred; and had brought the whole down from the right hand to the left, so that by the loss of one the left hand too should close upon them all, and the right hand have nothing. The number ninety-nine lies shut up in the left hand, is held fast, constrained, kept down: yet as soon as it receives and feels the addition of one, it passes at once to the palm of the right hand, at once reaches the crown of the number a hundred; and if not to have had the number a hundred is a matter of pain, of what pain is it to have lost it? You see that through the loss of one sheep this shepherd had grieved that the whole flock had fallen from the right hand, and that the whole had sunk back into the left; and therefore, leaving the ninety-nine, he follows the one, he seeks the one, so as to find all in the one, to make all whole again in the one.

But now let us unfold the secret of the heavenly parable. The man who has a hundred sheep is Christ. The good shepherd, the loving shepherd, who in one sheep, that is, in Adam, had placed the whole flock of the human race, had set it among the delights of paradise, set it in the region of life-giving pasture: but it forgot the shepherd's voice in believing the howls of wolves, and lost the folds of salvation, and was wholly wounded with deadly wounds. So Christ, coming into the world to seek it, found it in the womb of a virgin region. He came in the flesh of his nativity, and lifting it on to the cross he laid it on the shoulders of his Passion, and rejoicing with the whole joy of the resurrection, by his ascension he bore it and brought it through to the heavenly dwelling.

And he called his friends and neighbours. That is, the angels. Saying to them: Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. The angels rejoice with Christ and are glad together over the return of the Lord's sheep, nor are they indignant that it presides over them on the whole throne of majesty, because envy had already been put to flight from heaven with the devil: nor could the sin of envy penetrate any longer to the heights, through the Lamb who had taken away the sin of the world.

Fratres, ille nos quaesivit in terra, nos illum quaeramus in coelis; ille nos portavit suae divinitatis ad gloriam, nos illum sanctitate tota nostro portemus in corpore: Glorificate, inquit Apostolus, et portate Deum in corpore vestro. Ille Deum in corpore suo portat, qui nullum portat in suae carnis operatione peccatum.

Brothers, he sought us on earth, let us seek him in heaven; he carried us to the glory of his divinity, let us carry him in our body with all holiness: Glorify, says the Apostle, and carry God in your body (1 Cor 6:20). He carries God in his body who carries no sin in the working of his flesh.

Sermo CLXIX.

De parabola drachmae perditae

Per omnes evangelicas lectiones latere mysticos sensus et coelestis intelligentiae manere secreta, norunt soli quicumque divini Spiritus gratiam percepere. Ecce posteaquam pastor Supernus perditam centenarii gregis ovem perquisivit, invenit et angelorum laetitiam totam coeleste jam retulit ad ovile, mulier evangelica producitur in figuram: quae lumine accenso de decem drachmis unam drachmam perditam sic requirit, ut inventa hac de lucro suo, de suo gaudio, causam pariat coelestium gaudiorum. Sic enim dicit: Aut quae mulier habens drachmas decem, si perdiderit drachmam unam, non accendit lucernam et everrit domum, et quaerit diligenter, donec inveniat? Et cum invenerit, convocat amicas et vicinas, dicens: Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni drachmam quam perdideram. Ita dico vobis, gaudium erit coram angelis Dei super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente.

Putasne mulier ista communis est, aut habuisse eam decem drachmas humano putatur ex sensu, aut unam casu creditur perdidisse mundano, aut simpliciter contingit quod eam nocturno requirit in tempore, aut lucernam de nostri usus more succendit, aut consuetum quod eam perdidit et invenit intra domum, aut familiare quod amicas ad laetitiam convocat et vicinas, quas perdens convocasse non legitur ad moerorem? Novum damni genus, et quod drachmam non ablatam patefaciat, sed dilapsam: et quod eam domesticis absconditam tenebris et non defossam dolis loquatur extraneis. Videtis quam singulare sit totum, quam morem transeat et supergrediatur humanum, quam divinum spiret et redoleat sensum, quam attollat ad coelum mentis intellectum, quam collocet in supernis, quam cogat superni cordis accendere lucernam, et instar evangelicae mulieris, per Dominicae lectionis obscura, drachmam quaerere scientiae salutaris.

Antequam Christus ad ovem veniret errantem, et miserandis discursibus attritam misericordibus humeris sublevaret ad coelum, et onustus pecore pio inaccessas lupis perveniret ad caulas; mulier habens decem drachmas tenebras diutinas sustinebat, et non solum drachmam perditam deflebat unam, sed ipsas novem drachmas sibi residuas non videbat. Nox ei erat jugis, erat ei profunda et perseverans caligo; cui lucerna sine divino igne ad noctis solatium non lucebat.

Sermon CLXIX.

On the parable of the lost drachma

That mystical senses lie hidden through all the Gospel readings, and that the secrets of heavenly understanding remain in them, only those know who have received the grace of the divine Spirit. See, after the Shepherd on high had sought out the lost sheep of the flock of a hundred, found it, and now brought back to the heavenly fold the whole joy of the angels, the woman of the Gospel is brought forward as a figure: who, lighting a lamp, so seeks one lost drachma out of ten drachmas that, when it is found, from her gain, from her joy, she brings forth the cause of heavenly joys. For he says thus: Or what woman having ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she finds it? (Luke 15:8) And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma that I had lost (Luke 15:9). So, I tell you, there will be joy before the angels of God over one sinner doing penance (Luke 15:10).

Do you think this woman is an ordinary one, or is she supposed in a human sense to have had ten drachmas, or believed to have lost one by a worldly chance, or does it simply happen that she searches for it at night-time, or that she lights a lamp after the manner of our use, or is it customary that she lost it and found it within the house, or familiar that she calls together her friends and neighbours to rejoice, when she is not read to have called them together to mourn when she lost it? A new kind of loss, and one to show the drachma not stolen, but slipped away; and to speak of it as hidden in the darkness of the house, and not buried by the wiles of strangers. You see how singular the whole is, how it passes and goes beyond human custom, how it breathes and is fragrant with a divine sense, how it lifts the understanding of the mind to heaven, how it places it among things above, how it compels it to light the lamp of a heart on high, and, like the woman of the Gospel, to seek through the dark places of the Lord's reading the drachma of saving knowledge.

Before Christ came to the wandering sheep, and lifted it, worn out by pitiable wanderings, to heaven on merciful shoulders, and, laden with the tender beast, reached the folds that wolves cannot approach, the woman who had ten drachmas endured a long darkness, and not only wept for the one lost drachma, but did not see the very nine drachmas that remained to her. Night was continual for her, deep and lasting gloom was hers; for her a lamp without divine fire did not shine to comfort the night.

Sed posteaquam supernus ignis, ignis Spiritus sancti flammeo se super apostolos imbre diffudit, et non minus frigida quam tetra mortalium corda toto ignis sui calore succendit, mulier, id est Ecclesia, accendit lucernam suam, id est, internum illum sui cordis obtutum, hoc est, illuminatos, ut inquit Apostolus, oculos cordis vestri. Accendit ergo lucernam suam, et illam Judaicam domum ignorantiae caecam tenebris evertit apostolicum post laborem, donec jam de decem drachmis, hoc est, Decalogo legis, drachmam perditam reperiret in Christo. Christus est plenum deitatis numisma, Christus est drachma nostrae redemptionis et pretii, Christus est qui et erat in legis Decalogo et latebat, Christus est quem habebat et Synagoga, et tenebris impugnantibus non videbat.

Decem drachmas, decem legis diximus verba, ex quibus Verbum perdiderat et Synagoga unum. Quod unum? Illud quod in Ecclesia primus quia lucerna ardens erat, Joannes invenit, dicente Domino: Ille erat lucerna ardens, dicente evangelista: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum.

Hoc fuisse in Decalogo jam patescat. Audi, inquit, Israel, Dominus Deus tuus Deus unus est. Hoc Synagoga dum non videt in Filio, amittit in Patre; dum non credit in Christo, Christum lethaliter crucifigit; cui merito per Decalogum consequenter dicitur: Non occides. Siquidem dum Judaeus ipsam mandatorum seriem capite detruncat, ante Christi quam legis exstitit homicida; unde et totum corpus Decalogi retorsit in Christum. Non occides, non moechaberis: damnata est Synagoga, quae juncta diis gentium repulit Christum, qui seposita potestate dominantis, conjugis ad eam descendit affectus. Non furtum facies. Furata est Dominicam resurrectionem, quae pretium militibus dedit, ut resurrectionis infoderet et occuleret veritatem. Non falsum testimonium. Haec est quae conquisivit falsos testes, ut impleret illud: Exsurgentes testes iniqui, quae ignorabam, interrogabant me, Et revera aliter tradere non poterat veritatis auctorem, quia semper sola impugnat falsitas veritatem. Sic ruit, sic per gradus cadit, qui de scalis labitur et corruit praeceptorum. Nam si Dominum Deum credidisset unum, ad hoc ruinarum barathrum non venisset.

But after the fire on high, the fire of the Holy Spirit, poured itself out over the apostles in a flaming shower, and kindled with all the heat of its fire the hearts of mortals, no less cold than dark, the woman, that is, the Church, lit her lamp, that is, that inner gaze of her heart, that is, as the Apostle says, the eyes of your heart enlightened (Eph 1:18). So she lit her lamp, and after the labour of the apostles turned upside down that Jewish house, blind with the darkness of ignorance, until out of the ten drachmas, that is, the Decalogue of the Law, she should find the lost drachma in Christ. Christ is the full coin of the Godhead, Christ is the drachma of our redemption and our price, Christ is he who both was in the Decalogue of the Law and lay hidden there, Christ is he whom even the Synagogue had, and did not see, with the darkness fighting against her.

The ten drachmas, we have said, are the ten words of the Law, of which the Synagogue too had lost one, the Word. Which one? That one which John found first in the Church, because he was a burning lamp, as the Lord says: He was a burning lamp (John 5:35), and as the Evangelist says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

That this was in the Decalogue, let it now be made plain. Hear, he says, Israel: the Lord your God is one God (Deut 6:4). In not seeing this in the Son, the Synagogue loses it in the Father; in not believing in Christ, it crucifies Christ to the death; to whom, rightly, it is said next through the Decalogue: You shall not kill (Exod 20:13). For in cutting off at the head the very series of the commandments, the Jew became a murderer of Christ before he was one of the Law; hence he also turned the whole body of the Decalogue back against Christ. You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery (Exod 20:14): the Synagogue is condemned, which, joined to the gods of the Gentiles, repelled Christ, who, laying aside the power of a ruler, came down to her with a spouse's affection. You shall not steal (Exod 20:15). She stole the Lord's resurrection, she who gave money to the soldiers to bury and hide the truth of the resurrection (Matt 28:12–13). No false witness. She it is who sought out false witnesses (Matt 26:59–60), to fulfil that word: Unjust witnesses rising up asked me of things I did not know (Ps 35:11). And truly she could not hand over the author of truth otherwise, because falsehood alone always fights against truth. Thus he falls, thus he tumbles step by step, who slips and crashes down from the ladder of the commandments. For had he believed the Lord God to be one, he would not have come to this pit of ruins.

Sed nos lucernam matris Ecclesiae jam sequamur, et ambulantes in lumine Dominici vultus, Christi perveniamus ad drachmam; atque amicas et vicinas, id est, Ecclesias gentium convocemus, ne matrem nostram, drachmam suam, nesciant invenisse; et dicamus cum propheta: Paravi lucernam Christo meo. Et quid lucerna profuerit audiamus: Ecce audivimus eam in Ephrata, invenimus eam in campis silvae. Introibimus in tabernaculum ejus, adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Ecce quod per distensos campos et nemora diffusa quaerebamus, hoc in Domino, hoc matris inveniamus ad lucernam. Super hoc laetetur et coelum, quia in uno peccatore poenitentiam agente totius Christiani populi claruit plenitudo, et tota deitatis forma Christi nostra refulsit in drachma.

But let us now follow the lamp of our mother the Church, and, walking in the light of the Lord's countenance, come to Christ's drachma; and let us call together the friends and neighbours, that is, the churches of the Gentiles, lest they should not know that our mother has found her drachma; and let us say with the Prophet: I have prepared a lamp for my Christ (Ps 132:17). And let us hear what the lamp has profited: Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of the wood (Ps 132:6). We will go into his tabernacle, we will worship in the place where his feet stood (Ps 132:7). See, what we were seeking through wide fields and spreading woods, this let us find in the Lord, this by our mother's lamp. Over this let heaven too rejoice, because in one sinner doing penance the fullness of the whole Christian people has shone out, and the whole form of the Godhead of Christ has shone forth in our drachma.

Sermo CLXX.

