SAINT PETER DAMIAN

# Sermons

*Sermones*

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Saint Peter Damian (1007–1072)
Sermones · Sermons

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## Sermo XXXVIII.

*DE SS. DONATO ET HILARIANO MARTYRIBUS. (VII AUG.)*

Adest, dilectissimi, beatorum martyrum Donati atque Hilariani praeclara solemnitas, quae, dum devotionis vestrae frequentiam ex diversis in unum partibus convocat, nos etiam ut eorum insigne praeconium pro modulo nostro non taceamus invitat. Haec est enim dies in qua triste hoc saeculum deserentes deposuerunt sarcinam carnis, et stolam adepti sunt angelicae claritatis. Hodie, triumphato diabolo, palmam gloriosi certaminis ad imperatorem coelestis militiae reportarunt. Hodie purpurati proprio sanguine, alternantibus undique hymnidicis angelorum coetibus, vexillum peractae victoriae regnis coelestibus intulerunt. Gradatim siquidem incedentes, per pugnam consequenter ad palmam, per palmam provecti sunt ad coronam. Cum visibili sane videbantur hoste confligere, sed invisibilem in eo meruerunt adversarium superare. Corporum quidem obicem hostilibus jaculis opponebant, sed eorum fides munitissima mentis arce subnixa, inexpugnabilis eminebat.

Sed cum utriusque martyris communia gesta percurrimus, nonnullam conversationis inter eos fuisse distantiam, reperimus. Et Hilarianum quidem illum Hilarionem fuisse poterat quis non absurde conjicere, cujus a B. Hieronymo vita describitur, nisi dispar utriusque exitus prohiberet. Nam qui eorum vitae seriem, miracula quoque quibus effulserant, loca nihilominus quae suis habitationibus illustraverant, prout monumenta declarant, oculo vigilante percurrit, non minimam similitudinem in ipsis rerum collationibus deprehendit. Sed cum alter ad martyrii pervenerit palmam, alter ab hac vita in pace quieverit, constat procul dubio in persona diversos, quos utique diverso migrationis genere novimus consummatos. Qui nimirum ad suorum similitudinem nominum, licet in anterioribus congruant, in fine discordant.

Beatus vero Donatus, cui potissimum praesens famulaturus est sermo, ut ejus veridica testatur historia, Juliano Caesari non solum in liberalium artium studiis contubernalis exstitit, verum etiam cum eo simul prima gradus ecclesiastici rudimenta suscepit. Ubi notandum et formidolosius cogitandum quam abyssus multa sint divina judicia (Psal. XXXV), et quam terribilis Deus in consiliis super filios hominum (Psal. LXV). Ecce enim in agro Domini duo pariter virgulta succrescunt, quorum alterum per occultam gratiam cedrus est paradisi, alterum fomes nunquam finiendis praeparatur incendiis.

## Sermon XXXVIII.

*ON THE HOLY MARTYRS DONATUS AND HILARIANUS. (AUGUST 7)*

The distinguished solemnity of the blessed martyrs Donatus and Hilarianus is present, most beloved, which, while it convokes the frequency of your devotion from diverse parts into one, also invites us not to be silent about their distinguished praise according to our small measure. For this is the day in which, deserting this sad world, they laid down the burden of the flesh, and obtained the robe of angelic clarity. Today, the devil having been triumphed over, they carried back the palm of the glorious contest to the emperor of the heavenly militia. Today, purpled with their own blood, with groups of hymn-singing angels alternating on every side, they brought the banner of the finished victory into the heavenly kingdoms. Proceeding step by step, consequently through the fight to the palm, through the palm they were promoted to the crown. Indeed they seemed to conflict with a visible enemy, but in him they deserved to overcome an invisible adversary. They were opposing the barrier of their bodies to the hostile darts, but their faith, supported by the most fortified citadel of the mind, stood forth inexpugnable.

But when we run through the common deeds of both martyrs, we find that there was some distance of conduct between them. And indeed one could not absurdly conjecture that Hilarianus was that Hilarion whose life is described by Blessed Jerome, unless the disparate end of each prohibited it. For he who runs through with a vigilant eye the series of their lives, the miracles also with which they shone forth, and likewise the places which they illustrated with their habitations, as the monuments declare, finds no small similarity in the collations of the things themselves. But since the one reached the palm of martyrdom, the other rested in peace from this life, it is established without doubt that they are diverse in person, whom certainly we know to have been consummated by a diverse kind of migration. Who namely, according to the similarity of their names, although they agree in the former parts, disagree in the end.

Blessed Donatus however, whom the present sermon is especially about to serve, as his truthful history testifies, was a companion to Julian Caesar not only in the studies of the liberal arts, but also together with him received the first rudiments of the ecclesiastical grade. Where it is to be noted and more fearfully thought how many a deep are the divine judgments (Psalm 35), and how terrible is God in counsels over the sons of men (Psalm 65). For behold in the field of the Lord two saplings grow up together, of which one through occult grace is a cedar of paradise, the other as fuel is prepared for fires never to be finished.

Ille de scholis ad regnum, de regno truditur nudus in tartarum; iste sacerdos effectus, de cathedra rapitur ad supplicium, de supplicio purpuratus et coronatus elevatur in coelum. Illi mundus arrisit, coelestis aula non patuit; hic postquam mundanae tempestatis naufragium pertulit, ad quietis aeternae portum felici securitate pervenit.

Probatur autem in his vera evangelica illa sententia, qua dicitur: «Quia erunt duo in agro; unus assumetur, et alter relinquetur (Luc. XVII).» Uterque tamen, sicut angelus et diabolus, diversae scilicet intentionis intuitu famulati sunt Deo. Ille coactus, iste indubitanter ultroneus. Nunquid enim et Julianus Apostata divinis obtemperasse legibus non convincitur, cum ejus cruenta rabies in Christi martyres ebulliret, et tot quasi maturas electorum segetes in horreum Dominicum persecutionis suae falce desectas inferret? Ad hoc enim tyrannica potestas reprobae est adhibita voluntati, et pingui tauro cornua sunt divinitus exaltata, ut summi patris familias aream ventilaret, et a paleis quae ignibus sunt obnoxiae munda grana secerneret. Hinc est quod Historiae tradunt huic Juliano intra quamdam Galliarum basilicam constituto coronam, quae super eum dependebat, in ejus repente verticem cecidisse, et ita signum quia ille deberet imperator fieri, in opinione populi portendisse. Sed melius nos ardentem torrem in suo igne relinquimus, ut vernantis arboris suaviter redolentia poma carpamus.

Hanc itaque similam Deo beatus sacerdos et martyr Donatus obtulit, et in monimentum suavissimi odoris adolevit, cum plebem gentilium in unitate spiritus ad fidei sacramanta convertit. Fructus siquidem animarum in conspectu Dei fragrantius redolet, quam ulla suavitas sacrificiorum. Hoc sacrificium, fratres mei, cum beato Donato et nos pro modulo nostro semper Deo studeamus offerre, ut non solum de nostra salute solliciti, sed ad lucrandas etiam proximorum nostrorum animas simus solerter intenti; quatenus, dum charitatis hostia in ara nostri pectoris adoletur, ab illo sacrificium nostrum mereatur in odorem suavitatis accipi, qui in ara crucis pro salute nostra dignatus est immolari.

Tanto praeterea vir sanctus circa suos quoque fidei zelo fervebat, ut gentiles adhuc eum parentes abjicerent, et dulce pignus a suis prorsus affectibus abdicarent; sed postmodum eos et ad fidei Christianae sacramenta perduxit, et insuper ad martyrium sibi congrua ordinatione praemisit. Unde clarus iste inter beatos martyres jure censendus est, qui filius simul et pater est martyrum. Filius utique per naturam; pater per collatae fidei gratiam, eosque grata vicissitudine genuit Deo, a quibus fuerat genitus mundo.

That one from the schools to the kingdom, from the kingdom is thrust naked into hell; this one having been made a priest, is snatched from the chair to punishment, from punishment purpled and crowned is elevated into heaven. To that one the world smiled, the heavenly hall did not open; this one after he endured the shipwreck of the worldly tempest, reached the port of eternal rest with happy security.

For in these is proved that true evangelical sentence, in which it is said: "Because there shall be two in the field; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left (Luke 17)." Each however, just as the angel and the devil, served God with an intuition of diverse intention. That one coerced, this one undoubtedly voluntary. For is not Julian the Apostate also convicted of having obeyed the divine laws, when his bloody rage was bubbling up against the martyrs of Christ, and he brought in so many as it were mature crops of the elect into the Lord's barn, cut down by the sickle of his persecution? For to this the tyrannical power was applied to a reprobate will, and the horns were divinely exalted for the fat bull, so that he might winnow the threshing floor of the highest father of the family, and might discern the clean grains from the chaff which are liable to the fires. Hence it is that Histories hand down that to this Julian, stationed within a certain basilica of the Gauls, the crown which was hanging over him suddenly fell upon his vertex, and thus portended the sign that he ought to become emperor in the opinion of the people. But better we leave the burning firebrand in its fire, so that we may pluck the sweetly smelling fruits of the budding tree.

The blessed priest and martyr Donatus therefore offered this fine flour to God, and burned it as a memorial of most sweet odor, when he converted the people of the gentiles in the unity of the spirit to the sacraments of the faith. For the fruit of souls smells more fragrantly in the sight of God than any sweetness of sacrifices. This sacrifice, my brothers, let us also always strive to offer to God according to our small measure with blessed Donatus, so that we may be not only solicitous for our own salvation, but also skillfully intent upon gaining the souls of our neighbors; so that, while the victim of charity is burned on the altar of our heart, our sacrifice may merit to be accepted by him as an odor of sweetness, who deigned to be immolated on the altar of the cross for our salvation.

Furthermore, the holy man burned with such zeal for the faith toward his own, that his gentile parents still cast him off, and completely renounced the sweet pledge from their affections; but afterwards he both led them to the sacraments of the Christian faith, and moreover sent them before himself to martyrdom by a fitting ordination. Whence that famous man is rightly to be reckoned among the blessed martyrs, who is at once the son and the father of martyrs. The son indeed by nature; the father by the grace of the bestowed faith, and he begot for God by a grateful vicissitude those by whom he had been begotten for the world.

Beati qui in haereditate terrena talem genuere parentes, per quem videlicet in terra viventium supernorum fiunt civium cohaeredes. Laetare et tu felix Aritium, quod talem meruisti ex divina liberalitate patronum. Laetare, inquam, et totis in Domino visceribus gratulare; quia, dum sacri corporis in tuo gremio confoves glebam, diadematis superni regis solemniter imprimendam contines margaritam. Thesaurum servas, cui non aurum digne conferri, non ulla quarumlibet opum summa valet aequari. Unde non jam Aritium ex more dicaris, quod ab ariditate terrae tibi constat nomen impositum, sed tu Auritium potius a pretiosissimo scilicet sacri cadaveris auro, quod in tuis visceribus probatur occultum.

Beata igitur and dives terrae vena, quae quasi superno regi facta depositaria, illud recondit talentum suis finibus creditum, quod in die restitutionis coelestibus est gazophylaciis inferendum, ubi vivi lapides et igniti perpetuo rutilant, ubi triclinia auro radiantia vernantes margaritae luculenter exornant. Quod nimirum tunc indubitanter implebitur, cum jubilaeus noster advenerit, cum extrema illa tuba non jam legalis, sed judicialis clangere coeperit. Sicut enim septimus dies, ita et jubilaeus annus feriari praecipitur, per quem videlicet aeternae vitae requies figuratur.

Adveniente igitur Jubilaeo tuba canit, et mox ad antiquas possessiones suas unusquisque revertitur; quia, appropinquante judicio: In voce Archangeli, in novissima tuba (I Thes. V), cunctis mortalibus suorum corporum possessio reparatur. Testante etenim Paulo: «Canet tuba, et mortui resurgent incorrupti (I Cor. XV).» Beatae illae animae, fratres mei, quae tunc, dum suis se corporibus induunt, sanctorum martyrum participium sortiuntur. Beati, qui sic nunc ad sanctorum memorias excubant, ut eorum sibi ad imitandum semper exempla proponant; qui sic eorum solemnitates laudando frequentant, ut tamen vivendo ab eorum tramite non recedant. Sanctos enim martyres sequimur, si, dum illi suorum contempserunt corporum passiones nos etiam carnis nostrae studeamus frangere voluntates.

Veneremur itaque, fratres, et votis ac dignis honoremus obsequiis beatos istos martyres, Donatum videlicet arque Hilarianum: per quos, tanquam geminos superni luminis oculos, omnipotens Deus totius Tusciae corpus voluit illustrare; ut, dum gloriosos martyres nunc amando et imitando prosequimur, ad imperatorem martyrum, ipsis intercedentibus, pervenire mereamur, Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo XXXIX.

*DE SANCTO CASSIANO MARTYRE (XIII AUG.).*

Blessed are the parents who begot such a one in the earthly inheritance, through whom namely they become co-heirs of the supernal citizens in the land of the living. Rejoice also you, happy Arezzo, who merited such a patron from the divine liberality. Rejoice, I say, and congratulate with all your bowels in the Lord; because, while you cherish the remains of the sacred body in your bosom, you contain the pearl to be solemnly impressed of the crown of the supernal king. You keep a treasure to which gold cannot worthily be compared, nor any sum of any riches whatsoever be equaled. Whence you should no longer be called Arezzo (Aritium) according to custom, which name is established for you from the aridity of the earth, but rather you [should be called] Auritium from the most precious gold (auro) namely of the sacred corpse, which is proved hidden in your bowels.

Blessed therefore and rich is the vein of the earth, which as if made a depositary for the supernal king, hides that talent entrusted to its borders, which on the day of restitution is to be brought into the heavenly treasuries, where living and ignited stones glow perpetually, where dining rooms radiating with gold blooming pearls clearly adorn. Which undoubtedly will then be fulfilled without hesitation, when our jubilee shall arrive, when that final trumpet, no longer of the law but of judgment, shall begin to sound. For just as the seventh day, so also the jubilee year is commanded to be a holiday, through which namely the rest of eternal life is figured.

When the Jubilee arrives therefore, the trumpet sounds, and soon each one returns to his ancient possessions; because, as judgment approaches: In the voice of the Archangel, in the last trumpet (I Thess. 5), the possession of their own bodies is restored to all mortals. For Paul testifies: "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise incorrupt (I Cor. 15)." Blessed are those souls, my brothers, which then, while they clothe themselves with their own bodies, obtain a participation with the holy martyrs. Blessed are they who so now keep watch at the memories of the saints, that they always propose their examples to themselves for imitation; who so frequent their solemnities by praising, that they nevertheless do not recede from their path by living. For we follow the holy martyrs if, while they contemned the sufferings of their own bodies, we also strive to break the wills of our own flesh.

We venerate therefore, brothers, and with vows and worthy services let us honor these blessed martyrs, Donatus namely and Hilarianus: through whom, as if two eyes of supernal light, almighty God willed to illustrate the body of all Tuscany; so that, while we follow the glorious martyrs now by loving and imitating, we may merit to reach the emperor of martyrs, they interceding, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

## Sermon XXXIX.

*ON SAINT CASSIAN THE MARTYR (AUGUST 13).*

Admirabilis et gloriosa nostri dispensatio Conditoris, fratres charissimi, ita cursum nostrae mortalitatis instituit, ut per succedentium vicissitudines temporum, diversae nobis victoriosorum Christi militum festivitates occurrant, quae nostros animos ad amorem illius summae et continuae solemnitatis accendant. Plane cum totius anni circulum triumphalibus modo martyrum, modo confessorum titulis Deus omnipotens variat, quid aliud quam velut sertum gloriae construit, quod utique decora liliorum atque rosarum varietate depingitur. Inter quas nimirum festivitates, et hodierna non ignobilis est, Hippolyti scilicet et Cassiani martyrum, quae tanquam geminum rutilat duorum lumen astrorum. Qui profecto regis aeterni strenuissimi bellatores diversis quidem locis, diversis subjacuere suppliciis; sed una utrique erat causa certaminis, quia non dispar utrumque animaverat professio veritatis. Enim vero Cassianus, cui potissimum famulaturus est sermo, diu quidem latuit, sed cum ad certamen perventum est, quid acrimoniae, quid saporis, quid fortitudinis granum sinapis occultaret, aperuit. Imo, juxta nominis sui praesagium, cum in passionis pila persecutorum manibus tundi coepit et atteri, mox fragrantiam odoriferae suavitatis, quae in se latebat, aspersit. Casia siquidem species est aromatica, quae integra quidem nullius esse videtur odoris; trita autem naturalis vim suavitatis emittit.

Beatus itaque Cassianus, ut gestorum illius testatur historia, dum scholarum doctor existeret, brevibusque notis verba comprehendere pueros erudiret, pro fide Christi ad quaestionem deductus est. Cumque zelo succensus fidei judicum decreta contemneret, et sacrificia profana calcaret, discipulorum manibus ad cruciandum traditus est; ut illis versa vice poenas exsolveret, quos ipse dudum sub disciplinae ferula terruisset. Mox itaque indumentis exutus, manibus post terga ligatur, armato stylis et tabulis puerorum furentium agmine circumfunditur; qui undique compunctus atque discerptus, toto corpore laceratur. Novum plane et inusitatum genus martyrii insignem Deo martyrem consecravit. Videtur autem haec martyrii species ad similitudinem comparandam, nulli melius posse congruere quam ipsi regi martyrum Domino Salvatori. Nam et ille a suis fidelibus occisus est, Judaeis videlicet, quibus praecepta Decalogi proprio digito descripta tradiderat, quos caeremoniis suis sacrificiorumque ritibus instruxerat; quos certe ad omnem vivendi rectitudinem, tanquam teneros sub disciplina pueros, informaverat. Sicut ipse per Isaiam dicit: «Filios enutrivi et exaltavi, ipsi autem spreverunt me (Isa. XI).»

The admirable and glorious dispensation of our Creator, most dear brothers, so instituted the course of our mortality, that through the successions of following times, diverse festivities of the victorious soldiers of Christ occur to us, which kindle our minds to the love of that highest and continuous solemnity. Plainly, when almighty God varies the circle of the whole year by the triumphal titles now of martyrs, now of confessors, what else does he do but as if construct a garland of glory, which namely is depicted with the beautiful variety of lilies and roses. Among which festivities, certainly, today's is not ignoble, namely that of the martyrs Hippolytus and Cassian, which shines as if the twin light of two stars. These most strenuous warriors of the eternal king surely lay under diverse punishments in diverse places; but for both there was one cause of contest, because a non-dissimilar profession of truth had animated both. For indeed Cassian, whom the present sermon is especially about to serve, lay hidden for a long time, but when he came to the contest, he opened what of bitterness, what of flavor, what of strength the grain of mustard might hide. Nay, according to the presage of his name, when in the mortar of the passion he began to be pounded and worn by the hands of the persecutors, he soon sprinkled the fragrance of odoriferous sweetness which lay hidden in him. For Cassia is an aromatic species, which whole indeed seems to be of no odor; but when crushed it emits the force of natural sweetness.

Blessed Cassian therefore, as the history of his deeds testifies, while he was a teacher of schools, and was instructing boys to comprehend words by short notes, was led to questioning for the faith of Christ. And when, kindled with zeal for the faith, he contemned the decrees of the judges and trampled upon the profane sacrifices, he was delivered to the hands of his disciples to be tortured; so that by a reverse turn he might pay the penalties to those whom he himself had recently terrified under the rod of discipline. Soon therefore, stripped of his garments, his hands are bound behind his back, and he is surrounded by a troop of furious boys armed with styli and tablets; who, pricked and torn asunder on all sides, is lacerated in his whole body. Plainly a new and unusual kind of martyrdom consecrated the distinguished martyr to God. Moreover, this species of martyrdom seems able to agree with no one better, for comparing a similitude, than with the king of martyrs himself, the Lord Savior. For he also was killed by his own faithful, namely the Jews, to whom he had delivered the precepts of the Decalogue described with his own finger, whom he had instructed by his ceremonies and rites of sacrifices; whom surely he had informed to every rectitude of living, as if tender boys under discipline. As he himself says through Isaiah: "I have nourished and exalted sons, but they have despised me (Isaiah 1)."

Nam et illi carnales Israelitae puerorum nomine digni fuerant, qui mandata legis prophetarumque mysteria non senili gravitate pensabant, sed omnia superficietenus ac pueriliter intelligebant; quod cum diversa Scripturarum possit auctoritate firmari, id tantum sufficiat hic apponere, quod Eliseo prophetae legitur contigisse. Nam cum ascenderet per viam quae ducit Bethel, pueri parvi egressi de civitate illudebant ei, dicentes: «Ascende, calve; ascende, calve.» Qui cum respexisset, vidit eos, et maledixit eis in nomine Domini. Moxque Scriptura subjungit: «Quia egressi sunt duo ursi de saltu, et laceraverunt ex eis quadraginta duos pueros (IV Reg. II).» Sane quid per Eliseum, nisi Mediator Dei et hominum debet intelligi? Quid vero per Bethel, quae domus Dei interpretatur, nisi beatitudo coelestis exprimitur? Per viam ergo quae ducit Bethel, Redemptor noster ascendebat, quando passioni appropinquabat; sicut jam in ipsa sacrosancta et mystica coena dicit discipulis suis: «Vado ad eum qui misit me (Joan. VI).» Sed dum ascendit Bethel, id est, dum per sacratissimae Passionis suae mysterium redire contendit ad Patrem, pueri parvi egressi de civitate, illudunt ei, dicentes: «Ascende calve, ascende calve.» Quia Judaei, omni gravitatis et sapientiae pondere vacui, illaque pueritia parvuli de qua dicitur: «Maledictus puer centum annorum (Isai. LXV),» eum ad locum, qui dicitur calvariae, pertrahunt, atque adversus eum viperinis irrisionum et opprobriorum furiis inardescunt, calvariae autem locus ille dicebatur a calvitiis amputatis, quia illic damnatitii decollari consueverant.

Et notandum quia pueri egressi de civitate dicuntur: quoniam, sicut Apostolus ait: «Ut sanctificaret per suum sanguinem populum, extra portam passus est Dominus (Heb. XIII).» Porro quod sequitur, quoniam «egressi duo ursi de saltu, dilaceraverunt ex eis quadraginta duos pueros,» per numerum puerorum numerus signatur annorum. Quadragesimo secundo quippe anno post Domini passionem, sicut historiae tradunt, Titus et Vespasianus, duo reges de silvis gentium, tanquam duo feroces ursi, de saltu ferarum dilaceraverunt pueros; quia venientes ad excidium Hierusalem, debellaverunt in furore Judaeos. Per pueros ergo significati sunt qui Dominum crucifixerunt; pueri quoque sunt qui B. Cassianum martyrem occiderunt. Utraque scilicet non innocens pueritia, sed artifex et venenosa malitia. Occisus est Christus pro Cassiano, occisus est Cassianus pro Christo: Dominus pro servo, et servus pro Domino; dicebat enim: «Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus, quae retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo (Psal. CXV).»

For those carnal Israelites also had been worthy of the name of boys, who did not weigh the commands of the law and the mysteries of the prophets with senile gravity, but understood all things superficially and childishly; which since it can be established by diverse authority of the Scriptures, let it suffice to set down here only that which is read to have happened to the prophet Elisha. For when he was ascending by the way which leads to Bethel, small boys coming out of the city mocked him, saying: "Ascend, baldy; ascend, baldy." Who when he had looked back, saw them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And soon the Scripture subjoins: "Because two bears came out of the forest, and lacerated forty-two boys from among them (IV Kings 2)." Surely who is to be understood by Elisha, unless the Mediator of God and men? And what is expressed by Bethel, which is interpreted house of God, unless heavenly beatitude? By the way therefore which leads to Bethel, our Redeemer was ascending when he was approaching his passion; just as already in that sacrosanct and mystical supper he says to his disciples: "I go to him who sent me (John 16)." But while he ascends to Bethel, that is, while through the mystery of his most sacred Passion he contends to return to the Father, small boys coming out of the city mock him, saying: "Ascend baldy, ascend baldy." Because the Jews, void of all weight of gravity and wisdom, and small in that childhood of which it is said: "The boy of a hundred years shall be cursed (Isaiah 65)," drag him to the place which is called Calvary, and burn against him with the viperous furies of derisions and reproaches; moreover, that place was called Calvary from the cut-off baldnesses, because there the condemned were accustomed to be beheaded.

And it is to be noted that the boys are said to have come out of the city: because, as the Apostle says: "That he might sanctify the people through his own blood, the Lord suffered outside the gate (Hebrews 13)." Furthermore, what follows, since "two bears coming out of the forest lacerated forty-two boys from among them," the number of years is signified by the number of boys. For in the forty-second year after the Lord's passion, as histories hand down, Titus and Vespasian, two kings from the forests of the nations, like two fierce bears, lacerated the boys from the forest; because coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, they fought against the Jews in fury. By the boys therefore were signified those who crucified the Lord; boys also are they who killed the blessed martyr Cassian. Both surely not an innocent childhood, but a skilled and poisonous malice. Christ was killed for Cassian, Cassian was killed for Christ: the Lord for the servant, and the servant for the Lord; for he said: "What shall I render to the Lord for all things which he has rendered to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and I will invoke the name of the Lord (Psalm 115)."

Sed ille mori dignatus est, ut hunc de sub jugo fereae servitutis educeret; isti mori donatum est, ut ad haereditatem filiorum, cui ascriptus erat, cum gloria perveniret. Ille suscepit mortem, ut mortem in sua carne destrueret, iste mori non timuit, ut ad auctorem vitae triumphi sui victor insignia reportaret. Ille persecutores habuit, quos creaverat, iste eos carnifices pertulit quos docebat. Sed Christus in martyre suo pugnabat, qui pugnandi vires administrabat; in eo solus ipse vincebat qui illum inter certamina roborabat. Nam et tota universalis Ecclesia, virtutum armis accincta, contra diabolum per totum mortalis vitae hujus excursum in Christo dimicat, in Christo semper non sua, sed ejus virtute triumphat. Hanc plane ex antiquo hoste victoriam, quia noluit Synagoga, suscepit Ecclesia.

Quod vobis, fratres charissimi, melius ostendimus, si veteris instrumenti victoriam, quae per mulierem facta est, ad memoriam revocemus. Nam, ut paucis verbis sacra comprehendatur historia, Debora prophetes uxor Lapidoth, judicabat populum illo tempore, et sedebat sub palma inter Rama, et Bethel, in monte Ephraim, ascendebantque ad eam filii Israel in omne judicium (Jud. IV). Sed sic ad exitum celerius pervenitur, si, dum historia texitur, per partes interim exponatur. Per Deboram sane, quae loquela sive apis interpretatur, prophetia non inconvenienter accipitur. Apis quippe mellificat, et de prophetia per Psalmistam dicitur: «Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua, Domine, super mel et favum ori meo!» (Psal. CXVIII.) Interim nolo vos lateat, dilectissimi, quia historia haec, quam tractandam ex occasione suscepimus, pluribus indiget verbis, quia multis est repleta mysteriis: sed eam idcirco sub brevitate contrahimus, ut dilectionem vestram prolixitatis taedio non gravemus. Consideremus itaque ubi sedem habere prophetia describitur, videlicet sub palma, quia quos prophetica doctrina suis institutionibus erudit, ad palmam supernae vocationis adducit, dumque per eam homines vivendi ordinem discunt, vitiorum rebellantium victores fiunt. Nec praetereundum quod inter Rama et Bethel sedisse perhibetur. Rama siquidem excelsa, Bethel domus Dei, sicut jam diximus, interpretatur. Recte igitur prophetia inter Rama et Bethel habitare describitur; quia quisquis propheticis studet invigilare doctrinis, quisquis sacrarum Scripturarum sincere vacat eloquiis, sic in domo Dei per desiderium mentis inhabitat, ut non infirma et momentanea, sed excelsa potius atque coelestia semper inquirat.

But he deigned to die, so that he might lead this one out from under the yoke of iron servitude; to this one it was granted to die, so that he might arrive with glory at the inheritance of the sons, to which he had been ascribed. He undertook death, so that he might destroy death in his own flesh; this one did not fear to die, so that he might bring back the victor's insignia of his triumph to the author of life. That one had persecutors whom he had created; this one endured those executioners whom he was teaching. But Christ was fighting in his martyr, who was administering the strengths of fighting; in him he alone himself was conquering, who was strengthening him during the contests. For even the whole universal Church, girded with the arms of virtues, fights against the devil through the whole course of this mortal life in Christ, and in Christ always triumphs not by her own, but by his virtue. This victory plainly from the ancient enemy, because the Synagogue would not, the Church undertook.

Which we show better to you, most dear brothers, if we recall to memory the victory of the old testament which was made through a woman. For, so that the sacred history may be comprehended in a few words, Deborah the prophetess, wife of Lapidoth, was judging the people at that time, and she sat under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, on mount Ephraim, and the sons of Israel ascended to her for every judgment (Judges 4). But thus one arrives at the end more quickly, if, while the history is woven, it is explained by parts in the meantime. By Deborah surely, which is interpreted speech or bee, prophecy is not inconveniently accepted. For a bee makes honey, and of prophecy it is said by the Psalmist: "How sweet are your speeches to my jaws, O Lord, above honey and the honeycomb to my mouth!" (Psalm 118.) In the meantime I do not wish it to be hidden from you, most beloved, that this history, which we undertook to treat on occasion, needs more words, because it is filled with many mysteries: but for that reason we contract it under brevity, so that we may not burden your love with the weariness of prolixity. Let us consider therefore where the prophecy is described to have its seat, namely under a palm tree, because those whom prophetic doctrine instructs by its institutions, it leads to the palm of supernal vocation, and while through it men learn the order of living, they become victors of the rebelling vices. Nor is it to be passed over that she is said to have sat between Ramah and Bethel. Ramah indeed is interpreted lofty, Bethel house of God, as we have already said. Rightly therefore prophecy is described to dwell between Ramah and Bethel; because whoever strives to keep watch for prophetic doctrines, whoever sincerely has leisure for the speeches of the sacred Scriptures, so dwells in the house of God through the desire of the mind, that he may always inquire after not weak and momentary things, but rather lofty and heavenly ones.

Haec vocavit ad se Barach. Porro Barach interpretatur coruscatio. Coruscatio autem habet quidem lucem, sed non diutius permanentem. Mox enim ut lucere incipit, illico deficit. Barach igitur iste Israelitici populi figuram tenet, qui primus omnium propheticis instructus oraculis, aliquantulum quidem in accepta lege refulsit, sed brevi tempore coruscavit. In lege quippe, de qua dictum est: «Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, Domine, et lumen semitis meis (Psal. CXVIII),» antiquus ille populus lucere coepit, sed desiit. Coruscum quasi clarae vitae protulit, sed in lucidis operibus non permansit. Nam dum dicerent: «Omnia, quae praeceperit nobis Dominus, et audiemus et faciemus,» ecce quasi lux coruscationis exorta; sed dum repente curvarent genua ante Baal, ecce coruscatio videbatur exstincta. Dixit ergo Debora ad Barach: «Praecepit tibi Dominus Deus Israel: Tolle tecum decem millia pugnatorum, et vade in montem Thabor. Ego autem adducam ad te in locum torrentis Cison Sisaram principem exercitus Jabin, et currus ejus omnemque multitudinem, tradamque eos in manu tua (Jud. IV).» Tanquam si per propheticam doctrinam priori populo Deus omnipotens dicat: Decem praecepta legis assume, et virtutum culmen ascende, sicque reproborum principem ac totius iniquitatis auctorem, me tibi vires administrante, prosterne.