De Christo pro nobis varias formas suscipiente, apostolos vocante, morbos curatum mittente, et paupertatem praecipiente

Beatus Marcus hodie cum Galilaeae Dominum retulit circumisse castella, ineffabilem circa nos prodidit ejus pietatem. Et circuibat, inquit, Jesus castella in circuitu docens. Audistis quemadmodum circuit, quemadmodum te et propter te ubique pietas indefessa perquirit. Et ille qui capit ipse omnia, nec ab ulla capitur ipse creatura, intrat; et tuo angustatur in corpore, tuis in habitaculis se coarctat. Et ille cujus majestatem vox fidelium quotidiana testatur clamans: Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua, tuis propter te circuit, apparet, videtur, et tenetur in locis. Quo se movet immobilis plenitudo; quo accedit, vel unde recedit, quo sunt plena omnia? Et tamen vadit, redit, descendit, ascendit, et totum te, et propter te homo Deus patitur, quia te nimis diligit, nimis amat.

Habitus suscipit, formas variat, commutat officia: et nunc igneus tibi resplendet in rubo, ut perfidia te frigidum fidei calore succendat; nunc elucescit coelesti flammeus in columna, ut remotis ignorantiae tuae tenebris, per solitudines mundi hujus, viam possis scientiae percurrere salutaris; nunc idem tibi nubis vertitur in columnam, ut ardentes tuorum temperet aestus animorum; nunc te ut aquila protegit pennis sapientiae, et coelestem provocet ad volatum, dicente Moyse: Sicut aquila protegit nidum suum, et super pullos suos confidit, extendens alas suas accepit eos, et suscepit eos super scapulas suas, Dominus solus lucebat eos, et non erat cum eis Deus alienus. Nunc sicut gallina educit, ducit, vocat, recipit, protegit, portat, fovet, ambit, amplectitur, et sui volatus oblita, suae temporaliter immemor libertatis, tuis in penetralibus, tuo versatur in pulvere, ut te vernaculis, familiaribus, domesticis alat, erudiat,

Sermon CLXX.

On Christ taking on various forms for us, calling the apostles, sending them to cure diseases, and enjoining poverty

Blessed Mark, when he related today that the Lord went round the villages of Galilee, disclosed his ineffable loving-kindness towards us. And Jesus went round, he says, the villages round about, teaching (Mark 6:6). You have heard how he goes round, how a tireless loving-kindness seeks you everywhere, and for your sake. And he who himself contains all things, and is himself contained by no creature, enters; and is straitened in your body, confines himself in your dwellings. And he whose majesty the daily voice of the faithful attests, crying: Heaven and earth are full of your glory (Isa 6:3), goes round in your places for your sake, appears, is seen, and is held. Where does the immovable fullness move itself to; where does he draw near, or whence does he withdraw, he by whom all things are full? And yet he goes, returns, descends, ascends, and the whole of you, and for your sake, man, God suffers, because he cherishes you beyond measure, loves you beyond measure.

He takes on guises, varies his forms, changes his offices: and now, fiery, he shines out to you in the bush (Exod 3:2), so that he may kindle you, cold with unbelief, with the warmth of faith; now he gleams, flaming, in the heavenly pillar (Exod 13:21), so that, the darkness of your ignorance removed, you may run through the wastes of this world the way of saving knowledge; now the same turns for you into a pillar of cloud, to temper the burning heats of your minds; now like an eagle he shelters you with the wings of wisdom, and calls you to a heavenly flight, as Moses says: As an eagle shelters its nest, and trusts over its young, spreading its wings it received them, and took them up upon its shoulders: the Lord alone gave them light, and there was no strange god with them (Deut 32:11–12). Now, like a hen, he leads out, leads, calls, receives, protects, carries, warms, encircles, embraces (Matt 23:37), and, forgetful of his flight, for a time unmindful of his freedom, he busies himself in your inner rooms, in your dust, to feed, to train, to form you with home-bred, familiar, household nourishment; now, as

instituat nutrimentis; nunc ut pastor bonus altissimis errantem solus requirit in montibus, solus invenit, solus suis humeris imponit, et ne amplius in terrenis pascuis luporum morsibus pervadaris, coelestes evehit et perducit ad caulas. Sic, sicut diximus, habitus suscipit, formas variat, et ut te mutet in melius, ipse sua toties mutat et commutat officia. Et quia diu circuierat ut diriperet et devoraret inimicus, nunc necessario circuit ut te vindicet, ut eripiat Christus, dicente Scriptura: Adversarius vester sicut leo rugiens circuit quaerens quem devoret.

Et convocavit, inquit, duodecim. Post diuturna tempora tetrae noctis, aurorae suae desiderato splendore aeternus dies Christus noster reluxit in lucem, qui duodecim suas horas in apostolis suis duodecim signanter aptaret. Hunc diem beatus Psalmista prophetali vidit spiritu, cum canebat: Haec est dies quam fecit Dominus, exsultemus et laetemur in ea. Unde et Apostolus lucis ac diei filios appellat credentes: Vos filii lucis estis et diei. Et convocavit duodecim. Duodenarius numerus iste per quaternarium tripartitam nobis monstrat et format quadrigam: per quam Trinitas tota toto orbe apostolicis vehitur et fertur excursibus, ut diabolum mitis bellator expugnet, ut mundi superbiam mansuetus victor inclinet, ut discordias gentium pacificus auferat praeliator, ut destructo inferno, hoc est, peccati fovea, diuturno carcere animarum humani generis captivitatem liberam triumphi sui perducat ad gloriam. Hunc Trinitatis currum beatus Psalmista vidit prophetali spiritu, cum dicebat: Ascendisti in altum, captivam duxisti captivitatem, accepisti dona in hominibus. Hunc currum sibi, suo Patri et Spiritui sancto, Dominus cum diceret, praeparabat: Tollite jugum meum super vos, quia jugum meum suave est, et onus meum leve est. Nescit lassescere bajulus misericordiae, pietatis evector.

Duodecim patriarchas, duodecim distinctos in tribubus, duodecim fontes eremi, duodecim Jordanis lapides elevatos ex alveo, in figuram formamque apostolici numeri fuisse descriptos scrutatori legis relinquimus altius ad probandum, quia nobis cur binos ad praedicandum discipulos miserit, propositae lectionis series conatur aperire. Et coepit eos mittere binos et binos. Binos mittebat ne destituta singularitas aut negaret, ut Petrus; aut fugeret, ut Joannes. Cito cadit fragilitas humana, quae de se superbe confisa socios despicit, non vult habere collegam, dicente Scriptura: Et vae uni cum ceciderit, et non est secundus qui erigat eum. Quantum autem alter alterius roboretur auxilio, eadem Scriptura testatur, cum dicit: Frater qui adjuvatur a fratre, quasi civitas munita.

the good shepherd, he alone seeks the wanderer on the highest mountains, alone finds it, alone lays it on his shoulders, and, so that you may no longer be overrun by the bites of wolves in earthly pastures, he lifts you up and brings you through to the heavenly folds (Luke 15:4–5). Thus, as we have said, he takes on guises, varies his forms, and, to change you for the better, he himself so often changes and exchanges his offices. And since the enemy had long gone round to tear and devour, now Christ of necessity goes round to claim you back, to snatch you away, as Scripture says: Your adversary goes round like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet 5:8).

And he called together, he says, the twelve (Mark 6:7). After the long ages of a gloomy night, Christ our eternal day shone back into light with the longed-for splendour of his dawn, so as to fit his twelve hours, as a sign, to his twelve apostles. This day the blessed Psalmist saw with prophetic spirit, when he sang: This is the day which the Lord has made, let us exult and rejoice in it (Ps 118:24). Hence the Apostle too calls believers sons of light and of the day: You are sons of light and of the day (1 Thess 5:5). And he called together the twelve. This number twelve, through the four, shows and forms for us a four-horse chariot in three parts: on which the whole Trinity is drawn and borne through the whole world on the apostolic journeys, so that the gentle warrior may overcome the devil, the meek victor may bow down the pride of the world, the peaceable fighter may take away the discords of the nations, so that, hell being destroyed, that is, the pit of sin, the long prison of souls, he may lead the captivity of the human race, set free, to the glory of his triumph. This chariot of the Trinity the blessed Psalmist saw with prophetic spirit, when he said: You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive, you have received gifts among men (Ps 68:19). This chariot the Lord was preparing for himself, for his Father and for the Holy Spirit, when he said: Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is sweet, and my burden is light (Matt 11:29–30). The porter of mercy, the carrier of loving-kindness, knows no weariness.

That the twelve patriarchs, the twelve divided into tribes (Gen 49), the twelve springs of the desert (Exod 15:27), the twelve stones of the Jordan raised from its bed (Josh 4), were drawn as a figure and form of the apostolic number, we leave to the searcher of the Law to prove more deeply, since the course of the reading set before us tries to disclose to us why he sent the disciples two by two to preach. And he began to send them two by two. He sent them two by two, lest singleness, left without support, should either deny, like Peter, or flee, like John. Human frailty falls quickly, which, proudly trusting in itself, despises companions, does not wish to have a colleague, as Scripture says: And woe to the one alone, when he falls, and there is no second to lift him up (Eccl 4:10). And how much one is strengthened by the help of another the same Scripture testifies, when it says: A brother who is helped by his brother is like a fortified city (Prov 18:19).

Et coepit eos mittere binos et binos. Nec mirum, fratres, si Trinitas, quae ex duodenario numero tripartitam conscendit quadrigam, nunc ascendit et bigam; ut duobus nuntiis duorum vocatio monstretur, et clareat populorum, dicente Apostolo: Numquid Judaeorum Deus tantum? Nonne et gentium? immo et gentium; et impleatur Isaiae vaticinium, qui se ascensorem bigae vidisse testatur, ubi audit sibi dici: Quid tu vides? et respondit, video assessorem bigae, unde mox cecidisse Babylonem clamat, et omnia sculptilia. Quis dubitat, fratres, per has bigas Christum salutares inequitasse discursus, cum videat apostolica praedicatione corruisse templa, idola deperiisse, cessasse pecudum mugitus, et victimas, ipsas aras cum thuris sic fumo jam tota evanuisse per saecula? Has bigas Habacuc viderat cum clamaret: Qui ascendis super equos tuos, et equitatus tuus sanitas.

Et dedit, inquit, eis potestatem spirituum immundorum. Hoc est, divinae virtutis insigne; hoc tropaeum singularis triumphi, ut praedae suae praedo ipse, ipsis captivis suis ipse captivus, vinctis quondam suis vinctus ipse diabolus nunc tradatur, quatenus eorum subjiciatur imperio, quorum ante fuerat magnificus servitute. Merito dolet, gemit merito, merito stridet, qui se videt hominum sententia, hominum potestate percelli, qui se Deum hominibus longa diu fuerat persuasione mentitus.

Et praecepit eis, ne quid tollerent in via, nisi virgam tantum, non peram, non panem, non in zonis aes. Homo cum operarios invitat ad opera, non necessaria victus solum, sed etiam largo fundit epulas apparatu, ut convivium humanitatis effusae pondus operis superet et laborem. Deum quantum credit inhumanum, qui ad opera ejus invitatus, pera, pane, pretio onustus incedit, et anxius; ut aut lassus aut tardior ad opus operarius infidelis occurrat, aut occurrere fortassis non possit! praemia promittit ille copiosa, tot chirographis, tot testibus, largam spondet ille mercedem, tu eum neque panem, neque vestimentum impio spiritu aestimas praebiturum? Teipsum cum non esses, dedit esse; et quidquid, homo, habes dedit ipse; et cum tibi ac tuis voluptatibus viveres, victus necessaria non negavit: hunc suis virtutibus, suis operibus servienti, non panem, non vestimentum aestimas largiturum? Hoc ipsum quod in pera, quod in zona portas, quis dedit tibi? Quid illi de suo insultaturus occurris? Novit quia dives es.

And he began to send them two by two. Nor is it a wonder, brothers, if the Trinity, which from the number twelve mounted the four-horse chariot in three parts, now mounts a chariot of two as well; so that by two messengers the calling of two peoples may be shown and made clear, as the Apostle says: Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not of the Gentiles too? Yes, of the Gentiles too (Rom 3:29); and so that the prophecy of Isaiah may be fulfilled, who testifies that he saw the rider of a chariot of two, where he hears it said to him: What do you see? and he answered: I see one seated on a chariot of two; whence he at once cries out that Babylon has fallen, and all its graven images (Isa 21:7–9). Who doubts, brothers, that Christ rode out on saving courses through these chariots of two, when he sees that by the apostolic preaching the temples have fallen, the idols perished, the lowing of the cattle and the victims ceased, and the very altars with the smoke of frankincense have now vanished for all the ages? These chariots of two Habakkuk had seen when he cried: You who mount upon your horses, and your riding is health (Hab 3:8).