Nec praetereundum quod princeps ille militiae Sisara, qui perditioni proximae erat obnoxius, ad torrentem Cison promittebatur antea deducendus. Quid enim per torrentem Cison, nisi baptismus debet intelligi? Nam cum catechumenus lavacro sacri fontis immergitur, tanquam Sisara cum suo exercitu, sic nequissimus spiritus cum his, quae sibi militant, vitiis omnibus necesse est perimatur. Respondit autem Barach ad Deboram: Si venis mecum, vadam; si nolueris venire, non pergam. Ac si carnalis ille Israel prophetiae respondeat: Nisi juxta litteras, et quasi secundum muliebrem intellectum te mecum semper habuero, spirituale certamen aggredi non praesumo. Cui Debora: Ibo quidem tecum, sed tibi victoria non reputabitur, quia in manum mulieris tradetur Sisara. Velut si vetustus ille populus audit: Tecum quidem erit exterior, ut postulas, prophetia; sed spiritualem ex antiquo hoste triumphum, non tu, sed sancta potius obtinebit Ecclesia. Illi certe, illi proveniet jure victoria, quae in Scripturae mysteriis, dum spiritualis intelligentiae medullam quaerit, occidentis litterae paleas magnopere non attendit. Commisso itaque bello tandem fugit Sisara in domum Jahel, alienigenae videlicet mulieris. Quae profecto sitienti utrem lactis aperuit et potum dedit; deinde clavum in cerebrum ejus per tempus utrumque defixit, sicque in hominis specie perversorum omnium caput diabolum interfecit. Quid enim Jahel, quae ascensio interpretatur, nisi sanctam designat Ecclesiam, per quam videlicet solam beatitudo coelestis ostenditur?

This [prophecy] called Barak to itself. Moreover, Barak is interpreted flashing (coruscatio). Now flashing indeed has light, but not for very long. For as soon as it begins to shine, it immediately fails. This Barak therefore holds the figure of the Israelite people, which first of all instructed by prophetic oracles, shone for a little while in the received law, but flashed for a brief time. In the law, indeed, of which it was said: "Your word is a lamp to my feet, O Lord, and a light to my paths (Psalm 118)," that ancient people began to shine, but ceased. It brought forth as if the lightning of a clear life, but did not remain in lucid works. For while they were saying: "All things which the Lord has commanded us, we will both hear and do," behold as if the light of flashing arose; but while they suddenly bent their knees before Baal, behold the flashing was seen extinguished. Deborah said therefore to Barak: "The Lord God of Israel has commanded you: Take with you ten thousand fighters, and go into mount Tabor. Moreover, I will lead to you in the place of the torrent Kishon, Sisera the prince of the army of Jabin, and his chariots and all his multitude, and I will deliver them into your hand (Judges 4)." As if through prophetic doctrine almighty God says to the former people: Assume the ten precepts of the law, and ascend the summit of virtues, and thus prostrate the prince of the reprobate and the author of all iniquity, with me administering strength to you.

Nor is it to be passed over that that prince of the warfare, Sisera, who was liable to proximate perdition, was promised beforehand to be led to the torrent Kishon. For what is to be understood by the torrent Kishon, unless baptism? For when the catechumen is immersed in the washing of the sacred font, just as Sisera with his army, so the most wicked spirit with those vices which fight for it must necessarily be destroyed. Barak however replied to Deborah: If you come with me, I will go; if you will not come, I will not go. As if that carnal Israel should reply to prophecy: Unless I have you always with me according to the letters, and as if according to a womanly understanding, I do not presume to enter upon the spiritual contest. To whom Deborah [replies]: I will indeed go with you, but the victory will not be reputed to you, because Sisera shall be delivered into the hand of a woman. As if that old people hears: The exterior prophecy, as you ask, will indeed be with you; but the spiritual triumph over the ancient enemy, not you, but rather the holy Church shall obtain. To her surely, to her shall the victory arrive by right, who in the mysteries of Scripture, while she seeks the marrow of spiritual intelligence, does not greatly attend to the chaff of the killing letter. A battle having been joined therefore, at length Sisera fled into the house of Jael, namely of a foreign woman. Who surely opened a skin of milk for the thirsty one and gave him a drink; then she fixed a nail into his brain through both temples, and thus in the species of a man killed the devil, the head of all the perverse. For what does Jael, which is interpreted ascension, signify unless the holy Church, through which namely alone heavenly beatitude is shown?

Unde et Synagoga de eadem Ecclesia dicit in Canticis: «Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum?» (Cant. VIII.) Haec mulier alienigena fuit, quoniam sancta Ecclesia de gentilitate processit. Haec Israelitarum hostem prius lacte potavit, postea pilum capiti ejus infixit; quia humani generis inimicum, quem sancta prius Ecclesia carnaliter vivendo lactavit, postmodum spiritualiter conversando, quodam acumine ac virtute crucis exstinxit. Nisi enim insatiabilis homicida perditionem humani generis inexplebili prorsus aviditate sitiret, de illo certe Scriptura non diceret: «Absorbebit fluvium, et non mirabitur, et habet fiduciam quod influat Jordanis in os ejus (Job XL).» Lac vero fructus est carnis, et blandimenta carnalis significat voluptatis.

Quandiu ergo gentilis populus juxta legem carnis voluptuose vixit, tanquam lac, ita vitae suae mollitiem sitienti, mortem nostram diabolo propinavit. At postquam sub spiritus se disciplina constrinxit, invictae mox crucis arma corripuit, hostemque salutis humanae, quem dudum voluptatis lacte potaverat, nunc poenitentiae munita praesidio, ligno transfixit. Sic itaque quem Israelitica plebs superare non potuit, peregrina mulier, hoc est gentilis Ecclesia, solo crucis ligno prostravit.

Hinc est quod et hic invictissimus Christi miles B. Cassianus inter gravissima poenarum suarum tormenta superari non potuit, quia non eum ferrea lorica circumdedit, non galea cristata protexit, sed lignum tantummodo crucis armavit. Nam qui ligni hujus vexillo munitur, spiritualis nequitiae conflictum securus aggreditur. Hoc signum contra David ad bella congrediens, Philisthaeus sacrilegus ignorabat, atque idcirco mox in fronte percussus interiit (I Reg. XVII), ubi scilicet vitae sibi signaculum non impressit. Hoc signum salutis in fronte depingitur, ubi videlicet sacerdos summus in lege auri laminam in gloriam et decorem ponere jubebatur (Exod. XXVIII), in qua scilicet lamina illud gloriosum et ineffabile nomen Domini tetragrammaton videbatur exsculptum. Quod nimirum quid aliud quam crucem videbatur exprimere Salvatoris? Sicut enim crux quatuor habet cornua, et ita nomen illud quatuor litteris constat.

Crux ergo decor et gloria sacerdotalis officii in fronte ponitur, ut superliminari domus agni cruore perfuso, transeuntis angeli gladius evadatur (Exod. XII). Econtra in hac corporis parte rex ille Ozias lepra percussus est (II Par. XXVI), juxta Prophetae vocem dicentis: «Imple facies eorum ignominia (Psal. LXXXII),» qui dum regali culmine arroganter intumuit, sacrificandi licentiam, quae solis debebatur sacerdotibus, sibimet usurpavit.

Whence also the Synagogue says of the same Church in the Canticles: "Who is she who ascends from the desert flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" (Cant. 8.) This woman was foreign, because the holy Church proceeded from gentility. This one first gave the enemy of the Israelites milk to drink, afterwards she fixed a stake into his head; because the enemy of the human race, whom the holy Church first nourished by living carnally, afterwards by conversing spiritually, she extinguished by a certain sharpness and virtue of the cross. For unless the insatiable murderer thirsted for the perdition of the human race with an altogether unquenchable greed, the Scripture surely would not say of him: "He will absorb a river, and will not wonder, and has confidence that the Jordan may flow into his mouth (Job 40)." Milk however is the fruit of the flesh, and signifies the allurements of carnal pleasure.

As long, therefore, as the gentile people lived voluptuously according to the law of the flesh, they offered our death to the devil as if milk, thus the softness of their life to the thirsty one. But after they constrained themselves under the discipline of the spirit, they soon seized the arms of the invincible cross, and the enemy of human salvation, whom they had recently given to drink with the milk of pleasure, they now transfixed with the wood, fortified by the protection of penance. Thus, therefore, whom the Israelite people could not overcome, a foreign woman, that is the gentile Church, prostrated by the wood of the cross alone.

Hence it is that also here the most invincible soldier of Christ, Blessed Cassian, could not be overcome among the most grave torments of his punishments, because an iron breastplate did not surround him, a crested helmet did not protect him, but only the wood of the cross armed him. For he who is fortified by the banner of this wood, securely enters the conflict of spiritual wickedness. The sacrilegious Philistine was ignorant of this sign when he came together for war against David, and therefore soon died, struck in the forehead (1 Kings 17), where namely he did not imprint the seal of life upon himself. This sign of salvation is painted on the forehead, where namely the high priest in the law was commanded to place a gold plate for glory and beauty (Exodus 28), in which plate namely that glorious and ineffable four-letter name (tetragrammaton) of the Lord was seen engraved. Which surely, what else did it seem to express than the cross of the Savior? For just as the cross has four points, so that name consists of four letters.

The cross, therefore, the beauty and glory of the sacerdotal office, is placed on the forehead, so that, the lintel of the house having been sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, the sword of the passing angel may be evaded (Exodus 12). On the contrary, in this part of the body that king Uzziah was struck with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26), according to the voice of the Prophet saying: "Fill their faces with ignominy (Psalm 82)," who, while he arrogantly swelled at the royal height, usurped for himself the license of sacrificing, which was due to priests alone.

Hoc signum David in spiritu praevidens gratulabundus aiebat: «Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine;» ideoque subjungit: «Dedisti laetitiam in corde meo (Psal. IV).» Quam pretiosum, quamque mirificum crucis signum est, fratres mei, quod et superbos quosque cum ipso auctore superbiae destruxit, et pro Christo certantes in provectum gloriae triumphalis attollit! «Ecce, inquit Simeon, positus est hic in ruinam, et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel (Luc. II).» Pretiosum, inquam, signum crucis, sed, prout gestamus in fronte, utinam portemus in corde. Ille enim cordi suo signum crucis veraciter habet impressum, qui Christum, qui in cruce suspensus est, diligit, qui eum toto cordis amore complectitur, qui certe in eo totis visceribus delectatur, qui quaeque ab eo prohibita respuit, quae sunt mandata, cum amore custodit. Sunt enim inimici crucis Christi quorum, ut Apostolus ait: «Finis interitus, et gloria in confusione ipsorum, qui terrena sapiunt (Phil. III).» Sunt et amici crucis Christi, quorum videlicet conversatio in coelis est. In tremendo nempe judicio inter sinistros erit, quisquis vitalis hujus signi characterem non habebit. Nec ab eo, qui crucifixus est, judice referet praemium, qui sibi crucis insigne non ostendet impressum. In libro quippe Ezechielis hoc signum Dominus in frontibus gementium et dolentium praecipit imprimi: deinde caeteros omnes, qui absque hoc signo reperti sunt, jubet occidi (Ezech. IX).

Nam si diligenter inspicimus, ipsa quoque mandata veteris instrumenti sacramentum crucis redolere sentimus. Cum enim lex divinitus data sub denario numero traditur, qui videlicet numerus per X litteram designatur, quid in hoc aliud quam figura crucis exprimitur? Haec enim littera crucis habet speciem, quae, dum denarium numerum in se comprehendit, cruci militare omnia mandata legis evidenter ostendit.

Amemus ergo, dilectissimi, Christum, amemus crucem, et unusquisque nostrum solerter invigilet pravam in se reprimere voluntatem. Signum hoc vitae non exprimamus tantummodo in fronte carnis, sed recondamus insuper intimis visceribus castae et sobriae voluntatis, implentes illud quod sponsae sponsus jubet in Canticis: «Pone me, inquit, ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum (Cant. VIII).» Perspicuum est quia quod cor cogitat, brachium operatur. Ille ergo Christum super cor suum quasi signaculum ponit, qui eum medullitus diligit, qui ad eum ferventer anhelat, qui eum anxie flagitat, qui in ejus desiderio jugiter perseverat. Ille vero super brachium suum ponit Christum, qui extrinsecus quoque ejus mandatis insistens, quem in visceribus cordis occultat, etiam in operatione demonstrat. Nam et nos in quolibet membro nostro signum ponimus, ut rei, quae nobis chara est, memoriam non perdamus.

Foreseeing this sign in the spirit, David said rejoicing: "The light of your countenance is sealed upon us, O Lord"; and therefore he subjoins: "You have given gladness in my heart (Psalm 4)." How precious and how wonderful the sign of the cross is, my brothers, which both destroyed every proud one with the author of pride himself, and raises those struggling for Christ into the advancement of triumphal glory! "Behold," says Simeon, "this one is placed for the ruin and for the resurrection of many in Israel (Luke 2)." A precious sign, I say, is the cross, but as we bear it on the forehead, would that we might carry it in the heart. For he truly has the sign of the cross imprinted on his heart who loves Christ, who was suspended on the cross, who embraces him with the whole love of the heart, who surely delights in him with all his bowels, who rejects whatever things are prohibited by him, and guards with love those which are commanded. For they are enemies of the cross of Christ whose end, as the Apostle says, "is destruction, and glory is in their confusion, who savor earthly things (Philippians 3)." There are also friends of the cross of Christ, whose conversation namely is in heaven. Surely in the tremendous judgment, whoever will not have the character of this vital sign will be among those on the left. Nor will he receive a reward from him who is the Judge, who was crucified, who will not show the ensign of the cross imprinted on himself. Indeed, in the book of Ezekiel the Lord commands this sign to be imprinted on the foreheads of those groaning and grieving; then he commands all the others who are found without this sign to be killed (Ezekiel 9).

For if we look diligently, we perceive that the commands of the old instrument themselves also smell of the sacrament of the cross. For when the law given by God is delivered under the number ten, which number namely is designated by the letter X, what else is expressed in this than the figure of the cross? For this letter has the appearance of a cross, which, while it comprehends the number ten in itself, evidently shows that all the mandates of the law military for the cross.

Let us love, therefore, most beloved, Christ, let us love the cross, and let each of us watchfully be vigilant to repress the perverse will in himself. Let us not only express this sign of life on the forehead of the flesh, but let us moreover hide it in the innermost bowels of a chaste and sober will, fulfilling that which the bridegroom commands the bride in the Canticles: "Place me," he says, "as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm (Song of Songs 8)." It is clear that what the heart thinks, the arm performs. He therefore places Christ upon his heart as a seal who loves him from the marrow, who fervently pants after him, who anxiously entreats him, who continually perseveres in his desire. But he places Christ upon his arm who, also insisting upon his mandates outwardly, demonstrates even in operation him whom he hides in the bowels of the heart. For we also place a sign on any member of ours so that we may not lose the memory of a thing which is dear to us.

Habeatur ergo Christus in corde, habeatur et in operatione signaculum, ut ejus in nobis semper viva memoria, et subrepentium cogitationum prava compescat, et in his quae extrinsecus agimus, Crucifixi characterem evidenter exhibeat. Enimvero si nobis Christus signaculum fuerit, et ipse nos sibi grata vicissitudine signaculum ponit. Juxta quod Zorobabel duci Judaeae pollicetur, dicens: «In illa die suscipiam te, Zorobabel serve meus, et ponam te sicut signaculum in conspectu meo (Agg. II).» In conspectu namque Dei justus sicut signaculum ponitur, quia per continui amoris gratiam in ejus memoria semper habetur. At contra, de impio rege Jechonia, qui, quoniam Dei omnipotentis immemor erat, in ejus et ipse non merebatur esse memoria: «Si fuerit, inquit, Jechonias annulus dexter in manu mea, inde evellam eum (Jer. XXII).»

Quam inviolabile firmumque signaculum B. martyr Cassianus in pectore suo posuerat Christum, qui in tantae fidei constantia immobilis permanebat! illiduntur plagae verberum, infliguntur vulnera punctionum, intorquentur irrisionum jacula, vincula manibus innectuntur. Accedit et nuditas corporis, sed et spectaculum circumlatrantium undique derisorum. Inter hos procellarum saevientium turbines, inter istas denique crebrescentium grandinum tempestates, stat firma columna Dei prorsus immobilis. Non concutitur, non quassatur; sed lapidi, super quem fundata est, recta semper et firma constanter innititur. Dicebat enim: «Quis me separabit a charitate Christi? tribulatio? an angustia? an persecutio? an fames? an nuditas? an periculum? an gladius?» (Rom. VIII.) Illi frendebant dentibus; iste mitis Agni mundi peccata tollentis patientiam cogitabat. Carnifices inferendo supplicia satiabant cruentam sui pectoris rabiem; iste jam securus in mente versabat coelestis gloriae dignitatem.

Atque, ut ita dixerim, cautus ac prudens iste negotiator, fratres mei, quam felices cum remuneratore certantium Christo nundinas contrahebat! Deponebat siquidem sarcinam carnis, atque ad stolam festinabat angelicae claritatis. Deferebat ferulam crudelium puerorum, ut sanctorum fieret socius angelorum. Postponebat magisterium litteras edocendi, atque ad illud unum alacriter properabat Verbum, cui militant cuncta per orbem volumina litterarum, Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti, vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## * SERMO XL. IN ASSUMPTIONE BEATISSIMAE MARIAE VIRGINIS. (XV AUG.)

Let Christ therefore be had in the heart, and let him be had as a seal in operation, so that his memory, always living in us, may both restrain the perverse subreptitious thoughts, and evidently exhibit the character of the Crucified in those things which we do outwardly. Indeed, if Christ shall be a seal to us, he also places us as a seal to himself in a grateful vicissitude. According to what is promised to Zerubbabel the leader of Judea, saying: "In that day I will take you, Zerubbabel my servant, and I will place you as a seal in my sight (Haggai 2)." For in the sight of God the just is placed as a seal, because through the grace of continual love he is always had in his memory. But on the contrary, of the impious king Jeconiah, who, because he was unmindful of almighty God, did not deserve to be in his memory himself: "If," he says, "Jeconiah were the right ring on my hand, from there I will pluck him (Jeremiah 22)."

How inviolable and firm a seal Blessed martyr Cassian had placed Christ in his breast, who remained immobile in the constancy of such great faith! The blows of lashes are struck, the wounds of piercings are inflicted, the darts of derisions are twisted, chains are fastened to his hands. Body nakedness also approaches, and also the spectacle of deriders barking on every side. Among these whirlwinds of raging storms, among those tempests of frequent hailstorms, the firm column of God stands altogether immobile. It is not shaken, it is not shattered; but it always leans straight and firmly constant upon the stone upon which it is founded. For he was saying: "Who shall separate me from the charity of Christ? tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or hunger? or nakedness? or danger? or the sword?" (Romans 8.) They were gnashing with their teeth; he was thinking of the patience of the mild Lamb taking away the sins of the world. The executioners by bringing in supplications were satisfying the bloody rage of their breast; he, already secure in mind, was turning over the dignity of heavenly glory.

And, if I may say so, that cautious and prudent negotiator, my brothers, what happy markets he contracted with Christ the remunerator of those struggling! He was laying down the burden of the flesh, and was hastening to the robe of angelic brightness. He was carrying the rod of the cruel boys, so that he might become a companion of the holy angels. He was postponing the mastery of teaching letters, and was hastening alacritously to that one Word, for whom all the volumes of letters throughout the world military, Christ our Lord, who with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

## * SERMON XL. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. (AUGUST 15)

Hic totum decurrat ingenium, et aureus sermo tota reluceat majestate. Voluntaria oris nostri beneplacita (Psal. CXVIII) faciat sibi genitrix Dei, domina mundi, coeli regina. Ipsa sensum acuat, dirigat stylum, et linguam pauperis venustiori respergat eloquio. Illustret lucem hanc lumine clariori, et suo conventui suam praesentiam donare dignetur. Sublimis ista dies, et splendidiore sole refulgurans, in qua Virgo regalis ad thronum Dei Patris evehitur, et in ipsius Trinitatis sede reposita, naturam etiam angelicam sollicitat ad videndum. Tota conglomeratur angelorum frequentia, ut videat reginam sedentem a dextris Domini virtutum, in vestitu deaurato (Psal. XLIV), in corpore semper immaculato, circumdatam varietate, virtutum multiplicitate distinctam.

Haec est illa dies quae coelorum officinas sublimiori gaudio cumulavit, annua mundo, angelis continua, continuans homines angelis, et angelos hominibus felici foederatione conjungens. Intuere mentalibus oculis Filium ascendentem, et Matrem assumptam, et videbis aliquid excellentius in Ascensione Filii exhiberi, et aliquid gloriosius in Assumptione Virginis demonstrari. Ascendit enim Salvator in coelum potestativae virtutis imperio, sicut Dominus, et Creator, angelorum comitatus obsequio, non auxilio fultus. Assumpta est Maria in coelum, sed gratiae sublevantis judicio, comitantibus et auxiliantibus angelis, quam sublevabat gratia, non natura. Ideo dies haec Assumptio, Ascensio illa vocatur; cum aliud sit potentia, aliud misericordia, solumque soli sit privilegium Creatori naturam rerum propria potestate supergredi. Hoc est illud excellentius, quod sibi vindicat super creaturam Creator, ubi etiam superabundans et singularis gratia non audeat aspirare.

Sed si diligenter attendamus Ascensionem Filii, et Matris Assumptionem, inveniemus profecto aliquid quod nos invenisse gaudebimus. Ascendenti quippe Domino egressa est obviam omnis illa beatorum spirituum gloriosa societas, quando naturae superiori praetulit inferiorem, et inconvertibili sacramento susceptum hominem in ipsa divinitatis clausit identitate. Occurrentibus autem angelis, electorum animas, quas secum educebat, adjunxit, et sic utrorumque triumphali pompa deductus ad Patrem, sedet ad dexteram majestatis. Attolle jam oculos ad Assumptionem Virginis, et, salva Filii majestate, invenies occursum hujus pompae non mediocriter digniorem. Soli quippe angeli Redemptori occurrere potuerunt, Matri vero coelorum palatia penetranti Filius ipse, cum tota curia tam angelorum quam justorum solemniter occurrens, evexit ad beatae consistorium sessionis, et ait: «Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te (Cant. IV).» Tota pulchra, quia tota deificata; macula non est in te, quia Spiritus sanctus supervenit in te, qui te mundavit.

Here let all genius run its course, and let the golden speech shine with all majesty. May the mother of God, the mistress of the world, the queen of heaven, make the voluntary good-pleasures of our mouth (Psalm 118) for herself. May she sharpen the sense, direct the stylus, and sprinkle the tongue of the poor one with a more beautiful eloquence. May she illustrate this light with a clearer light, and may she deign to give her presence to her assembly. Sublime is this day, and refulgent with a more splendid sun, in which the royal Virgin is carried up to the throne of God the Father, and placed in the seat of the Trinity itself, she solicits even the angelic nature to see. The whole crowd of angels is gathered together so that it may see the queen sitting at the right hand of the Lord of virtues, in gilded clothing (Psalm 44), in a body always immaculate, surrounded by variety, distinguished by a multiplicity of virtues.

This is that day which has crowned the workshops of the heavens with a more sublime joy, annual to the world, continual to the angels, continuing men to angels, and joining angels to men in a happy federation. Behold with mental eyes the Son ascending and the Mother assumed, and you will see something more excellent exhibited in the Ascension of the Son, and something more glorious demonstrated in the Assumption of the Virgin. For the Savior ascended into heaven by the command of potestative virtue, as Lord and Creator, accompanied by the service of angels, not supported by help. Mary was assumed into heaven, but by the judgment of lifting grace, with angels accompanying and helping, whom grace, not nature, was lifting up. Therefore this day is called the Assumption, that the Ascension; since power is one thing, mercy another, and it is the privilege of the Creator alone to transcend the nature of things by his own power. This is that more excellent thing which the Creator claims for himself over the creature, where even superabundant and singular grace may not dare to aspire.

But if we carefully attend to the Ascension of the Son and the Assumption of the Mother, we will surely find something which we will rejoice to have found. Indeed, all that glorious society of blessed spirits went out to meet the ascending Lord, when he preferred the lower nature to the superior, and enclosed the assumed man in the very identity of divinity by an inconvertible sacrament. Moreover, to the meeting angels, he joined the souls of the elect, whom he was leading out with him, and thus led to the Father by the triumphal pomp of both, he sits at the right hand of majesty. Lift up now your eyes to the Assumption of the Virgin, and, saving the majesty of the Son, you will find the meeting of this pomp not moderately more worthy. For only the angels were able to meet the Redeemer, but to the Mother penetrating the palaces of the heavens, the Son himself, solemnly meeting with the whole court as well of angels as of the just, carried her up to the consistory of the blessed session, and says: "You are all beautiful, my friend, and there is no spot in you (Song of Songs 4)." All beautiful, because all deified; there is no spot in you, because the Holy Spirit has come upon you, who has cleansed you.

Sed et Virgo gratiosis cumulata muneribus, tanta benignitate Davidico sermone respondet, summae dignationis claritatem admirans: «Tenuisti manum dexteram meam, et in voluntate tua deduxisti me, et cum gloria suscepisti me (Psal. LXXII).» Nota verborum positionem differenti graduum distinctione signatam. Tenuisti, inquit, manum dexteram meam, quia et si laeva tua sub capite meo, dextera tua jam amplexatur me. Et in voluntate tua deduxisti me, non in mea sublimitate, quia totum opus gratiae est, non naturae. Et cum gloria suscepisti me; gloria utique gloriosa, quam non novit, nisi qui dedit, et cui donare dignatus est.

Attende autem diligentiam et consequentiam Scripturarum. Spiritus enim sanctus, in cujus fabrica, tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti fuit compositi fabricata, Ascensionem Filii, et Matris Assumptionem simili stylo perambulans, ter interrogat: «Quis est iste?» (Psal. XXIII.) Et tertio repetit: «Quae est ista?» (Cant. III.) Primum de Filio, postea de Matre videamus. In spiritu fortitudinis Salvator ad inferos descendens, contrivit portas aereas, et vectes ferreos confregit, et gehennalis ollae dissipatis fragminibus, totum illud infelix habitaculum ruinosa concussione succussit, conclamantibus angelis: «Attollite portas principes vestras (Psal. XXIII);» illi, qui superbiae lapsu irremediabili corruerunt, ignoratione dedignativa retorquent: «Quis est iste rex gloriae?» (Ibid.) Hic est ille insipiens, qui dixit in corde suo: «Non est Deus (Psal. XIII).» Et: «Nescio Dominum, et Israel non dimittam (Exod. V).» Angeli pacis confidenter ingeminant: «Dominus fortis, et potens, Dominus potens in praelio (Psal. XXIII);» fortis ad vestram fortitudinem infirmandam; potens ad vestram potentiam vacuandam; in praelio illo utique salutari, quo potestates aereas singulariter debellavit. Resurgens ab inferis, et solemnis victoryae vexilla reportans, hominem unitum sibi, quem nunquam dimisit, resuscitavit, et triumphatrici palma coelis invectus, Patri ovem centesimam, quam perdiderat (Luc. XV), repraesentans, audit ab angelis: «Quis est iste rex gloriae?» sed et eisdem conclamantibus: «Dominus virtutum, ipse est rex gloriae (Psal. XXIII);» coelorum insonuere palatio, et tota super coelestis domus profusioribus gaudiis inundavit. Vere Dominus virtutum in Resurrectione virtutem faciens, quam ante non fecerat, redimens servum, et pro servo filium efficiens.

But the Virgin also, crowded with gracious gifts, responds with such great benignity in Davidic speech, admiring the clarity of the highest dignity: "You have held my right hand, and in your will you have led me, and with glory you have received me (Psalm 72)." Note the position of the words marked by a different distinction of grades. She says, "You have held my right hand," because even if your left is under my head, your right now embraces me. And in your will you have led me, not in my sublimity, because the whole is a work of grace, not of nature. And with glory you have received me; a glory surely glorious, which no one knows except him who gave it, and to whom he has deigned to give it.

Note, moreover, the diligence and consequence of the Scriptures. For the Holy Spirit, in whose workshop the structure of both the Old and New Testament was fabricated, traversing the Ascension of the Son and the Assumption of the Mother with a similar style, asks three times: "Who is this?" (Psalm 23.) And three times repeats: "Who is she?" (Song of Songs 3.) First let us see concerning the Son, afterwards concerning the Mother. In the spirit of fortitude the Savior descending to the lower regions, crushed the brazen gates and broke the iron bars, and the fragments of the hellish pot having been dissipated, he shook that whole unhappy habitation with a ruinous concussion, with the angels crying out: "Lift up your gates, you princes (Psalm 23)"; those who fell by an irremediable lapse of pride, retort with disdainful ignorance: "Who is this king of glory?" (Ibid.) This is that foolish one who said in his heart: "There is no God (Psalm 13)." And: "I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go (Exodus 5)." The angels of peace confidently redouble: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle (Psalm 23)"; strong to weaken your strength; mighty to empty your power; in that surely salutary battle, by which he singularly warred down the powers of the air. Rising from the lower regions, and bringing back the banners of solemn victory, he resuscitated the man united to himself, whom he never dismissed, and carried into the heavens with a triumphant palm, representing to the Father the hundredth sheep which he had lost (Luke 15), he hears from the angels: "Who is this king of glory?" but also with the same crying out: "The Lord of virtues, he is the king of glory (Psalm 23)"; they sounded in the palace of the heavens, and the whole house above the heavens overflowed with more profuse joys. Truly the Lord of virtues making virtue in the Resurrection, which he had not made before, redeeming the servant, and making a son instead of a servant.

Clarissima autem Ascensionis die, quando, videntibus discipulis, est elevatus in coelum (Marc. XVI), summum illud, reverendumque collegium venit obviam Redemptori, et omnis illa tam assistentium quam ministrantium angelorum auctoritas cucurrit ad Filium, et ascendentem demirans ait: «Quis est iste, qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra?» (Isa. LXIII.) Videntes enim eum sanguinei ruboris unda perfusum, mirantur ejus patientiam, et saevitiam Judaeorum, qui non sunt veriti Filium Dei crucis ignominia condemnare. «Gradiens, inquiunt, in multitudine fortitudinis suae (Ibid.):» non solum in fortitudine, sed etiam in multitudine fortitudinis; quia nulla fortitudo fortior fuit, quam redimere servum, et in divinitatis dextera perpetuo collocare.

Hae sunt illae voces quae descendentem ad inferos, ab inferis resurgentem, ascendentem ad coelos, multiformi praeconio prosequuntur. Sed jam vertendus est stylus ad sanctam sanctarum, et illorum verborum enodanda proprietas, quae Virgini matri sunt specialiter dedicata. Sed uti superliminarem titulum in fronte futuri aedificii proponamus, dicamus breviter quia prima interrogatio convenit ejus Nativitati, secunda ejus conversationi, tertia Assumptioni. «Quae est ista,» inquit Spiritus sanctus de ejus Nativitate, «quae progreditur, sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata?» (Cant. VI.) Haec est «quae nescivit torum in delicto (Sap. III).» Virgo Dei Filio singulariter consecrata, specialiter sancto conjugata Spiritui. «Quae progreditur,» inquit, «sicut aurora consurgens.» Quam elegans et clara similitudo, et ex illius disciplina descendens, qui summum sapientiae fontem in Canticis affluenter inclusit!

In meridiano lumine primus ille parens creatus est, factus ad imaginem et similitudinem Conditoris. Quid enim clarius, quam creatum Creanti non esse dissimilem? «Faciamus, inquit, hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram (Gen. I).» Imaginem dedit ei in aeternitate, similitudinem in moribus; ut sit similis Creatori, si non identitate, similitudine tamen. Sed ille, tanti privilegii dignitate rejecta, apostatae spiritus falsa promissione delinitus inhaesit, et se cum posteritate sua perpetuae morti destinavit, et tenebris. Ab illa hora tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram usque ad Virginem; nec inventus est aliquis qui vel exiret de tenebris, vel tenebras dissiparet; sed mundo crescente concrevit et tenebrosa vorago, donec in densissimam conglobata nigredinem, humanum genus nocte terribili sepelivit. Haec est illa nox solitaria, nec laude digna, de qua scriptum est: «Posuisti tenebras, et facta est nox (Psal. Iii).» In ipsa permansierant omnes bestiae silvae, quia crudeles et indomiti spiritus dimotis repagulis, humanum genus totis viribus obtriverunt.

On the most clear day of the Ascension, when, with the disciples seeing, he was lifted into heaven (Mark 16), that highest and reverend assembly came to meet the Redeemer, and all that authority of angels both assisting and ministering ran to the Son, and admiring him ascending says: "Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" (Isaiah 63.) For seeing him drenched with a wave of bloody redness, they admire his patience and the ferocity of the Jews, who were not afraid to condemn the Son of God with the ignominy of the cross. "Walking," they say, "in the multitude of his strength (Ibid.)": not only in strength, but also in the multitude of strength; because no strength was stronger than to redeem the servant and place him perpetually at the right hand of divinity.

These are those voices which follow him descending to the lower regions, rising from the lower regions, ascending to the heavens, with a multiform praise. But now the stylus must be turned to the holy of holies, and the property of those words must be unfolded which are specially dedicated to the Virgin mother. But that we may propose the lintel title on the front of the future building, let us say briefly that the first interrogation corresponds to her Nativity, the second to her conversation, the third to the Assumption. "Who is she," says the Holy Spirit concerning her Nativity, "who goes forth like the rising dawn, fair as the moon, chosen as the sun, terrible as an army set in order?" (Song of Songs 6.) This is she "who did not know the bed in sin (Wisdom 3)." The Virgin singularly consecrated to the Son of God, specially joined to the Holy Spirit. "Who goes forth," he says, "like the rising dawn." How elegant and clear a similitude, and descending from the discipline of him who affluently enclosed the highest fountain of wisdom in the Canticles!

In meridian light that first parent was created, made to the image and likeness of the Founder. For what is clearer than for the created not to be dissimilar to the Creator? "Let us make," he says, "man to our image and likeness (Genesis 1)." He gave him the image in eternity, the likeness in morals; so that he might be similar to the Creator, if not in identity, yet in likeness. But he, the dignity of such great privilege being rejected, beguiled by the false promise of the apostate spirit, adhered to it, and destined himself with his posterity to perpetual death and to darkness. From that hour darkness was made over the whole earth even to the Virgin; nor was anyone found who either might go out from the darkness or dissipate the darkness; but as the world grew, the dark abyss also grew, until, gathered into the densest blackness, it buried the human race in a terrible night. This is that solitary night, nor worthy of praise, of which it is written: "You have placed darkness, and night was made (Psalm 103)." In it all the beasts of the forest had remained, because the cruel and untamed spirits, the bars having been moved away, crushed the human race with all their strength.

Sed nata Virgine surrexit aurora; quia Maria veri praevia luminis, nativitate sua mane clarissimum serenavit. Haec est stella matutina in medio nebulae, quae in coeli cardine summo splendore coruscans, orbem subditum splendidioribus radiis incolorat. Haec est aurora, quam sequitur, imo de qua nascitur Sol justitiae, solius claritati succumbens. Haec est aurora, quam ille non vidit qui vidit omne sublime; et orat beatus Job ut ei multa suppressione claudatur, dicens: «Non videat ortum surgentis aurorae (Job III).» Tuus est dies, Domine, in quo Adam est conditus; tua est nox, in qua Adam a die est ejectus; tu fabricatus es auroram, id est Virginem matrem: et solem, Solem videlicet justitiae, qui de virginali thalamo consurrexit. Nam sicut aurora terminum noctis, diei principium adesse testatur, sic et Virgo noctem expulit sempiternam, et de die diem, de terra suae virginitatis exortum, terris infudit.

Progreditur, inquit, quasi procul egreditur, quia procul, et de ultimis finibus pretium ejus (Prov. XXXI). Aurora, quia noctis finis, et lucis initium; consurgens, quia de cadente supersurgens materia. Pulchra ut luna. Quid luna pulchrius, cum stellis coruscantibus in signifero limite reliquorum siderum splendorem excedit? Considera quam stellarum et serena vibratio, quam luminosus fulgor circularem orbem tanti sideris superfundat, ut aliorum luminum claritatem non mediocriter offuscet? Sic et Virgo inter animas sanctorum et angelorum choros supereminens et evecta, merita singulorum et omnium titulos antecedit. Quantumlibet aliae stellae reluceant, luna tamen et magnitudine praeeminet et splendore. Sic utramque naturam Virgo singularis exsuperat et immensitate gratiae et fulgore virtutum. Electa ut sol. Hanc attende similitudinem, qua nulla in rebus mundi potest esse sublimior. Nihil enim habuit Spiritus in visibilibus creaturis excellentius, cui excellentiam Virginis compararet. Multo enim altius aliquid habet claritas solis quam lunae; quia et si illa minores stellas obscurat, non tamen penitus occultat; hic vero lucidius incandescens, ita sibi siderum et lunae rapit positionem, ut sint quasi non sint, et videri non possint.

Similiter et virga Jesse, veri praevia luminis, in illa inaccessibili luce perlucens, sic utrorumque spirituum hebetat dignitatem, ut in comparatione Virginis nec possint nec debeant apparere. An putas quod non contremiscat tota rationalis creatura ad contemplationem tantae dignitatis? Considera et quae in coelis, et quae in terris in Virgine refabricata.

But with the Virgin born, the dawn arose; because Mary, the precursor of the true light, by her nativity cleared the most bright morning. This is the morning star in the midst of the mist, which, flashing with the highest splendor in the hinge of heaven, colors the subject world with more splendid rays. This is the dawn, which the Sun of justice follows, nay, from which he is born, succumbing to the clarity of him alone. This is the dawn, which he did not see who saw every sublime thing; and blessed Job prays that it may be closed to him with much suppression, saying: "Let it not see the rising of the surging dawn (Job 3)." Yours is the day, O Lord, in which Adam was founded; yours is the night, in which Adam was cast out from the day; you have fabricated the dawn, that is the Virgin mother: and the sun, namely the Sun of justice, who arose from the virginal chamber. For just as the dawn testifies that the end of night and the beginning of day is present, so also the Virgin expelled the everlasting night, and poured from day the day, arisen from the earth of her virginity, upon the lands.

"She goes forth," he says, as if she steps out from afar, because "from afar, and from the ultimate ends is her price (Proverbs 31)." The Dawn, because she is the end of night and the beginning of light; surging, because rising above falling matter. Fair as the moon. What is fairer than the moon, when with flashing stars in the zodiacal limit it exceeds the splendor of the rest of the stars? Consider how both the serene vibration of the stars and the luminous brightness overpour the circular orb of such a great star, so that it obfuscates the clarity of other lights not moderately? So also the Virgin, supereminent and carried up among the souls of the saints and the choirs of angels, precedes the merits of individuals and the titles of all. However much other stars may shine, yet the moon excels both in magnitude and in splendor. Thus the singular Virgin surpasses both natures both by the immensity of grace and by the brightness of virtues. Chosen as the sun. Attend to this similitude, than which none in the things of the world can be more sublime. For the Spirit had nothing more excellent in visible creatures to which he might compare the excellence of the Virgin. For the clarity of the sun has something much higher than that of the moon; because even if she obscures the smaller stars, she does not yet completely hide them; but this one, more lucidly glowing, so snatches to himself the position of the stars and the moon, that they are as if they were not, and cannot be seen.

Similarly also the rod of Jesse, precursor of the true light, shining in that inaccessible light, so dims the dignity of both spirits, that in comparison with the Virgin they neither can nor ought to appear. Or do you think that the whole rational creature does not tremble at the contemplation of such great dignity? Consider both the things in the heavens and those on the earth refabricated in the Virgin.

Deum, qui coelum palma metitur, virginei ventris brevitate conclusum, redemptionem hominum, angelorum restaurationem, denique quidquid est, fuit, et erit per Virginis uterum renovatum, et tunc tibi cogitatio suggeret quod locutio demonstrare non potest. Electa, inquit, sed et praeelecta. Ut sol, quia sicut sol solus orbem illuminat; sic haec sola solidiori lumine et angelos et homines illustrat. Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata, terribilis daemonibus, ordinata virtutibus, singularis timor malignorum spirituum, specialis amor civium beatorum.

Sequitur de ejus conversatione: «Quae est ista, quae ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae, et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentarii? Ista est speciosa inter filias Jerusalem (Cant. III).» Desertum est vastitas hujus mundi, in quo bestiae agri frequentius ludunt, ubi princeps ille nequissimus omni fortitudine principatur. Desertum autem dicitur, quasi derelictum a virtutum administratione, cum earum conventus, abundante iniquitate, ad proprios ortus revolaverit. Quae ascendit, inquit. In hujus saeculi vanitates omnes vel descendere vel cadere cognoscuntur, rarusque qui non vel descendat vel cadat in hujus turbulentissimae profunditatis oceanum. Sola illa mater et filia Creatoris nec descendit nec cecidit, sed de virtute in virtutem ascendens consummatione virtutum vestita est. Qualiter autem ascendit? sicut virgula, inquit, fumi. Sed et haec operatio quam significanti similitudine sit signata, recollige. Virgula fumi recta est, subtilis, odorifera, et quanto magis in aera extenditur, tanto amplius dilatatur. Sic et angelorum regina recta est in sublimitate conversationis, quia virga directionis, virga regni Domini (Psal. XLIV). Subtilis in deitatis contemplatione, quia ipsa est quae conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo (Luc. II). Odorifera in virtutum opinione, quia currimus in odorem unguentorum suorum (Cant. I). Angusta in temporalibus, quia non erat ei locus in diversorio (Luc. II). In spiritualibus dilatata, quia astitit regina a dextris Domini (Psal. XLIV). Haec est virga illa qua retunduntur impetus adversantium daemoniorum: virga Aaron, per quam fiunt signa et mirabilia. Baculum autem crucis intellige, quo non solum verberatus est, sed et occisus ille insanabilis [f. insatiabilis] homicida, qui mortibus hominum pascitur et nutritur. In Virgine virga et baculo cruce, miserorum spes et consolatio continetur. Sicut sublimis Propheta clara voce declarat: «Virga, inquit, tua, et baculus tuus ipse me consolata sunt (Psal. XXII).»

God, who measures the heaven with a palm, enclosed in the brevity of a virginal womb, the redemption of men, the restoration of angels, finally whatever is, was, and will be renewed through the Virgin's womb, and then thought will suggest to you what speech cannot demonstrate. "Chosen," he says, but also "pre-elected." "As the sun," because just as the sun alone illuminates the world, so she alone illustrates both angels and men with a more solid light. "Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata," terrible to demons, set in order with virtues, singular fear of malignant spirits, special love of the blessed citizens.

It follows concerning her conversation: "Who is she who ascends through the desert, like a rod of smoke from the aromatics of myrrh and frankincense and all the powder of the apothecary? She is beautiful among the daughters of Jerusalem (Song of Songs 3)." The desert is the vastness of this world, in which the beasts of the field play more frequently, where that most wicked prince rules with all fortitude. Moreover, it is called a desert, as if derelict by the administration of virtues, when their assembly, iniquity abounding, has flown back to their own origins. "Who ascends," he says. Into the vanities of this age all are known either to descend or to fall, and rare is he who does not either descend or fall into the ocean of this most turbulent depth. She alone, that mother and daughter of the Creator, neither descended nor fell, but ascending from virtue into virtue she was clothed with the consummation of virtues. Moreover, how did she ascend? "Like a rod," he says, "of smoke." But recollect with how significant a similitude this operation is marked. A rod of smoke is straight, subtle, odoriferous, and the more it is extended into the air, the more it is dilated. So also the queen of angels is straight in the sublimity of her conversation, because the rod of direction, the rod of the kingdom of the Lord (Psalm 44). Subtle in the contemplation of the deity, because she is the one who "kept all these words, conferring them in her heart (Luke 2)." Odoriferous in the opinion of virtues, because "we run into the odor of her ointments (Song of Songs 1)." Narrow in temporal things, because "there was no place for her in the inn (Luke 2)." Dilated in spiritual things, because "the queen stood at the right hand of the Lord (Psalm 44)." This is that rod by which the impetus of the opposing demons is beaten back: the rod of Aaron, through which signs and wonders are made. But understand the staff of the cross, by which was not only beaten, but also killed that incurable [or insatiable] murderer, who is fed and nourished by the deaths of men. In the Virgin rod and the staff cross, the hope and consolation of the miserable is contained. Just as the sublime Prophet declares with a clear voice: "Thy rod," he says, "and thy staff, they have comforted me (Psalm 22)."

Sequitur: Ex aromatibus myrrhae et thuris. Nominantur species, de quibus aromatica virgula sublevatur, myrrhae et thuris. Myrrha corpora dissoluta consolidat, et cadaver exanime sibi vindicat, ne putrescat. Thus autem Deo in oratione accenditur, sicut multiplicibus Scripturarum testimoniis edocemur. In myrrha continentiam, in thure devotionem intellige. Caro enim Virginis ex Adam assumpta maculas Adae non admisit, sed singularis continentiae puritas in candorem lucis aeternae conversa est. Porro quis ejus devotionem votivis laudibus poterit adaequare, cum rememoret missum archangelum, supervenientem Spiritum, Filium conceptum, Deum natum, stellam novam, magorum gloriam, munerum gratiam, et super haec omnia testimonium conscientiae suae? Haec sunt duo quae virginalem substantiam tota circumdedere virtute, continentia scilicet et devotio, quorum alterum carnem, alterum mentem ita possedit, ut caro mundissima, mens purissima genitricem Domini singularius consecrarent.

Sed ne putares his duabus solis virtutibus insignitam dominam orbis et reginam coelorum, subsequitur Scripturarum auctoritas: Et universi pulveris pigmentarii. Hic expressum est quidquid exprimi potuit. Species quidem integrae odorem reddunt, sed non tantum, quantum confractae. Crebris enim tunsionibus supertritae, remotiorem etiam locum odorifera conspersione refundunt. Sic et virtutes in pace quidem fortiter redolent, sed fortius in tribulatione, quia virtus in pace acquiritur, in persecutione probatur, approbatur in victorya. Universus ergo pulvis pigmentarius in Virgine conjectus est, quia in ea virtutum conventus reverendum sibi thalamum consecravit, et si caeteris per partes Spiritus affluit. Mariae tamen tota plenitudo gratiae supervenit. Nec integrae fuerunt in ea species, sed in subtilissimum comminutae, quia ipsa est quae, fortioribus tribulationum malleis supergressa, vidit suum et Dei Filium affigi cruci, militari lancea vulnerari, et inter duos latrones positum expirare (Joan. XIX).

Sequitur de ejus Assumptione: Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum? Haec est regina illa, quam videntes filiae Sion, «Beatissimam praedicaverunt, et reginae laudaverunt eam (Cant. VI).» Ascendit autem hodie de deserto, id est de mundo, ad regalis throni celsitudinem sublimata. Deliciis, inquit, affluens. Vere affluens, quia «multae filiae congregaverunt divitias, haec supergressa est universas (Prov. XXIX).»

It follows: "From the aromatics of myrrh and frankincense." The species from which the aromatic rod is raised are named: myrrh and frankincense. Myrrh consolidates dissolved bodies and claims for itself the lifeless cadaver lest it putrefy. But frankincense is burned to God in prayer, as we are taught by multiple testimonies of the Scriptures. Understand continence in the myrrh, devotion in the frankincense. For the flesh of the Virgin assumed from Adam did not admit the stains of Adam, but the purity of singular continence was converted into the brightness of eternal light. Moreover, who will be able to equal her devotion with votive praises, when he remembers the archangel sent, the Spirit coming upon her, the Son conceived, God born, the new star, the glory of the magi, the grace of the gifts, and above all these things the testimony of her conscience? These are the two things which surrounded the virginal substance with all virtue, namely continence and devotion, of which the one so possessed the flesh, the other the mind, that the most pure flesh and most pure mind singularly consecrated the mother of the Lord.

But lest you should think the mistress of the world and queen of the heavens was distinguished by these two virtues alone, the authority of the Scriptures follows: "And all the powder of the apothecary." Here is expressed whatever could be expressed. Indeed, whole species yield an odor, but not as much as when broken. For when crushed by frequent poundings, they pour out an odoriferous scattering even to a more remote place. So also virtues indeed smell strongly in peace, but more strongly in tribulation, because virtue is acquired in peace, proved in persecution, approved in victory. All the powder of the apothecary, therefore, was cast into the Virgin, because in her the assembly of virtues consecrated a reverend chamber for itself, and if to others the Spirit flows in parts. Yet upon Mary the whole fullness of grace came. Nor were the species whole in her, but broken into the most subtle [powder], because she is the one who, overcome by the stronger hammers of tribulations, saw her own and God's Son affixed to the cross, wounded by the military lance, and expire placed between two thieves (John 19).

It follows concerning her Assumption: "Who is she who ascends from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" This is that queen whom the daughters of Zion seeing, "proclaimed most blessed, and queens praised her (Song of Songs 6)." Moreover, she ascends today from the desert, that is from the world, sublimated to the height of the royal throne. "Flowing," he says, "with delights." Truly flowing, because "many daughters have gathered riches, this one has surpassed them all (Proverbs 31 [cited as XXIX])."

Deliciarum autem ejus non est numerus, quia, dum Spiritum sanctum suscipit, concipit Dei Filium, Regem gloriae generat, penetrat coelos, cumulata divitiis, et deliciis affluens ad regnum evolat sempiternum suum. Innixa super dilectum suum. Rex virtutum dilecti Pater est, in quo sibi bene complacuit (Matth. III, XVII). Super hunc innititur Mater illa felicior, et in aureo reclinatorio divinae majestatis incumbens, intra sponsi, imo Filii sui, brachia requiescit. O quanta dignitas, quam specialis potentia, inniti super illum quem angelicae potestates reverentur aspicere!

Haec sunt ergo quae praesenti festivitati sub umbris et imaginibus dignanter alludunt, et sacratiore tegmine velata gratiosius lucent, cum potuerint revelari. Amen.

## Sermo XLI.

### *I. DE S. BARTHOLOMAEO APOSTOLO. (XXIV AUG.)*

Hodierna festivitas, dilectissimi, qua videlicet triumphalia B. Bartholomaei gesta recolimus, non est propria cujuslibet civitatis aut patriae, sed communis est catholicae totius Ecclesiae. Nec immerito colitur et veneratur ab omnibus, qui nobilis architectus cum beatis coapostolis suis fidei fundamentum posuit, super quod nascentis Ecclesiae structura surrexit. Huc accedit quia, cum senatus apostolicus judicii sibi vindicet solium atque inter omnes beatorum ordines egregiae dignitatis obtineat principatum, iste in eorum catalogo non mediocriter insignis atque conspicuus sextum obtinet locum. Ait enim evangelista Matthaeus: «Duodecim autem apostolorum nomina sunt haec: primus Simon, qui dicitur Petrus, et Andreas frater ejus, Jacobus Zebedaei, et Joannes frater ejus, Philippus, et Bartholomaeus, Thomas, et Matthaeus publicanus, Jacobus Alphaei, et Thaddaeus, Simon Chananaeus, et Judas Iscariotes, qui et tradidit eum (Matth. X).» His itaque convocatis, ut evangelista praemittit, dedit illis Dominus potestatem spirituum immundorum, ut ejicerent eos, et curarent omnem languorem et omnem infirmitatem (Ibid.). Marcus etiam eumdem sextum constituit locum (Marc. III). Unde colligere possumus quanta in beato Bartholomaeo meritorum praerogativa claruerit, qui tam sublimis, tantaeque gloriae viros in apostolica dignitate praecellit. Praefertur enim Matthaeo, qui in mystica evangelistarum quadriga principalem possidet locum, et tanquam Phison inter caeteros fluvios de paradisi fonte primus eructat (Gen. II), atque omnem mundi latitudinem evangelicae doctrinae fluentis inundat.

Moreover, of her delights there is no number, because, while she receives the Holy Spirit, she conceives the Son of God, she generates the King of glory, she penetrates the heavens, crowded with riches, and flowing with delights she flies away to her eternal kingdom. "Leaning upon her beloved." The King of virtues is the Father of the beloved, in whom he was well pleased (Matthew 3, 17). Upon him that happier Mother leans, and reclining upon the golden couch of divine majesty, she rests within the arms of her spouse, nay of her Son. O how great dignity, how special power, to lean upon him whom the angelic powers reverence to behold!

These are therefore the things which deign to allude to the present festivity under shadows and images, and veiled with a more sacred covering they shine more graciously when they could be revealed. Amen.

## Sermon XLI.

### *I. ON ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE. (AUGUST 24)*

Today's festivity, most beloved, in which we recall the triumphal deeds of Blessed Bartholomew, is not proper to any one city or country, but is common to the entire Catholic Church. Nor is he worshipped and venerated by all without merit, who, as a noble architect, with his blessed fellow apostles, laid the foundation of faith, upon which the structure of the nascent Church arose. To this is added that, since the apostolic senate claims for itself the throne of judgment and holds the primacy of outstanding dignity among all the orders of the blessed, he, in their catalogue not moderately distinguished and conspicuous, holds the sixth place. For the evangelist Matthew says: "Now these are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him (Matthew 10)." Therefore, having called these together, as the evangelist premised, the Lord gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity (Ibid.). Mark also established him in the same sixth place (Mark 3). From this we can gather how great a prerogative of merits shone forth in blessed Bartholomew, who in apostolic dignity excels such sublime men of so great glory. For he is preferred to Matthew, who in the mystical chariot of the evangelists holds the principal place, and like the Pishon among the other rivers first gushes out from the fount of paradise (Genesis 2), and inundates all the breadth of the world with the flows of evangelical doctrine.

Praeponitur nihilominus et beato Thomae, cujus digitus magister factus est mundi, qui principali quadam dignitate vere dicendus est index, quia veritatem Dominicae carnis ignorantibus indicavit. Hic enim beatus apostolus certitudinem nobis sua dubietate providit, et dum scrutatur vulnera Salvatoris, evertit errores atque versutias haereticae pravitatis. Palpat enim veritatem carnis, et intelligit omnipotentiam deitatis. «Dominus, inquit, meus et Deus meus (Joan. XX).»

Quanquam ergo de B. Bartholomaeo in authenticis libris nil proprium, vel singulare, praeter communem legatur historiam, quidquid tamen ex his quibus ipse praeponitur, Scripturarum reperitur stylo digestum, in ejus quoque non dubitatur redundare praeconium; licet omnes sancti apostoli unius privilegii dignitatem, unius fastigii celsitudinem, nec disparem coelestis gratiae comprobentur habere virtutem. Nam quod beato Petro Dominus claves regni coelorum speciali quadam voluit traditione committere (Matth. XVIII), hoc propterea factum est, ut unitatem Ecclesiae commendaret. Caeterum quidquid uni specialiter dedit, communiter omnibus contulit. Omnibus enim dicit: «Accipite Spiritum sanctum; quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis, et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt (Joan. XX).» Et Lucas ait: Quia convocatis duodecim apostolis, dedit illis virtutem et potestatem super omnia daemonia, et ut languores curarent (Luc. X). Unde et ipse Dominus ait: «Ecce dedi vobis potestatem calcandi supra serpentes et scorpiones, et super omnem virtutem inimici, et nihil vobis nocebit (Ibid.).» Et paulo superius: «Qui vos audit, me audit, et qui vos spernit, me spernit (Ibid.).» Illud etiam omnibus dixit: «Qui credit in me, opera, quae ego facio, et ipse faciet; et majora horum faciet, quia ad Patrem vado (Joan. XIV).»

Porro autem quod Salvator noster, ad perficiendum apostolicum ordinem, duodenarii numeri voluit eligere quantitatem, haec est causa: Quoniam ter quaterni duodecim fiunt, et rationis ordo poscebat, ut duodecim eligerentur apostoli, qui sanctae Trinitatis fidem spargerent per quatuor partes mundi. Hic plane mysticus numerus sanctis apostolis convenire tunc indubitanter agnoscitur, cum Israeliticus populus in Elim castra posuisse narratur. ubi videlicet erant duodecim fontes, et septuaginta palmae (Exod. XV). Quid enim per duodecim fontes, nisi sancti designantur apostoli, qui ariditatem cordis humani sanctae praedicationis non desinunt irrigare fluentis? Quid vero per septuaginta palmas; nisi inferioris gradus debent sacerdotes intelligi, qui constituti sunt per mundum Christi narrare victorias? Palma siquidem manum solet honorare victricem. Ipsum quoque nomen Elim aptissime congruere videtur apostolis. Elim enim vertitur in arietes. Ipsi nimirum duces gregis, pastores ovium, magistri gentium, principes populorum.

He is nonetheless also placed before blessed Thomas, whose finger became the teacher of the world, who by a certain principal dignity is truly to be called the index, because he indicated the truth of the Lord's flesh to those who were ignorant. For this blessed apostle provided certainty for us by his doubt, and while he scrutinized the wounds of the Savior, he overturned the errors and subtleties of heretical depravity. For he touched the truth of the flesh, and understood the omnipotence of the deity. "My Lord," he said, "and my God (John 20)."

Although, therefore, nothing proper or singular is read concerning Blessed Bartholomew in the authentic books beyond the common history, nevertheless whatever is found digested by the style of the Scriptures from those over whom he is placed, is not doubted to redound to his praise; although all the holy apostles are proved to have the dignity of one privilege, the height of one summit, nor a disparate virtue of heavenly grace. For the fact that the Lord wished to commit the keys of the kingdom of heaven to blessed Peter by a certain special tradition (Matthew 18), was done for this reason: that he might commend the unity of the Church. Moreover, whatever he gave to one specifically, he conferred upon all in common. For he says to all: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained (John 20)." And Luke says: that having called the twelve apostles together, he gave them virtue and power over all demons, and to heal diseases (Luke 10). Whence also the Lord himself says: "Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you (Ibid.)." And a little above: "He who hears you, hears me, and he who despises you, despises me (Ibid.)." That also he said to all: "He who believes in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do, because I go to the Father (John 14)."

Furthermore, as for the fact that our Savior, to complete the apostolic order, wished to choose the quantity of the number twelve, this is the reason: Since three times four make twelve, and the order of reason demanded that twelve apostles be chosen, who would spread the faith of the Holy Trinity through the four parts of the world. This clearly mystical number is then recognized to belong undoubtedly to the holy apostles, when the Israelite people is narrated to have pitched camp in Elim; where namely there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees (Exodus 15). For what is designated by the twelve springs, if not the holy apostles, who do not cease to irrigate the aridity of the human heart with the flows of holy preaching? What indeed by the seventy palms, if not the priests of a lower degree must be understood, who were established through the world to narrate the victories of Christ? For the palm is wont to honor the victorious hand. The name Elim itself also seems most aptly to fit the apostles. For Elim is translated as rams. They are indeed the leaders of the flock, the shepherds of the sheep, the teachers of the nations, the princes of the peoples.

Ipsi duorum Testamentorum auctoritate suffulti tanquam binis cornibus praemuniti, lupinam haereticorum ac Deo resistentium rabiem ventilant, ut sequentes ovium turmas ad viriditatis aeternae pascua sine laesione perducant.

Et notandum quod sicut B. Bartholomaeus sextus est intra ordinem apostolicum, sic Elim quoque intra Israelitici populi mansiones sextum obtinet locum, ut huic nomen spiritualis arietis aptissime congruat, a quo locus ipse, qui fontes habet apostolicos per nominis et ordinis mysterium non discordat. Sextum nihilominus locum Issachar inter fratres tenuit, cum eum patriarcha Jacob cum caeteris fratribus benedixit. Cujus etiam benedictio beato quoque Bartholomaeo perspicue congruit, qui videlicet Indiam, gentilem utique populum, in sortem praedicationis accepit. Nam cum diversis per quinque filios benedictionibus distributis, ad Issachar perventum esset, ait Jacob: «Issachar, asinus fortis accubans in terminis, vidit requiem, quod esset bona, et terram, quod optima, et supposuit humerum suum ad portandum (Gen. XLIX).» In terminis quippe accubare est, praestolato mundi fine, requiescere, nihilque de his quae nunc in medio versantur, quaerere, sed ultima desiderare. Et fortis asinus requiem optimam vidit, cum simplex gentilitas idcirco se ad robur boni operis erigit, quia ad aeternae vitae patriam tendit. Quae et ad portandum humerum supponit, quia conspecta superna requie, praeceptis etiam gravibus in operatione se subjicit, et quidquid intolerabile pusillanimitas asserit, hoc ei leve ac facile spes remunerationis ostendit.

Benedictio igitur Issachar beato Bartholomaeo per gentilem populum congruit, quem dum a cultura daemonum Christianae fidei sociavit, in unitate spiritus quodammodo suum corpus effecit. Unum et nos cum sanctis apostolis sumus, si non modo fidei meritum, sed et conversationis eorum imitemur exemplum, sicut per Paulum dicitur: «Etenim in uno spiritu omnes nos in unum corpus baptizati sumus, sive Judaei, sive gentiles, sive servi, sive liberi, et omnes uno spiritu potati sumus (I Cor. XII).» Quapropter eorum nobis necesse est semper exempla proponere, ut a quibus agnoscimur in fide geniti, non videamur dissona vitae qualitate discreti. Unde est quod post Jordanis transitum ad Josue Dominus ait: «Elige duodecim viros, singulos per singulas tribus, et praecipe eis ut tollant de medio Jordanis alveo, ubi steterunt sacerdotum pedes, duodecim durissimos lapides, quos ponetis in loco castrorum, ubi fixeritis hac nocte tentoria (Jos. IV).» Quid itaque per Jordanis transitum, nisi baptismatis innuitur sacramentum?

They themselves, supported by the authority of the two Testaments as if armed with two horns, drive away the lupine madness of heretics and those resisting God, that they may lead the following troops of sheep to the pastures of eternal greenness without injury.

And it is to be noted that just as Blessed Bartholomew is the sixth within the apostolic order, so also Elim holds the sixth place within the mansions of the Israelite people, so that the name of spiritual ram most aptly fits him, from whom that very place, which has apostolic springs, does not disagree through the mystery of name and order. Nevertheless Issachar held the sixth place among the brothers, when the patriarch Jacob blessed him with the other brothers. Whose blessing also clearly fits blessed Bartholomew, who namely received India, a gentile people indeed, as the lot of his preaching. For when, with various blessings distributed through five sons, it had come to Issachar, Jacob said: "Issachar, a strong ass couching in the borders, saw rest, that it was good, and the land, that it was best, and he bowed his shoulder to carry (Genesis 49)." To couch in the borders is, having waited for the end of the world, to rest, and to seek nothing of those things which are now in the midst, but to desire the last things. And the strong ass saw the best rest, when simple gentility therefore raises itself to the strength of good work, because it tends toward the fatherland of eternal life. Which also bows its shoulder to carry, because having beheld the supernal rest, it subjects itself also to heavy precepts in operation, and whatever pusillanimity asserts to be intolerable, the hope of remuneration shows this to be light and easy to it.

The blessing of Issachar therefore fits blessed Bartholomew through the gentile people, whom while he associated with the Christian faith from the worship of demons, he made in a certain way his own body in the unity of the spirit. We also are one with the holy apostles, if we imitate not only the merit of faith, but also the example of their conduct, as it is said through Paul: "For in one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or gentiles, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one spirit (1 Corinthians 12)." Wherefore it is necessary for us always to set forth their examples, so that we, by whom we are recognized to have been begotten in the faith, may not seem separated by a dissonant quality of life. Whence it is that after the crossing of the Jordan the Lord said to Joshua: "Choose twelve men, one from each tribe, and command them to take from the midst of the bed of the Jordan, where the feet of the priests stood, twelve very hard stones, which you shall place in the site of the camp where you shall pitch your tents this night (Joshua 4)." What therefore is hinted at by the crossing of the Jordan, if not the sacrament of baptism?

Cur dicitur quia duodecim durissimos lapides in testimonium posuerunt, nisi ut nos instruant quatenus, mox ut de sacri lavacri fonte consurgimus, virtutis apostolicae nobis exempla fortissima proponamus? ut ii nobis lapides sint in testimonium, dum contendimus ad incrementa virtutum. Unde protinus Josue jubetur ut in Galgala cum populo transeat, atque illic eos cultris lapideis circumcidat. Petra, ut ait Apostolus, erat Christus (I Cor. X). Per cultellos ergo lapideos circumcidimur, cum per Christum a nobis omnes carnis et spiritus illecebras amputamus. Et hac circumcisione, sicut illic dicitur, Aegyptiorum propulsamus opprobrium, quoniam deludentium nos elidimus petulantiam vitiorum: «Hodie, inquit Dominus ad Josue, abstuli opprobrium Aegypti a vobis (Jos. V).» Nec praetereundum, quod Galgala revelatio interpretatur. Vita quippe carnalis oculos mentis excaecat, spiritualis illuminat. «Revela, inquit, oculos meos, et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua (Psal. CXVIII).» Cum enim a suis homo vitiis circumciditur, ad divinae legis consideranda mysteria mentis acies relevatur, in quo scilicet loco ab Israelitico populo Pascha celebratur, et typice Agnus ille comeditur, qui tollit peccata mundi (Joan. I).