And he gave them, he says, power over unclean spirits. This is the emblem of divine power; this the trophy of a singular triumph, that the plunderer himself is now handed over as plunder to his own plunder, himself a captive to his own captives, the devil himself in chains to those he once held in chains, so as to be subjected to the command of those whose servitude once made him magnificent. Rightly he feels pain, rightly he groans, rightly he gnashes his teeth, who sees himself struck down by the sentence of men, by the power of men, he who for so long, by long persuading them, had lied to men that he was God.

And he commanded them to take nothing for the way, except a staff only: no bag, no bread, no copper in their belts (Mark 6:8). When a man invites labourers to work, he not only supplies what is needed for food, but also pours out banquets with lavish preparation, so that the feast of an overflowing humanity may outweigh the weight of the work and the toil. How inhuman does he believe God to be, who, invited to his works, goes along laden with bag, bread and money, and anxious, so that, a faithless labourer, he comes to the work either weary or rather slow, or perhaps cannot come at all! He promises copious rewards, with so many bonds, with so many witnesses he pledges an ample wage, and you, with an impious spirit, think he will not supply you with bread nor clothing? When you did not exist, he gave you being; and whatever you have, man, he himself gave; and when you lived for yourself and your pleasures, he did not deny you what is needed for food: and do you think that to one who serves his powers, his works, he will not grant bread, nor clothing? This very thing that you carry in your bag, in your belt, who gave it to you? Why do you run to meet him, to insult him with what is his own? He knows that you are rich.

Cede, homo, opibus tuis: sufficit tibi divina paupertas, depone sarcinas divitiarum tuarum, onustus non potest per angustam viam ad opus Dominicae messis pervenire, veni expeditus, veni liber ad opera, antequam nudus et exspoliatus, infidelis omnibus operarius rapiaris ad poenam; quia, sicut scriptum est, Morientem divitiae non sequuntur. Sit tibi pera conscientia tua, sit tibi panis vita tua; ut sit verus panis Christus in vita, qui dixit: Ego sum panis. Sit tibi in pretium merces tua, quia ille praemium exigit securus a Christo, qui ut sequeretur Christum, nudus despexit respuens fideliter quod habebat.

Part with your riches, man: divine poverty is enough for you; lay down the bundles of your wealth; the laden man cannot reach the work of the Lord's harvest by the narrow way; come unburdened, come free to the works, before, naked and stripped, a labourer faithless in all things, you are snatched away to punishment; for, as it is written: Riches do not follow the dying man. Let your conscience be your bag, let your life be your bread; so that Christ may be the true bread in your life, who said: I am the bread (John 6:35). Let your wage be your money, for he claims his reward from Christ without fear who, to follow Christ, went naked and despised what he had, faithfully spurning it.

Sermo CLXXI.

De discipulis illotis manibus prandentibus

Sicut fulgura cum saxa, montes, arbores, ipsa domorum culmina, terribili collisione dissolvunt, sensus hominum mentesque corripiunt: ita Dominus quoties in Pharisaeos intonat, suos timore salutari corrigit et emendat, sicut hodie evangelicus sermo perdocuit, Pharisaeos et Scribas vituperasse aliquos discipulorum Domini, eo quod non lotis manibus manducarent. Nemo cum haec audit, existimet discipulos Domini sub specie contemptus incultis et lutulentis manibus edere, nec mensae Domini, nec convivii communis servare et colere honestatem: quando istud neque natura patitur, neque hospitalitatis admittit affectio. Quis aquam manibus non offerat mox ad venientis obsequium, quis ad offerentis tristitiam mox recuset? praesertim cum Dominus ipse arguat Simonem invitatus ad mensam? Pedibus meis, inquit, aquam non dedisti. Vult itaque fieri, quod sic exigere perdocetur.

Sed Pharisaei non diligentiam corporis in discipulis Domini, sed superstitionis suae baptismata perquirebant; nescientes unum baptisma, quod Dominus non lavandis solum, sed in novandis animabus et corporibus invenisset; quod non corpus ad cultum vitae, sed conscientiam dilueret ad salutem. Hoc propheta precabatur, cum diceret: Amplius lava me ab injustitia mea. Id est, quousque me legaliter lavas, et me non lavas? lava me per gratiam semel, quem lavacra legis innumera non laverunt.

Sed hoc aperiat nobis ipse qui sequitur evangelicus sermo: Pharisaei, inquit, et omnes Judaei nisi crebro laverunt manus non manducant, tenentes traditionem seniorum, et cum de foro veniunt nisi baptizati fuerint non manducant, servantes baptisma calicum et urceorum ac aeramentorum et lectorum. Pharisaee, qui te mundum credis, cum tua omnia tuo sint polluta convivio? In foro tu de innocentis sanguine disputasti, de rapienda substantia pauperis perquisisti, perscrutatus es qualiter libertatem addiceres servituti, et cum interiora tua tanto sint confecta crimine, quemadmodum te exterior lavare et mundare sufficiat aqua? corda et corpora nostra mundare haec poterit, cum fuerit et ipsa Spiritus sancti purificata commercio, ut visibili ministerio invisibile purificationis nostrae perficiat sacramentum.

Sermon CLXXI.

On the disciples eating with unwashed hands

As lightning, when it shatters rocks, mountains, trees, the very roofs of houses with a terrible crash, seizes the senses and minds of men: so the Lord, whenever he thunders against the Pharisees, corrects and amends his own with a salutary fear, as the Gospel word taught today, that the Pharisees and scribes blamed some of the Lord's disciples because they ate with unwashed hands (Mark 7:2). Let no one, when he hears this, think that the Lord's disciples ate with untended and muddy hands as a show of contempt, and did not keep and honour the decency either of the Lord's table or of a common meal: since neither does nature allow this, nor does the affection of hospitality admit it. Who would not at once offer water for the hands in homage to one arriving, who would at once refuse it, to the sorrow of the one offering? especially since the Lord himself, invited to table, reproaches Simon? For my feet, he says, you gave no water (Luke 7:44). So he wishes to be done what he is shown to require in this way.

But the Pharisees were looking in the Lord's disciples not for care of the body, but for the baptisms of their own superstition; not knowing the one baptism, which the Lord had devised not for washing only, but for renewing souls and bodies; which should wash not the body for the refinement of life, but the conscience for salvation. The Prophet prayed for this when he said: Wash me yet more from my injustice (Ps 51:4). That is: How long will you wash me by the Law, and not wash me? Wash me once by grace, me whom the countless washings of the Law have not washed.

But let the Gospel word that follows disclose this to us itself: The Pharisees, he says, and all the Jews do not eat unless they have often washed their hands, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market, they do not eat unless they have been baptised, keeping the baptism of cups and pitchers and bronze vessels and couches (Mark 7:3–4). Pharisee, you who think yourself clean, when all your things are polluted by your own feasting? In the market you disputed about innocent blood, you inquired into seizing the substance of the poor, you searched out how you might deliver freedom into servitude; and when your inner parts are steeped in so great a crime, how should water from outside suffice to wash and cleanse you? This water will be able to cleanse our hearts and bodies when it has itself been purified by the commerce of the Holy Spirit, so that by a visible ministry it may accomplish the invisible sacrament of our purification.

Sed tu, Judaee, calices, urceos, aeramenta baptizas, quae motu sensuque carentia per naturam, ut reatum nesciunt, ita non sentiunt; haec honoras, et te per quem contaminata sunt omnia, non emundas; tuis usibus, tuis obsequiis haec mancipata purificas, et te divinis officiis, divinis ministeriis non purificas mancipatum.

Sed nos, fratres, non quid Judaeis, sed quid discipulis suis Dominus responderit, audiamus: Dicebat autem, quod quae de homine exeunt, illa contaminant hominem. Abintus enim de corde hominum procedunt cogitationes malae, adulteria, fornicationes, homicidia, furta, avaritiae, nequitiae; dolus, impudicitia, oculus malus, blasphemiae, superbia, stultitia: omnia haec mala abintus procedunt et contaminant hominem. Quae spatia terrarum, quae magnitudo urbium, quae latitudo regionum, tot hostes ferre, tot inimicos capere, tantas sustinere praevalet nationes, quot vitia, quot delicta, quot crimina rapiunt humanos sensus, hominum corda patiuntur? Vidistis, fratres, quod ad unam ovem genera tota, tota feritas bestiarum accedant, quae magis eo saeviunt, quo se explere nequeunt, satiari non possunt unius captione voraci dente praedones; qui plus hinc aestuant et tabescunt, quod capere nequeunt et vorare; quod ad unam columbam tot milvi, tot aquilae, vultures tot voraces, tantarum currat congeries avium sordidarum. Hanc numerositatem, hanc multitudinem senserat propheta cum caneret: Circumdederunt me mala, quorum non est numerus: comprehenderunt me iniquitates meae, et non potui ut viderem.

Abintus de corde hominum procedunt. Tolerabilis est hostis cum muros arietat extrinsecus, cum foris positus cedit aliquando conflictui; cui vero est intus inimicus, cujus adversarius in ipsis penetralibus jam desaevit, iste se intelligit, et sentit oppressum, iste se et captivum pervidet et deplorat, iste suus expugnator esse non potest, suis esse non potest liberator, alienum requirit auxilium, quaerit alterum defensorem. Abintus exeunt de corde. Novus est hic ordo bellandi: de homine contra hominem gentes exeunt bellaturae: non contentae in occulto vincere, prosternere in abdito; quasi quae famam quaerant hominis de ruina.

Judaei, qui foris sunt, se et sua forinsecus lavent; nos, fratres, ab istis vitiorum sordibus emundemur intrinsecus: has nequitiarum gentes in nostris mentibus Christo propugnante vincamus, has delictorum bestias de nostris cordibus terrore Dominici nominis effugemus, has criminum rabies et voracissimas aves a nostris sensibus crucis hasta fortiter propellamus; ut civitatis nostrae splendor, templi nostri sanctitas, domus nostrae integer et singularis ornatus, ad habitandum semper in nobis nostrum provocet et invitet auctorem. Illuc vitia redire nequeunt, ubi Christus cum suis virtutibus commoratur.

But you, Jew, baptise cups, pitchers, bronze vessels, which, lacking motion and sense by nature, as they know no guilt, so they feel nothing; these you honour, and yourself, through whom all things are defiled, you do not cleanse; these things made over to your uses, to your service, you purify, and yourself, made over to divine offices, to divine ministries, you do not purify.

But let us, brothers, hear not what the Lord answered the Jews, but what he answered his disciples: He said, then, that the things which come out of a man, these defile the man (Mark 7:20). For from within, out of the heart of men, come evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetous acts, wickednesses, deceit, shamelessness, an evil eye, blasphemies, pride, foolishness: all these evils come from within and defile the man (Mark 7:21–23). What expanses of lands, what greatness of cities, what breadth of regions has the strength to bear so many foes, to hold so many enemies, to sustain such great nations, as there are vices, offences, crimes that seize the senses of man, that the hearts of men endure? You have seen, brothers, how whole kinds, all the savagery of beasts, come at one sheep, raging the more because they cannot fill themselves, plunderers with greedy teeth that cannot be sated by the capture of one; who burn and pine the more because they cannot seize and devour; how upon one dove so many kites, so many eagles, so many greedy vultures, such a heap of unclean birds rushes. This great number, this multitude, the Prophet had perceived when he sang: Evils without number have surrounded me: my iniquities have laid hold of me, and I could not see (Ps 40:13).

From within, out of the heart of men, they come. An enemy is bearable when he batters the walls from outside, when, set outside, he sometimes gives way in the fight; but he who has the enemy within, whose adversary already rages in his very inner chambers, this man understands and feels himself oppressed, this man sees and bewails himself a captive, this man cannot take himself by storm, cannot be his own deliverer; he looks for help from another, seeks another defender. They come out from within, out of the heart. New is this order of battle: out of man, against man, nations go forth to make war; not content to conquer in secret, to lay low in hiding; as though they sought fame from a man's ruin.

Let the Jews, who are outside, wash themselves and their things outwardly; let us, brothers, be cleansed inwardly of these filths of the vices: let us conquer these nations of wickedness in our minds, with Christ fighting for us; let us put to flight these beasts of offences from our hearts by the terror of the Lord's name; let us bravely drive off these rabid crimes and most voracious birds from our senses with the spear of the cross; so that the splendour of our city, the holiness of our temple, the whole and singular adornment of our house, may call and invite our author to dwell in us always. Vices cannot return there where Christ dwells with his virtues.

Sermo CLXXII.