Et nota ordinem rerum, ac salutis humanae perpende mysterium. Postquam de baptismo quasi de gurgite Jordanis eximus, apostolicae virtutis et constantiae lapides nobis in exempli testimonium constituimus, quos aemulationis studio contemplantes, a pravitatis nostrae praeputio circumcidimur; sicque dimota procul atque detersa caligine vitiorum, revelata facie spiritalis laetitiae, Pascha celebramus in luce virtutum. Illic primum populus de frugibus terrae comedit azymos panes; et manna, quo eatenus ali consueverant, ulterius non apparuit. Quia postquam panis ille vivus, qui de coelo descendit (Joan. VI), ex agro virginalis uteri prodiit; postquam granum tritici cadens in terram mortuum est, ac plurimos fructus attulit (Joan. XII), mox typicae legis manna defecit. Terra quippe repromissionis venter est Virginis. De qua terra per Isaiam dicitur: «Rorate coeli desuper, et nubes pluant Justum; aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem (Isa. XLV).» Cum ergo ad hunc panem pervenitur, legis veteris amplius manna non quaeritur. Dende Jericho septem diebus obsessa destruitur (Jos. VI), per quam videlicet mundus iste designatur. Sicut enim civitas illa non evertitur telis, vel oppugnantibus cuneis bellatorum, sed tubis tantummodo clangentibus sacerdotum; ita mundus hic non terrenis superatus est armis, sed quasi quibusdam tubis atque clangoribus apostolicae praedicationis. Sacerdotes concrepant tubis, et muri Jericho corruunt; quia, praedicantibus apostolis, hujus mundi dilectores a rigore sese tumidae superbiae humiliter flectunt.

Why is it said that they placed twelve very hard stones as a testimony, if not that they might instruct us that, as soon as we rise from the fount of the sacred washing, we should set before ourselves the strongest examples of apostolic virtue? That those stones may be for us as a testimony while we strive for the increases of virtues. Whence immediately Joshua is commanded to cross with the people into Gilgal, and there to circumcise them with stone knives. The Rock, as the Apostle says, was Christ (1 Corinthians 10). By the stone knives, therefore, we are circumcised when through Christ we cut off from ourselves all the allurements of the flesh and the spirit. And by this circumcision, as is said there, we drive back the reproach of the Egyptians, because we crush the petulance of the vices that delude us: "Today," said the Lord to Joshua, "I have taken away the reproach of Egypt from you (Joshua 5)." Nor should it be passed over that Gilgal is interpreted as revelation. For the carnal life blinds the eyes of the mind, the spiritual life illuminates them. "Open," he says, "my eyes, and I will consider the wonders of your law (Psalm 118)." For when a man is circumcised from his vices, the sharp edge of the mind is raised to consider the mysteries of the divine law, in which place namely the Passover is celebrated by the Israelite people, and that Lamb is typically eaten who takes away the sins of the world (John 1).

And note the order of things, and weigh the mystery of human salvation. After we go out from baptism as if from the whirlpool of the Jordan, we establish for ourselves the stones of apostolic virtue and constancy as a testimony of example, which, contemplating with the zeal of emulation, we are circumcised from the foreskin of our depravity; and thus, with the darkness of vices removed far off and wiped away, with the face of spiritual joy revealed, we celebrate the Passover in the light of virtues. There first the people ate unleavened bread from the fruits of the earth; and the manna, with which they had been accustomed to be nourished until then, appeared no further. Because after that living bread, which descended from heaven (John 6), came forth from the field of the virginal womb; after the grain of wheat falling into the earth died and brought forth very much fruit (John 12), immediately the manna of the typical law failed. For the land of promise is the womb of the Virgin. Concerning which land it is said through Isaiah: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth be opened and bud forth the Savior (Isaiah 45)." When, therefore, one comes to this bread, the manna of the old law is no longer sought. Then Jericho, besieged for seven days, is destroyed (Joshua 6), by which namely this world is designated. For just as that city is not overturned by weapons or by the attacking wedges of warriors, but only by the sounding trumpets of the priests; so this world was not overcome by earthly arms, but by certain trumpets and soundings of apostolic preaching. The priests sound the trumpets, and the walls of Jericho fall; because, with the apostles preaching, the lovers of this world humbly bend themselves from the rigor of swollen pride.

Et nos, fratres charissimi, semper apostolicis humiliemur imperiis, ut rigidam cordis nostri cervicem eorum studeamus subjugare doctrinis. Certe ipsi sunt judices nostri, ab ipsis sumus in tremendo summi Judicis examine discutiendi. Ecce per totum mundum tubarum clangoribus intonant, ecce rebellem adhuc Jericho quasi cum arca foederis eorum doctrina circumdat. Excitemur ad tonitru tantae praedicationis, nec sopor nos mortis opprimat, dum vitae carnalis umbra delectat. Audiamus Paulum tanquam vehemens classicum terribiliter intonantem: «Exsurge, inquit, qui dormis, et exsurge a mortuis, et excitabit te Christus (Ephes. V).» Porro cum sacerdotalibus tubis Jerichontini lapides obtemperaverint, et insensibilis illa materia, diruta funditus et eversa civitate, corruerit; quomodo nos ad apostolicae praedicationis imperium velut insensibiles dormiemus, qui per Christi gratiam, qui lapis est angularis, et ipsi vivi lapides sumus? Audiamus quid Petrus dicat apostolus: «Ad quem, inquit, accedentes, lapidem vivum, ab hominibus quidem reprobatum, a Deo autem electum et honorificatum; et ipsi tanquam vivi lapides superaedificamini domus spiritualis (I Petr. II).» Jam igitur in nobis superba Jericho, non Chananaeorum, sed vitiorum habitatio corruat; et Hierusalem nova, virtutum lapidibus aedificata, consurgat, ut juxta Apostolum: «Peccato mortui, justitiae vivamus; et: Qui commortui sumus Christo, simul et vivamus cum ipso (II Tim. II).» Qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo XLII.

*II. DE S. BARTHOLOMAEO APOSTOLO. (XXIV AUG.)*

Laetamur et gloriamur in Domino, dilectissimi, de sancto vestrae devotionis affectu, quia quanto uberius divini verbi poculum bibitis, tanto ferventioris in idipsum desiderii faucibus aestuatis. Nec immerito: nam ita est omnis apostolici culminis beatitudo conjuncta, et tot gratiarum compage vel glutino probatur unita, ut cum unius eorum festivitas colitur, protinus omnium apostolorum non diversa sublimitas interioribus obtutibus ingeratur. Una scilicet inter eos excellentia judiciariae potestatis, eadem dignitas ordinis, nec diversa in ligando, sive solvendo, virtutis habetur auctoritas. Hae sunt enim illae pretiosae margaritae, quas in Apocalypsi B. Joannes se conspexisse pronuntiat, ex quibus etiam coelestis Hierusalem portas perhibet esse constructas: «Singulae, inquit, portae erant ex singulis margaritis (Apoc. XXI).» Ipsi nimirum portae, ipsi sunt nihilominus margaritae, quia, dum signis atque prodigiis quosdam divini splendoris radios mittunt, ad supernae Hierusalem gloriam conversis ad fidem gentibus aditum pandunt.

And let us, most dear brothers, always be humbled by apostolic commands, so that we may strive to subjugate the rigid neck of our heart to their doctrines. Certainly they are our judges, by them we are to be discussed in the tremendous examination of the supreme Judge. Behold, through the whole world they thunder with the soundings of trumpets; behold, their doctrine surrounds Jericho, still rebellious, as if with the ark of the covenant. Let us be excited to the thunder of such great preaching, nor let the sleep of death oppress us while the shadow of carnal life delights us. Let us hear Paul thundering terribly like a vehement trumpet-call: "Awake," he says, "thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Ephesians 5)." Furthermore, since the stones of Jericho obeyed the priestly trumpets, and that insensible matter, with the city utterly demolished and overturned, fell down; how shall we sleep as if insensible to the command of apostolic preaching, we who through the grace of Christ, who is the cornerstone, are ourselves living stones? Let us hear what Peter the apostle says: "To whom coming," he says, "as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and honored; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house (1 Peter 2)." Now therefore let proud Jericho, the habitation not of Canaanites but of vices, fall within us; and let the new Jerusalem, built with the stones of virtues, arise, so that according to the Apostle: "Being dead to sin, we may live unto justice; and: Since we are dead with Christ, we shall also live with him (2 Timothy 2)." Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon XLII.

*II. ON ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE. (AUGUST 24)*

We rejoice and glory in the Lord, most beloved, concerning the holy affection of your devotion, because the more abundantly you drink the cup of the divine word, the more you burn with the jaws of a more fervent desire for that same thing. Nor without merit: for thus is all the blessedness of the apostolic height conjoined, and proved to be united by such a framework or glue of graces, that when the festivity of one of them is celebrated, immediately the not diverse sublimity of all the apostles is thrust upon our interior gazes. Namely, there is one excellence of judicial power among them, the same dignity of order, nor is a diverse authority of virtue held in binding or in loosing. For these are those precious pearls, which Blessed John pronounces that he beheld in the Apocalypse, from which also he asserts the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem to be constructed: "Every several gate," he says, "was of one several pearl (Apocalypse 21)." They indeed are the gates, they likewise are the pearls, because, while they send out certain rays of divine splendor by signs and wonders, they open the approach to the glory of the supernal Jerusalem to the nations converted to the faith.

Et quicunque salvatur per hos, quasi portas ad vitam viator ingreditur, Quorum mysticam tenuere figuram et lapides illi, qui, Deo jubente Moysi, rationali summi sacerdotis reguntur impressi (Exod. XXVIII). Hoc itaque rationale sacerdos ferebat in pectore, cum ingrederetur Sancta sanctorum. Praeceptum est ergo ut in eo ponerentur duodecim lapides, terni per quaternos angulos, inclusi auro; quia nimirum sancti apostoli per quadrifidum orbem de Trinitate, quae Deus est, praedicarunt catholicae fidei veritatem. Qui etiam lapides auro referuntur inclusi, quia et beati apostoli in sapientiae coelestis arcano perseverant inviolabiliter confirmati.

Legitimum ergo est ut sacerdos, cum ingreditur sanctuarium, duodecim pretiosos lapides in rationali pectoris deferat; quatenus quisquis sacris altaribus appropinquat, apostolicae sibimet rectitudinis exempla proponat; ut quorum ministerio fungitur, eorum vitam, in quantum praevalet, imitetur; et quorum gerit officium, in eos sanctae aemulationis studio mentis defigat obtutum. Et quid mirum, si nos imbecilles et parvuli, beatorum apostolorum, qui sanctae Ecclesiae bases sunt et columnae, jubeamur imitari normam, sanctamque tenere doctrinam, cum et ipsi apostoli priorum suorum, antiquorum scilicet Patrum, sint auctoritate firmati? Unde et in constructione tabernaculi ut columnae argenteae interius starent, paxilli aerei figi per circuitum exterius jussi sunt (Exod. XXXVIII), in quibus religatum tabernaculum teneretur. Columnae itaque argenteae interius, paxilli vero aerei in circuitu figuntur, atque in ipsis funes ligati sunt, ut tabernaculum fixum maneret; quia videlicet ut sancti apostoli in luce sermonis sui solidi starent, utque totum tabernaculum, id est, sancta Ecclesia in fidei integritate consisteret, tanquam paxilli aerei in circuitu patres Testamenti Veteris ac prophetae exterius fixi sunt; qui verborum suorum funibus praedicatorum mentes in soliditate constringerent, atque hoc Dei habitaculum fidei stabilitate ligarent.

Extra ergo paxilli sunt, qui ante tempus hujus sanctae Ecclesiae fuerunt. Sed tamen eos ligant qui in ipsa sunt; quia dum coelestia mysteria ventura praedicant, haec, postquam ostensa sunt, credibilia omnia fecerunt. Ut ergo intus columnae immobiles stent, foris paxilli funes continent; quia ut sancti apostoli perfectae incarnationis Dominicae mysterium crederent, illorum praedicatio obtinuit; qui hoc, priusquam fieret, et videre et praedicare potuerunt.

And whoever is saved through them, enters as a traveler through the gates to life. Whose mystical figure those stones also held, which, at God's command to Moses, are held impressed upon the breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28). This breastplate therefore the priest bore on his breast when he entered the Holy of Holies. It was commanded, therefore, that twelve stones be placed in it, three by four corners, enclosed in gold; because namely the holy apostles preached the truth of the Catholic faith through the fourfold world concerning the Trinity, which is God. Which stones also are reported to be enclosed in gold, because the blessed apostles also persevere inviolably confirmed in the secret of heavenly wisdom.

It is therefore legitimate that the priest, when he enters the sanctuary, should bear twelve precious stones in the breastplate of his heart; so that whoever approaches the sacred altars may set before himself the examples of apostolic rectitude; so that he may imitate, as much as he is able, the life of those whose ministry he performs; and whose office he bears, upon them he may fix the gaze of his mind with the zeal of holy emulation. And what wonder if we, weak and little ones, are commanded to imitate the norm and hold the holy doctrine of the blessed apostles, who are the bases and columns of the holy Church, when the apostles themselves were confirmed by the authority of those before them, namely of the ancient Fathers? Whence also in the construction of the tabernacle, that the silver columns might stand within, bronze pegs were commanded to be fixed around the outside (Exodus 38), in which the bound tabernacle might be held. Silver columns therefore within, but bronze pegs are fixed around the outside, and cords are tied in them, so that the tabernacle might remain fixed; because namely that the holy apostles might stand solid in the light of their speech, and that the whole tabernacle, that is, the holy Church, might consist in the integrity of faith, as bronze pegs around the outside the fathers of the Old Testament and the prophets were fixed; who by the cords of their words might constrain the minds of the preachers in solidity, and bind this dwelling of God with the stability of faith.

Outside therefore are the pegs, which were before the time of this holy Church. But nevertheless they bind those who are in it; because while they preach the heavenly mysteries about to come, they made all these things, after they were shown, believable. That therefore the columns may stand immobile within, the pegs outside contain the cords; because that the holy apostles might believe the mystery of the perfect incarnation of the Lord, their preaching obtained it; who could both see and preach this before it happened.

Unde recte quoque ipse primus apostolorum, magna scilicet columna veri tabernaculi, loquitur, dicens: «Habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem, cui benefacitis intendentes, quasi lucernae relucenti in caliginoso loco (II Petr. I).» In quibus verbis indicat (quamvis ad alta surrexit) ex culmine, ubi religata persistat in fide. Quae tamen lucerna prophetici sermonis jam quidem intelligentibus lucet, sed adhuc non intelligentibus cooperta allegoriarum obscuritatibus permanet. Unde etiam per Psalmistam de eisdem dictis prophetarum dicitur: «Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris (Psal. XVII),» quia videlicet occulta est sapientia in prophetis.

Nec immerito columnae argenteae, paxilli vero aerei facti sunt; quia quod clare jam apostoli praedicant, hoc prophetae sub intellectu mystico obscure locuti sunt. Recte vero per aeris metallum signati sunt, qui clari in suis praedicationibus non fuerunt; sancti vero apostoli, quia de Redemptoris nostri mysterio lucem praedicationis habuerunt, argenteis columnis expressi sunt. Et notandum quod argentum sonat et lucet; aes vero sonat, et non lucet; quia praedicatores Novi Testamenti aperte locuti sunt quae etiam monstrare potuerunt. Praedicatores vero Testamenti Veteris, quia per allegoriarum umbras de coelesti mysterio obscura dicta protulerunt, quasi sine luce sonitum dederunt; quanquam aes et sanctis aliquando congruere reperiatur apostolis. De quibus sub Aser specie per Moysen in Deuteronomio dicitur: «Ferrum et aes calceamentum ejus (Deut. XXXIII).» Calceamentum quippe in Scriptura sacra munimentum praedicationis accipitur, sicut scriptum est: «Calceati pedes in praedicatione Evangelii pacis (Ephes. VI).» Quia ergo per ferrum virtus, per aes autem perseverantia longanimitatis exprimitur; ferrum, et aes apostolorum dicitur esse calceamentum, nec non et sanctorum quorumlibet praedicatorum. Per ferrum scilicet adversantia mala patienter tolerant; per aes vero bona proposita longanimiter servant. De quibus apostolis, sive apostolicis viris, praedicatoribus scilicet sanctis, ad eumdem Aser cum praemisisset: «Ascensor coeli auxiliator tuus;» illico subdidit «Magnificentia ejus discurrunt nubes.» Quis enim est ascensor coeli, nisi Salvator noster, qui, postquam mortis imperium moriens perdidit, coelum angelis comitantibus et discipulis suspicientibus penetravit? Hujus magnificentia nubes discurrunt, quia ejus auctoritate doctores sancti per mundum salutiferae praedicationis imbrem pluunt. De quibus et propheta: «Qui sunt, inquit, isti, qui ut nubes volant?» (Isa. IX.) Istae nubes resolvuntur in aquam, cum terram cordis nostri doctrinae suae fluentis inebriant, ut eam ad proferenda pii operis germina fertilem reddant.

Whence also correctly that first of the apostles, namely the great column of the true tabernacle, speaks, saying: "We have a firmer prophetic word, to which you do well to attend, as to a lamp shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1)." In which words he indicates (although he rose to high things) from the summit, where he might persist bound in faith. Which lamp of prophetic speech now indeed shines for those who understand, but remains covered with the obscurities of allegories for those who do not yet understand. Whence also through the Psalmist it is said concerning the same sayings of the prophets: "Dark water in the clouds of the air (Psalm 17)," because namely wisdom is hidden in the prophets.

And not without merit were silver columns and bronze pegs made; because what the apostles now clearly preach, the prophets spoke obscurely under a mystical understanding. Rightly indeed were they signified by the metal of bronze who were not bright in their preachings; but the holy apostles, because they had the light of preaching concerning the mystery of our Redeemer, were expressed by silver columns. And it is to be noted that silver sounds and shines; but bronze sounds and does not shine; because the preachers of the New Testament spoke openly those things which they were also able to show. But the preachers of the Old Testament, because through the shadows of allegories they brought forth obscure sayings concerning the heavenly mystery, gave a sound as if without light; although bronze is sometimes found to fit even the holy apostles. Concerning whom it is said under the figure of Asher through Moses in Deuteronomy: "Iron and bronze his shoe (Deuteronomy 33)." A shoe indeed is taken in Holy Scripture as the protection of preaching, as it is written: "Feet shod in the preaching of the Gospel of peace (Ephesians 6)." Because therefore through iron virtue is expressed, but through bronze the perseverance of longanimity; iron and bronze are said to be the shoe of the apostles, and also of any holy preachers. Namely, through iron they patiently tolerate opposing evils; but through bronze they longanimously keep good purposes. Concerning which apostles, or apostolic men, namely holy preachers, when he had premised to that same Asher: "The ascender of heaven is thy helper;" he immediately added: "By his magnificence the clouds run about." For who is the ascender of heaven, if not our Savior, who, after dying he destroyed the empire of death, penetrated heaven with angels accompanying and disciples looking up? By his magnificence the clouds run about, because by his authority holy teachers rain the shower of salutary preaching through the world. Concerning whom also the prophet says: "Who are these," he says, "that fly like clouds?" (Isaiah 60). These clouds are resolved into water when they inebriate the earth of our heart with the flows of their doctrine, so that they may render it fertile for bringing forth the germs of a pious work.

Unde et Bartholomaeus (quod utique Syrum nomen est, non Hebraeum) interpretatur filius suspendentis aquas: Filius utique Dei, qui praedicatorum suorum mentes ad coelestia contemplanda suspendit; ut quanto liberius se ad intelligendum Creatorem suum pennis virtutum librant, tanto feracius et uberius imbrem coelestis eloquii nostris cordibus infundere valeant, et ex illo fonte suspensi bibant, quod in nos postmodum propinando transfundant. Unde bene Moyses mystice de sancta dicit Ecclesia: «Non est, inquit, terra, ad quam ingredimini possidendam, similis terrae Aegypti, de qua existis, ubi jacto semine, in hortorum morem aquae ducuntur irriguae;» sed: «de coelo pluvias exspectans, quam Deus suus invisit omni tempore (Deut. XI).» Saecularis enim prudentia quasi coluber per humum serpit, et huc illucque lubrica varietate declinat; divina vero sapientia de coelestibus intonat. Hortus etiam hic sinistram habet significationem. Nam carnalis scientiae videtur designare lasciviam. Sicut et illic, ubi Achab petiit vineam Naboth: «Da mihi, inquit, vineam tuam, ut faciam mihi hortum oleorum (II Reg. XXI).» Ille quippe in hortum conatur vineam vertere, qui rigorem virtutis jucunda carnalis illecebrae vult amoenitate mutare. Et Psalmista reprobos oleribus comparat, dicens: «Tanquam fenum velociter arescent, et sicut olera herbarum cito cadent (Psal. XXXVI).»

Terra itaque repromissionis, hoc est sancta Ecclesia, et de coelo pluvias praestolatur, quia sapientiae coelestis imbre perfunditur, et nubes ejus, sancti scilicet doctores, de coelesti uno fonte invisibiliter hauriunt, quod in nos postmodum suaviter eructando transfundunt. Unde Propheta: «Memoriam, inquit, abundantiae suavitatis tuae eructabunt, et justitia tua exsultabunt (Psal. CXLIV).» An non ad illum fontem Paulus, magna scilicet nubes, rediit, cum, supra tertium coelum raptus, verba quae loqui non licebat, audivit? (I Cor. II.) An non ad eumdem fontem reversus est Petrus, cum in extasim subito rapitur, et non modo diversa animantium genera, sed et serpentia mactare et manducare jubetur? (Act. X.) Et haec quidem nubes non erat tunc aqua sapientiae pleniter gravida, quia communis omnium gentium vocationis erat ignara. Sed accessit ad fontem, et hausit limpidissimam atque perspicuam de salute gentium puritatem.

Whence also Bartholomew (which is certainly a Syrian name, not Hebrew) is interpreted son of him who suspends the waters: Namely the Son of God, who suspends the minds of his preachers to contemplate heavenly things; so that the more freely they balance themselves on the wings of virtues to understand their Creator, the more fruitfully and abundantly they may be able to pour the shower of heavenly eloquence into our hearts, and drink suspended from that fountain what they may afterwards pour out for us to drink. Whence well Moses says mystically concerning the holy Church: "It is not," he says, "the land which you enter to possess, like the land of Egypt from which you come out, where seed having been cast, irrigating waters are led in the manner of gardens;" but: "expecting rains from heaven, which its God visits at all times (Deuteronomy 11)." For secular prudence creeps along the ground like a serpent, and turns aside here and there with slippery variety; but divine wisdom thunders from the heavens. This garden also has a sinister signification. For it seems to designate the lasciviousness of carnal knowledge. Just as there, where Ahab sought the vineyard of Naboth: "Give me," he says, "thy vineyard, that I may make me a garden of herbs (1 Kings 21)." For he strives to turn a vineyard into a garden, who wishes to change the rigor of virtue for the pleasant amenity of carnal allurement. And the Psalmist compares the reprobate to herbs, saying: "As grass they shall quickly wither, and as the green herbs they shall quickly fall (Psalm 36)."

The land of promise, therefore, that is, the holy Church, also waits for the rains from heaven, because it is drenched by the shower of heavenly wisdom, and its clouds, namely the holy teachers, invisibly draw from the one heavenly fount what they afterwards pour out sweetly eructating into us. Whence the Prophet says: "They shall eructate the memory of the abundance of thy sweetness, and shall exult in thy justice (Psalm 144)." Did not Paul, namely a great cloud, return to that fountain when, snatched up above the third heaven, he heard words which it was not permitted to speak (2 Corinthians 12)? Did not Peter return to the same fountain when he was suddenly snatched into ecstasy, and was commanded not only to slay and eat various kinds of living things, but also creeping things (Acts 10)? And this cloud indeed was not then fully heavy with the water of wisdom, because it was ignorant of the common vocation of all nations. But he approached the fountain, and drew the most limpid and clear purity concerning the salvation of the nations.

Nunquid et beatus iste Bartholomaeus de plenitudine fontis hujus haustum coelestis gratiae non percepit, quando super eum cum coapostolis suis omnibus venit Spiritus sanctus in ignitarum diversitate linguarum? (Act. II.) Sed qui ignem audis, aquam forsan non intelligis? Audi quomodo Dominus eumdem Spiritum sanctum, qui in igne super apostolos venit, aquam vocavit. «Si quis, inquit, sitit, veniat ad me et bibat.» Moxque subjunxit: «Qui credit in me,» sicut dicit Scriptura, «flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae.» Hoc autem, ait evangelista, dixit de Spiritu quem accepturi erant credentes in eum (Joan. VII).» De quibus credentibus per Prophetam dicitur: «Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuae, et torrente voluptatis tuae potabis eos, quoniam apud te est fons vitae (Psal. XXXV).» Philosophi dicunt spatium aereae crassitudinis non amplius quam decem stadiis a terra distendi, quae nobis aliquando solis splendorem subtrahit et pluvias fundit. Istae vero, de quibus nunc loquimur, nubes coelorum celsa transcendunt, et lumen veri Solis non auferunt, sed ostendunt. De quibus etiam sub fluviorum nomine per Salomonem dicitur: «Omnia flumina intrant in mare, et mare non redundat; ad locum unde exeunt, flumina revertuntur, ut iterum fluant (Eccle. I).»

Inter quos utique fluvios beatus Bartholomaeus insignis est atque conspicuus, qui quodam praesagio futurorum hujus mystici vocabuli titulo cernitus insignitus. Nam cum dicitur filius suspendentis aquas, dicitur procul dubio Filius Dei, non quidem naturalis generationis origine, sed propensioris gratiae dignitate. Erat enim vere Dei templum, coelestis gratiae sanctuarium, arca foederis, tabernaculum testimonii. Nam sicut arca illa legalis ex imputribilibus lignis Setim mystica fuerat arte composita, auro quoque purissimo resplendebat, intus et extrinsecus inaurata (Exod. XXV); ita vir iste mirabilis, qui spem suam in aeternitate posuerat, et exterius radiabat imitandae vitae splendore, et intrinsecus praelucebat divinae sapientiae claritate. In illa quoque arca erat urna aurea, in qua manna servabatur, tabulae nihilominus Testamenti, et virga Aaron, quae fronduerat. Quid est autem urna aurea, nisi caro Christi munda, nitida, sincera atque ab omni reatus contagione purissima? Quae reconditum habet manna, angelicum videlicet panem, hoc est, divinitatis aeternae dulcedinem. Duae vero lapideae tabulae inviolabilem utriusque Testamenti significant firmitatem. Quid autem Aaron virga, nisi summi verique Pontificis nostri salutare vexillum, et vivificae crucis exprimit sacramentum? Quae etiam in eo quod germinasse perhibetur, praefiguravit beatam crucem immortalis memoriae viriditate vernantem.

Did not also this blessed Bartholomew perceive a draught of heavenly grace from the fullness of this fountain, when the Holy Spirit came upon him with all his fellow apostles in the diversity of fiery tongues (Acts 2)? But you who hear of fire, perhaps you do not understand water? Hear how the Lord called the same Holy Spirit, who came upon the apostles in fire, water. "If any man thirst," he said, "let him come to me and drink." And immediately he added: "He who believes in me," as the Scripture says, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." But this, the evangelist says, he said of the Spirit which those believing in him were about to receive (John 7)." Concerning which believers it is said through the Prophet: "They shall be inebriated from the richness of thy house, and thou shalt give them to drink of the torrent of thy pleasure, for with thee is the fount of life (Psalm 35)." Philosophers say that the space of aerial thickness is extended no more than ten stadia from the earth, which sometimes subtracts from us the splendor of the sun and pours out rains. But these clouds of which we now speak transcend the heights of the heavens, and do not take away the light of the true Sun, but show it. Concerning whom also it is said under the name of rivers through Solomon: "All the rivers enter into the sea, and the sea does not overflow; to the place whence they go out, the rivers return, that they may flow again (Ecclesiastes 1)."

Among which rivers certainly blessed Bartholomew is distinguished and conspicuous, who by a certain presage of future things is seen distinguished by the title of this mystical name. For when he is called son of him who suspends the waters, he is called without doubt the Son of God, not indeed by the origin of natural generation, but by the dignity of more propense grace. For he was truly the temple of God, the sanctuary of heavenly grace, the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle of testimony. For just as that legal ark had been composed of incorruptible Shittim wood by mystical art, and also shone with the purest gold, gilded within and without (Exodus 25); so this wonderful man, who had placed his hope in eternity, both radiated without with the splendor of a life to be imitated, and shone forth within with the clarity of divine wisdom. In that ark also was the golden urn, in which the manna was kept, likewise the tables of the Testament, and the rod of Aaron, which had blossomed. But what is the golden urn, if not the flesh of Christ, clean, bright, sincere, and most pure from every contagion of guilt? Which has the hidden manna, namely the angelic bread, that is, the sweetness of eternal divinity. But the two stone tables signify the inviolable firmness of both Testaments. But what does the rod of Aaron express, if not the salutary banner of our supreme and true Pontiff, and the sacrament of the life-giving cross? Which also in that it is reported to have budded, prefigured the blessed cross blossoming with the greenness of immortal memory.

Haec sunt sacramenta universalis Ecclesiae, haec etiam salutaris instructio cujuscunque fidelis animae Christianae. Quod enim arca per adumbratam praetendebat imaginem, hoc nunc Ecclesia, vel quaeque mens justi per efficacissimam et apertam possidet veritatem. Haec beati apostoli mysticae refectionis alimenta portabant, haec tanquam panem parvulis exponendo frangebant. Nam postquam evangelicus ille sermo prorupit, quoniam aperuit illis sensum, ut intelligerent Scripturas (Luc. XXIV), prophetica querela cessavit, qua dicitur: «Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis (Thren. IV).» Hic est panis ille quotidianus, fratres mei, quem nos Veritas docuit inhianter expetere; hoc coelestis sapientiae pabulum, quod debemus jugiter esurire.

Audiamus itaque per os Salomonis Sapientiam nos ad mensam spiritualis alimoniae claris vocibus invitantem: «Sapientia, inquit, immolavit victimas suas, miscuit vinum et proposuit mensam suam; misit ancillas suas, ut vocarent ad arcem, et ad moenia civitatis: si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me; venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis (Prov. IX).» Christus enim, qui sapientia Patris est, victimas immolavit, cum ad nostrae imitationis exemplum beatos martyres occidi permisit. Miscuit vinum, quia propinavit credentibus Spiritum sanctum. Proposuit mensam, quia coelestem paravit hominibus gloriam. Misit ancillas suas, id est, sanctos Verbi ministros, qui se infirmos et fragiles asseverant. Quid ergo jam restat, nisi ut, relicta fame saeculi, properemus ad mensam Dei? Sed ad hanc ingrediendi aditum reperire non possumus, nisi per sanctos apostolos, quibus claves commissae sunt regni coelorum (Joan XX). Unde scriptum est: «Sapientia foris praedicat, in plateis dat vocem suam, in capite turbarum clamitat, in foribus portarum (Prov. I).» Ipsi quippe sunt caput turbarum foresque portarum, quia ipsi sunt populorum principes, ac supernae Jerusalem per sublimioris excellentiae privilegium janitores. Ipsi sunt regales illae sedes, de quibus in libro Sapientiae dicitur: «Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus, Domine, de coelo a regalibus sedibus venit (Sap. XVIII).» In adventu quippe Domini medium silentium omnia continebant, quia jam et prophetae cessaverant, et nondum apostoli ad praedicandam novae fidei gratiam veniebant.

These are the sacraments of the universal Church, this is also the salutary instruction of any faithful Christian soul. For what the ark portended through a shadowed image, this the Church now, or any mind of a just man, possesses through a most effective and open truth. These foods of mystical refreshment the blessed apostles bore, these they broke by setting them forth like bread to the little ones. For after that evangelical word broke forth, since he opened their sense that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke 24), the prophetic complaint ceased, by which it is said: "The little ones asked for bread, and there was no one who would break it for them (Lamentations 4)." This is that daily bread, my brothers, which Truth taught us to seek gapingly; this the food of heavenly wisdom, for which we ought to hunger continually.