De invidia et hypocrisi

Audistis hodie, fratres, quemadmodum, dum seclusit alios, seipsum janitor invidiosus exclusit. Vae vobis, inquit, legis peritis, quia tulistis clavem scientiae, ipsi non introistis, et eos qui introibant prohibuistis. Audistis ergo quemadmodum dum seclusit alios, seipsum janitor invidiosus exclusit. Acceperat claves Pharisaeus non ut clauderet, sed ut intrare desiderantibus aperiret; sed ne intraret alter, ipse permanere foris maluit per livorem.

Omnia quidem vitia ad suorum semper tendunt et prosiliunt laesionem; sed suos semper amplius invidia consumit: invidia suorum carnifex semper exstitit, extendit sensus, torquet animos, discruciat mentes, corda corrumpit. Et quid plura? Hanc qui receperit, sua sustinet sine fine supplicia, quia in se domesticum semper diligit habere tortorem. Quis ibi malorum finis, ubi alterius bonum poena est alterius? ubi cruciatus alienus est aliena felicitas? malum multiplex: quot sunt prosperitates hominum, tot tormenta sunt invidorum. Cum aliis vitiis animus poterit confligere Christianus, invidiam quisquis antequam sentiat non fugerit, non evadit. Haec peritis legis legem suasit non aperire, sed claudere; et salutaris praecepti non commodare doctrinam, sed negare; obserare scientiae fontem et vitalis fluenti, originis suae secreto divitias obstruere. Iste velociter fugiendus est morbus, quia quos contigerit non patitur jam sanari.

Invidia coelum tentavit; ibi enim diabolum fecit ex angelo; ussit terras, quae utique paradisi nobis amoena flammeo custode seclusit. Reges urget, quia haec Herodem in coaevos Christi sic compulit desaevire, ut ante lac quam sanguis teneris funderetur ex membris. Charitatem violat, nam haec Cain reddidit fratricidam, et innocuam adhuc terram novi sanguinis cruore perfudit. Vastat populos, namque Judaeos haec, si dici fas est, si capit sermo, fecit esse deicidas: deicidas diximus, non quo pervenit, sed quo facinus hoc tetendit.

Sermon CLXXII.

On envy and hypocrisy

You have heard today, brothers, how the envious doorkeeper, in shutting out others, shut himself out. Woe to you, he says, lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering (Luke 11:52). You have heard, then, how the envious doorkeeper, in shutting out others, shut himself out. The Pharisee had received the keys not to close, but to open to those who wished to enter; but so that another might not enter, he chose out of spite to stay outside himself.

All vices, indeed, always tend and leap to the harm of their own; but envy always consumes its own the more: envy has always been the executioner of its own; it stretches the senses, tortures spirits, racks minds, corrupts hearts. And what more? He who has taken her in endures his own torments without end, because he loves always to have a torturer of his own household within himself. What end of evils is there, where the good of one is the punishment of another? where another's happiness is another's torment? a manifold evil: as many as are the prosperities of men, so many are the torments of the envious. With other vices a Christian mind will be able to contend; envy, whoever has not fled it before he feels it, does not escape. It was envy that persuaded the lawyers not to open the Law, but to close it; and not to lend the teaching of the saving precept, but to deny it; to lock up the spring of knowledge and of the life-giving stream, to block up its riches in the secret place of its source. This disease must be fled swiftly, because it does not allow those whom it has touched to be healed any longer.

Envy assailed heaven; for there it made a devil out of an angel; it burned the lands, envy which indeed shut us out from the delights of paradise with a flaming guard (Gen 3:24). It drives kings, for it so drove Herod to rage against Christ's coevals that blood was shed from tender limbs before milk (Matt 2:16). It violates charity, for it made Cain a fratricide, and drenched the still innocent earth with the gore of new blood (Gen 4:8). It lays waste peoples; for this made the Jews, if it is right to say it, if speech can hold it, deicides: deicides we have said, not for what this misdeed reached, but for what it strained towards.

In Christo enim Judaei non hominem tantum, sed Deum Filium Dei conati sunt opprimere, necare virtutes, cum dicunt: Hic est haeres, venite, occidamus eum, et nostra erit haereditas ejus. Sed quid valet diabolus ad Deum? Invidia quid valet ad Dominicam charitatem? Invidit diabolus nobis terram, sed donavit coelum Deus; claves scientiae legisperitus sustulit, sed claves coelestis regni per Petrum largitus est Christus. Ac sic invidia suis commodis est nudata, et homo ditatus est ipsa necessitate damnorum.

Bene ergo in sequentibus Dominus adjecit, dicens: Attendite vobis a fermento Pharisaeorum. Quia in fermento non est moles magnitudinis, sed tumoris; et conspersio tali specie inflata est, non ditata: quantum enim efferbuerit ferventius, tantum farris massa turgescit, et totam formam levitatis implet, et tumoris. Congrue ergo a Domino dictum est: Attendite vobis a fermento Pharisaeorum, quod est hypocrisis. Quid est hypocrisis, nisi species arte composita; quae aliud in re agit, aliud promittit in vultu? Haec penes Pharisaeos per scientiam tumescebat, Apostolo sic dicente: Scientia inflat. Illos namque scientia inflabat ad superbiam, non instruebat ad vitam; et corrumpebat ad malitiam, non ad prudentiam promovebat. Erat in eorum facie hypocrisis, erat in eorum mente invidiae hydrops, erat in pectore siticulosus fons, erat ardens unda, quae suis magis ac magis inflammabatur fluentis, ut bibentis non exstingueret sitim, sed augeret incendium. Sic, sic hypocrisi ministrante, suis semper invidia propinat.

Ab hoc nos morbo subtrahit Apostolus: Cum nos non in fermento veteri, neque in fermento malitiae et nequitiae, sed in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis, sanctum Pascha Domini celebrare compellit. Veritas nescit tumorem, simplicitas hypocrisim prorsus ignorat. In azymis sinceritatis et veritatis. Haec sunt cordis azyma, haec coelesti dulcedine confecta, haec gratiae saporata pinguedine, haec sancti Spiritus igne decocta; haec nos manducantes Agnum Dei, Agnum qui tollit peccatum mundi, ad nostrum Pascha solemniter immolamus, quibus Christus ad laetitiam totam, totam est natus et immutatus ad gloriam.

For in Christ the Jews tried to crush not a man only, but God the Son of God, to kill his powers, when they say: This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and his inheritance will be ours (Mark 12:7). But what can the devil do against God? What can envy do against the Lord's charity? The devil begrudged us the earth, but God gave us heaven; the lawyer took away the keys of knowledge, but Christ bestowed the keys of the heavenly kingdom through Peter (Matt 16:19). And thus envy has been stripped of its gains, and man has been enriched by the very necessity of his losses.

Well, then, did the Lord add in what follows, saying: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1). For in leaven there is no bulk of greatness, but of swelling; and the kneading is puffed up by such an appearance, not enriched: for the more fervently it has fermented, the more the lump of meal swells, and fills its whole form with lightness and with swelling. Fittingly, then, was it said by the Lord: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. What is hypocrisy but an appearance composed by art, which does one thing in fact and promises another in the face? Among the Pharisees it swelled through knowledge, as the Apostle says: Knowledge puffs up (1 Cor 8:1). For knowledge puffed them up to pride, it did not instruct them for life; and it corrupted them to malice, it did not advance them to prudence. Hypocrisy was in their face, the dropsy of envy was in their mind, a thirsty spring was in their breast, a burning water, which was inflamed more and more by its own streams, so as not to quench the thirst of the drinker, but to increase the fire. Thus, thus, with hypocrisy as cupbearer, envy always serves drink to its own.

From this disease the Apostle withdraws us, when he urges us to celebrate the holy Easter of the Lord not in the old leaven, nor in the leaven of malice and wickedness, but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:8). Truth knows no swelling, simplicity is wholly ignorant of hypocrisy. In the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. These are the unleavened loaves of the heart, these prepared with heavenly sweetness, these savoured with the richness of grace, these baked in the fire of the Holy Spirit; eating these, we solemnly sacrifice for our Easter the Lamb of God, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), we for whom Christ was born to joy entire, and changed to entire glory.

Sermo CLXXIII.

De D. Joanne Baptista et Herode

Pastor bonus pervigiles noctes, dies anxios ducit, ne quid callidus latro, ne quid luporum feritas astuta perniciosum charo gregi, ne quid noxium moliatur. Pastor bonus, sicut Dominus dixit: Animam suam ponit pro ovibus suis. Sed et oves bonae pastoris sui audiunt attentis auribus vocem, pastoris sui semper sequuntur arbitrium, pastoris sui totam faciunt voluntatem. Ascendunt colles, petunt ardua, mutant saepe regiones: ac sic apta pascuis, irrigua fluentis, umbrosa, accommoda, secreta quietis loca penetrant, reperiunt amoenitates, et deliciis perfruuntur.

Et vos, filioli, Dominici gregis portio copiosa, niveo et divino vestita jam vellere, molli fetu, coelesti germine perfecunda, si per nostrae vocis auditum ad loca saepe salutaria, ad salutaria pascua pervenistis; si per nostri sermonis fluenta animi vestri aestus, vestrae sitis temperastis ardorem; si sub doctrinae nostrae tegmine aliquanta commoditate recubastis, quae ordinamus attendite, quae dicimus audite, quae facimus approbate; nec pro voluntate vestra, sed pro dispositione nostra praedicationis nostrae percipite rationem: et sive cum dicimus de gradu isto, sive cum de sacerdotali sede pro temporis ratione tractamus, ut oves bonae, ut chari greges, dilecta pignora, sine fastu impigrae, ac toto fidei cursu convenite, concurrite. Nec vos locorum mutatio tam propinqua, et spatia sic arctata, aut reddant desides, aut faciant murmurantes: quia nec ovis ad caulas pervenit, si pro suo libito pervagetur; nec scientiam discipulus poterit obtinere, si doceri pro sua voluntate contenderit; aegrotus quoque numquam poterit recipere sanitatem, si pro suo fuerit curatus arbitrio.

Sed quia nobis hodie contra lupum furentem sermo est, arrepto pastorali baculo transeamus ad evangelicam lectionem. Audivit, inquit, Herodes rex (manifestum enim factum erat nomen Jesu), et dicebat: Quia Joannes Baptista resurrexit a mortuis, propterea virtutes operantur in illo. Stultus de mortuo pie credit, quem feraliter persecutus est vivum. Joannes resurrexit, ait, et tamen confitetur ignorans, quia in Christo pro Christo resurgit occisus.

Sermon CLXXIII.

On Saint John the Baptist and Herod

The good shepherd spends wakeful nights and anxious days, lest the cunning thief, lest the crafty savagery of wolves, should plot anything ruinous, anything harmful, against the dear flock. The good shepherd, as the Lord said: lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). But good sheep, too, hear their shepherd's voice with attentive ears, always follow their shepherd's choice, do their shepherd's whole will. They climb hills, seek steep places, often change regions: and so they make their way into places fit for pasture, watered by streams, shady, convenient, secret places of quiet; they find delights, and enjoy pleasures.

And you, little children, abundant portion of the Lord's flock, clothed now in a snowy and divine fleece, a tender brood, most fruitful with heavenly offspring: if through hearing our voice you have often come to saving places, to saving pastures; if through the streams of our preaching you have tempered the heats of your minds, the burning of your thirst; if under the shelter of our teaching you have rested in some comfort, attend to what we ordain, hear what we say, approve what we do; and grasp the plan of our preaching not according to your will, but according to our disposition: and whether we speak from this step, or preach from the priestly seat as the season requires, like good sheep, like dear flocks, beloved pledges, without disdain, unwearied, and with the whole course of faith, come together, run together. Nor let the change of place, so near, and the room so narrowed, either make you sluggish or make you murmur: for neither does a sheep reach the folds if it wanders at its own pleasure; nor will a disciple be able to obtain knowledge if he strives to be taught according to his own will; a sick man, too, will never be able to recover his health if he is treated according to his own choice.

But since today our sermon is against a raging wolf, let us take up the shepherd's staff and pass to the Gospel reading. King Herod heard, he says (for the name of Jesus had become known), and said: John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works are at work in him (Mark 6:14). The fool believes devoutly concerning the dead man whom he cruelly persecuted while he lived. John has risen, he says; and yet, unknowing, he confesses that, slain for Christ, he rises in Christ.

Herodes, quid egit gladius tuus? crudelitas tua quid profecit? quo processit impietas tua? si ut ipse dicis, rediit ad virtutes, resurrexit ad opera divina, qui furore tuo putabatur exstinctus? Joannes resurrexit sicut fateris ipse: non hic persona, sed infirmitas perit; non hic Joannes, sed mors magis tali morte succubuit: illusa est poena, carnifex habetur irrisus, ipsa est cognitoris miseri decepta sententia, quae interemptum non perdidit, sed promovit.