Let us hear therefore through the mouth of Solomon Wisdom inviting us to the table of spiritual nourishment with clear voices: "Wisdom," he says, "has immolated her victims, mixed her wine, and set forth her table; she has sent her handmaids to call to the citadel, and to the walls of the city: if anyone is a little one, let him come to me; come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mixed for you (Proverbs 9)." For Christ, who is the wisdom of the Father, immolated victims when he permitted the blessed martyrs to be slain for the example of our imitation. He mixed wine, because he gave the Holy Spirit to the believers to drink. He set forth a table, because he prepared heavenly glory for men. He sent his handmaids, that is, the holy ministers of the Word, who assert themselves to be weak and fragile. What therefore now remains, except that, having left behind the hunger of the world, we hasten to the table of God? But we cannot find the entrance for entering this, except through the holy apostles, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed (John 20). Whence it is written: "Wisdom preaches without, in the streets she gives her voice, in the head of the crowds she cries out, in the entrances of the gates (Proverbs 1)." For they indeed are the head of the crowds and the entrances of the gates, because they are the princes of the peoples, and the janitors of the supernal Jerusalem through the privilege of more sublime excellence. They are those royal seats of which it is said in the book of Wisdom: "While all things held a middle silence, and the night in its course had a middle journey, thy almighty word, O Lord, came from heaven from the royal seats (Wisdom 18)." For at the coming of the Lord all things contained a middle silence, because both the prophets had already ceased, and the apostles had not yet come to preach the grace of the new faith.

In quodam plane mundus meditullio consistebat, dum et prophetarum nequaquam oracula superessent, et apostolica nondum praedicatio coruscaret. Quid autem hic nox intelligitur, nisi diabolus, qui auctor est tenebrarum? qui nimirum quodammodo tunc ambulat, cum non facile valet implere quod optat; tunc vero currit, cum malitiae suae vota absque ullo contradictionis obstaculo perficit; et non jam vitae marginem, sed medium iter tenet, dum nihil sibi videt occurrere, quod sui cursus impetum valeat retardare.

Cum igitur sub tam noxio mundus silentio conticesceret, et haec ad perdendos homines occasio diabolum provocaret, ille non modo medium iter habebat, sed et currebat, quia quidquid nequitiae suae mente conceperat, efficaciter adimplebat. Nam et cuncta jam Romanum occupabat empireum, et necesse erat eos, qui legem Dei eatenus saltem utcunque tenuerant, jam subesse legibus paganorum. Sub igitur pereuntis mundi silentio sermo Domini a regalibus sedibus venit, quia de pectoribus apostolicis, quae regis aeterni veraciter sedes sunt, verbum evangelicae praedicationis erupit. Ipsi quippe regales sunt sedes, quas Deus inhabitat, ipsi reges, et Patres Ecclesiae, sicut dicitur: «Omnis gloria ejus filiae regum ab intus (Psal. XLIV).» Isti sane reges armati gladio spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI), debellarunt principem mundi. De quo nimirum apostolorum gladio legitur: «Durus debellator in mediam exterminii terram prosilivit, gladius acutus insimulatum imperium tuum portans, et stans replevit omnia morte, et usque ad coelum attingebat stans in terra (Sap. XVIII).»

Istorum itaque regum, dilectissimi, subdamur imperiis, eorum magisteriis instrui, eorum patrociniis elaboremus absolvi; quatenus, absoluti per concessam beatis apostolis auctoritatem, ad ipsum apostolicae dignitatis introducamur auctorem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER.

I. Sermo de S. Victore confessore.

VIII. Sermo I in Nativitate B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo II de eadem. Homilia de eadem.

XIV. Sermo I de exaltatione S. Crucis. Sermo II de eadem.

XXI. Sermo de S. Matthaeo, apostolo et evangelista. Sermo II de eodem. Homilia de eodem.

XXIX. Sermo de S. Michaele archangelo.

The world stood clearly in a certain midpoint, while both the oracles of the prophets by no means survived, and the apostolic preaching did not yet shine forth. But what is understood here by night, if not the devil, who is the author of darkness? who indeed in a certain way walks then, when he cannot easily fulfill what he desires; but then he runs, when he accomplishes the vows of his malice without any obstacle of contradiction; and he no longer holds the margin of life, but the middle journey, while he sees nothing occur to himself that might be able to retard the impetus of his course.

Therefore, when the world was silent under such harmful silence, and this occasion provoked the devil to destroy men, he not only had a middle journey, but he also ran, because whatever of iniquity he had conceived in his mind, he effectively fulfilled. For the Roman Empire was already occupying everything, and it was necessary for those who had at least held the law of God in any way up to that point to be subject now to the laws of the pagans. Therefore, under the silence of the perishing world, the word of the Lord came from the royal seats, because from the apostolic hearts, which are truly the seats of the eternal King, the word of evangelical preaching broke forth. For they indeed are the royal seats which God inhabits, they themselves kings, and Fathers of the Church, as it is said: "All the glory of that daughter of kings is from within (Psalm 44)." These kings indeed, armed with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6), defeated the prince of the world. Concerning which sword of the apostles certainly it is read: "A fierce warrior leaped forth into the midst of the land of extermination, a sharp sword carrying thy unfeigned command, and standing he filled all things with death, and he reached even unto heaven standing on the earth (Wisdom 18)."

Therefore, most beloved, let us be subject to the empires of these kings, let us labor to be instructed by their teachings, to be absolved by their patronages; so that, absolved through the authority granted to the blessed apostles, we may be introduced to the author of apostolic dignity himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ages of ages. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER.

I. Sermon on St. Victor the confessor.

VIII. Sermon I on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sermon II on the same. Homily on the same.

XIV. Sermon I on the exaltation of the Holy Cross. Sermon II on the same.

XXI. Sermon on St. Matthew, apostle and evangelist. Sermon II on the same. Homily on the same.

XXIX. Sermon on St. Michael the archangel.

## * SERMO XLIII. DE SANCTO VICTORE CONFESSORE. (I SEPTEMB.)

Hic ille magnus Providentiae oculus dulciori verbere carnem carnaliter ambulantem afflixit et confixit timore suo. Qui enim patientiam Dei, poenam inferni, gloriam regni animo irreverenti et infrunito contempseram, paratus sum, et non sum turbatus, ut custodiam mandata Domini (Psal. CXVIII). Intus erat urens conscientia multis obvoluta criminibus, et artificioso velamine detestandum silentium diligens plus elegerat mori quam loqui, perire quam redire. Sic obdurationis suae legibus pressa, oculos suos statuerat declinare in terram. Sed ille qui non dormit neque dormitat, pauperis animae recordatus, agressus est flagellis vincere quam vincere beneficiis non valebat. Adest illa maxima febris, quam acutam physici nominant, et membris omnibus profusius superfusa miserabili corpori insedit. Exaggeratur calor, et in ipsam animae sedem ignis furiosus irrumpit. Jam flammis ultricibus peccantis substantia conflagratur, et aeternalium sentit praeludia tormentorum. Intelligens igitur quia «horrendum est incidere in manus Dei viventis (Hebr. X),» multiplicitatem facinorum meorum recolligo, confessus illi, quem electio patrem, amicitia fidelem, familiaritas consortem effecit. Utrum taliter responderit qualiter ego clamaverim, ejus discretioni censui relinquendum. In proposito meo est et praeterita mea plangere et cavere futura. Donet ille perseverantiam, qui negligentiam excitavit. In ipsius misericordia, non in justitia sua confidit servus suus, ut memor sit mandatorum ipsius non solum ad scribendum, sed ad faciendum ea. Haec ergo causa fuit operis interrupti. Haec tantae taciturnitatis occasio; nunc igitur scribemus tanto laetius, quanto securius, cum summum periculum sit docere, nec facere; nec attendatur hic styli lenocinantis excursus, cum verae religionis sit eventilatis caruisse sermonibus, nec verborum gloriam redolere.

Ad manum est patris nostri Victoris solemnitas, ad cujus sacratissimum corpus, si vera est antiquitatis fides, quotidie residemus. Hic est vir, qui in virtute Domini virtutum signis et mirabilibus gloriosus effulsit, apostolis et apostolicis viris miraculorum gloria comparandus. Quae et quanta sint, et quanta sublimitate fulgentia, libellus de vita et ortu ejus latius exaratus sufficit indicare. Huic significanter assignari potest illud quod in illa solemni visione angelo Ephesi Ecclesiae scribitur: «Vincenti dabo edere de ligno vitae, quod est in paradiso Dei mei (Apoc. II).»

## * SERMON XLIII. ON SAINT VICTOR THE CONFESSOR. (SEPTEMBER 1.)

Here that great eye of Providence afflicted and transfixed with a sweeter lash the flesh walking carnally. For I who with an irreverent and unbridled mind had contemned the patience of God, the punishment of hell, the glory of the kingdom, am ready, and have not been troubled, that I may keep the commands of the Lord (Psalm 118). Within was a burning conscience enveloped in many crimes, and a detestable silence loving an artificial veil had chosen rather to die than to speak, to perish than to return. Thus pressed by the laws of its own obduracy, it had determined to decline its eyes toward the earth. But he who neither sleeps nor slumbers, having remembered the poor soul, approached to conquer by lashes whom he was not able to conquer by benefits. That greatest fever is present, which physicians name acute, and having been poured forth more profusely over all the members, it settled in the miserable body. Heat is exaggerated, and a furious fire breaks into the very seat of the soul. Now the substance of the sinner is burned by avenging flames, and feels the preludes of eternal torments. Understanding therefore that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10)," I recollect the multiplicity of my deeds, having confessed to him whom choice made a father, friendship a faithful one, familiarity a companion. Whether he responded in such a way as I cried out, I decided to leave to his discretion. It is in my purpose both to bewail my past things and to beware of future ones. May he give perseverance who excited negligence. In his mercy, and not in his justice, does his servant trust, that he may be mindful of his commands not only for writing, but for doing them. This, therefore, was the cause of the interrupted work. This the occasion of such great silence; now therefore we shall write the more joyfully as we do so the more securely, since it is the greatest danger to teach and not to do; nor let the excursion of an enticing style be attended to here, since it is of true religion to have been without winnowed speeches, nor to redol the glory of words.

The solemnity of our father Victor is at hand, at whose most sacred body, if the faith of antiquity is true, we reside daily. This is the man who in the strength of the Lord shone forth glorious with signs and wonders of virtues, to be compared in the glory of miracles to the apostles and apostolic men. Which and how great they are, and with what sublimity they shine, the booklet about his life and origin written at greater length suffices to indicate. To him can be significantly assigned that which is written in that solemn vision to the angel of the Church of Ephesus: "To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God (Revelation 2)."

Ipse etenim, nomen ex opere sortitus, ante vicit quam vincere nosset; nec quemlibet hostem, sed illum de quo rara et nunquam secura victoria. Lignum vitae est sapientia, de cujus fructu et hic in spe, et illic manducat in re, fructu utique specioso et pretioso; specioso propter speciem, pretioso propter utilitatem. Haec est illa sublimis arbor, cujus umbra montes, et arbusta cedros Dei operuerunt (Psal. LXXIX). Cedrus Libani, quae ramosa densitate angelicas perumbrat stationes. Sub umbra hujus arboris sedet sponsa, et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi suo (Cant. II). Huic dicimus: In umbra tua vivemus inter gentes. Hujus umbraculum protegit ab aestu diei in securitatem, et absconsionem a turbine, et a pluvia (Isa. IV). Hoc est illud granum sinapis quod in utero Virginis Dei Patris manibus seminatum, minus fuit omnibus oleribus terrae, sed in tantam altitudinem exsurrexit, ut veniant volucres coeli, et habitent in ramis ejus (Matth. XIII); lignum, quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum (Psal. I), lignum vitae in medio paradisi (Gen. III).

Et attende magnum sacramentum. Filius Dei totus et integer eructatus est de corde Patris in uterum Mariae, de ventre Matris in gremium Ecclesiae. Quantus in Patre, tantus in Virgine; quantus in Virgine, tantus in Ecclesiae unitate. In Patre ineffabiliter, in Matre mirabiliter, singulariter in Ecclesia. Cum Patre ejusdem et aequalis substantiae; cum Matre ejusdem, et divisae; cum Ecclesia ejusdem, sed occultae. Sic distillaverunt coeli misericordiam, sic Verbum Dei tranfusum est, et effusum ubique totum, sine quo nihil totum. Felix effusio, quae currentes adolescentulae ad odorem suavitatis invitat, visu recreat, satiat gustu, ubique autem in medio. Nam et in illa deitatis essentia, media est inter Patrem et Spiritum persona familiaris humano generi benignitate, familiarior identitate, cum sola nostrae carnis susceperit paupertatem. Unde et David, in ipsius divinitatis abyssum immersus, ait: «Benedicat nos Deus, Deus noster, benedicat nos Deus (Psal. LXVI);» et illum in medio majestatis esse protestans, et nostrum asserens specialiter, qui nostrae mortalitatis induit vestimentum. Pater enim, et Spiritus impleverunt quidem Virginem, sed majestate, non susceptione. Est et in medio Virginis ipsius utero substantialiter illapsus, qui medietatem staterae comprehendit humanae. Deus enim noster rex ante saecula operatus est salutem in medio terrae (Psal. LXXIII). Terrae utique illius, de qua scriptum est: «Nemo erat qui operaretur terram (Gen. II).» Est etiam in medio Ecclesiae, dicente Psalmista: «Sanctificavit tabernaculum suum Altissimus: Deus in medio ejus non commovebitur (Psal. XLIII).»

For he himself, having obtained his name from his work, overcame before he knew how to overcome; nor any host whatever, but him concerning whom victory is rare and never secure. The tree of life is wisdom, of whose fruit he eats both here in hope, and there in reality, a fruit certainly beautiful and precious; beautiful on account of its appearance, precious on account of its utility. This is that sublime tree, whose shadow covered the mountains, and its shrubs the cedars of God (Psalm 79). The cedar of Lebanon, which with its branched density overshadows the angelic stations. Under the shadow of this tree the bride sits, and its fruit is sweet to her throat (Canticles 2). To this we say: In thy shadow we shall live among the nations. The shade of this tree protects from the heat of the day into security, and is a hiding place from the whirlwind, and from the rain (Isaiah 4). This is that grain of mustard which, sown by the hands of God the Father in the womb of the Virgin, was smaller than all the herbs of the earth, but rose up into such great height that the birds of heaven come and dwell in its branches (Matthew 13); the tree which is planted beside the runnings of waters (Psalm 1), the tree of life in the midst of paradise (Genesis 3).

And attend to the great sacrament. The Son of God, whole and entire, was brought forth from the heart of the Father into the womb of Mary, from the womb of the Mother into the bosom of the Church. As great in the Father, so great in the Virgin; as great in the Virgin, so great in the unity of the Church. In the Father ineffably, in the Mother wonderfully, singularly in the Church. With the Father of the same and equal substance; with the Mother of the same, and divided; with the Church of the same, but hidden. Thus the heavens distilled mercy, thus the Word of God was transfused, and poured out everywhere whole, without which nothing is whole. A happy effusion, which invites the running young maidens to the odor of sweetness, recreates by sight, satiates by taste, but is everywhere in the middle. For also in that essence of the deity, the person is the middle one between the Father and the Spirit by a kindness familiar to the human race, more familiar by identity, since he alone has taken up the poverty of our flesh. Whence also David, immersed into the abyss of that divinity itself, says: "May God bless us, our God, may God bless us (Psalm 66);" both protesting that he is in the middle of majesty, and asserting him specifically as ours, who put on the garment of our mortality. For the Father and the Spirit indeed filled the Virgin, but by majesty, not by taking up. And he is substantially glided into the middle of the womb of that Virgin, he who comprehended the middle of the human balance. For our God the King before the ages worked salvation in the midst of the earth (Psalm 73). Of that earth certainly, concerning which it is written: "There was no man who would work the earth (Genesis 2)." He is also in the midst of the Church, as the Psalmist says: "The Most High has sanctified his tabernacle: God in the midst of it shall not be moved (Psalm 43)."

Colligamus pauca de pluribus, qualiter Salvator medius sit, et semper in medio videatur. «Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos (Luc. IX);» ipse non habet nidum, foveam ignorat, angulum nescit; locum illum elegit unde pateat omnibus, exclusa personarum acceptione. Denique et natus, positus est in medio duorum animalium, et quaesitus invenitur in medio doctorum (Luc. II): et medius Judaeorum stat, quem ipsi nesciunt. Loquitur et ad discipulos: «Ubi duo, vel tres congregati fuerint in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum (Matth. XVIII).» Et: «Ego in medio vestrum sum, sicut qui ministrat (Luc. XXII).» Crucifixus est etiam in medio duorum latronum: resurgens stetit in medio discipulorum suorum (Joan. XIX, XX); et a Joanne visus est in medio septem candelabrorum aureorum (Apoc. I). Medius ergo medium sequere, nec angulorum sordibus, nec fovearum tenebris delecteris; sed dic cum justo: «In medio Ecclesiae laudabo te (Psal. XXI).» Hoc est igitur lignum vitae plantatum in medio paradisi (Gen. II), arbor aromatica, purissima, balsamorum mella distillans. Ex hujus arboris substantia septemplicium ramorum corona progerminat, in quorum summitate fructus illi dependent, quos coelestis illa fistula, Paulus apostolus, verbis elegantibus explanavit.

Primus ramus est incarnatio Filii Dei. Iste siquidem subtilis et necessarius; cum et instauret coelestia, terrestria restauret, et utramque naturam sua vivificet viriditate. «Si in viridi, inquit, ligno hoc faciunt, in arido quid fiet?» (Luc. XXIII.) Se vocans viride lignum, de virginali pullulatum virore; cum nos et nativitatis munditiam, et fidei viriditatem in primo parente verum sit amisisse. Viriditas haec tam sapienter ab ipsa Sapientia excogitata est, ut et cordis et oris transeat facultatem. Oportebat enim ad redemptionem hominis, ut victus homo victorem diabolum vinceret. Sed unde fieret hoc, non habebat. Omnes enim in illo proscripti eramus, et per illum originalis peccati gravitate depressi. Deus autem non debuit, cum potius potentia videretur, si servum a se recedentem, qui illum subjugaverat, enodaret. Quod igitur homo per se non potuit, Deus per se non debuit, artifex Sapientia Deum et hominem collocavit, ut ex parte hominis pro hominibus satisfaceret, et ex parte Dei superbum sicut vulneratum humiliaret. Clausa est principi tenebrarum haec tam gloriosa conjunctio, nec versuta calliditas consilium Dei potuit conjectare. Assumitur purum semen de virginea puritate, et illum propitiationis fontem Sapientia Dei secretiori novitate repurgat. Primus itaque ramus est incarnatio ejus; fructus ejus, Spiritus sapientiae.

Let us collect a few things from many, how the Savior is middle, and is always seen in the middle. "Foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven nests (Luke 9);" he himself has no nest, he is ignorant of the hole, he knows no corner; he chose that place from which he might be open to all, the acceptance of persons being excluded. Finally, also when born, he was placed in the middle of two animals, and having been sought he is found in the middle of the doctors (Luke 2); and he stands middle of the Jews, whom they themselves do not know. He speaks also to the disciples: "Where two or three shall be gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18)." And: "I am in the midst of you, as he who ministers (Luke 22)." He was crucified also in the middle of two thieves: rising he stood in the midst of his disciples (John 19, 20); and he was seen by John in the midst of seven golden candlesticks (Revelation 1). Therefore, follow the middle, O middle one, and be delighted neither with the filth of corners, nor with the darkness of holes; but say with the just man: "In the midst of the Church I will praise thee (Psalm 21)." This therefore is the tree of life planted in the midst of paradise (Genesis 2), an aromatic tree, most pure, distilling the honeys of balsams. From the substance of this tree a crown of sevenfold branches buds forth, on whose summit those fruits hang, which that heavenly pipe, the apostle Paul, explained with elegant words.

The first branch is the incarnation of the Son of God. This one indeed is subtle and necessary; since it both instills heavenly things, restores earthly things, and vivifies each nature by its own greenness. "If in the green wood," he says, "they do this, in the dry what shall be done? (Luke 23.)" Calling himself the green wood, sprouted from virginal greenness; since it is true that we lost both the cleanness of birth and the greenness of faith in our first parent. This greenness was so wisely thought out by Wisdom herself, that it transcends the faculty of both heart and mouth. For it was fitting for the redemption of man, that man having been conquered should conquer the conquering devil. But from whence this might be done, he did not have. For we were all proscribed in him, and depressed through him by the weight of original sin. But God ought not, since it would rather seem power, if he should unknot the servant receding from himself, who had subjugated him. What therefore man through himself was not able, God through himself ought not, artisan Wisdom placed God and man, so that on the part of man he might satisfy for men, and on the part of God he might humble the proud one like a wounded one. This so glorious conjunction was closed to the prince of darkness, nor was a crafty shrewdness able to conjecture the counsel of God. A pure seed is taken from virginal purity, and the Wisdom of God cleanses that fount of propitiation with a more secret novelty. Therefore the first branch is his incarnation; its fruit, the Spirit of wisdom.

Secundus ramus est baptismus Christi. Intuere Filium Virginis non ad ablutionem membrorum suorum, quae de virgineis membris exierant, fuisse baptizatum, sed ut tantae mundationis privilegium in aquarum substantia sanciretur. Tene intellectu, quod visu non potes, descendere in aquam, cum aliquis baptizatur, filium diaboli, et ascendere filium Dei, vasa irae in misericordiae vasa converti (Rom. IX), everti peccatum originis, subverti latronis aedificium, divinitatis domicilium praeparari. Adest Spiritus sanctus, et de summa coelorum arce descendens, elementum sanctificat, deificat baptizatum, clarificat ministerii dignitatem. Constipantur angelicae virtutes alludentes sacramentalibus institutis, et coelestibus creaturis unda purificans coronatur. Cordis, non carnis oculos desiderat sacramenti transcensio, quia intelligibilis est. Secundus ergo ramus est baptismus Christi; fructus ejus, Spiritus intellectus.

Tertius est passio Redemptoris. Vide consilium Dei quod in abysso judiciorum ejus clausum fuerat ab aeterno. Consilium tuum antiquum, Domine, verum fiat, ait unus illorum, qui ad arcanum divinae Providentiae fuerat intromissus. Nunquid non consuluit tibi, cui non erat adjutor, cum sanctissimam illam carnem addidit opprobriis, tormentis exposuit, et «inclinato capite emisit spiritum?» (Joan. XIX.) O quam indebita miseratio, quam gratuita: et sic probata dilectio, quam inopinata dignatio, quam stupenda dulcedo, Filium Dei sic affligi, regem gloriae in lacu miseriae crucifigi! Denique nihil melius ad te redimendum habuit, quam quod semetipsum exinanivit, nec excellentiorem modum invenit sapientia Dei in omni sapientia sua. Passio ista consilium tuae redemptionis est. Ramus necessarius et mirabilis, cujus fructus est Spiritus consilii.

Quartus est descensio ejus ad inferos. In fortitudine singulari descendit ad inferos, tanquam potens crapulatus a vino, et conturbavit virum, qui conturbavit terram, qui posuit orbem desertum, confringens malleum universae terrae, et horrendum illud palatium fortissima subversione concutiens. Fortis quidem erat ille, sed fortior supervenit, qui vasa diriperet, auferret arma, ligaret inimicum (Luc. XII). Et ramus quidem iste rectus atque subtilis cujus fructus est Spiritus fortitudinis.

Quintus est resurrectio Christi. Hic ostendit nobis exemplo, quod promiserat in praemio, et scire nos fecit quod carne sua resurgente resurgeremus: quae etsi dissimilis gloriae, tamen ejusdem naturae in utero Virginis fuerat fabricata. Exclusa est totius ambiguitatis offensio. Viderunt apostoli manus, tenuerunt pedes, palpaverunt latus (Joan. XX), et omnia mortis insignia beatis oculis aspexerunt. Et hic igitur ramus magnus, atque sublimis; fructus autem ejus, Spiritus scientiae.

The second branch is the baptism of Christ. Intuit that the Son of the Virgin was baptized not for the washing of his members, which had come out from virginal members, but so that the privilege of such great cleansing might be sanctioned in the substance of the waters. Hold in understanding what you cannot by sight, that a son of the devil descends into the water when someone is baptized, and a son of God ascends, vessels of wrath are converted into vessels of mercy (Romans 9), original sin is overturned, the building of the thief is subverted, a domicile of divinity is prepared. The Holy Spirit is present, and descending from the highest citadel of the heavens, he sanctifies the element, deifies the baptized one, clarifies the dignity of the ministry. Angelic virtues are crowded together alluding to the sacramental institutes, and the purifying wave is crowned by heavenly creatures. The transcendence of the sacrament desires the eyes of the heart, not of the flesh, because it is intelligible. Therefore the second branch is the baptism of Christ; its fruit, the Spirit of understanding.

The third is the passion of the Redeemer. See the counsel of God which had been closed from eternity in the abyss of his judgments. Let thy ancient counsel, O Lord, be made true, says one of those who had been admitted to the secret of divine Providence. Did he not consult for thee, who had no helper, when he added that most holy flesh to reproaches, exposed it to torments, and "having bowed his head gave up the ghost?" (John 19.) O how unmerited a commiseration, how gratuitous: and thus a proven love, how unexpected a condescension, how stupendous a sweetness, for the Son of God to be so afflicted, the King of glory to be crucified in the lake of misery! Finally, he had nothing better for redeeming thee than that he emptied himself, nor did the wisdom of God find a more excellent way in all its wisdom. That passion is the counsel of thy redemption. A necessary and wonderful branch, whose fruit is the Spirit of counsel.

The fourth is his descent into hell. In singular strength he descended into hell, like a powerful man drunk with wine, and he troubled the man who troubled the earth, who made the world a desert, breaking the hammer of the whole earth, and shaking that horrendous palace with a most strong subversion. Strong indeed was that one, but a stronger one came upon him, who would plunder his vessels, take away his arms, bind the enemy (Luke 12). And this branch indeed is straight and subtle, whose fruit is the Spirit of fortitude.

The fifth is the resurrection of Christ. Here he showed to us by example what he had promised in reward, and made us know that by his flesh rising we would rise: which although of dissimilar glory, yet had been fashioned of the same nature in the womb of the Virgin. The offense of all ambiguity is excluded. The apostles saw the hands, held the feet, felt the side (John 20), and looked upon all the signs of death with blessed eyes. And this branch therefore is great and sublime; but its fruit, the Spirit of knowledge.

Sextus est ascensio ad coelos. O singularis pietas, suavitas specialis, cum lumen carnis nostrae sublimibus intulit officinis, et ad dexteram Patris collocavit in gloria! Vident et admirantur coelestium agmina legionum, et ad tantae gratiae largitatem incessabiliter obstupescunt. Exsuperat enim sensum omnem tantae dignationis intuitus, ipsi soli pervius Trinitati. Sed et hic ramus spectabilis et mirandus; fructus vero ejus, Spiritus pietatis.

Septimus est dies judicii, quando veniet cum potestate magna et majestate (Luc. XXI) reddere in ira vindictam, et vastationem in flamma ignis. Tunc erit timor ille timendus, cum, coelis ardentibus, pugnantibus elementis, terra succensa, conscientiis obvolutis, daemonibus accusantibus, trementibus angelis, judice furibundo et misericordiam nesciente, fiet illa discussio, quae utinam nos paratos inveniat (II Thess. I). Ramus iste magnus et metuendus; fructus ejus, Spiritus timoris Domini. Amemus ergo lignum vitae, et de fructu ejus assidue manducemus, quia fructus iste Filius Mariae est, qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## * SERMO XLIV. I. IN NATIVITATE BEATISSIMAE VIRGINIS MARIAE. (VIII SEPT.)

De gaudiis properamus ad gaudia, et ferventem stylum gloriosa materia facit ferventiorem. De Virgine venimus ad Virginem, et de Maria ad Mariam recurrimus. Bonum est nos hic esse, melius immorari, optimum permanere. Felices angelici spiritus, qui beatae Virginis habent praesentiam! Nos interim memoriam abundantiae suavitatis tuae eructamus. Illi praesentiam, nos memoriam. Sic si dulcis est memoria, quid est praesentia? Et illi quidem, abundantiori rore divinitatis infusi, Genitum et Genitricem visione mirabili contuentur, regis et reginae gloria cumulati. Nos vero, quos carcerariae mortalitatis aerumna contorquet, memoria pascimur, Scripturis relevamur: et quod illi vident, nos legimus. Utinam veniat, qui nos in lucem reponat, dies ubi non legere liceat, sed videre. Iterim consolemur nos suavitate memoriae, donec dulcedine praesentiae satiemur. Hodie nata est illa, per quam omnes renascimur, cujus speciem concupivit Omnipotens, et in qua Deus posuit thronum suum (Psal. XLIV). Ipsa est thronus ille mirabilis, de quo in Regnorum historia legitur in haec verba: «Fecit rex Salomon thronum de ebore grandem, et vestivit eum auro fulvo nimis. Per sex gradus ascendebatur ad eum. Rotundus erat in posterioribus. Duodecim leunculi stabant super gradus, respicientes ad thronum. Porro duae manus tenebant hinc et inde sedile. Duo leones stabant juxta brachiola. Non est factum simile opus in universis regnis (III Reg. X).»

The sixth is the ascension into heaven. O singular piety, special sweetness, when he brought the light of our flesh into the sublime workshops, and placed it at the right hand of the Father in glory! The crowds of heavenly legions see and admire, and they are unceasingly stupified at the largess of such great grace. For the intuition of such great condescension exceeds all sense, being open only to the Trinity itself. But also this branch is remarkable and to be wondered at; but its fruit, the Spirit of piety.

The seventh is the day of judgment, when he shall come with great power and majesty (Luke 21) to render vengeance in wrath, and devastation in a flame of fire. Then shall be that fear to be feared, when, the heavens burning, the elements fighting, the earth set on fire, consciences enveloped, demons accusing, angels trembling, with a furious judge and one not knowing mercy, that discussion shall be made, which would that it find us prepared (2 Thessalonians 1). That branch is great and to be dreaded; its fruit, the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. Let us love therefore the tree of life, and let us eat assiduously of its fruit, because this fruit is the Son of Mary, who is blessed for ages of ages. Amen.

## * SERMON XLIV. I. ON THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. (SEPTEMBER 8.)

We hasten from joys to joys, and the glorious matter makes the fervent style more fervent. From a Virgin we come to a Virgin, and from Mary we run back to Mary. It is good for us to be here, better to tarry, best to remain. Happy are the angelic spirits, who have the presence of the blessed Virgin! We meanwhile belch forth the memory of the abundance of thy sweetness. They have the presence, we the memory. If the memory is so sweet, what is the presence? And they indeed, infused with a more abundant dew of divinity, behold the Begotten and the Mother with a wonderful vision, heaped with the glory of the king and queen. But we, whom the hardship of a prison-like mortality twists, are fed by memory, relieved by the Scriptures: and what they see, we read. Would that it may come, he who may restore us into the light, the day where it may not be permitted to read, but to see. Meanwhile let us console ourselves with the sweetness of memory, until we are satiated with the sweetness of presence. Today she is born, through whom we all are reborn, whose beauty the Almighty desired, and in whom God placed his throne (Psalm 44). She herself is that wonderful throne, of which one reads in the history of the Kings in these words: "King Solomon made a great throne of ivory, and clothed it with very yellow gold. It was ascended to by six steps. It was round in the back parts. Twelve little lions stood upon the steps, looking toward the throne. Furthermore, two hands held the seat on this side and on that. Two lions stood near the armrests. A similar work was not made in all the kingdoms (1 Kings 10)."