Joannes resurrexit a mortuis, propterea virtutes operantur in illo. Et si hostis legis, per legem tamen ille resurrectionem promissam didicerat mortuorum. Et si resurrecturum Joannem noverat, cur insanus occidit? Si ad totius divinae virtutis culmen, si ad totum quidquid est potestatis insigne tali morte sciebat elevandum, cur se tantae mortis esse fecit auctorem? Semper febrit impietas, a phrenesi semper crudelitas obtinetur, carere dementia furor nescit; in se namque saevit, quoties in alterum tendit; se punit, dum percellit insontem; sibi lethalis est totus, cum erga justum crudelis existit. Ecce Joannes, ut ipse dicis, jam vivit in Christo: ad tuam poenam redit, qui venit ad omnium coelesti munere medicinam.

Alii autem dicebant quia Elias est; alii vero dicebant quia propheta est, aut quasi unus ex prophetis. Quo audito, Herodes ait: Ipse est Joannes, quem ego decollavi; hic resurrexit a mortuis. Malevolo quidem at veraci sensu testis ipse criminis sui, assertor sceleris sui, sui facinoris accusator existit. Joannes, quem ego decollavi, ipse est; hic resurrexit a mortuis. Verum dicit: nam sicut in Christo sui resurgunt, ita in suis ipse patitur Christus; et sicut honor capitis ad membra pertendit, ita membrorum poena ad dolorem capitis, ad capitis redundat injuriam. Joannes, quem ego decollavi, ipse est. Iste rex sapiens, egregius judex, censor morum, disciplinae custos, vindex innocentiae, criminum poena, quod decollaverit Joannem dicit, quare decollaverit tacet, ne potestatem regiam tanti facti confunderet turpitudo: sed evangelista prodit, ut interfectoris dedecus interfecti producat ad gloriam.

Nam ipse Herodes, inquit, misit, ac tenuit Joannem, et vinxit eum in carcere propter Herodiadem, uxorem Philippi, fratris sui, quia duxerat eam uxorem. Dicebat enim Joannes Herodi: Non licet tibi habere uxorem fratris tui. Herodias, quae uxor esse duorum fratrum sceleris amore contendit, ut affectione violaret affectum, et sociaretur Herodi Herodias, ne essent vel nomine dissimiles, qui erant scelere, moribus vitaque consimiles, et jungerentur vocabulo, quos criminum junxerat turpitudo; haec ergo Herodias insidiabatur Joanni.

Herod, what has your sword done? what has your cruelty gained? how far has your impiety advanced? if, as you yourself say, he has returned to mighty works, has risen to divine deeds, he who was thought quenched by your fury? John has risen, as you yourself acknowledge: here not the person, but the weakness perishes; here not John, but rather death has succumbed to such a death: the punishment has been mocked, the executioner is held a laughing-stock, the very sentence of the wretched examining judge has been deceived, which did not destroy the slain man, but promoted him.

John has risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works are at work in him. Though an enemy of the Law, yet through the Law he had learned of the promised resurrection of the dead. And if he knew that John would rise again, why did he kill him in his madness? If he knew that by such a death John would be raised to the summit of all divine power, to every emblem of authority whatever, why did he make himself the author of so great a death? Impiety is always feverish, cruelty is always held by frenzy, fury cannot be without madness; for it rages against itself whenever it aims at another; it punishes itself in striking down the innocent; it is wholly deadly to itself when it is cruel towards the just. See, John, as you yourself say, now lives in Christ: he returns for your punishment who came, by a heavenly gift, for the healing of all.

But others said: It is Elijah; and others said: It is a prophet, or as one of the prophets (Mark 6:15). When he heard this, Herod said: It is John, whom I beheaded; he has risen from the dead (Mark 6:16). With a malevolent but truthful sense, he proves himself the witness of his own crime, the assertor of his own wickedness, the accuser of his own misdeed. John, whom I beheaded, it is he; he has risen from the dead. He speaks the truth: for as his own rise in Christ, so Christ himself suffers in his own; and as the honour of the head extends to the members, so the punishment of the members overflows to the pain of the head, to the injury of the head. John, whom I beheaded, it is he. This wise king, this distinguished judge, censor of morals, guardian of discipline, avenger of innocence, punishment of crimes, says that he beheaded John, but is silent as to why he beheaded him, lest the shame of so great a deed confound his royal power: but the Evangelist reveals it, so as to bring the disgrace of the slayer to the glory of the slain.

For Herod himself, he says, sent and seized John, and bound him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother, for he had married her (Mark 6:17). For John said to Herod: It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife (Mark 6:18). Herodias, who out of love of wickedness strove to be the wife of two brothers, so as to violate affection by affection, and so that Herodias might be associated with Herod, lest those should be unlike even in name who were alike in wickedness, in morals and in life, and that those whom the shame of their crimes had joined might be joined by a name: this Herodias, then, lay in wait for John (Mark 6:19).

Herodes adulterae non vincebat animum, nefas tamen adulterae differebat. Illa, ne esset arguens, arguentis tendebat ad mortem; ille, ut placeret incestae, captivus ipse justum tantum tenuit, et vinxit inclusum, quia in innocentem reus facile non poterat dictare sententiam.

Cum accidisset, inquit, opportunus dies, Herodes natalis sui coenam fecit principibus, tribunis et primis Galilaeae; cumque intrasset filia ipsius Herodiadis, et saltasset, et placuisset Herodi, simulque recumbentibus, Rex ait puellae: Pete a me quod vis, et dabo tibi. Et juravit illi, Quidquid petieris, dabo tibi, etiam si dimidium regni mei. Ingratus, inhumanus rex, qui virtuti tantae, tam glorioso labori, tam memorabili facto, non totum regnum suum, sed dimidium dedit. Et quare sibi vel pro parte servavit, qui post tantam domus suae gloriam, post tantam familiae sanctitatem, post tale castitatis exemplum, esse, videri, vivere, non debebat? Illa ergo criminis filia, non naturae, non tam ad matrem, quam ad ipsam sentinam sui sceleris mox cucurrit; ut quae fluida tota, tota ierat resoluta, saeva, et truculenta revolaret, et, ut de ipsis artibus loquar, ut tragoediam nefandam caneret, quae impleverat turpissime comoediam.

At illa egressa dixit matri suae: Quid petam? Illa vero dixit: Caput Joannis Baptistae. Et ingressa statim cum festinatione ad regem, petivit dicens: Volo, ut protinus des mihi in disco caput Joannis Baptistae. Et contristatus est rex propter jusjurandum, et propter simul recumbentes, noluit eam contristare; et statim rex misso spiculatore, jussit afferri caput ejus. Ille autem abiit, et decollavit eum in carcere, et attulit caput ejus in disco, et dedit illud puellae, et puella dedit illud matri suae. Sic judicat mens oppressa crapulis, soluta vino, et toto quodammodo ebrietatis demersa naufragio. Volo, ut protinus des mihi in disco caput Joannis. Serpentis germen caput hominis petit, cui suum caput sententia principali sciebat addictum, dicente Deo: Ipse servabit caput tuum, et tu illius observabis calcaneum.

In longum nos trahit prolixitas lectionis, et satis in altum promovet loci ipsius immensa profunditas. Differamus hodie quae sequuntur, ne dum sermo festinat ad finem, quae sunt prolixe dicenda transmittat. Id in clausula nostri commendamus eloquii, quod sine causa cucurrerit serpens: nam tota germina serpentis antiqui iste Joannes noster interemit, et effusione sui sanguinis exstinxit occisus.

Herod did not overcome the adulteress's mind, yet he put off the adulteress's abomination. She, so that there might be no one to reprove her, was aiming at the reprover's death; he, to please the incestuous woman, himself a captive, only held the just man and kept him bound and shut up, because, guilty as he was, he could not easily pronounce sentence against the innocent.

When an opportune day had come, he says, Herod made a supper on his birthday for the princes, the tribunes and the first men of Galilee; and when the daughter of Herodias herself had come in, and danced, and pleased Herod and those reclining with him, the king said to the girl: Ask of me what you will, and I will give it to you (Mark 6:21–22). And he swore to her: Whatever you ask, I will give you, even half of my kingdom (Mark 6:23). An ungrateful, an inhuman king, who to so great a virtue, so glorious a labour, so memorable a deed, gave not his whole kingdom, but half! And why did he keep even a part for himself, who after such glory of his house, after such holiness of his family, after such an example of chastity, ought not to be, to be seen, to live? So that daughter of crime, not of nature, ran at once not so much to her mother as to the very sink of her wickedness; so that she who had gone in all fluid, all dissolved, might fly back savage and truculent, and — to speak of those very arts — might sing a monstrous tragedy, she who had most shamefully played out a comedy.

And she went out and said to her mother: What shall I ask? (Mark 6:24) And she said: The head of John the Baptist. And coming in at once with haste to the king, she asked, saying: I want you to give me at once on a dish the head of John the Baptist (Mark 6:25). And the king was saddened; because of his oath and because of those reclining with him, he would not sadden her; and at once the king, sending an executioner, commanded his head to be brought (Mark 6:26–27). And he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a dish, and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother (Mark 6:27–28). So judges a mind weighed down by surfeit, loosened by wine, and sunk, as it were, in the whole shipwreck of drunkenness. I want you to give me at once on a dish the head of John. The offspring of the serpent seeks the head of a man, knowing that its own head had been condemned by the sovereign sentence, as God says: He will watch for your head, and you will lie in wait for his heel (Gen 3:15).

The length of the reading draws us out long, and the immense depth of the passage itself carries us very far into the deep. Let us put off today what follows, lest, while the sermon hastens to its end, it pass over what must be said at length. This we commit to the close of our discourse: that the serpent ran in vain: for this John of ours, slain, destroyed all the offspring of the ancient serpent and quenched it by the shedding of his blood.

Sermo CLXXIV.

De decollatione D. Joannis Baptistae

Herodianae coenae cruentas epulas, convivium sic ferale, tunc terra, tunc coelum, hodie mecum vester horruit et expavit auditus. Herodes, inquit, natalis sui coenam fecit. Bene coenam, quia non luci, sed tenebris addictus est hic natalis, in quo noctis filius natus est, non diei. Natalis sui, inquit, coenam fecit principibus, tribunis et primis Galilaeae. Quid egit incauta et caeca semper impietas? Omnes evocat potestates, ut non tam multos convivii sui socios, quam innumeros criminis sibi testes assumat, et tot habeat facinoris sui arbitros, quot habuit praesides disciplinae.

Cumque intrasset filia ipsius Herodiadis et saltasset, inquit, et placuisset Herodi. Respondit suo turpis generi, dum patri complacet turpiori; de adulterio namque non nisi turpis debuit procreari: quae fractis gressibus, corpore dissoluto, disjuncta compage membrorum, fluentibus ex arte visceribus, tota patri fieret deformitate formosior. Et revera suam credidit tunc Herodes cum talem vidit; nam putasset alienam, si pudicam vel aliquantulum pervidisset. Serpens tunc latebat in femina, quae reptans gressibus flexuosis lethale toto corpore virus effudit, ut discumbentium mentes furor, venenum corpora sauciaret, homines verterentur in bestias; nec vino jam tales, sed sanguine potarentur; nec pane rabidi, sed carnibus vescerentur humanis. Tales utique tales reddidit, quibus adhuc fumante sanguine caput intulit tunc Joannis; ut illud Psalmistae canticum probaretur: Dederunt carnes sanctorum tuorum bestiis terrae, effuderunt sanguinem eorum tamquam aquam.

Ecce quidquid pariunt totis noctibus protracta convivia; ecce quid generat quod cum mensura emitur, et sine mensura bibitur vinum. Ecce quo praecipitatur caro, cum ad luxuriae facinus voluptatis inflammatur incendiis. Rogo quid tantis cuneis arctatur? Sufficit infelix caro sibi suis casibus ad ruinam, attestante propheta cum dicit: Ut quid irruitis in hominem, interficitis universi vos tamquam parieti inclinato et maceriae impulsae?

Sermon CLXXIV.

On the beheading of Saint John the Baptist

At the bloody dishes of Herod's supper, at a banquet so deadly, earth then, heaven then, and today your hearing with me, shuddered and took fright. Herod, he says, made a supper on his birthday (Mark 6:21). Rightly a supper, because this birthday is given over not to light but to darkness, the day on which a son of night was born, not of day. On his birthday, he says, he made a supper for the princes, the tribunes and the first men of Galilee. What has impiety done, always heedless and blind? It summons all the powers, so as to take to itself not so much many companions of its banquet as countless witnesses of its crime, and to have as many judges of its misdeed as it had governors of discipline.

And when the daughter of Herodias herself had come in and danced, he says, and pleased Herod (Mark 6:22). She answered to her shameful stock, in pleasing a more shameful father; for from adultery none but a shameful daughter ought to have been begotten: she who, with broken steps, with her body loosened, with the frame of her limbs disjointed, with her inward parts flowing by art, became, by her whole deformity, the more beautiful to her father. And indeed Herod believed her his own then, when he saw her such; for he would have thought her another's, had he seen her even a little modest. The serpent then lay hidden in the woman, who, creeping with sinuous steps, poured out a deadly venom through her whole body, so that fury wounded the minds, venom the bodies of those reclining, men were turned into beasts; no longer were such made drunk with wine, but with blood; no longer rabid for bread, they fed on human flesh. Such men she made truly such, to whom she then brought in the head of John with the blood still smoking; so that the Psalmist's song might be proved: They have given the flesh of your saints to the beasts of the earth, they have poured out their blood like water (Ps 79:2–3).

See whatever banquets drawn out through whole nights bring forth; see what is begotten by wine, which is bought by measure and drunk without measure. See where the flesh is hurled headlong, when it is inflamed by the fires of pleasure to the misdeed of dissoluteness. Why, I ask, is it hemmed in by such great battle-wedges? Unhappy flesh is enough for itself, by its own falls, for its ruin, as the Prophet testifies when he says: Why do you rush upon a man? Do you all kill, as against a leaning wall and a tottering fence? (Ps 62:4)

Jacebat in Herode caro oppressa crapulis, ebrietate captiva, quae, titillante luxuria, et non tam ludente quam illudente lascivia, promitteret quidquid turpitudo peteret se daturam.

Pete a me quod vis, inquit, et dabo tibi; et juravit illi. Jurat miser, dum quidquid honestatis est et virtutis abjurat. Pete a me quod vis. Quid peteret luxuria, nisi castitatis interitum, pudicitiae necem, mortem sibi semper contrariae sanctitatis? Volo ut des mihi in disco caput Joannis. Si caput viri est, juxta Apostolum, Christus, jam tunc novello ore antiquissimus serpens Christi Domini tendebat ad mortem. Volo ut des mihi in disco caput Joannis. Jam tunc avidus draco in servi capite Domini degustabat sitiens passionem. Volo ut des mihi in disco. Cur in disco, cur pretiose gestas, quem viliter occidis, nisi quia pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus? Hoc ipsum quod vis non agis quomodo ipsa vis, quia agit te superna ratio aliter quam vis. In illo quidem tunc ferali antro, non aula regis, rabies tunc fera pastum suum credidit, cum caput martyris vidit; lotum suum sensit, cum liquorem sacri sanguinis sitiens aspexit; ferculum crudelitatis suae toto ore, totis faucibus contendit et conatur absorbere.

Sed Joannes venit in sublimi positus, ut lucerna super candelabrum, tenebras ut fugaret, dicente Domino: Ille erat lucerna ardens et lucens. Venit Joannes, ut judex in tribunali resplendens, ut qui arguit adulterium, exponeret et damnaret homicidam; et qui pie vivens incestum vocarat ad poenitentiam, reservaverat ad veniam, homicidium etiam damnaret occisus. Quam quaeso meretur veniam, qui in morte Joannis ipsam poenitentiam tam crudeliter interemit?

Gratis cucurristis Herodes et Herodias, nomina non affectione sociata, sed crimine, quae vocem intercipi posse stultissime credidisti. Ego sum, inquit, vox clamantis in deserto. Vox occidi non potest, sed magis clamat angustiis corporis absoluta. Sic vox Abel in suo jam effusa sanguine magis sonat, magis penetrat, magis pertendit ad coelum. Sic nunc, Joannes toto orbe clamat, totis saeculis facinus vestrum cunctis refert, et ostentat in gentibus.

In Herod the flesh lay weighed down by surfeit, captive to drunkenness, flesh that, with dissoluteness tickling it, and wantonness not so much sporting as making sport of it, would promise that it would give whatever shamelessness asked.

Ask of me what you will, he says, and I will give it to you; and he swore to her. The wretch swears in that he forswears whatever there is of honour and of virtue. Ask of me what you will. What should dissoluteness ask but the destruction of chastity, the slaying of modesty, the death of the holiness always opposed to it? I want you to give me on a dish the head of John. If the head of man, according to the Apostle, is Christ (1 Cor 11:3), already then, with a new mouth, the most ancient serpent was aiming at the death of Christ the Lord. I want you to give me on a dish the head of John. Already then the greedy dragon, thirsting, was tasting the Lord's Passion in the head of the servant. I want you to give me on a dish. Why on a dish, why do you carry him preciously whom you kill vilely, unless because precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Ps 116:15)? This very thing that you want, you do not do as you yourself want, because a design from on high drives you otherwise than you want. In that deadly den then, not a king's hall, the savage madness believed it had its food when it saw the martyr's head; it felt it had its drink when, thirsting, it beheld the liquid of the sacred blood; it strains and tries to swallow the dish of its cruelty with its whole mouth, with all its jaws.

But John came, set on high, like a lamp upon a lampstand, to put darkness to flight, as the Lord says: He was a lamp, burning and shining (John 5:35). John came, like a judge shining on the tribunal, so that he who reproved the adultery might expose and condemn the murderer; and he who, living devoutly, had called the incestuous man to penance, had reserved him for pardon, might, slain, condemn the murder too. What pardon, I ask, does he deserve, who in the death of John so cruelly slew penance itself?

In vain did you run, Herod and Herodias, names associated not by affection but by crime, you who most foolishly believed that a voice could be cut off. I am, he says, the voice of one crying in the desert (John 1:23). A voice cannot be killed, but cries out the more, set free from the confines of the body. So the voice of Abel, already poured out in his blood, sounds more, penetrates more, reaches further to heaven (Gen 4:10). So now John cries out through the whole world, through all the ages tells your misdeed to all, and displays it among the nations.

Ecce Joannes Christi capite gloriatur, qui capiti putabatur addictus. Ecce eo die quo tu finisti tuum, ille sibi natalem coeli conquisivit: quia quando tuus ortus mersit in finem, tunc illius finis ortus est in natalem. Justus enim tunc inchoat vivere, cum pro Christo meretur occidi; transfertur ista morte vita martyris, non aufertur; morte magis claruit, qui ob hoc mortuus est, ut viveret in aeternum. Ecce tu jaces in morte, Joannes vivit occisus. Tu fucatam murice purpuram perdidisti, Joannes cruore suo fulgenti purpura semper gloriatur indutus. Tui convivae nunc participes efficiuntur in poenis, Joannes coelesti mensa cum choris vescitur angelorum. Ille audit coelestem jugiter symphoniam, tu audis inferni semper gemitum et stridorem. Ille meretricis tuae, saltatricis tuae addictus in pretium, nunc regno, nunc praemiis coelestibus honoratur, tu mercedem sententiae tuae cum tua filia in tartaro percepisti.

Vestimentum Joseph, cum adulteram fugeret, derelinquit; Joannes ne videret adulteram, ipsum projecit et corpus. Joseph, ne adulterium faceret, libens carcerem suscepit; Joannes ut argueret adulterium, eremum carcere commutavit. Joseph somnia dum revelat, evasit ex morte; Joannes, ut Dei Filium revelaret, suscepit et mortem. Joseph dum panem praeparat temporalem, ex auro torquem meruit, et honorem; Joannes, ut ostenderet coelestem credentibus panem, martyrii torquem meruit ex cruore.

Merito in natis mulierum cunctis major est hic Joannes, qui non solum adulteras arguit, sed et licita mulierum consortia virginitatis amore calcavit. Et si Joannes tantus, Joannes talis, tanta eremo separatus a feminis feminarum pericula non evasit, quis est qui inter feminas vivens evasurum se sine labore maximo, maxima sine cautione confidit, nisi is qui sancto alitur Spiritu? Qui cum genitore natoque una cuncta disponit saecula per aevi omnia spatia.

See, John glories in Christ for his head, he who was thought condemned in his head. See, on the day on which you ended yours, he gained for himself his birthday of heaven: for when your rising sank into its end, then his end rose into a birthday. For the just man begins to live then when he merits to be slain for Christ; by this death the martyr's life is transferred, not taken away; he shone the more by death who died for this, that he might live for ever. See, you lie in death, John lives, slain. You have lost the purple dyed with the murex; John, clothed in his own blood, glories for ever in a shining purple. Your guests are now made sharers in punishments; John feasts at the heavenly table with the choirs of angels. He hears unceasingly the heavenly harmony, you hear always the groaning and gnashing of hell. He, made over as the price of your harlot, your dancing girl, is now honoured with a kingdom, now with heavenly rewards; you have received the wages of your sentence with your daughter in Tartarus.

Joseph left his garment when he fled the adulteress (Gen 39:12); John, so as not to see the adulteress, cast off even his very body. Joseph, so as not to commit adultery, willingly accepted prison; John, to reprove adultery, exchanged the desert for prison. Joseph, by revealing dreams, escaped from death; John, to reveal the Son of God, accepted death as well. Joseph, by preparing temporal bread, merited a collar of gold, and honour; John, to show believers the heavenly bread, merited from his blood the collar of martyrdom.

Rightly is this John greater than all among those born of women (Matt 11:11), who not only reproved adulteresses, but also trod underfoot, for love of virginity, the lawful fellowship of women. And if John, so great, John, such a man, separated from women by so great a desert, did not escape the dangers of women, who is there who, living among women, trusts that he will escape without the greatest labour, without the greatest caution, unless he who is fed by the Holy Spirit? Who, with the Begetter and the One born, disposes as one all the ages through all the spaces of time.

SERMO CLXXV.

De Marcellino episcopo Vicohaventino, et D. Mariae, Virginis partu

Omnium quidem rerum primordia sunt dura, sed duriora sunt omnibus primordia generantis. Sancta Ecclesia Ravennas, ut primum pareret, viam fecit, angores pertulit, sensit dolores. Et hoc egit, fratres, ut ordinem partus divini toto veritatis tramite custodiret: nam posteaquam primogenitum totius creaturae Virgo mater ut pareret, viam totius patriae percucurrit; sic virgineus partus, sic primitivorum est dedicata nativitas. Et necessario, fratres, Via generatur in via. Ego sum, inquit, Via; ut omnis aditus excluderetur erroris, et viator tandem coelum peteret, qui terreni itineris incassum diu sudores pertulerat et labores.

Et factum est in diebus illis, inquit evangelista, exiit edictum a Caesare Augusto, ut scriberetur universus orbis. Ascendit autem et Joseph a Galilaea de civitate Nazareth in Judaeam ad civitatem David, quae vocatur Bethlehem, eo quod esset de domo et familia David, ut profiteretur cum Maria desponsata sibi uxore praegnante. Et factum est in diebus illis, impleti sunt dies ut pareret, et peperit filium suum primogenitum.

Libet hic aliquid de dolore dicere. Edicto Caesaris et pagani universorum Dominus obtemperaturus occurrit, et decreto beati Petri, decreto principis Christiani, servus adhuc aliquis irreverenter obsistit? Verum, quia neque prospera adversis, neque gaudiis miscenda sunt tristia, his omissis hodierni germinis laetitiam proloquamur. Habeat modo natus, qui primum natus est, primogeniti reverentiam, teneat et honorem: Marcellinus hodie vernaculi partus totum rapuit et conquisivit affectum. Circumstant filii, adsunt propinqui, cognatio tota concurrit, familia exsultat omnis, et ipsa penetralia domus tripudiant et laetantur: quia videre oculis, suscipere manibus, hodie primum sanctae genitricis partum, sobolemque meruerunt. Ipsa quoque genitrix sponsa mater et virgo, in ipso conjunctionis suae cubiculo, genuisse nova gratulatione miratur.

Sermon CLXXV.

On Marcellinus, bishop of Vicohabentia, and on the childbearing of Saint Mary the Virgin

The beginnings of all things, indeed, are hard, but harder than all are the beginnings of one who begets. The holy church of Ravenna, to give birth for the first time, made a journey, endured anguish, felt pains. And she did this, brothers, so as to keep the order of the divine childbearing along the whole path of truth: for the Virgin mother, in order to bring forth the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15), ran the road across her whole homeland; so the virginal childbearing, so the birth of the firstborn, was hallowed. And of necessity, brothers, the Way is begotten on the way. I am, he says, the Way (John 14:6); so that every approach of error might be shut off, and the traveller might at last make for heaven, who had long borne in vain the sweat and the labours of an earthly journey.