Sed jam verba proposita producamus in lucem et aquam eliciamus de petra, ipsa loquente in nobis, de qua loqui vobis proponimus. «Fecit,» inquit Scriptura, «Salomon rex thronum de ebore grandem.» Tribus nominibus in Scripturis Salomonem vocatum legimus, et ubique regio nomine titulatum, videlicet Salomonem, Ecclesiasten, Ididam. Filius regis, imo et rex, nec solum Filius Dei, sed etiam Deus, Salomon, id est pacificus, est nobis in hoc exsilio: Ecclesiastes, id est concionator, erit in judicio; Idida, id est gloriosus, erit in regno; in exsilio amabilis, in judicio terribilis, in regno admirabilis; in exsilio pius, in judicio justus, in regno gloriosus. Vide autem si non ubique rex. In exsilio rector morum, in judicio discretor meritorum, in regno praemiorum distributor; simulque considera quia non Ecclesiastes, non Idida, sed Salomon tam gloriosum opus facere praenotatur. Averte oculos tuos ab illius terreni regis deliciis, qui, licet fuerit sapientia singularis, sublimis gloria, rebus affluens, pace securus, non tamen tale opus facere potuerit quale factum non sit universis regnis. Nunquid sacrae scriptor historiae omnia opera mundi et gloriam eorum intuitu diligenti prospexerat, ut hoc statim tota deliberatione, non uni, sed omnibus anteferret? Inania sunt haec, si non recurramus ad intimos coelestis disciplinae recessus, si non deviemus a via litteratoriae qualitatis. Salomon noster, non solum sapiens, sed et sapientia Patris; non solum pacificus, sed et pax nostra, qui fecit utraque unum, fecit thronum, uterum videlicet intemeratae Virginis, in quo sedit illa majestas, quae nutu concutit orbem.

Hanc sessionem Filii et probavit et cognovit Pater, ipso dicente: «Tu cognovisti sessionem meam (Psal. CXXXVIII);» et: «Thronus tuus Deus in saeculum saeculi (Psal. XLIV);» et: «Thronus iste sicut sol in conspectu tuo (Psal. LXXXVIII).» «Sedes,» inquit Scriptura, «super thronum, qui judicas aequitatem (Psal. IX).» Quid enim justius quam vilem et transfugam servum, et conservi sui sedulum deceptorem, perpetuis ignibus assignare, et illum, quem fefellerat, suo resignare principio? Ait ille alter filius Virginis: «Et vox de throno exivit dicens: Laudem dicite Deo nostro, omnes sancti ejus (Apoc. V).» Ex hoc throno laus angelorum prorumpit, et hominum, quia dum hic restituitur, et ille resarcitur, utrique gratiarum debent devotionem. Nosti quidnam dicat qui sedet in throno? «Ecce, inquit, nova facio omnia (Apoc. XXI).» Felix thronus, in quo sedet dominator Dominus; in quo, et per quem non solum omnes, sed omnia renovantur! Parco verbis, quia quosdam vestrum sentio praevolare, et currentis styli praevenire pauperiem.

But now let us bring the proposed words into the light and draw water from the rock, she herself speaking in us, of whom we propose to speak to you. "King Solomon," says the Scripture, "made a great throne of ivory." We read that Solomon was called by three names in the Scriptures, and everywhere titled with a royal name, namely Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Jedidiah. Son of a king, nay even a king, and not only Son of God, but also God, Solomon, that is, peaceful, is for us in this exile: Ecclesiastes, that is, preacher, he will be in the judgment; Jedidiah, that is, glorious, he will be in the kingdom; in exile lovable, in judgment terrible, in kingdom admirable; in exile pious, in judgment just, in kingdom glorious. But see if he is not everywhere a king. In exile the ruler of morals, in judgment the discerner of merits, in the kingdom the distributor of rewards; and at the same time consider that not Ecclesiastes, not Jedidiah, but Solomon is noted as making so glorious a work. Turn away your eyes from the delights of that earthly king, who, although he was of singular wisdom, sublime glory, affluent in things, secure in peace, yet could not make such a work as was not made in all the kingdoms. Had the writer of the sacred history looked upon all the works of the world and their glory with a diligent gaze, so that he would prefer this immediately with total deliberation, not to one, but to all? These things are empty, if we do not run back to the innermost recesses of heavenly discipline, if we do not deviate from the path of literal quality. Our Solomon, not only wise, but also the wisdom of the Father; not only peaceful, but also our peace, who made both one, made a throne, namely the womb of the undefiled Virgin, in which sat that majesty, which shakes the world with a nod.

This session of the Son the Father both approved and knew, he himself saying: "Thou hast known my sitting down (Psalm 138);" and: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever (Psalm 44);" and: "This throne is like the sun in thy sight (Psalm 88)." "Thou sittest," says the Scripture, "upon the throne, who judgest equity (Psalm 9)." For what is more just than to assign to perpetual fires a vile and fugitive servant, and a sedulous deceiver of his fellow-servant, and to resign him, whom he had deceived, to his own principle? That other son of the Virgin says: "And a voice came out of the throne, saying: Give praise to our God, all ye his saints (Revelation 5)." From this throne the praise of angels breaks forth, and of men, because while this one is restored, and that one is repaired, both owe the devotion of thanks. Do you know what he says who sits on the throne? "Behold," he says, "I make all things new (Revelation 21)." Happy throne, in which sits the Ruler, the Lord; in which, and through which not only all persons, but all things are renewed! I spare words, because I feel some of you are flying ahead, and anticipating the poverty of the running style.

Merito ergo tale opus non eloquenti, non glorioso, sed pacifico scribitur assignatum; quia venit Jesus instaurare et quae in coelis et quae in terris; pacemque et concordiam inter homines et angelos, mediante Virgine, reformare.

«De ebore,» inquit. Quid est quod aurum, et argentum, et lapides pretiosi, et omnis denique pretiosioris materiae praemittitur gloria? Sola eboris substantia capax est tantae compositionis, et fabricatur in ea quod omnibus operibus praeferatur. Ebur enim et mirabili candore relucet, et multa praeeminet fortitudine, frigidiorisque naturae sortitur auspicium. Et quid candidius illa virginitate, quae singularis aspectus sui gratia super coelestem curiam allicit ad videndum? Quid fortius illa fortitudine per quam Domini fortitudo vasa diripuit fortioris? Quid frigidius illa substantia quam obumbravit virtus Altissimi, et ab aestu peccati defendit supervenientis Spiritus plenitudo? Ex hoc ebore, nisi fallor, fiunt illae domus eburneae, de quibus dicit Psalmista: «Myrrha, et gutta, et casia a vestimentis tuis, a domibus eburneis (Psal. XLIV).»

Sequitur: «Grandem.» Quid grandius Virgine Maria, quae magnitudinem summae divinitatis intra sui ventris concludit arcanum? Attende Seraphim, et in illius superioris naturae supervola dignitatem, et videbis quidquid majus est, minus Virgine, solumque Opificem opus istud supergredi. «Et vestivit eum auro fulvo nimis.» Aurum omnibus metallis pretiosius, intellige divinitatem Dei, omni praeeminentem mundo, omnia gubernantem. Hac vestita est, imo supervestita Mater Altissimi, totamque Virginem tota illa indivisibilis natura largiori gratia superfudit. Quid est autem quod dicit: fulvo nimis? Hic aliquid requirendum reliquit nobis Spiritus ille multiplex, et utinam possim explicare quod sentio. Quatuor modis inest Deus omnibus creaturis. Primo modo essentialiter tam bonis quam malis, nihilque intercludit deitatis essentiam, per quam esse omnia acceperunt. Inde est quod nusquam et in omni loco esse legitur, cum omnibus praesentialiter assistat, et a nullo comprehendatur. Habent etiam et mali Dei praesentiam, sed non gaudent, cum inanimata quaelibet hoc possint privilegio gloriari. Secundo modo inest bonis operatione, agit enim in eis virtus operativa, ut operentur opera Dei; nec otiose creati sunt inter creaturas, sicut et mali, qui elegerunt arescere, ut sempiternis ignibus alimenta ministrent. Inest et plerisque bonis illuminatione, quos de futurorum cognitione nobilitat et participes suorum efficit secretorum. Quarto modo inest uni creaturae, videlicet Mariae Virgini, identitate, quia idem est quod illa.

Deservedly therefore such a work is written as assigned not to the eloquent, not to the glorious, but to the peaceful one; because Jesus came to restore both the things that are in the heavens and the things that are on the earth; and to reform peace and concord between men and angels, through the mediation of the Virgin.

"Of ivory," he says. What is it that the glory of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and finally of all more precious matter is passed over? Only the substance of ivory is capable of such a composition, and there is fabricated in it what is preferred to all works. For ivory both shines with a wonderful whiteness, and excels in much strength, and obtains the auspice of a colder nature. And what is whiter than that virginity, which by the grace of its singular aspect allures the heavenly court to see? What is stronger than that fortitude through which the strength of the Lord plundered the vessels of the stronger one? What is colder than that substance which the power of the Most High overshadowed, and the fullness of the coming Spirit defended from the heat of sin? From this ivory, unless I am mistaken, are made those ivory houses, of which the Psalmist says: "Myrrh, and stacte, and cassia from thy garments, from the ivory houses (Psalm 44)."

It follows: "Great." What is greater than the Virgin Mary, who concludes the greatness of the supreme divinity within the secret of her womb? Consider the Seraphim, and fly over the dignity of that superior nature, and you will see that whatever is greater is less than the Virgin, and only the Maker surpasses this work. "And he clothed it with very yellow gold." Gold, more precious than all metals, understand as the divinity of God, preeminent over all the world, governing all things. With this the Mother of the Most High was clothed, nay overclothed, and all that indivisible nature poured over the whole Virgin with a more bountiful grace. But what is it that he says: very yellow? Here that manifold Spirit left something for us to seek, and would that I might be able to explain what I feel. In four ways God is in all creatures. In the first way, essentially to the good as well as to the evil, and nothing shuts out the essence of the deity, through which all things have received to be. Thence it is that he is read to be nowhere and in every place, since he assists all things presentially, and is comprehended by none. Even the evil have the presence of God, but they do not rejoice, since any inanimate thing can boast of this privilege. In the second way he is in the good by operation, for an operative power acts in them, so that they work the works of God; nor were they created idly among creatures, like the evil, who chose to wither, so that they might minister fuel to sempiternal fires. He is in many of the good also by illumination, whom he ennobles with the cognition of future things and makes participants of his secrets. In the fourth way he is in one creature, namely the Virgin Mary, by identity, because he is the same as she.

Hic taceat et contremiscat omnis creatura, et vix audeat aspicere tantae dignitatis et dignationis immensitatem. «Dominus tecum (Luc. I),» inquit archangelus. Habitat in angelis Deus, sed non cum angelis, quia cum illis ejusdem non est essentiae. Habitat Deus in Virgine, habitat cum illa, cum qua unius naturae habet identitatem. Hoc est ergo aurum fulvum nimis, quo thronus est vestitus, quia tali modo Deus Virginem induit et in Virgine indutus est, ut meliori non posset.

Sequitur: «Per sex gradus ascendebatur ad eum.» Elige meditari quae sancta sunt, quia «perversae cogitationes separant a Deo (Sap. I);» et primum gradum ascendisti. Insuesce linguam tuam bene loqui, et subsilisti ad secundum. Juste quod justum est operare, et tertium ascendere meruisti. Doce iniquos vias Domini et consolare omnes lugentes, et ad quarti sublimitatem raptatus es. Relinque mundum et ea quae in mundo sunt, et ad quinti cacumen evolasti. Teneat te perseverantia in motu, perseverantiam non relinque, et sextum gradum viriliter attigisti. Ex hoc subsilire licet in coelum, ad illam gloriam aspirare, in qua Regina gloriosior angelicam reverberat dignitatem.

Sequitur: «Rotundus erat in posterioribus.» Posteriora Virginis assumptionem ejus intellige, in qua finem vitae mortalis accepit, quae vitam reddidit orbi. Et nota cum quanto sacramento transitum Virginis Scriptura comparet rotunditati. In rotundo nec principium, nec finem poteris invenire; ita et gloria, quae eam de hoc mundo transeuntem excepit, principium ignorat, nescit finem; de qua nil aliud possumus dicere, nisi quia gloriosa dicta sunt de te (Psal. LXXXVI), gloria Dei.

Sequitur: «Duodecim leunculi stabant super gradus.» Duodecim leunculi, duodecim apostoli sunt, qui praefixis gradibus validius insistentes, Reginam coeli non sine maximo stupore demirantur, et dicunt: «Quae est ista, quae ascendit sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata?» (Cant. VI.) Porro duae manus, quae tenebant hinc et inde sedile, activam et contemplativam vitam significant, quae matrem Virginem propensiori diligentia ambierunt, adeo ut nec actio contemplationem minueret, et contemplatio non desereret actionem. Recordare, quia non erat ei locus in diversorio (Luc. II), quomodo filium suum propriis uberibus lactaverit, et omnes denique vagientis parvuli sustinuerit actiones, et tunc intelliges quia plurimum ministravit. Considera quia ipsa est quae, in contemplativae dignitatis supervecta dulcedinem, in ipsius Dei substantiam lucidiores infixit obtutus. «Laeva, inquit, ejus sub capite meo, et dextera illius amplexabitur me (Cant. II).»

Here let every creature be silent and tremble, and scarcely dare to behold the immensity of such great dignity and condescension. "The Lord is with thee (Luke 1)," says the archangel. God dwells in the angels, but not with the angels, because he is not of the same essence with them. God dwells in the Virgin, he dwells with her, with whom he has the identity of one nature. This is therefore the very yellow gold with which the throne is clothed, because in such a way God clothed the Virgin and was clothed in the Virgin, that he could not in a better way.

It follows: "It was ascended to by six steps." Choose to meditate on what is holy, because "perverse thoughts separate from God (Wisdom 1);" and you have ascended the first step. Accustom your tongue to speak well, and you have jumped up to the second. Work justly what is just, and you have deserved to ascend the third. Teach the wicked the ways of the Lord and console all who mourn, and you have been snatched to the sublimity of the fourth. Leave the world and those things that are in the world, and you have flown to the summit of the fifth. Let perseverance hold you in motion, do not leave perseverance, and you have manfully reached the sixth step. From here one may jump up into heaven, to aspire to that glory, in which the more glorious Queen reflects the angelic dignity.

It follows: "It was round in the back parts." Understand the back parts of the Virgin as her assumption, in which she received the end of mortal life, who gave back life to the world. And note with how great a sacrament the Scripture compares the passing of the Virgin to roundness. In a round thing you can find neither beginning nor end; so also the glory, which received her passing from this world, ignores a beginning, knows no end; of which we can say nothing else, except that glorious things are said of thee (Psalm 86), glory of God.

It follows: "Twelve little lions stood upon the steps." The twelve little lions are the twelve apostles, who, standing more strongly upon the fixed steps, admire the Queen of heaven not without the greatest stupor, and say: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array (Song of Songs 6)?" Furthermore, the two hands, which held the seat on this side and on that, signify the active and contemplative life, which surrounded the Virgin mother with a more prone diligence, so that neither did action diminish contemplation, and contemplation did not desert action. Remember, because there was no room for him in the inn (Luke 2), how she nursed her son with her own breasts, and finally sustained all the actions of the crying little one, and then you will understand that she ministered very much. Consider because she herself is the one who, carried up into the sweetness of contemplative dignity, fixed clearer gazes into the substance of God himself. "His left hand," she says, "is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me (Song of Songs 2)."

«Duo leones stabant juxta brachiola.» Duo leones sunt Gabriel archangelus et Joannes evangelista, quorum alter dexterae Virginis, alter sinistrae custos deputatus est. Gabriel enim mentem, Joannes carnem pervigili sollicitudine servaverunt. Qui bene leones dicuntur, propter rugitum altisonae vocis; duo enim verba nuntiaverunt orbi terrae qualia nec dicta sunt nec dicentur, et in quorum comparatione omnia muta debeant apparere. «Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum (Luc. I),» ait archangelus. Audisne in hoc verbo incarnationem Dei, redemptionem hominum, renovationem mundi? «In principio erat Verbum (Joan. I),» dixit evangelista. Animadvertis hic Verbi divinitatem, Ecclesiae fidem, haereticorum silentium, locum quietis, secretum solitudinis, luminis arcanum, habitaculum pacis? Ob hanc fortassis causam vocavit Jacobum et Joannem Boanerges, id est, filios tonitrui (Marc. I).

«Non est factum simile opus in universis regnis.» Nihil verius, nihil sublimius, nihil dulcius miserae mortalitati et mortali miseriae. Nam etsi multa magna facta sunt in creaturis mundi, nihil tamen tam excellens, tam magnificum fecerunt opera digitorum Dei. Virgo Dei genitrix, cujus pulchritudinem sol et luna mirantur, subveni, domina, clamantibus ad te jugiter: «Revertere, revertere Sunamitis, revertere, revertere, ut intueamur te (Cant. VI).» Tu benedicta, et super benedicta, revertere, primo per naturam. Nunquid quia ita deificata, ideo nostrae humanitatis oblita es? Nequaquam, domina. Scis in quo discrimine nos reliqueris, ubi jaceant, quantum delinquant servi tui; non enim convenit tantae misericordiae tantam miseriam oblivisci, quia, etsi subtrahit gloria, revocat natura: non enim ita memoraris justitiae Dei solius, ut misericordiam non habeas; neque ita es impassibilis, ut sis incompassibilis. Naturam nostram habes, non aliam; et justum est ut de rore tantae pietatis diffusius infundamur.

«Revertere,» secundo per potentiam. Fecit in te magna qui potens est, et data est tibi omnis potestas in coelo et in terra. Quid tibi negabitur, cui negatum non est Theophilum de ipsis perditionis faucibus revocare? Infelicem animulam, totum illud, quod in te factum est, proprio charactere denegantem, de luto faecis et miseriae sublevasti. Nil tibi impossibile, cui possibile est desperatos in spem beatitudinis relevare. Quomodo enim illa potestas tuae potentiae poterit obviare, quae de carne tua carnis suscepit originem? Accedis enim ante illud aureum humanae reconciliationis altare, non solum rogans, sed imperans, domina, non ancilla. Moveat te natura, potentia moneat, quia quanto potentior, tanto misericordior esse debebis. Potestati enim cedit ad gloriam, injurias ulcisci nolle cum possit.

"Two lions stood near the armrests." The two lions are Gabriel the archangel and John the evangelist, of whom one was deputed as guardian of the Virgin's right hand, the other of her left. For Gabriel kept her mind, John her flesh, with ever-wakeful solicitude. Who are well called lions, on account of the roaring of their high-sounding voice; for they announced to the world two such words as have not been said nor will be said, and in comparison with which all things ought to appear mute. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee (Luke 1)," says the archangel. Do you hear in this word the incarnation of God, the redemption of men, the renovation of the world? "In the beginning was the Word (John 1)," said the evangelist. Do you perceive here the divinity of the Word, the faith of the Church, the silence of heretics, the place of rest, the secret of solitude, the mystery of light, the dwelling of peace? For this cause perhaps he called James and John Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder (Mark 1).

"A similar work was not made in all the kingdoms." Nothing is truer, nothing more sublime, nothing sweeter to wretched mortality and mortal wretchedness. For even if many great things have been made in the creatures of the world, yet the works of the fingers of God have made nothing so excellent, so magnificent. Virgin Mother of God, whose beauty the sun and moon admire, come to the aid, O Lady, of those crying out to thee continually: "Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may behold thee (Song of Songs 6)." Thou blessed, and over-blessed, return, first through nature. Because thou art thus deified, art thou therefore forgetful of our humanity? By no means, O Lady. Thou knowest in what danger thou hast left us, where thy servants lie, how much they offend; for it is not fitting for such great mercy to forget such great misery, because, even if glory withdraws thee, nature recalls thee: for thou art not so mindful of the justice of God alone, that thou shouldst not have mercy; nor art thou so impassible, as to be incompassionate. Thou hast our nature, not another; and it is just that we be more diffusely infused by the dew of such great piety.

"Return," second through power. He who is powerful has done great things in thee, and all power has been given to thee in heaven and on earth. What will be denied to thee, to whom it was not denied to recall Theophilus from the very jaws of perdition? An unhappy little soul, denying with its own character all that was made in thee, thou hast lifted up from the mud of dregs and misery. Nothing is impossible for thee, for whom it is possible to relieve the desperate into the hope of beatitude. For how will that power be able to oppose thy potency, which received from thy flesh the origin of its flesh? For thou approachest before that golden altar of human reconciliation, not only asking, but commanding, a lady, not a handmaid. Let nature move thee, let power advise thee, because as much as thou art more powerful, so much more merciful thou oughtest to be. For it yields to the glory of power, to be unwilling to avenge injuries when it can.

«Revertere,» tertio per amorem. Scio, domina, quia benignissima es, et amas nos amore invincibili, quos in te et per te Filius tuus et Deus tuus summa dilectione dilexit. Quis scit quoties refrigeras iram Judicis, cum justitiae virtus a praesentia deitatis egreditur?

«Revertere,» quarto per singularitatem. In manibus tuis sunt thesauri miserationum Domini, et sola electa es, cui gratia tanta conceditur. Absit ut cesset manus tua, cum occasionem quaeras salvandi miseros et misericordiam effundendi! neque enim tua gloria minuitur, sed augetur, cum poenitentes ad veniam, justificati ad gloriam assumuntur. Revertere ergo, Sunamitis, id est, despecta, cujus animam pertransivit gladius (Luc. II), quae fabri uxor appellata fuisti. Ad quid? Ut intueamur te. Summa gloria est post Deum te vedere, adhaerere tibi, et in tuae protectionis munimine demorari. Audi nos. Nam et Filius nihil negans honorat te, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen. SERMO XLV. II. IN NATIVITATE BEATISSIMAE VIRGINIS MARIAE. (VIII SEPT.)

Nativitas beatissimae et intemeratae Genitricis Dei, fratres charissimi, merito praecipuum et singulare praebet hominibus gaudium, quae totius exstitit humanae salutis exordium. Sicut enim omnipotens Deus, ineffabili providentiae suae intuitu, antequam homo fieret, hominem periturum diabolica machinatione praevidit, sed etiam redemptionis humanae consilium ante saecula in immensae pietatis suae visceribus habuit. Et non solum qualiter redimeret, modum et ordinem in profundissima sapientiae suae ratione constituit, verum etiam quando redimeret, certum temporis articulum praefinivit. Sicut ergo impossibile erat ut humani generis redemptio fieret, nisi Dei Filius de Virgine nasceretur; ita etiam necessarium fuerat ut Virgo, ex qua Verbum caro fieret, nasceretur. Oportebat quippe prius aedificari domum, in quam descendens coelestis Rex habere dignaretur hospitium. Illam videlicet, de qua per Salomonem dicitur: «Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem (Prov. IX).» Septem namque virginalis haec domus suffulta columnis exstitit, quia venerabilis Mater Domini septem sancti Spiritus donis, id est, sapientiae, et intellectus; consilii, et fortitudinis; scientiae, et pietatis, atque timoris Dei (Isa. XI) dotata fuit. Quam utique aeterna Sapientia, quae attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suaviter (Sap. VIII), talem construxit quae digna fieret illum suscipere, et de intemeratae carnis suae visceribus procreare. Necesse erat prius erigi thalamum, qui venientem ad nuptias sanctae Ecclesiastae susciperet Sponsum, cui David, exsultans in spiritu, epithalamium canit, dicens: «Tanquam sponsus Dominus procedens de thalamo suo (Psal. XVIIII).»

"Return," third through love. I know, O Lady, because thou art most kind, and thou lovest us with an invincible love, whom in thee and through thee thy Son and thy God loved with supreme affection. Who knows how many times thou refreshest the wrath of the Judge, when the power of justice goes forth from the presence of the deity?

"Return," fourth through singularity. In thy hands are the treasures of the mercies of the Lord, and thou alone art chosen, to whom such great grace is granted. Let it be far from thy hand to cease, since thou seekest an occasion of saving the wretched and pouring out mercy! for neither is thy glory diminished, but increased, when the penitent are assumed to pardon, the justified to glory. Return therefore, O Shulamite, that is, despised one, whose soul a sword pierced (Luke 2), who wast called the wife of a carpenter. To what end? That we may behold thee. It is the supreme glory after God to see thee, to adhere to thee, and to tarry in the protection of thy defense. Hear us. For also the Son, denying nothing, honors thee, who is God blessed for ages of ages. Amen. SERMON XLV. II. ON THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. (SEPTEMBER 8.)

The nativity of the most blessed and undefiled Mother of God, most dear brothers, deservedly offers a special and singular joy to men, she who was the beginning of the whole of human salvation. For just as almighty God, by the ineffable intuition of his providence, before man was made, foresaw that man would perish by a diabolical machination, so also he had the counsel of human redemption before the ages in the bowels of his immense piety. And not only did he establish the mode and order in the most profound reason of his wisdom how he would redeem, but he also predefined a certain point of time when he would redeem. As therefore it was impossible that the redemption of the human race should take place, unless the Son of God were born of a Virgin; so also it had been necessary that the Virgin, from whom the Word would become flesh, should be born. For it was fitting that a house should first be built, in which the heavenly King, descending, would deign to have a lodging. Namely, that house of which it is said through Solomon: "Wisdom built for itself a house, it cut out seven columns (Proverbs 9)." For this virginal house was supported by seven columns, because the venerable Mother of the Lord was endowed with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, that is, of wisdom and understanding; of counsel and fortitude; of knowledge and piety, and the fear of God (Isaiah 11). Which surely eternal Wisdom, which reaches from end even to end strongly, and disposes all things sweetly (Wisdom 8), constructed such as would be worthy to receive him, and to procreate from the bowels of her undefiled flesh. It was necessary that a bridal chamber should first be erected, which would receive the Spouse coming to the nuptials of the holy Church, to whom David, exulting in spirit, sings a nuptial song, saying: "As a bridegroom the Lord proceeding from his chamber (Psalm 18)."

Merito ergo hodie profusis gaudiis totus ubique terrarum orbis exsultat, merito universa sancta Ecclesia, nascente Sponsi sui Genitrice, ut ita prae gaudio dixerim, fescennini carminis laudes alternat. Exsultemus igitur in hac die, charissimi, in qua dum beatissimae veneramur Virginis ortum, cunctarum etiam Novi Testamenti festivitatum celebramus initium. Exsultemus, inquam, in hac die praecipua, et totis visceribus in Domino delectemur: in qua dum Redemptoris nostri recolimus Matrem, reliquarum festivitatum celebramus originem. Quae enim cunctis solemnitatibus est antiquior tempore, nequaquam esse debet inferior dignitate. Nam si Salomon cum israelitico populo, in dedicatione templi ex lapidibus facti, tam copiosum et magnificum sacrificium solemniter celebravit (III Reg. VIII); quale quantumque gaudium beatae Mariae nativitas populo Christiano debet afferre, in cujus uterum, velut revera sacratissimum templum, Deus ipse descendens, et humanam naturam ex ea suscripere, et cum hominibus dignatus est visibiliter habitare? Licet enim et in illud Salomonis templum Deus descendisse credendus sit, in hoc tamen rationabili sanctuario, hoc est, in beatissimae Virginis utero, multo mirabilius multoque felicius dignatus est manere pro nobis, in quo Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis (Joan. I). De illo quippe, antiquo videlicet templo, scriptum est: «Factum est, cum exissent sacerdotes de sanctuario, implevit nebula domum Domini, et non poterant sacerdotes stare prope propter nebulam. Impleverat enim gloria Domini domum Domini (III Reg. VIII).

Quae omnia, sicut egregius praedicator dicit, in figura contingebant illis (I Cor. X). Gloria quippe Domini intelligitur Christus, cujus fide repletus est mundus. De qua gloria cum pro eo adorato vitulo deprecaretur Dominum Moyses, ut parceret populo peccatori, respondit Dominus: «Propitius ero illi (Num. XIV).» Verumtamen vivo ego, et vivit nomen meum, quia «implebitur gloria mea omnis terra (Ib.).» Et Psalmista: «Implebitur, inquit, gloria ejus omnis terra (Psal. LXXI).» Quod autem nebula implevit domum Dei, et non poterant sacerdotes ministrare propter nebulam; ea sententia superbos Judaeorum pontifices ac doctores insinuat, qui, dum Incarnationis Christi sacramenta investigare despiciunt, debitum fidei suae ministerium per erroris nebulam perdunt. Ita enim eorum mentes infidelitatis caligo replevit, ut, propriis exigentibus meritis, non agnoscat cultum credulitatis.

Deservedly therefore today with profuse joys the whole world everywhere exults, deservedly the whole holy Church, at the birth of the Mother of its Spouse, that I may speak thus for joy, alternates the praises of a nuptial song. Let us exult therefore on this day, most dear ones, in which while we venerate the birth of the most blessed Virgin, we also celebrate the beginning of all the festivities of the New Testament. Let us exult, I say, on this special day, and let us be delighted with our whole bowels in the Lord: in which while we recall the Mother of our Redeemer, we celebrate the origin of the remaining festivities. For she who is older in time than all solemnities, ought by no means to be inferior in dignity. For if Solomon with the Israelite people, in the dedication of the temple made of stones, solemnly celebrated so copious and magnificent a sacrifice (1 Kings 8); what and how great a joy ought the nativity of blessed Mary to bring to the Christian people, into whose womb, as into a truly most sacred temple, God himself descending, deigned both to receive human nature from her, and to dwell visibly with men? For although God is to be believed to have descended into that temple of Solomon also, yet in this rational sanctuary, that is, in the womb of the most blessed Virgin, he deigned to remain much more wonderfully and much more happily for us, in whom the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1). For of that ancient temple indeed, it is written: "It came to pass, when the priests had gone out of the sanctuary, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, and the priests could not stand near on account of the cloud. For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (1 Kings 8)."

All these things, as the egregious preacher says, happened to them in figure (1 Corinthians 10). For the glory of the Lord is understood to be Christ, with whose faith the world is filled. Of which glory, when Moses was entreating the Lord for the people who had sinned by worshipping the golden calf, that he would spare the sinful people, the Lord answered: "I will be propitious to them (Numbers 14)." Nevertheless I live, and my name lives, because "all the earth shall be filled with my glory (Ibid.)." And the Psalmist: "All the earth," he says, "shall be filled with his glory (Psalm 71)." But that a cloud filled the house of God, and the priests could not minister on account of the cloud; that sentence suggests the proud pontiffs and doctors of the Jews, who, while they despise investigating the sacraments of the Incarnation of Christ, lose the due ministry of their faith through the cloud of error. For the darkness of infidelity so filled their minds, that, their own merits requiring it, they do not recognize the worship of credulity.

Ad illud ergo templum Dominus in nebula descendit, ut caecam Judaicae infidelitatis caliginem designaret, in hoc, sicut scriptum, in sole posuit tabernaculum suum (Psal. XVIII). ut sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis illuminaret. Illi denique templo Deus omnipotens gloriam quidem sui adventus contulit, sed nihil ex eo in sua natura suscepit; in beatissimae autem Virginis uterum non solum dignatus est descendere, sed ex eo etiam perfectam sibi substantiam nostrae mortalitatis unire. Quanto igitur nostri templi major est dignitas, tanto gloriosior ejus debet esse solemnitas.

Sed quo pacto ejus festivitatem digne celebrare valet infirmitas hominum, quae gaudium parere meruit angelorum? Qualiter eam laudare poterit mortalis hominis transitorium verbum, quae illud de se protulit Verbum, quod manet in aeternum? Quae lingua in ejus laude invenitur idonea, quae illum genuit cui omnia benedicunt, et cum tremore obediunt elementa? Nam dum cujuslibet martyris fortia facta extollere cupimus, dum virtutum ejus insignia ad Redemptoris nostri gloriam praedicamus; etiamsi ad cogitandum tardior sensus impediat, vel ad loquendum balbutiens lingua non suppetat; verborum tamen copiam ipsius rei materia subministrat. Cum vero beatissimae Genitricis Dei laudes scribere volumus, quia nova et inaudita sunt quae tractanda suscipimus, nulla invenimus verba quibus ad haec digne exprimenda sufficere valeamus. Tollit enim facultatem sermonis materia singularis. Quae enim lingua explicare sufficiat, vel quae ratio humana non obstupescat, cum cogitare coeperit quia Creator oritur ex creatura, factor fit ex factura? Quod in virginea puellae vulva concipitur, qui vastissima totius mundi amplitudine non tenetur? Jacet intra materna viscera parvulus, qui cum coaeterno Patre rerum omnium jura gubernat immensus? O beata ubera, quae dum tenue lac puerilibus labris infundunt, angelorum cibum et hominum pascunt! Exiguum exprimunt liquorem, et mundi reficiunt Creatorem. Qui suae virtutis imperio marium procellas mitigat, qui fluminibus indeficientem aquarum impetum subministrat, qui aridam terram innumeris ubique fontibus irrigat, raras de virgineo pectore guttas lactis exspectat. Manat liquor ex uberibus Virginis, et in carnem vertitur Salvatoris.