And it came to pass in those days, says the Evangelist, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled (Luke 2:1). And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child (Luke 2:4–5). And it came to pass in those days, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth, and she brought forth her firstborn son (Luke 2:6–7).

I would like here to say something of a pain. The Lord of all comes forward to obey the edict of Caesar, and of a pagan, and does some servant still irreverently resist the decree of blessed Peter, the decree of the Christian prince? But since neither are prosperous things to be mingled with adverse ones, nor sad things with joys, let us leave these aside and speak out the gladness of today's offspring. Let him now, the one who was born first, have the reverence of the firstborn, and keep its honour too: Marcellinus today has carried off and won all the affection of a home-born childbirth. The sons stand round, the kinsfolk are present, the whole kindred runs together, the whole household exults, and the very inner rooms of the house dance and rejoice: because they have merited to see with their eyes, to receive in their hands, today for the first time, the offspring and progeny of their holy bearer. The bearer herself too, bride, mother and virgin, in the very chamber of her union, marvels with a new rejoicing that she has borne.

Sed neminem turbet, nullum moveat, quod in thalamo ipso sponsa ipsa cernitur peperisse: talis non est de crimine, sed de virginitate conceptus, quando in tali germine coelestis partus est, non humanus: nec ullus hic est sinistrae suspicionis locus, ubi ipse sponsus sponsae suae testis habetur et custos. Quicumque sollicitus es de facto, esto de exemplo maximo persecurus, et praecedentis trepidatio ad tuam cautelam proficiat, et munimen. Joseph ille maritus solo nomine, conscientia sponsus, praegnantem sponsam fluctuans et anxius intuetur, quia neque accusare innocentem, neque praegnantem poterat accusare; tacere tutum non erat, erat loqui periculum. Admittit, non prodit crimina accusator insontis. Erat ipse testimonium castitatis, erat custos pudoris: aliud noverat, aliud intuebatur; confundebat visus quem non confundebat Virginis fides: actus et vita in bivio; mens justa et sanctus animus ancipiti cogitatione torquetur; sentit, sed tantum non potest penetrare sacramentum, quia nec accusare poterat, et defensare penes homines non valebat.

Merito mox occurrit angelus, merito responsum subvenit mox divinum, cui humano deficiente consilio justitia non defecit. Et quid dicit? Joseph fili David, noli timere. Qui nihil fecerat, quid timebat? Timebat, quia etsi nullus in facto reatus erat, erat in causa maximus pavor. Sanctus animus quidquid non assequitur, expavescit. Cave ergo, homo, de partu nostrae matris taliter disputare, cum angelum respondisse sufficiat: Noli timere accipere Mariam conjugem tuam; quod enim in illa natum est, de Spiritu sancto est. Feliciter parturit, quae virginitatis coronam magis magisque pariendo conquisivit et gloriam.

Hic vero qui nobis hodie natus est, semper retia tetendit in mare. Nemo ergo miretur, si piscatorem Petrus gestivit habere collegam. Orate ergo, fratres, ut piscari mereatur homines qui hactenus pisces capere hominum laboravit ad vitam.

But let it trouble no one, let it move none, that the bride herself is seen to have given birth in the very bridal chamber: such a conception comes not from crime, but from virginity, since in such offspring the childbearing is heavenly, not human: nor is there here any room for ill suspicion, where the bridegroom himself is held the witness and guardian of his bride. Whoever of you is troubled about the deed, be wholly secure on the strength of the greatest example, and let the trembling of the one who went before profit you for caution and defence. That Joseph, husband in name only, bridegroom in conscience, looks on his pregnant bride wavering and anxious, because he could neither accuse the innocent woman nor accuse the pregnant one; to keep silent was not safe, to speak was danger. He who accuses the guiltless commits crimes, he does not expose them. He himself was the witness of her chastity, he was the guardian of her modesty: one thing he knew, another he beheld; his sight confounded him whom the Virgin's faith did not confound: his conduct and his life at a crossroads; his just mind and holy heart are tortured by a doubtful thought; he perceives, but cannot penetrate so great a mystery, because he could not accuse, and was not able to defend her before men.

Rightly an angel at once comes to meet him, rightly a divine answer at once comes to the help of him in whom, when human counsel failed, justice did not fail. And what does he say? Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid (Matt 1:20). He who had done nothing, what was he afraid of? He was afraid because, even if there was no guilt in the deed, there was the greatest fright in the case. A holy mind takes fright at whatever it does not grasp. Beware, then, man, of disputing in such a way about the childbearing of our mother, since it is enough that the angel answered: Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife; for what has been born in her is from the Holy Spirit. Happily she gives birth who, by giving birth, gained more and more the crown and the glory of virginity.

But he who has been born to us today has always cast his nets into the sea. Let no one wonder, then, if Peter longed to have a fisherman as colleague. Pray, then, brothers, that he who until now laboured to catch fish for the life of men may merit to fish for men.

Sermo CLXXVI.

De caeco

Deus quoties desperatas humanorum curat corporum passiones, deitatis suae toties potentiam pandit: sed in una eademque infirmitate, quando ordinem suae curationis immutat, causas propter quas hoc faciat, facit nos altius perscrutari. Nam juxta viam sedenti caeco visum sola restituit jussione; alii a nativitate caeco nato, non lumini, sed tenebris, et cui natura visum inviderat, atque ipsa, quae parat et aperit oculos, oculos clauserat et negarat, Christus imponit lutum, et collyrio materiali fingit, facit, procurat oculos, non recurat, ut creante, non medicante manu inde homini suppleret lumina, unde hominem fecerat totum. Iste vero caecus, cujus nobis evangelista Marcus retulit curam, sic novo sanatur modo, ut omnes compellat exquirere cur contumax caecitas moram facere sic praesumit auctori, cujus nutu, visu, jussu infirmitates pereunt, redeunt sanitates, vita oritur, mors finitur, stant omnia, cuncta dilabuntur.

Venit, inquit, Jesus Bethsaida, et adducunt ei caecum, et rogabant eum ut eum tangeret; et apprehensa manu caeci, eduxit eum foras extra vicum. Quasi eum curare non potuerit in loco, aut beneficio loci indiguerit, universis qui contulit visum. Haec est Bethsaida cujus perfidiam Dominus exprobrat, dicens: Vae tibi, Chorozaim, vae tibi, Bethsaida: quia si in Tyro et Sidone virtutes factae fuissent quae in te factae sunt, olim in cilicio et cinere poenitentiam egissent. Ergo apprehensa manu ejus de domo infidelitatis educit, levat eum de perfidiae sessione, ut ante fidem quam oculos daret, ante menti quam corpori redderet sanitatem, ante praeberet humani ducatus obsequium quam divinae virtutis operaretur insigne. Illi rogabant ut vel tangeret eum: sed Christus, qui horrere nescit pauperem, pauperem scit amare, totam dedit pauperi manum, et debilitati Deus publicam praebuit servitutem, ut homo non horreat hominem, et videns non videntem videat, et duce manu caecum lucis faciat nescire orbitatem: ne dicat homo: Non habet manus mea quod det pauperi, det ipsam manum pauperi, et plus erit manum pauperi dedisse quam nummum, iter praebuisse pauperi quam pauperi panis dedisse fragmentum.

Sermon CLXXVI.

On the blind man

Whenever God heals the desperate sufferings of human bodies, so often he displays the might of his Godhead: but in one and the same illness, when he changes the order of his cure, he makes us search more deeply for the causes for which he does this. For to the blind man sitting by the way he restored sight by a command alone (Mark 10:46–52); to another, a man blind from his birth, born not to light but to darkness (John 9:1–7), whom nature had begrudged sight, and whose eyes nature itself, which prepares and opens eyes, had closed and denied, Christ applies clay, and with a material eye-salve fashions, makes, provides eyes, does not restore them, so that with a creating, not a healing, hand he might supply light to the man from that from which he had made the whole man. But this blind man, whose cure the Evangelist Mark has related to us, is healed in so new a way that he compels all to inquire why a stubborn blindness so presumes to keep its author waiting, at whose nod, look and command illnesses perish, healths return, life arises, death ends, all things stand, all things pass away.

Jesus came, he says, to Bethsaida, and they bring to him a blind man, and they asked him to touch him; and taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out outside the village (Mark 8:22–23). As though he could not heal him on the spot, or needed the favour of a place, he who gave sight to all! This is the Bethsaida whose unbelief the Lord reproaches, saying: Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida: for if the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have done penance in a hair shirt and ashes (Matt 11:21). So, taking him by the hand, he leads him out of the house of faithlessness, raises him from the seat of unbelief, so as to give faith before eyes, to restore health to the mind before the body, to offer the service of human guidance before he worked the emblem of divine power. They asked that he would at least touch him: but Christ, who does not know how to shrink from a poor man, knows how to love a poor man, gave his whole hand to the poor man, and God offered a public service to infirmity, so that man may not shrink from man, and the seeing may look upon the unseeing, and with a guiding hand make the blind man not know the bereavement of light: lest a man say: "My hand has nothing to give to the poor"; let him give the hand itself to the poor, and it will be more to have given one's hand to a poor man than a coin, to have offered a poor man the way than to have given a poor man a fragment of bread.

Et eduxit eum foras extra vicum, et exspuit in oculos ejus. Dominico sputo vacuas oculorum replet lacunas, divino ore luciferam dat salivam, ut sancti roris gutta baptizaret oculos peccatoris, ut aperiret venia, quos clauserat culpa. Nemo ergo dubitet divino imbre tota arefacta mortalia membra posse reviviscere, cum videat parva Dominici sputi gutta arentes caecitate oculos subito sic suscitatos in lucem: Exsurgent, inquit Isaias, mortui, et resurgent qui in monumentis sunt, et laetabuntur qui sunt in terra. Quomodo? Ros enim qui abs te est sanitas est illis; quod est pluvia semini, hoc resurrecturis Dominicus imber.

Et imposuit illi manus. In faciendo, in reparando, in componendo hominem Dominicae manus curatrices hominibus semper adsunt. Manus tuae, inquit, fecerunt me et plasmaverunt me. Et interrogavit eum si aliquid videret. Interrogat ut homo, operatur ut Deus. Qui videt abdita terrarum, qui cordis intuetur occulta, cui omnia sunt nuda quae sunt tecta omnibus, in opere suo, in oculis suis videre quaerit, laborat scire, alio referente cognoscit? Absit. Sed interrogat ut praesentes scirent, futuri cognoscerent, caecitatis hujus non esse simplicem, sed mysticam curam.

Denique non lumen, sed auroram quamdam, lucemque erumpentem datam sibi adhuc qui curabatur, Domino interrogante, respondit: Video, inquit, homines ut arbores ambulantes. Imperfectis oculis grandescunt formae, turbantur species, res falluntur ipsae, quia non jam visionem capiunt, sed adhuc umbram sustinent visionis. Et quare tamen sicut arbores, non ut columnae, aut aliud quid, neque stantes, sed ambulantes? Quia post curam Christi viderat, quod homines velut arbores transirent in hoc saeculo, non manerent; temporalem plantationem germinis humani esse in hac vita mox videt quem curaverit Christus. Iteranda est ergo cura Christi, ut perfecti oculi futura certa, manentia videant et aeterna. Iterum, inquit, posuit manus super oculos ejus, et coepit videre: et restitutus est, ita ut clare videret omnia, et misit illum in domum suam, dicens: Vade in domum tuam, et si in vicum introieris, nemini dixeris.

Aperiatur jam spiritualis intelligentia, ut qui sit iste caecus cognoscamus, et quare non sponte venit, sed ab aliis adducitur, et ducitur manu Christi, et educitur extra vicum, et alibi recipit visum, qui diu apud suos longam sui pertulerat orbitatem: et exspuit in oculos ejus, et iteratur divinae manus impositio, et cui videre extra domum datur, quid viderit, quomodo viderit, per quem viderit, suis dicere non donatur.

And he led him out outside the village, and spat on his eyes. With the Lord's spittle he fills the empty hollows of the eyes, from a divine mouth he gives a light-bearing saliva, so that a drop of holy dew might baptise the eyes of the sinner, that pardon might open those which fault had closed. Let no one, then, doubt that mortal limbs, wholly dried up, can revive by the divine rain, when he sees eyes parched with blindness thus suddenly raised to light by a small drop of the Lord's spittle: The dead shall rise, says Isaiah, and those who are in the tombs shall rise again, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice (Isa 26:19). How? For the dew that is from you is health to them; what rain is to seed, that the Lord's shower is to those who will rise again.