Hic, dilectissimi fratres mei, hic rogo, perpendite quam debitores simus huic beatissimae Dei Genitrici, quantasque illi post Deum de nostra redemptione gratias agere debeamus. Illud siquidem corpus Christi, quod beatissima Virgo genuit, quod in gremio fovit, quod in fasciis cinxit, quod materna cura nutrivit: illud, inquam, absque ulla dubietate, non aliud, nunc de sacro altari percipimus, et ejus sanguinem in sacramentum nostrae redemptionis haurimus. Hoc catholica fides habet, hoc sancta Ecclesia fideliter docet.

Therefore the Lord descended into that temple in a cloud, that he might designate the blind darkness of Jewish infidelity; in this one, as it is written, he placed his tabernacle in the sun (Psalm 18), that he might illuminate those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Finally, almighty God indeed conferred the glory of his coming upon that temple, but received nothing from it in his nature; but into the womb of the most blessed Virgin he not only deigned to descend, but also to unite from it to himself the perfect substance of our mortality. Therefore, as much as the dignity of our temple is greater, so much more glorious ought its solemnity to be.

But in what way is the infirmity of men able to celebrate worthily her festivity, who deserved to bring forth the joy of angels? In what way will the transitory word of a mortal man be able to praise her, who brought forth from herself that Word which remains forever? What tongue is found suitable for her praise, who bore him whom all things bless, and whom the elements obey with trembling? For when we desire to extol the strong deeds of any martyr, while we preach the marks of his virtues to the glory of our Redeemer; even if a sense too slow for thinking hinders, or a stammering tongue is not sufficient for speaking; yet the matter of the thing itself supplies a copiousness of words. But when we wish to write the praises of the most blessed Mother of God, because the things we undertake to treat are new and unheard of, we find no words by which we may be sufficient to express these things worthily. For the singular matter takes away the faculty of speech. For what tongue may suffice to explain, or what human reason would not be stupified, when it begins to think that the Creator arises from a creature, the Maker becomes from a thing made? That he is conceived in the virginal womb of a girl, who is not held by the most vast amplitude of the whole world? A little one lies within the maternal bowels, who with the co-eternal Father governs the laws of all things, immense? O blessed breasts, which while they pour thin milk into boyish lips, feed the food of angels and of men! They express a meager liquid, and they refresh the Creator of the world. He who by the command of his power mitigates the storms of the seas, who supplies the unailing impetus of waters to the rivers, who irrigates the arid earth everywhere with innumerable fountains, expects rare drops of milk from the virginal breast. The liquid flows from the breasts of the Virgin, and is turned into the flesh of the Savior.

Here, my most beloved brothers, here I ask, consider how great debtors we are to this most blessed Mother of God, and how many thanks we ought to give to her after God for our redemption. For that body of Christ, which the most blessed Virgin bore, which she cherished in her bosom, which she bound in swaddling clothes, which she nourished with maternal care: that, I say, without any doubt, not another, we now receive from the sacred altar, and we drink his blood in the sacrament of our redemption. This the catholic faith holds, this the holy Church faithfully teaches.

Nullus ego humanus sermo in laude ejus invenitur idoneus, de qua mediator Dei et hominum cognoscitur incarnatus. Impar est illi omne humanae linguae praeconium, quae de intemeratae carnis suae visceribus cibum nobis protulit animarum: illum videlicet, qui de semetipso perhibet, dicens: «Ego sum panis vivus, qui de coelo descendi: si quis ex hoc pane manducaverit, vivet in aeternum (Joan. VI).» Per cibum namque a paradisi sumus amoenitate dejecti, per cibum quoque ad paradisi gaudia reparati. Cibum comedit Eva, per quem nos aeterni jejunii fame multavit; cibum Maria edidit, qui nobis coelestis convivii aditum patefecit. Hic etiam, obsecro, dilectissimi fratres, hic lineam nostrae redemptionis diligenter attendite, et quam circa nos divinae pietatis viscera fuerint intenta, cordis aure pensate. Fecit Deus hominem, ut ita dixerim, mortaliter immortalem, videlicet ut si custodire vellet praeceptum obedientiae, in aeternum viveret; si vero contemneret, mortis mox imperio subjaceret. Quid plura? Peccavit homo, diabolo suadente (Gen. III), et tota humani generis arbor venenata est in radice. Cecidit infelix pater per gulam, et universa ejus progenies rea facta est per naturam, dicente Apostolo: «Eramus natura filii irae, sicut et caeteri (Ephes. II).»

Factus est itaque Adam fermentum, et universam corrupit multitudinem filiorum; quia dum ille pestifero serpentis veneno vitiatur, tota in illo humani generis massa corrumpitur. Unde irradiante jam novae gratiae splendore, per egregium nobis praedicatorem dicitur: «Expurgate vetus fermentum, ut sitis nova conspersio (I Cor. V).» Sed pius et misericors Deus noluit omnimodo perire creaturam suam, quam formaverat ad imaginem et similitudinem suam. Ex omni itaque multitudine nationum unum sibi elegit, israeliticum videlicet populum, cui et legem dedit, et sacrificia sibi diversorum animalium offerre praecepit. Sed lex illa, ut homo per eam perfecte salvaretur, nequaquam erat idonea. Sicut enim per Paulum dicitur: «Nihil ad perfectum adducit lex (Hebr. VII).» Quia enim rudis adhuc ille populus, superbus, et rigidus erat, ad portandum perfectae legis jugum, cervicem cordis humiliare non poterat. De quo nimirum populo ad Moysen Dominus dicit: «Cerno quod populus iste durae cervicis sit (Exod. XXXII).» Danda ergo illi fuerat hujusmodi lex, quae nec omnino a divinis obsequiis liberum ire permitteret, nec tamen praecipiendo summa et gravia deterreret. Sacrificia autem, quae tunc offerebantur, ad emundationem carnis aliquatenus prodesse poterant, ad conferendum vero animabus salutem sufficere non valebant, dicente Apostolo: «Si enim sanguis taurorum, aut vitulorum, aut cinis vitulae aspersus, inquinatos sanctificat ad emundationem carnis; quanto magis sanguis Christi, qui per Spiritum sanctum se obtulit immaculatum Deo, emundabit conscientiam nostram ad serviendum Deo viventi?» (Hebr. IX.)

No human word of mine is found suitable in her praise, of whom the mediator of God and men is known to have been incarnate. Every proclamation of human tongue is unequal to her, who from the bowels of her undefiled flesh brought forth for us the food of souls: namely, him who asserts concerning himself, saying: "I am the living bread, who came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever (John 6)." For through food we were cast down from the pleasantness of paradise, through food also we were restored to the joys of paradise. Eve ate food, through which she punished us with the hunger of an eternal fast; Mary brought forth food, which opened for us the entrance to the heavenly banquet. Here also, I beseech, most beloved brothers, here consider diligently the line of our redemption, and how much the bowels of divine piety have been intent toward us, weigh with the ear of the heart. God made man, that I may speak thus, mortally immortal, namely that if he wished to keep the precept of obedience, he would live forever; but if he should despise it, he would soon be subject to the rule of death. What more? Man sinned, the devil persuading (Genesis 3), and the whole tree of the human race was poisoned in its root. The unhappy father fell through gluttony, and his whole progeny was made guilty through nature, as the Apostle says: "We were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest (Ephesians 2)."

Adam was thus made leaven, and he corrupted the whole multitude of sons; because while he is vitiated by the pestiferous poison of the serpent, the whole mass of the human race is corrupted in him. Whence, the splendor of new grace already shining, it is said to us by an egregious preacher: "Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste (1 Corinthians 5)." But the pious and merciful God did not wish his creature, whom he had formed to his own image and likeness, to perish entirely. Therefore from all the multitude of nations he chose one for himself, namely the Israelite people, to whom he both gave a law, and commanded them to offer to him sacrifices of various animals. But that law, so that man might be perfectly saved through it, was by no means suitable. For as it is said through Paul: "The law brought nothing to perfection (Hebrews 7)." For because that people was still rude, proud, and rigid, it could not humble the neck of the heart to bear the yoke of the perfect law. Concerning which people, to be sure, the Lord says to Moses: "I see that this people is stiff-necked (Exodus 32)." Therefore a law of this kind was to be given to it, which would neither permit it to go entirely free from divine services, nor yet deter it by commanding supreme and heavy things. But the sacrifices which were then offered could profit to some extent for the cleansing of the flesh, but they were not able to suffice for conferring salvation on souls, as the Apostle says: "For if the blood of bulls, or of goats, or the sprinkled ashes of a heifer, sanctifies the defiled to the cleansing of the flesh; how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unspotted to God, cleanse our conscience to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9.)"

Cum enim ad emundationem carnis sacrificia illa prodesse denuntiat, purgationem animabus conferre nequaquam potuisse designat. Neque enim irrationalis creatura ad sanctificandam rationalem esse poterat valida. Sed nec ipsi sacerdotes sanctificare populum poterant, quia et ipsi pro suis reatibus offerre hostias indigebant. Neque, delictis obnoxii, delictorum valebant vincula solvere, vel peccatores peccatorem justificare.

Necesse ergo erat ut talis sacerdos inveniretur, qui, dum in aliis peccatorum sordes ablueret, ipse in se abluendum aliquid non sentiret; et dum alieni reatus contagia tergeret, in semetipso aliquam leprae maculam non haberet. Sed hujusmodi homo in humano genere inveniri non poterat, quia unusquisque cum Propheta hunc versiculum veraciter decantabat: «Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea (Psal. L);» et, sicut per Apostolum dicitur: «Omnes peccaverunt, et egent gloria Dei (Rom. III).»

Obsecro, dilectissimi fratres mei, hanc vestrae, imo nostrae salutis historiam diligenter attendite, et humanae restaurationis ordinem etiam in vestris cordibus ordinate. Corda vigilent, oculi non dormitent. Cum igitur hujusmodi homo in humano genere inveniri non posset, ne in peccato suo periret homo, Creator hominum de beatissima Virgine carnem sumens, sine peccato factus est homo, sine peccato conceptus in Virginis utero, sine peccato est conversatus in mundo. Eia, fratres, intendite, intendite, inquam, et ineffabile redemptionis nostrae mysterium vigilanter audite. Ecce jam sacerdos, fratres, nulla ipse habens peccata, et idcirco dignus et potens ut, sacrificium offerens, aliena mundaret peccata. Ille videlicet, cui per Prophetam dicitur: «Tu es sacerdos in aeternum, secundum ordinem Melchisedech (Psal. CIX).» Sed sicut per Paulum dicitur: «Necesse est sacerdotem aliquid habere quod offerat (Hebr. VIII).» Verumtamen, sicut superius dictum est, impossibile erat ut brutorum carnes animalium sanctificarent animas hominum, et irrationalis hostia ratione utentium sufficeret abolere peccata. Unde ex persona Filii ad Patrem per Psalmistam dicitur: «Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti, holocausta etiam pro delicto non postulasti; tunc dixi: Ecce venio (Psal. XXXIX).» Oportebat ergo ut rationalis hostia fieret, quae creaturam rationabilem expiaret. Sed peccator aliquis homo, sicut indignus erat ut sacrificium offerret, sic etiam nihilominus ut ipse sacrificium fieret. Quid igitur sacerdos noster faceret? Quo se verteret? Quod redemptionis nostrae consilium inveniret? Unde mediator Dei et hominum placationis hostiam sumeret, qua pacem inter Deum, et hominem reformaret? Omnis quippe terrena creatura, si rationalis erat, peccati virus de primi parentis radice contraxerat; si irrationalis, rationalem justificare non poterat.

For when he announces that those sacrifices profit for the cleansing of the flesh, he designates that they could by no means have conferred purgation on souls. For neither could an irrational creature be valid for sanctifying a rational one. But nor could the priests themselves sanctify the people, because they themselves also needed to offer hosts for their own guilts. Nor, being liable to sins, were they able to loose the bonds of sins, or sinners to justify a sinner.

It was necessary therefore that such a priest should be found, who, while he washed away the filth of sins in others, should not feel anything in himself to be washed away; and while he wiped away the contagions of another's guilt, should not have any spot of leprosy in himself. But a man of this kind could not be found in the human race, because each one with the Prophet was truly chanting this little verse: "For behold I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me (Psalm 50);" and, as it is said through the Apostle: "All have sinned, and need the glory of God (Romans 3)."

I beseech, my most beloved brothers, attend diligently to this history of your, or rather our salvation, and order the order of human restoration also in your hearts. Let the hearts watch, let the eyes not sleep. Since therefore a man of this kind could not be found in the human race, lest man should perish in his sin, the Creator of men, taking flesh from the most blessed Virgin, was made man without sin, conceived without sin in the Virgin's womb, lived without sin in the world. Eia, brothers, attend, attend, I say, and listen watchfully to the ineffable mystery of our redemption. Behold already a priest, brothers, having no sins himself, and therefore worthy and powerful so that, offering a sacrifice, he might cleanse the sins of others. He namely, to whom it is said through the Prophet: "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 109)." But as it is said through Paul: "It is necessary for a priest to have something that he may offer (Hebrews 8)." However, as was said above, it was impossible that the flesh of brute animals should sanctify the souls of men, and an irrational host should suffice to abolish the sins of those using reason. Whence from the person of the Son to the Father it is said through the Psalmist: "Sacrifice and oblation you did not want, holocausts also for sin you did not require; then I said: Behold I come (Psalm 39)." It was necessary therefore that a rational host should be made, which would expiate the rational creature. But some sinful man, just as he was unworthy to offer sacrifice, so also nonetheless was he unworthy to become the sacrifice himself. What therefore would our priest do? Whither would he turn? What counsel of our redemption would he find? Whence would the mediator of God and men take a host of appeasement, by which he would reform peace between God and man? Indeed every earthly creature, if it was rational, had contracted the virus of sin from the root of the first parent; if irrational, it could not justify a rational one.

Quid ergo faceret mediator pacis, et ipse pax? Ipse est enim pax nostra, qui fecit utraque unum, et medium parietem maceriae solvens, inimicitias in carne sua: legem mandatorum decretis evacuans, ut duos conderet in semetipso in unum novum hominem, faciens pacem; ut reconciliaret ambos in uno corpore Deo per crucem, interficiens inimicitias in semetipso: et veniens evangelizavit pacem his qui longe, et pacem his qui prope (Ephes. II). Quid, inquam, faceret? Considerate, fratres mei, diligenter considerate ineffabilis viscera pietatis, perpendite immensum et inaestimabile pondus divinae charitatis. Quia enim in rebus inveniri non poterat pretium nostrae redemptionis, Redemptor noster semetipsum obtulit Patri pro nobis hostiam in odorem suavitatis. Sic ipse factus est sacerdos et sacrificium, ipse redemptor et pretium. Unde recte per Paulum dicitur: «Talis enim decebat ut nobis esset pontifex, sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus et excelsior coelis factus; qui non habet quotidie necessitatem, quemadmodum sacerdotes, prius pro suis delictis hostias offerre, deinde pro populo: hoc enim fecit semel, se offerendo (Hebr. VII).» Dominus noster Jesus Christus.

Audistis itaque nunc, dilectissimi, breviter reparationis nostrae mirabile sacramentum, audite etiam salutis nostrae opportunum valde consilium. Tradidit semetipsum pro nobis Christus ad mortem, mortificemus et nos pro ejus amore omnem in nobis terrenae concupiscentiae voluptatem. Quod enim subire crucis patibulum voluit, viam nobis, qua redire valeamus ad patriam, stravit; ut qui voluptatibus delectati discessimus, fletibus amaricati redeamus; et qui per illicita defluendo cecidimus etiam a licitis nosmetipsos restringendo surgamus; et quos dejecerat elatio superbiae, erigat dejectio humilis vitae. Unde et pastor Ecclesiae clamat, dicens: «Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia ejus (I Petr. II);» et Paulus: «Imitatores, inquit, Dei estote, et ambulate in dilectione, sicut et Christus dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis oblationem, et hostiam Deo in odorem suavitatis (Ephes. V).»

Degustemus ergo nunc, dilectissimi, cum Christo temporalem momentaneae mortis amaritudinem, ut ad aeternam postmodum resurrectionis ejus mereamur pervenire dulcedinem. Quod enim fecit pro nobis, hoc etiam fieri quaerit a nobis, testante Propheta, qui ait: «Quid, inquit, retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo (Psal. CXV).» Pro nostra etenim redemptione non aurum dedit, non argentum appendit, non pecuniam numeravit; sed semetipsum tradidit, pretiosum sui corporis sanguinem fudit, propriam pro nobis animam posuit. Unde et Petrus ait: «Non corruptibilibus auro, vel argento redempti estis de vana vestra conversatione paternae traditionis; sed pretioso sanguine, quasi Agni immaculati, et incontaminati Christi (I Petr. I).»

What therefore would the mediator of peace, and peace himself, do? For he himself is our peace, who made both one, and dissolving the middle wall of partition, the enmities in his flesh: evacuating the law of commandments in decrees, that he might create two in himself into one new man, making peace; that he might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, slaying the enmities in himself: and coming he evangelized peace to those who were far off, and peace to those who were near (Ephesians 2). What, I say, would he do? Consider, my brothers, diligently consider the bowels of ineffable piety, weigh the immense and inestimable weight of divine charity. Because indeed the price of our redemption could not be found in things, our Redeemer offered himself to the Father for us as a host in an odor of sweetness. Thus he himself was made priest and sacrifice, himself redeemer and price. Whence it is rightly said through Paul: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens; who has not daily necessity, like the priests, first to offer hosts for their own sins, then for the people: for this he did once, by offering himself (Hebrews 7)." Our Lord Jesus Christ.

You have heard therefore now, most beloved, briefly the wonderful sacrament of our reparation, hear also the very opportune counsel of our salvation. Christ handed himself over to death for us, let us also mortify for his love every pleasure of earthly concupiscence in us. For that he wished to undergo the gibbet of the cross, he laid for us the way by which we may be able to return to the fatherland; so that we who departed delighted by pleasures, may return embittered by weepings; and we who fell by flowing through illicit things, may rise by restricting ourselves even from licit things; and those whom the elation of pride had cast down, the dejection of a humble life may raise up. Whence also the pastor of the Church cries out, saying: "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his footsteps (1 Peter 2);" and Paul: "Be, he says, imitators of God, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and handed himself over for us as an oblation, and a host to God in an odor of sweetness (Ephesians 5)."

Therefore, most beloved, let us now taste with Christ the temporal bitterness of momentary death, that we may afterwards deserve to arrive at the eternal sweetness of his resurrection. For what he did for us, this he also seeks to be done by us, the Prophet testifying, who says: "What, he says, shall I render to the Lord for all that he has rendered to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord (Psalm 115)." For for our redemption he did not give gold, he did not weigh out silver, he did not count money; but he handed himself over, he poured out the precious blood of his body, he laid down his own life for us. Whence Peter also says: "You were redeemed from your vain conversation of paternal tradition, not with corruptible gold or silver; but with the precious blood, as of an unspotted and uncontaminated Lamb, Christ (1 Peter 1)."

Expedit ergo, ut Redemptori suo semetipsum offerat, quicunque ad ejus consortium pervenire festinat. Illius vestigia imitetur in via, qui cum eo gaudere anhelat in patria. Illum sibi ducem faciat in itinere, qui ei particeps esse desiderat in perventione. «Si enim compatimur, et conregnabimus; si commorimur, et convivemus (Rom. VIII).» Et iterum idem dicit Apostolus: «Si complantati facti sumus similitudini mortis ejus, simul et resurrectionis erimus (Rom. VI).» Nemo se, fratres mei, inaniter seducat, nemo se vanae spei securitate decipiat. Non enim possumus hic gaudere de saeculo, et illic regnare cum Christo. Ecce intemerata et gloriosa virgo Maria, cujus hodie splendidissima nativitate universa per orbem sancta illustratur Ecclesia, in lege praefigurata, in patriarcharum et prophetarum oraculis praenuntiata, ab angelo singulari honorificentiae privilegio salutata, thronus Dei, solium divinitatis, palatium regis aeterni, gazophylacium thesauri, quo sumus de cruenti praedonis servitio comparati, nobis proponitur in exemplum. Haec tam singularis, tam incomparabilis Virgo, si non sequeretur humilitatem Christi, nunquam pertingeret ad celsitudinem Christi: si injuncta mandata contemneret, ad promissa praemia nullatenus perveniret. Nam dum, praedicante eo, quaedam mulier extolleret vocem de turba, dicens: «Beatus venter qui te portavit, et ubera quae suxisti.» Respondit: «Quinimo beati, qui audiunt verbum Dei et custodiunt illud (Luc. XI).» Alibi etiam, cum quidam sibi in templo propinquos secundum carnem adesse nuntiaret, dicens: «Ecce mater tua et fratres tui foris stant, quaerentes te.» Respondit: «Quae est mater mea et qui sunt fratres mei?» Et extendens manus in discipulos suos dixit: «Ecce mater mea et fratres mei. Quicunque enim fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, qui in coelis est, ipse meus frater, soror et mater est (Matth. XII).»

Notate, fratres, notate dignitatem vestram, si adimplentes voluntatem Dei frangitis voluntatem vestram. Ecce, beata et venerabilis virgo Maria secundum carnem quidem mater Christi fuit, frater non fuit, soror non fuit. Et quicunque aliquid horum alicui secundum carnalis jura propinquitatis exstiterit, aliud sibi esse omnino non valebit, ut nimirum si mater fuerit, frater, vel soror esse non possit; si vero frater, vel soror exstiterit, mater non sit. Nos autem haec simul omnia Christo per Spiritum sumus, si voluntatem Christi, quae illi semper cum Patre communis est, adimplere satagimus. Sed quod natum est ex carne, caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu, spiritus est (Joan. III), quia Deus Spiritus est. Ex illa ergo parte, qua Redemptor noster Deus est, propinqui sibi tam multipliciter sumus, quantum illi beata Virgo, ex qua nasci dignatus est, secundum carnem esse non potuit. Proprium et singulare fuit illi beatissimae Virgini Christum in vulva concipere; commune vero, et universale est omnibus electis in cordis eum devotione portare.

It is expedient therefore, that whoever hastens to arrive at his fellowship, should offer himself to his Redeemer. Let him imitate his footsteps in the way, who pants to rejoice with him in the fatherland. Let him make him his leader on the journey, who desires to be a partaker with him in the arrival. "For if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we die with him, we shall also live with him (Romans 8)." And again the same Apostle says: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6)." Let no one, my brothers, uselessly seduce himself, let no one deceive himself with the security of vain hope. For we cannot rejoice here in the world, and there reign with Christ. Behold the undefiled and glorious Virgin Mary, by whose most splendid nativity today the whole holy Church throughout the world is illustrated, prefigured in the law, foretold in the oracles of the patriarchs and prophets, saluted by the angel with a singular privilege of honor, the throne of God, the seat of divinity, the palace of the eternal king, the treasury of the treasure by which we were purchased from the service of the bloody robber, is proposed to us as an example. This so singular, so incomparable Virgin, if she did not follow the humility of Christ, would never reach the height of Christ: if she should despise the enjoined commands, she would by no means arrive at the promised rewards. For while he was preaching, when a certain woman lifted up her voice from the crowd, saying: "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the paps that you have sucked." He answered: "Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it (Luke 11)." Elsewhere also, when someone announced to him in the temple that his kinsmen according to the flesh were present, saying: "Behold your mother and your brothers stand without, seeking you." He answered: "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hands toward his disciples he said: "Behold my mother and my brothers. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister and mother (Matthew 12)."

Note, brothers, note your dignity, if by fulfilling the will of God you break your own will. Behold, the blessed and venerable Virgin Mary was indeed the mother of Christ according to the flesh, she was not a brother, she was not a sister. And whoever shall be any of these to anyone according to the laws of carnal kinship, will not be able to be anything else to him at all, so that surely if she were a mother, she could not be a brother or a sister; but if she were a brother or a sister, she would not be a mother. We, however, are all these things together to Christ through the Spirit, if we strive to fulfill the will of Christ, which is always common to him with the Father. But what is born of the flesh is flesh; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3), because God is a Spirit. From that part, therefore, in which our Redeemer is God, we are so manifoldly kin to him as the blessed Virgin, from whom he deigned to be born, could not be according to the flesh. It was proper and singular to that most blessed Virgin to conceive Christ in the womb; but it is common and universal to all the elect to carry him in the devotion of the heart.

Felix illa, et nimium beata femina, quae illum novem mensibus gestavit in ventre; felices etiam nos, si illum assidue portare studeamus in mente. Mirabilius quidem fuit Christum concipi in vulva carnis; sed non est inferius si deferatur in ergastulo pectoris. Unde et per Joannem testatur, dicens: «Ego sto ad ostium, et pulso; si quis aperuerit mihi, intrabo ad illum, et coenabo cum illo, et ipse mecum (Apoc. III).»

Notandum vero quia prius se coenaturum narrat, deinde coenam daturum grata vice pronuntiat. Quia de cujus nunc bonis operibus pascitur, cum eo simul postmodum in aeterni convivii dapibus epulatur. Hinc etiam, dilectissimi, considerandum est quanta sit dignitas nostra, quantaque nobis sit proportio cum Maria. Concepit Maria Christum in vulva carnis, deferimus et nos in visceribus mentis. Reficiebat Maria Christum, cum teneris labris lac exprimeret uberum; reficimus et nos variis bonorum deliciis operum.

Libet autem nunc, dilectissimi, pro aedificatione nostra in regula divinae justitiae parumper radios mentis infigere, et qualiter omnipotens Deus electos suos deprimi temporaliter sinat, quos extollere in aeternum decreverit, indagare. Ut enim nunc de caeteris sileam, haec eadem beatissima Virgo, cujus hodiernam nativitatem debitis veneramur obsequiis, ante constitutionem mundi in consilio aeternae sapientiae electa et praeelecta, licet de regali fuerit stirpe progenita, nulla tamen humanae dignitatis altitudine floruit, nullis rerum temporalium divitiis abundavit. Praesepium quippe parturientis indicat, quia diversorium, in quo pareret, non habebat (Luc. II). Solent autem homines, nascentibus pueris, futuri successus laeta promittere, et ex eorum auspiciis prospera matribus nuntiare. Beata vero Maria, cum filium ad templum deferret et hunc Simeon in ulnis acciperet, audivit: «Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius (Ibid.).» Ac si aperte diceret: Dum filius tuus senserit passionem crucis in corpore, te etiam transfiget gladius compassionis in mente.

Studeamus et nos, dilectissimi, saeculi hujus blandimenta despicere, rerum terrenarum affluentiam devitare, carnis incentiva reprimere, crucem Christi assidue in mente portare; quatenus dum nunc anima nostra gladio Mariae transfigitur, cum ipsa postmodum de aeternae felicitatis dulcedine satietur. Quod ipse praestare dignetur, qui ex Patre ante saecula genitus ex ipsa nasci dignatus est in fine saeculorum. Amen.

Happy is she, and a too blessed woman, who carried him for nine months in her belly; happy also are we, if we study to carry him assiduously in the mind. It was indeed more wonderful for Christ to be conceived in the womb of the flesh; but it is not inferior if he be carried in the prison of the breast. Whence he also testifies through John, saying: "I stand at the door and knock; if any man shall open to me, I will enter in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Revelation 3)."

It is to be noted indeed that he first relates that he will sup, then he pronounces that he will give a supper in grateful turn. Because he is now fed by whose good works he is fed, with him together afterwards he feasts on the banquets of the eternal convivium. Hence also, most beloved, it is to be considered how great is our dignity, and how great is our proportion with Mary. Mary conceived Christ in the womb of the flesh, we also carry him in the bowels of the mind. Mary refreshed Christ, when with tender lips he pressed out the milk of the breasts; we also refresh him with the various delicacies of good works.

It is pleasant now, most beloved, for our edification to fix for a little the rays of the mind on the rule of divine justice, and to investigate how the almighty God allows his elect to be depressed temporally, whom he has decreed to extol forever. For to be silent now about the rest, this same most blessed Virgin, whose nativity today we venerate with due services, chosen and pre-elected before the constitution of the world in the counsel of eternal wisdom, although she was begotten of a royal stock, yet she flourished with no height of human dignity, she abounded with no riches of temporal things. Indeed the manger of her bringing forth indicates it, because she did not have an inn in which she might bring forth (Luke 2). But men are accustomed, when children are born, to promise joyful future successes, and from their auspices to announce prosperous things to mothers. But blessed Mary, when she brought the son to the temple and Simeon received him in his arms, heard: "And a sword shall pierce your own soul (Ibid.)." As if he should say openly: While your son feels the passion of the cross in his body, a sword of compassion will also transfix you in the mind.

Let us also study, most beloved, to despise the allurements of this world, to avoid the affluence of earthly things, to repress the incentives of the flesh, to carry the cross of Christ assiduously in the mind; so that while now our soul is transfixed by the sword of Mary, with her afterwards it may be satiated by the sweetness of eternal happiness. Which may he deign to grant, who begotten from the Father before the ages deigned to be born of her at the end of the ages. Amen.

XLVI. HOMILIA IN NATIVITATE BEATISSIMAE VIRGINIS MARIAE. (VIII SEPT.) Initium sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum: Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham. Abraham genuit Isaac, Isaac autem genuit Jacob, Jacob autem genuit Judam et fratres ejus. Et reliqua. (Matth. I.)

Audistis, fratres charissimi, Dominicae incarnationis ineffabile sacramentum: audistis in genealogia beatissimae genitricis Dei, reparationis mysterium; audistis, quia Creator angelorum dignatus est propagari de stirpe mortalium; audistis, quia proavos habere est dignatus in terris qui fons et origo omnium rerum jura gubernat in coelis. Ait enim beatus evangelista: «Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham (Matth. I).»

Sed quaerendum hic videtur cur tot patrum numerosa series intermittitur, ut horum solummodo duorum, David scilicet et Abraham Redemptor noster filius esse dicatur? Cur enim filius David, et mox filius Abraham, et non potius filius Jesse, vel filius Obeth, vel caeterorum deinceps in medio positorum?

Sed haec quaestio facile solvitur, si facta divinitus utrisque promissio recensetur. Abrahae quippe divina voce dictum est: «In semine tuo benedicentur omnes tribus terrae (Gen. XXII).» Quod exponens Apostolus, ait: «Non dixit in seminibus, quasi in multis; sed in semine tuo uno, quod est Christus (Gal. III).» Quia enim Abraham adhuc in praeputio positus credidit, pater gentium; quia vero postmodum signum circumcisionis accepit, pater esse meruit Judaeorum; et quia de ejus stirpe ille prodiit, per quem benedictio redditur olim maledictae terrae; idcirco in semine ejus benedicuntur omnes tribus terrae. David vero dictum est: «De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem meam (Psal. CXXXI).» Quia igitur his duobus specialiter est promissus, non immerito utriusque praecipue filius esse dicitur Christus.

Sed et illud inquirendum est cur David Abrahae in Christi generatione praeponitur, cum Abraham multo ante eum tempore fuisse non dubitetur?

Sed, si modum factae ad utrumque promissionis studiose perpendimus, non sine causa David fuisse praepositum invenimus. Quod enim Abrahae semel legitur fuisse promissum, hoc David frequenti est pollicitatione firmatum. Abrahae enim solummodo dictum est: «In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes.» David vero Christi pater dici speciali quodammodo privilegio meruit, qui plures de eo promissiones accepit; sicut est illud in psalmo: «De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem meam.» Et iterum: «Semel juravi in sancto meo, si David mentiar, semen ejus in aeternum manebit (Psal. LXXXVIII).»

XLVI. HOMILY ON THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. (SEPTEMBER 8TH) The beginning of the holy Gospel according to Matthew: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judah and his brothers. And the rest (Matthew 1).