And he laid his hands on him. In making, in repairing, in fashioning man, the Lord's healing hands are always at hand for men. Your hands, he says, have made me and fashioned me (Ps 119:73). And he asked him whether he saw anything. He asks as man, he works as God. He who sees the hidden places of the earth, who beholds the secrets of the heart, to whom all things are naked that are covered to all, does he seek to see in his own work, in his own eyes, labour to know, learn by another's report? Far from it. But he asks so that those present might know, and those to come might learn, that the cure of this blindness was not simple, but mystical.

Indeed, the man who was being cured answered, when the Lord asked him, that what had been given him so far was not light, but a kind of dawn and a light breaking forth: I see, he says, men like trees walking (Mark 8:24). To imperfect eyes forms grow larger, appearances are confused, things themselves deceive, because they do not yet take in the vision, but still bear the shadow of vision. And yet why like trees, not like columns, or something else, and not standing, but walking? Because after Christ's cure he had seen that men pass like trees in this world, that they do not remain; he whom Christ has cured at once sees that the planting of the human offspring in this life is temporal. Christ's cure must therefore be repeated, so that eyes made perfect may see things to come, things certain, things lasting and eternal. Again, he says, he laid his hands on his eyes, and he began to see; and he was restored, so that he saw all things clearly; and he sent him to his house, saying: Go to your house, and if you enter the village, tell no one (Mark 8:25–26).

Let spiritual understanding now be opened, so that we may know who this blind man is, and why he does not come of his own accord, but is brought by others, and is led by the hand of Christ, and is led out outside the village, and receives sight elsewhere, he who had long endured among his own his long bereavement: and he spat on his eyes, and the laying on of the divine hand is repeated, and he to whom it is given to see outside the house is not granted to tell his own what he saw, how he saw, through whom he saw.

Fratres, caecus iste est Judaeus, qui in Synagoga, hoc est, in perfidiae domo et in vico, hoc est, in conventu malignantium ignorantiae caecitate tenebatur, et sedebat oppressus. Hinc est quod non veniebat ad Christum, sed venit ad eum Christus, et apprehendit manum ejus, ut dono vocantis, non beneficio legis, non proprio curatum se gloriaretur arbitrio. Educit eum foras, ut in Ecclesia lucem fidei videat per libertatem gratiae, qui sub legis velamine nil videbat.

Imponit ei primum manum, ut videat transire umbram legis; ut sacerdotes, scribas, pharisaeos, et figuram totam Judaicae observantiae videat velut arbores praeterire, quae ut in tempore, sic cum tempore senescunt, nascuntur, virescunt, florescunt, fructificant, pereunt, evanescunt. Iterum imponit ei manum, ut resurgens non jam caduca videat, sed aeterna, et videat quidquid est divini luminis, honoris et gloriae: sicut ille magnus ex ipsis Paulus, qui extra vicum et in via Judaeus cecidit, ut resurgeret Christianus; et caecatus est in lege, ut videret in gratia, sicut ab ipso perhibetur: Nunc videmus in speculo et in aenigmate; tunc autem videbimus facie ad faciem. Tunc quando quod sepultum est in morte, surget in vita, et quidquid satum est in contumelia, surget in gloria.

Brothers, this blind man is the Jew, who in the Synagogue, that is, in the house of unbelief, and in the village, that is, in the assembly of the malignant, was held in the blindness of ignorance, and sat oppressed. Hence it is that he did not come to Christ, but Christ came to him, and took his hand, so that he might boast of having been cured by the gift of the one who called, not by the benefit of the Law, not by his own choice. He leads him outside, so that in the Church he may see the light of faith through the freedom of grace, he who under the veil of the Law saw nothing.

He lays his hand on him first, so that he may see the shadow of the Law passing; so that he may see priests, scribes, Pharisees and the whole figure of Jewish observance go by like trees, which, as they are in time, so with time grow old, are born, grow green, flower, bear fruit, perish, vanish. Again he lays his hand on him, so that, rising again, he may see no longer perishable things but eternal ones, and may see whatever there is of divine light, honour and glory: like that great Paul from among them, who outside the village and on the way fell a Jew, to rise a Christian (Acts 9:4); and was blinded in the Law, to see in grace, as is declared by him: Now we see in a mirror and in an enigma; but then we shall see face to face (1 Cor 13:12). Then, when what has been buried in death shall rise in life, and whatever has been sown in dishonour shall rise in glory (1 Cor 15:43).

Appendix

Sermo VI. De verbis Evangelii Matth. XVII: Hoc genus in nullo ejicitur, nisi oratione et jejunio

Adversus daemonum nequitiam quae nobis Dominus arma ostendit, debemus utique retinere. Hoc, ait, genus in nullo ejicitur, nisi in oratione et jejunio. Haec cum plena fide exercentur, pietas est. Pietas autem ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habens vitae praesentis et futurae. Inspiciamus ergo utiliter orationis fructus et jejunii, quia ipsa sunt arma adversus improbas cogitationes. Jejunium purgat mentem, sublevat sensum, carnem spiritui subjicit. Jejunium cor facit contribulatum et humiliatum, quod Deus non spernit. Jejunium concupiscentiae nebulas dispergit, libidinum ardores exstinguit, castitatis verum lumen accendit. Jejunium verbositatem non amat, divitiarum superfluitatem judicat, superbiam spernit, humilitatem commendat, praestat homini seipsum intelligere quod est, infirmum et fragilem, atque dum ita se intelligit imbecillem, aptius virtute Dei adjutorium quaerit et accipit, quaerit autem per frequentes orationes et obsecrationes.

Oratio quidem refectio est jejuniorum, et advocat gratiam Spiritus sancti. Oratio duritiam cordis mollit, austeritatem temperat, jejunium dulcificat. Sicut enim sine potu non est plena refectio, sic et jejunium sine oratione non potest animam perfecte nutrire. Quid est autem oratio nisi ascensio animae de terrestribus ad coelestia, inquisitio supernorum, invisibilium desiderium? Abeat dissensio saecularium morum quibus premitur mens humana quotidie. Oratio conjunctio est Spiritui sancto: si tamen in oratione intentus sit animus, sicut clamat propheta: Sitivit in te anima mea, quam multipliciter tibi caro mea. Quid autem sitiendum sit, sequitur, ut videat virtutem tuam. Credite mihi: si ad videndam plenam virtutem Dei plene sitiat anima humanae substantiae, nec fastidio victa dissimulet, replebitur adipe et pinguedine spirituali: et sitiens illam Dei visitationem sensu proprio cum fide clamabit: Adhaesit anima mea post te, suscepit me dextera tua.

Appendix

Appendix, sermon VI. On the words of the Gospel, Matthew 17: "This kind is cast out by nothing but prayer and fasting"

The arms which the Lord has shown us against the wickedness of demons we must surely keep. This kind, he says, is cast out by nothing but by prayer and fasting (Matt 17:21). When these are exercised with full faith, it is piety. And piety is useful for all things, having the promise of the present life and of that to come (1 Tim 4:8). Let us, then, consider with profit the fruits of prayer and of fasting, because they themselves are the arms against wicked thoughts. Fasting purifies the mind, lifts up the sense, subjects the flesh to the spirit. Fasting makes the heart contrite and humbled, which God does not despise (Ps 51:19). Fasting scatters the mists of concupiscence, quenches the heats of lusts, kindles the true light of chastity. Fasting does not love wordiness, it judges the superfluity of riches, despises pride, commends humility, grants a man to understand himself, what he is, weak and frail; and in thus understanding himself to be feeble, he seeks and receives help more fitly from the power of God, and he seeks it through frequent prayers and supplications.

Prayer, indeed, is the refreshment of fasts, and calls down the grace of the Holy Spirit. Prayer softens the hardness of the heart, tempers austerity, sweetens fasting. For as without drink there is no full refreshment, so too fasting without prayer cannot nourish the soul perfectly. And what is prayer but the ascent of the soul from earthly things to heavenly, a seeking of the things above, a desire for things invisible? Let the discord of worldly ways depart, by which the human mind is pressed down every day. Prayer is union with the Holy Spirit: if only the mind is intent in prayer, as the Prophet cries: My soul has thirsted for you, how manifoldly my flesh for you (Ps 63:2). And what is to be thirsted for follows: to see your power (Ps 63:3). Believe me: if a soul of human substance thirsts fully to see the full power of God, and does not dissemble, overcome by disgust, it will be filled with spiritual fat and richness (Ps 63:6): and, thirsting for that visitation of God, it will cry out with its own sense, with faith: My soul has clung after you, your right hand has upheld me (Ps 63:9).

Jejunium tollit inertiam, de animo impedimenta carnalia aufert. Oratio vero perseverans jungit Deo, atque ita gaudens assistere se Domino gloriatur. Adhaerens autem anima Domino, incipit securitatem habere, et libertatem; nec pavores sustinet, nec timores. Suscepto autem tanto patrocinio dexterae Dei, quomodo poterit noceri ab aliqua potestate, sicut scriptum est, quod nemo illud rapit de manu Patris? Hoc praestat jejunium, hoc praestat oratio.

Fasting takes away sloth, removes fleshly hindrances from the mind. But persevering prayer joins one to God, and so, rejoicing, it glories that it stands before the Lord. And the soul that clings to the Lord begins to have security and freedom; it endures neither frights nor fears. And when so great a protection of the right hand of God has been received, how can it be harmed by any power, since it is written that no one snatches it from the hand of the Father (John 10:29)? This fasting provides, this prayer provides.

Sermo VII.

De verbis Evangelii Joann. XIV: Pacem meam do vobis, pacem meam relinquo vobis

Domini vox est, fratres charissimi: Pacem meam do vobis, pacem relinquo vobis. De pace dicturi, prius quae pacis sint commoda videamus. Est pax serenitas mentis, tranquillitas animi, simplicitas cordis, amoris vinculum, consortium charitatis. Haec est quae simultates tollit, bella compescit, comprimit iras, superbos calcat, humiles amat, discordes sedat, inimicos concordat, cunctis est placita. Non quaerit alienum, nihil deputat suum; docet amare quae odisse non novit. Nescit extolli, nescit inflari.

Hanc ergo, qui accepit, teneat; qui perdidit, repetat; qui amisit, exquirat: quoniam qui in eadem non fuerit inventus, abdicatur a Patre, exhaeredatur a Filio, nihilominus a Spiritu sancto alienus efficitur. Respuit enim munus oblatum, qui datae legis contempserit bonum; nec poterit ad haereditatem Domini pervenire, qui testamentum noluerit observare. Non potest concordiam habere cum Christo, qui discors voluerit esse cum Christiano. Contumaciae ergo crimen est quod jubetur contemnere, quod praecipitur nolle, quod imperatur declinare.

Quid tibi commune cum discordia, Christiane? quid simultates amas, quod auctori pacis placere non potuit? quid exerces inimicitias, quas evadere non potuit nec ille, qui eas primus invenit? Initio namque inimicitias in protoplastum dum serpens exerit, interficitur; dum homini invidet, ipse prosternitur; dum Adam cupit decipere, ipse primitus jugulatur. Quare aut Christi charitatem amplectere, Christiane, aut discordiae auctori de similitudine operum parem te esse cognosce.

Appendix, sermon VII. On the words of the Gospel, John 14: "My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you"

It is the voice of the Lord, dearest brothers: My peace I give to you, peace I leave to you (John 14:27). Being about to speak of peace, let us first see what the benefits of peace are. Peace is serenity of mind, tranquillity of spirit, simplicity of heart, the tie of love, the fellowship of charity. She it is who takes away rivalries, checks wars, represses angers, tramples on the proud, loves the humble, calms the discordant, reconciles enemies, is pleasing to all. She does not seek what is another's, counts nothing her own; she who does not know how to hate teaches how to love. She does not know how to be lifted up, does not know how to be puffed up.

Let him, then, who has received her keep her; let him who has lost her seek her again; let him who has let her slip search her out: since he who has not been found in her is disowned by the Father, disinherited by the Son, and no less made a stranger to the Holy Spirit. For he rejects the gift offered who has despised the good of the law that was given; nor will he be able to reach the Lord's inheritance who has refused to observe the testament. He cannot have concord with Christ who chooses to be in discord with a Christian. It is therefore the crime of contumacy to despise what one is bidden, to refuse what one is enjoined, to turn away from what one is commanded.

What have you in common with discord, Christian? Why do you love rivalries, a thing that could not please the author of peace? Why do you practise enmities, which not even he could escape who first invented them? For in the beginning, in putting forth enmities against the first-formed man, the serpent is slain; in envying man, he himself is laid low; in desiring to deceive Adam, he himself is the first to be slaughtered. Therefore either embrace the charity of Christ, Christian, or know that by the likeness of your works you are the equal of the author of discord.