You have heard, most dear brothers, the ineffable sacrament of the Lord's incarnation: you have heard in the genealogy of the most blessed mother of God the mystery of reparation; you have heard that the Creator of angels deigned to be propagated from the stock of mortals; you have heard that he deigned to have ancestors on earth, who as the source and origin of all things governs the laws in the heavens. For the blessed evangelist says: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1)."

But it seems to be asked here why the numerous series of so many fathers is intermitted, so that our Redeemer is said to be the son of only these two, namely David and Abraham? For why the son of David, and soon the son of Abraham, and not rather the son of Jesse, or the son of Obed, or of the others thereafter placed in the middle?

But this question is easily solved, if the promise made divinely to both is reviewed. For to Abraham it was said by the divine voice: "In your seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed (Genesis 22)." Explaining which the Apostle says: "He did not say in seeds, as in many; but in your seed as one, which is Christ (Galatians 3)." For because Abraham believed while still placed in uncircumcision, he is the father of the nations; but because he afterwards received the sign of circumcision, he deserved to be the father of the Jews; and because from his stock he came forth, through whom blessing is restored to the earth formerly cursed; therefore in his seed are blessed all the tribes of the earth. But to David it was said: "Of the fruit of your womb I will set upon my seat (Psalm 131)." Because therefore he was specially promised to these two, not undeservedly is Christ said to be especially the son of both.

But that also is to be inquired, why David is preferred to Abraham in the generation of Christ, when it is not doubted that Abraham was much before him in time?

But, if we studiously weigh the manner of the promise made to both, we find that not without cause was David preferred. For what is read to have been promised once to Abraham, this was confirmed to David by frequent promise. For to Abraham it was only said: "In your seed shall all nations be blessed." But David deserved to be called the father of Christ by a certain special privilege, who received more promises concerning him; such as is that in the psalm: "Of the fruit of your womb I will set upon my seat." And again: "Once have I sworn in my holy one, if I lie to David, his seed shall remain forever (Psalm 88)."

Et in libro Regum, Nathan propheta in Spiritu sancto ad David loquitur, dicens: «Cum dormieris cum patribus tuis, suscitabo semen tuum, quod egredietur de lumbis tuis, et ipse erit mihi in filium, et ego ero ei in patrem (II Reg. VII).» Jure ergo David Abrahae in Christi generatione praefertur, cui multiplicior ac per hoc omnino immobilis promissio praerogatur.

Illud vero quosdam movere non irrationabiliter potest, cur sanctus evangelista reprehensibiles solummodo mulieres in Christi genealogia interponere studuit; sanctas vero et absque ulla contradictione laudabiles silentio praeterivit?

Congrue autem per septuagenarium numerum peccatorum remissio designatur, qui ab undenario et septenario nascitur.

Sed hoc idcirco factum est ut, dum Redemptor noster de peccatoribus natus esse describitur, pro peccatoribus de coelo ad terram descendisse credatur. Descendit quippe ut peccata nostra ipse portaret; ascendit vero, ut divinitatis suae nos participes faceret, sicut per Apostolum dicitur: «Qui mortuus est propter peccata nostra, et resurrexit propter justificationem nostram (Rom. IV).» Hinc est enim quod Matthaeus descendendo per Salomonem, cujus matrem concupiscendo David peccavit, quadraginta generationes enumerat, cum Lucas ascendendo per Nathan, per cujus nominis prophetam peccatum David Dominus expiavit, septuaginta et septem generationes describat. Per Matthaeum quippe signatur quia idcirco Dei Filius ad nos peccatores descendit, ut mortalitatis nostrae particeps fieret; per Lucam vero innuitur quia idcirco post resurrectionem ad Patrem ascendit, ut nos divinitatis suae consortes efficeret. Sicut per egregium praedicatorem dicitur: «Quod autem ascendit, quid est, nisi quia descendit primum in inferiores partes terrae? Qui descendit ipse est, et qui ascendit super omnes coelos, ut adimpleret omnia (Ephes. IV).» Per numerum namque, quem Matthaeus ordinat, susceptio nostrae mortalitatis; per illum vero, quem Lucas posuit, humanae exprimitur abolitio pravitatis. Quadragenarius enim a quaternario, et denario nascitur; ipse quoque denarius a quaternario derivatur. Unus namque, et duo, et tres, et quatuor, auctis semper monadibus, in denarium crescunt.

Per quadragenarium ergo numerum hoc praesens saeculum designatur, quia et annus iste, quem temporaliter ducimus, per quatuor tempora volvitur, et mundus, in quo vivimus, quatuor hinc inde partibus terminatur. Hoc denique Moyses praevidit, hoc Elias intellexit: uterque enim quadraginta diebus continuis jejunavit (Exod. XXXIV; III Reg. XIX). Redemptor etiam noster hoc idem jejunium diebus totidem consecravit (Matth. IV). Hinc est quod filii Israel, qui per desertum laborem tanti itineris pertulerunt, post quadraginta annos terram repromissionis intrarunt (Deut. I; Jos. XI).

And in the book of Kings, Nathan the prophet speaks in the Holy Spirit to David, saying: "When you shall sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed, which shall go out from your loins, and he shall be to me as a son, and I will be to him as a father (2 Kings 7)." Rightly therefore is David preferred to Abraham in the generation of Christ, to whom a more manifold and for this reason entirely immovable promise is granted as a prerogative.

That indeed can move some not irrationally, why the holy evangelist studied to interpose only reprehensible women in the genealogy of Christ; but passed over in silence the holy and without any contradiction laudable ones?

But congruously through the number seventy the remission of sins is designated, which is born from eleven and seven.

But this was done for this reason so that, while our Redeemer is described as born of sinners, he may be believed to have descended from heaven to earth for sinners. For he descended that he might carry our sins himself; but he ascended that he might make us partakers of his divinity, as it is said through the Apostle: "Who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification (Romans 4)." For hence it is that Matthew, descending through Solomon, in desiring whose mother David sinned, enumerates forty generations, while Luke, ascending through Nathan, through the prophet of whose name the Lord expiated the sin of David, describes seventy and seven generations. For through Matthew it is signified that for this reason the Son of God descended to us sinners, that he might become a partaker of our mortality; but through Luke it is hinted that for this reason after the resurrection he ascended to the Father, that he might make us consorts of his divinity. As it is said through the egregious preacher: "Now that he ascended, what is it, but because he first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same, and he who ascended above all the heavens, that he might fill all things (Ephesians 4)." For through the number which Matthew orders, the taking up of our mortality; but through that which Luke placed, the abolition of human depravity is expressed. For the number forty is born from four and ten; the ten itself also is derived from four. For one, and two, and three, and four, always increased by monads, grow into ten.

Therefore through the number forty this present world is designated, because both this year, which we lead temporally, is revolved through four seasons, and the world in which we live is terminated by four parts here and there. Finally Moses foresaw this, Elijah understood this: both fasted for forty continuous days (Exodus 34; 1 Kings 19). Our Redeemer also consecrated this same fast for as many days (Matthew 4). Hence it is that the children of Israel, who through the desert bore the labor of so great a journey, after forty years entered the land of promise (Deuteronomy 1; Joshua 11).

Nos denique fratres, nos filii Israel sumus, qui prius laborem hujus aerumnosae vitae perferimus, et sic demum terram repromissionis, id est, stabilitatem regni coelestis intramus. Hinc est etiam quod Jonas, qui ex divina jussione ad Niniven mittitur, imminere sibi post quadraginta dies excidium comminatur. «Adhuc, inquit, quadraginta dies, et Ninive subvertetur (Jon. III).» Quod, quia tunc non legitur historialiter factum, exspectatur adhuc spiritualiter adimplendum. Per Niniven quippe mundus iste designatur, per quadraginta ergo dies, omnis status vitae praesentis innuitur. Post quadraginta ergo dies Ninive subvertetur, quia post hujus mortalis vitae decursum, completo videlicet electorum numero, mundus iste destruetur.

Per septuagenarium vero numerum, quem Lucas posuit, remissio peccatorum exprimitur. Sicut ipse Dominus in Evangelio testatur. Cum enim Petrus interrogaret, dicens: «Domine, quoties peccaverit in me frater meus, et dimittam ei? usque septies?» Respondit: «Non dico tibi usque septies, sed usque septuagies septies (Matth. XVIII).» Undecim namque si septies multiplicentur, septuaginta et septem numerum faciunt. Denarius autem numerus perfectus esse dignoscitur, per quem et Decalogus designatur. Sed si denarius est perfectus, restat necessario ut undenarius sit imperfectus.

Quid est autem peccatum, nisi transgressio legis? Si ergo per denarium lex intelligitur, recte per undenarium legis transgressio figuratur. Septenario vero numero tota saeculi hujus universitas continetur, quia septem diebus omnis decursus vitae praesentis evolvitur. Per undenarium ergo septies multiplicatum cuncta nostra peccata ad septuagesimum septimum deducuntur numerum, in quo vere omnium fit remissio peccatorum. Unde eleganter a Christi baptismo haec secundum Lucam series inchoatur, et in Dei Patris persona finitur (Luc. III). In baptismo enim Christi omnium nobis peccatorum remissio provenit per Spiritum sanctum, qui super baptizatum Dominum in specie columbae descendit (Matth. III). Sic, sic per Christum redempti, et per Spiritus sancti gratiam abluti, reconciliamur Deo Patri. Quos utriusque evangelistae sensus B. Paulus una sententia comprehendit, dicens: «Misit Deus Filium suum in similitudinem carnis peccati, et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne (Rom. IX).» Cum enim dicit: «Misit Deus Filium suum in similitudinem carnis peccati,» peccatorum nostrorum susceptionem manifeste declarat; quam ostendit Matthaeus, cum descendendo quadraginta generationes enumerat. Cum vero sequitur: «Et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne,» expiationem omnium nostrorum criminum indicat; quam Lucas exprimit, cum ascendendo septuaginta septem generationes describit.

Finally we, brothers, we are the children of Israel, who first bear the labor of this calamitous life, and thus at last enter the land of promise, that is, the stability of the heavenly kingdom. Hence it is also that Jonah, who by divine command is sent to Nineveh, threatens that destruction is imminent for them after forty days. "Yet forty days," he says, "and Nineveh shall be subverted (Jonah 3)." Which, because it is not read then historically done, is still expected spiritually to be fulfilled. For through Nineveh this world is designated; therefore through forty days, every state of the present life is hinted. Therefore after forty days Nineveh shall be subverted, because after the course of this mortal life, namely the number of the elect being completed, this world shall be destroyed.

But through the number seventy, which Luke placed, the remission of sins is expressed. As the Lord himself testifies in the Gospel. For when Peter asked, saying: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" He answered: "I say not to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven (Matthew 18)." For eleven if multiplied seven times, make the number seventy and seven. But the number ten is known to be perfect, through which also the Decalogue is designated. But if ten is perfect, it remains necessarily that eleven is imperfect.

What moreover is sin, but a transgression of the law? If therefore through ten the law is understood, rightly through eleven the transgression of the law is figured. But in the number seven the whole universality of this world is contained, because in seven days every course of the present life is evolved. Therefore through eleven multiplied seven times all our sins are led to the seventy-seventh number, in which truly the remission of all sins is made. Whence elegantly this series according to Luke is begun from the baptism of Christ, and is finished in the person of God the Father (Luke 3). For in the baptism of Christ the remission of all our sins comes through the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the baptized Lord in the form of a dove (Matthew 3). Thus, thus redeemed through Christ, and washed through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are reconciled to God the Father. Which senses of both evangelists St. Paul comprehends in one sentence, saying: "God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and of sin condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3)." For when he says: "God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin," he manifestly declares the taking up of our sins; which Matthew shows, when descending he enumerates forty generations. When he follows: "And of sin condemned sin in the flesh," he indicates the expiation of all our crimes; which Luke expresses, when ascending he describes seventy-seven generations.

Plurima quidem dilectionis vestrae, fratres charissimi, de lectione evangelica, quae multis mysteriorum sacramentis est gravida, possemus exponere; sed eam idcirco succincte transcurrimus, ne ea, quae a majoribus nostris de ea latius dicta sunt, superfluo repetere videamur. Illud autem unum in ea non tam libet exponere quam mirari, quia persona Redemptoris nostri sic in fine hujus propaginis ponitur, ac si hamus in extremitate lineae subnectatur: sic ordinate additur genealogiae, sicut hamus productae inseritur lineae. Cum enim dicitur: «Abraham genuit Isaac, Isaac autem genuit Jacob,» et caeteri progenitores bis numerantur, quasi lilium lilio inseritur, ut una ex pluribus in longum linea producatur. Cum vero subjungitur: «Jacob autem genuit Joseph virum Mariae, de qua natus est Jesus, qui vocatur Christus (Matth. I);» non jam directim, sed quasi ex obliquo hamus apponitur, qui antiqui illius Leviathan faucibus infigatur. Hinc est quod ad beatum Job Dominus loquitur dicens: «Nunquid capies Leviathan hamo?» (Job XL.) Per Leviathan quippe, qui additamentum eorum dicitur, cetus ille devorator humani generis designatur, qui dum se divinitatem homini addere spopondit, immortalitatem sustulit (Gen. III); qui praevaricationis quoque culpam, quam primo homini propinavit, dum se sequentibus pessima persuasione multiplicat, poenas eis sine cessatione coacervat. In hamo autem esca ostenditur, aculeus occultatur.

Hunc ergo Pater omnipotens hamo cepit, quia ad mortem illius unigenitum Filium incarnatum misit, in quo et caro passibilis videri posset, et divinitas impassibilis videri non posset. Cumque in eo serpens iste per manus persequentium escam corporis momordit, divinitatis illum aculeus perforavit. Prius vero eum in miraculis Deum cognoverat, sed de cognitione ad dubitationem cecidit, quando hunc passibilem vidit. Quasi hamus ergo fauces deglutientis tenuit, dum in illo esca carnis apparuit, quam devorator appeteret, et divinitas passionis tempore latuit, quae necaret. In hamo ejus incarnationis captus est, quia, dum in illo appetiit escam corporis, transfixus est aculeo divinitatis. Ibi quippe inerat humanitas, quae ad se devoratorem duceret; ibi divinitas, quae perforaret; ibi aperta infirmitas, quae provocaret; ibi occulta virtus, quae raptoris fauces transfigeret. In hamo igitur captus est, quia inde interiit unde momordit, et quos jure tenebat mortales perdidit, quia eos, in quos jus non habuit mortis, appetere in morte praesumpsit.

We could indeed set forth many things to your charity, most dear brothers, concerning the evangelical reading, which is pregnant with many sacraments of mysteries; but we therefore run through it succinctly, lest we should seem redundantly to repeat those things which have been said more broadly by our elders concerning it. But that one thing in it it is pleasant not so much to set forth as to admire, because the person of our Redeemer is thus placed at the end of this propagation, as if a hook were subjoined at the extremity of a line: thus orderly is he added to the genealogy, as a hook is inserted into a lengthened line. For when it is said: "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob," and the rest of the progenitors are numbered twice, as if lily were inserted into lily, so that one line may be produced at length from many. But when it is subjoined: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ (Matthew 1);" not now directly, but as if from an oblique angle a hook is applied, which may be fixed in the jaws of that ancient Leviathan. Hence it is that the Lord speaks to blessed Job, saying: "Will you catch Leviathan with a hook?" (Job 40.) For through Leviathan, who is called "their addition," that cetus, the devourer of the human race, is designated, who while he promised to add divinity to man, took away immortality (Genesis 3); who also the fault of prevarication, which he gave to the first man to drink, while he multiplies it in those following by his most evil persuasion, heaps up punishments for them without ceasing. In a hook the bait is shown, the barb is hidden.

Therefore the almighty Father caught him with a hook, because he sent his incarnate only-begotten Son to his death, in whom both passible flesh could be seen, and impassible divinity could not be seen. And when in him that serpent through the hands of the persecutors bit the bait of the body, the barb of divinity perforated him. But previously he had known him as God in miracles, but from knowledge he fell into doubt, when he saw him passible. As if a hook therefore held the jaws of the swallowing one, while the bait of the flesh appeared in him, which the devourer might seek, and the divinity lay hidden at the time of the passion, which might kill. In the hook of his incarnation he was caught, because, while in him he sought the bait of the body, he was transfixed by the barb of divinity. For there was present the humanity, which would draw the devourer to itself; there the divinity, which would perforate; there open infirmity, which would provoke; there hidden virtue, which would transfix the jaws of the robber. Therefore in the hook he was caught, because he perished from where he bit, and he lost those mortals whom he held by right, because he presumed to seek in death those over whom he had not the right of death.

Hinc, fratres, hinc, rogo, perpendite quibus laudibus digna sit beata et gloriosa virgo Maria, quae illum nobis de castissimis suis visceribus genuit, qui nos de tam profundo gutture avidissimi draconis eripuit. Ad ejus namque digne efferenda praeconia non rhetoricorum diserta facundia, non dialecticorum subtilia argumenta, non acutissima philosophorum apta reperiuntur ingenia. Et quid mirum, si haec ineffabilis Virgo in suis laudibus modum humanae vocis exsuperat, cum et ipsam generis humani naturam excellentium meritorum dignitate transcendat? Non denique excellentissimus ille patriarcharum chorus, non providus prophetarum numerus, non judex apostolorum senatus, non martyrum victor exercitus, non aliquis antiquorum, non quisquam sequentium Patrum huic beatissimae Virgini poterit comparari. Quid enim sanctitatis, quid justitiae, quid religionis, quid perfectionis singulari huic Virgini deesse potuit, quae totius divinae gratiae charismate plena fuit? Sic namque ab angelo, dum salutaretur, audivit: «Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum (Luc. I).» Quod, rogo, vitium, in ejus mente, vel corpore vindicare sibi potuit locum, quae ad instar coeli, plenitudinis totius divinitatis meruit esse sacrarium? «In Christo» enim, sicut per Paulum dicitur; «habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter (Col. III).» Nec mirum, si cunctorum merita transcendat mortalium, quae et ipsa super excedit celsitudinem angelorum.

Per hanc enim beatissimam Virginem, non solum amissa olim vita hominibus redditur, sed etiam beatitudo angelicae sublimitatis augetur, quia, dum domo ad superna reducitur, illorum numerus, qui diminutus fuerat, reparatur. Hoc nempe angelorum multitudo illa signaverat quae pastoribus audientibus in Redemptoris nostri nativitate clamabat: «Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II).» Cum enim prius dicitur gloria esse Deo in excelsis, deinde additur et in terra pax, patenter ostenditur quia ineffabilis intemeratae Virginis partus non solum terris, sed et ipsis nihilominus generabat gaudium coelis. Hoc etiam illa beatorum puerorum indoles asserebat, qui, veniente ad passionem Domino, concordi voce cantabant: «Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini (Matth. XXI).»

O mirabiliter fecunda virginitas, quae novo et inaudito miraculo et mater dici possit et virgo! Qui toto mundo non capitur, puellae innuptae membris infunditur. Sentiebat quidem pondera ventris quae pudorem non amiserat castitatis. Mirabatur partus insignia quae nulla noverat viri contagia. Erat spes in partu, cum non fuisset voluptas in coitu. Immensum concepit, aeternum genuit, genitum ante saecula parturivit. Qui sibi et munus fecunditatis attulit conceptus, et decus virginitatis non abstulit natus.

Hence, brothers, hence, I ask, consider with what praises the blessed and glorious Virgin Mary is worthy, she who bore for us from her most chaste womb him who snatched us from so deep a throat of the most greedy dragon. For the purpose of worthily extolling her praises, the eloquent eloquence of rhetoricians is not found fit, nor the subtle arguments of dialecticians, nor the most acute geniuses of philosophers. And what wonder if this ineffable Virgin in her praises exceeds the measure of the human voice, since she transcends even the nature itself of the human race by the dignity of her excellent merits? Finally, neither that most excellent choir of patriarchs, nor the provident number of prophets, nor the judge-senate of apostles, nor the victorious army of martyrs, nor any of the ancients, nor any of the following Fathers will be able to be compared to this most blessed Virgin. For what of holiness, what of justice, what of religion, what of perfection could be lacking to this singular Virgin, who was full of the charism of all divine grace? For thus she heard from the angel, while she was being saluted: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee (Luke 1)." What vice, I ask, could claim a place for itself in her mind or body, she who, like heaven, merited to be the sanctuary of the fullness of the whole divinity? For "in Christ," as it is said through Paul, "dwells all the fullness of the divinity bodily (Colossians 2:9)." Nor is it a wonder if she transcends the merits of all mortals, she who herself exceeds the loftiness of the angels.

For through this most blessed Virgin, not only is the life once lost restored to men, but even the blessedness of angelic sublimity is increased, because, while a home is led back to the supernal things, the number of those who had been diminished is repaired. This indeed that multitude of angels had signified which cried out to the hearing shepherds in the nativity of our Redeemer: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke 2)." For when it is first said that there is glory to God in the highest, and then it is added "and on earth peace," it is clearly shown that the ineffable birth of the undefiled Virgin was generating joy not only for the lands, but no less even for the heavens themselves. This also that nature of the blessed boys asserted, who, as the Lord was coming to his passion, sang with concordant voice: "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (Matthew 21)."

O wonderfully fruitful virginity, which by a new and unheard-of miracle can be called both mother and virgin! He who is not contained by the whole world is infused into the members of an unwed girl. She felt indeed the weights of the womb, she who had not lost the shame of chastity. She wondered at the signs of birth, she who had known no contagions of a man. There was hope in the birth, since there had been no pleasure in the coitus. She conceived the immense, she bore the eternal, she brought forth the one begotten before the ages. The conception brought her the gift of fecundity, and the birth did not take away the glory of virginity.

Qui antequam nasceretur, talem creavit eam, ut ipse digne nasci potuisset ex ea, de qua propheta David multo ante praedixerat: «Mater Sion dicet: Homo, et homo factus est ex ea, et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus (Psal. LXXXVI).» Creatus est ex ea quam creavit, portatus est manibus quas formavit, suxit ubera quae replevit, puellae confovebatur in gremio quem vastissima coeli non recipit latitudo, puerilibus fasciis cingebatur qui immensitatem orbis terrae pugillo complectitur, matris parebat arbitrio qui omnium rerum jura suo gubernabat imperio, vagiebat in cunabulis qui angelorum gaudium erat in coelis, vilibus tegebatur crepundiis qui electos suos stola induit immortalitatis, imperabat illi puella cui cuncta obtemperant et obediunt elementa. Sic namque in Evangelio scriptum est: «Quia venit cum parentibus Nazareth, et erat subditus illis (Luc. II).»

Merito itaque beata Maria dicitur parens parientis, oriens orientis, fons fontis vivi, origo principii, quia ille ex ea prodiit per materia carnis qui caput est et initium omnium rerum per essentiam deitatis. Haec est denique porta illa, de qua Ezechiel testatur, dicens: «Convertit me, inquit, ad viam portae sanctuarii exterioris, quae respiciebat ad orientem, et haec erat clausa. Et dixit Dominus ad me: Porta haec, quam vides, clausa erit, et non aperietur, et vir non transibit per eam, et semper erit clausa (Ezech. XLIV).» Vere semper clausa, quia semper incorrupta. Incorrupta ante partum, incorrupta post partum, concipiens virum, nesciens virum, sicut per Jeremiam dicitur: «Faciet Dominus novum super terram, et ecce mulier circumdabit virum (Jer. XXXI).»

Gaudeamus itaque, dilectissimi, et exsultemus in nativitate beatissimae Dei genitricis Mariae, quae novum mundo nuntiavit gaudium, et totius exstitit humanae salutis exordium. Exsultemus, inquam, et sicut gaudere solemus in nativitate Christi, ita etiam nihilominus gaudeamus in nativitate matris Christi. Hodie nata est regina mundi, fenestra coeli, janua paradisi, tabernaculum Dei, stella maris, scala coelestis, per quam supernus Rex humiliatus ad ima descendit; et homo, qui prostratus jacebat, ad superna exaltatus ascendit. Hodie apparuit stella mundo, per quam Sol justitiae illuxit mundo.

He who, before he was born, created her such that he himself could worthily have been born from her, concerning whom the prophet David had predicted long before: "Mother Zion shall say: A man, and he was made man in her, and the Most High himself has founded her (Psalm 86)." He was created from her whom he created, he was carried by the hands which he formed, he sucked the breasts which he filled, he was cherished in the lap of a girl whom the vastest breadth of heaven does not receive, he was girded with childish swaddling clothes who embraces the immensity of the orb of the earth in his fist, he obeyed the will of a mother who governed the laws of all things by his own empire, he wailed in the cradle who was the joy of angels in the heavens, he was covered with cheap rattles who clothes his elect with the stole of immortality, a girl commanded him whom all elements obey and serve. For thus it is written in the Gospel: "That he came with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject to them (Luke 2)."

Worthily, therefore, is blessed Mary called the parent of the one bringing forth, the rising of the one rising, the fountain of the living fountain, the origin of the principle, because he came forth from her through the matter of the flesh who is the head and beginning of all things through the essence of the deity. Finally, this is that gate concerning which Ezekiel testifies, saying: "He turned me," he said, "to the way of the gate of the outer sanctuary, which looked toward the east, and this was closed. And the Lord said to me: This gate, which you see, shall be closed, and it shall not be opened, and a man shall not pass through it, and it shall always be closed (Ezekiel 44:1-2)." Truly always closed, because always incorrupt. Incorrupt before birth, incorrupt after birth, conceiving a man, not knowing a man, as it is said through Jeremiah: "The Lord will do a new thing upon the earth, and behold a woman shall encompass a man (Jeremiah 31:22)."

Therefore, most beloved, let us rejoice and let us exult in the nativity of the most blessed mother of God, Mary, who announced a new joy to the world, and stood forth as the beginning of all human salvation. Let us exult, I say, and just as we are accustomed to rejoice in the nativity of Christ, so even no less let us rejoice in the nativity of the mother of Christ. Today is born the queen of the world, the window of heaven, the gate of paradise, the tabernacle of God, the star of the sea, the heavenly ladder, through which the supernal King, being humbled, descended to the depths; and man, who lay prostrate, ascended being exalted to the supernal things. Today the star appeared to the world, through which the Sun of justice shone upon the world.

Illa videlicet, de qua per prophetam dicitur: «Orietur stella ex Jacob, et exsurget homo de Israel (Num. XXIV).» Hodie nata est splendidissima illa Virgo, ex qua processit speciosus forma prae filiis hominum tanquam sponsus de thalamo suo (Psal. XLIV). Hodie prodiit ex utero matris, quae templum fieri meruit divinitatis. Hodie impleta est prophetia illa, quam eximius prophetarum Isaias quasi praeco factus ad adventum reginae mundi, magna voce clamabat, dicens: «Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, et flos de radice ejus ascendet (Isa. XI).» Et bene haec incomparabilis Virgo virga dicitur, quae et per intentionem desiderii ad superna emicuit, et per sinceritatem boni operis distortae nodositatis vitium non incurrit. De qua virga Redemptor noster quasi flos ascendit, qui martyribus et confessoribus suis totius orbis campos velut rosis et liliis decoravit. Singularis namque flos sanctae Ecclesiae ipse est, sicut de semetipso in Canticis canticorum loquitur, dicens: «Ego flos campi, et lilium convallium (Cant. II).» Hoc lilium non in montibus, sed in convallibus nascitur, quia superbis Deus resistens, in humilium cordibus invenitur. Lilium vocatur Christus, lilium dicitur et mater Christi, sicut in eodem Cantico subinfertur: «Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias (Ibid.).» Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic beatissima virgo Maria enituit inter filias; quae de spinosa propagine Judaeorum nata, candescebat munditia virgineae castitatis in corpore, flammescebat autem ardore geminae charitatis in mente, flagrabat passim odore boni operis, tendebat ad sublimia intentione continua cordis.

Nonnulli autem, dum plus sapere quam oporteat sapere gestiunt, quis pater, vel quae mater beatae Mariae fuerit, studio superfluae curiositatis inquirunt. Sed aliquis lector nimis inutiliter quaerit quod evangelista narrare superfluum duxit. Si enim huic notitiae utilitatem inesse cognosceret, nequaquam nobilis historicus rem necessariam silentio praeteriret. Sciendum vero est hunc esse morem scriptoribus sacri eloquii ut, sicut student semper silere quod obest, sic etiam referre despiciunt quod scire non prodest. Aliquando autem in sacra Scriptura certi causa mysterii aliquid praetermittitur, ut ipso quasi clamante silentio magnum aliquid sentiatur. Sicut est quod Melchisedech in veteris narratione historiae, sine patre, sine matre, sine genealogia per Moysen introducitur (Gen. XIV; Hebr. VII), ut videlicet Christus, qui est sacerdos secundum ordinem Melchisedech (Psal. CIX), per eum significetur, de quo propheta dicit: «Generationem enim ejus quis enarrabit?» (Isa. LIII.)

That one, namely, concerning whom it is said through the prophet: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a man shall arise from Israel (Numbers 24:17)." Today is born that most splendid Virgin, from whom proceeded he who is beautiful in form before the sons of men like a bridegroom from his chamber (Psalm 44:3). Today she came forth from the womb of her mother, she who merited to become the temple of divinity. Today that prophecy was fulfilled, which the most excellent of the prophets, Isaiah, as if having become a herald for the arrival of the queen of the world, cried out with a loud voice, saying: "A rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall ascend from his root (Isaiah 11:1)." And well is this incomparable Virgin called a rod, who both through the intention of desire flashed forth to the supernal things, and through the sincerity of a good work did not incur the vice of distorted knottedness. From which rod our Redeemer like a flower ascended, who decorated the fields of the whole world for his martyrs and confessors as if with roses and lilies. For he himself is the singular flower of the holy Church, as he speaks of himself in the Canticle of Canticles, saying: "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys (Song of Solomon 2:1)." This lily is born not on the mountains, but in the valleys, because God, resisting the proud, is found in the hearts of the humble. Christ is called a lily, and the mother of Christ is called a lily, as it is subjoined in the same Canticle: "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters (Song of Solomon 2:2)." As the lily among the thorns, so the most blessed Virgin Mary shone among the daughters; who, being born from the thorny propagation of the Jews, shone with the whiteness of virginal chastity in the body, but flamed with the heat of twofold charity in the mind, burned everywhere with the odor of a good work, and reached toward the sublime things with a continuous intention of the heart.

But some, while they desire to know more than it is proper to know, inquire with the study of superfluous curiosity who the father or who the mother of blessed Mary was. But some reader seeks too uselessly what the evangelist thought it superfluous to narrate. For if he knew that utility was present in this knowledge, the noble historian would by no means pass over a necessary thing in silence. For it must be known that this is the custom for the writers of sacred eloquence that, just as they always study to be silent about what is harmful, so also they despise to report what it is not profitable to know. But sometimes in sacred Scripture something is omitted for the sake of a certain mystery, so that by its silence, as if crying out, something great may be sensed. Just as it is that Melchizedek, in the narration of ancient history, is introduced through Moses without father, without mother, without genealogy (Genesis 14; Hebrews 7), so that namely Christ, who is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 109), may be signified through him, of whom the prophet says: "For who shall declare his generation?" (Isaiah 53:8.)

In generatione autem Christi illae ordinari personae merito debuerunt, per quas ad Joseph descensio fieret, non ad Mariam, quae de una cum ipso tribu fuerat, declinaret. Consuetudo quippe fuerat veterum ut in genealogia virorum vix aliquando nomina ponerent feminarum. Si vero mulierum genus voluissent describere, per mulieres illud curabant aliquando propagare. Attestatur nostrae assertioni Lucas evangelista, qui Zachariam patrem Joannis per virile genus ostendere, Elisabeth vero per sexum muliebrem designare. «Fuit, inquit, in diebus Herodis regis Judaeae, sacerdos quidam, nomine Zacharias, de vice Abia, et uxor illi de filiabus Aaron (Luc. I).» Ut nimirum congrue vir a viris, femina propagari videretur a feminis.

Matthaeus igitur, qui viri proposuerat genus describere, illius scilicet, de quo per prophetam dicitur: «Ecce vir Oriens nomen ejus (Zach. VI),» erudite per Joseph descendere voluit; Mariae vero parentes ponere superfluum judicavit.

Qui ergo parentum Mariae notitiam habere desiderat, de semine eam Abrahae, de tribu Juda, de regia stirpe David, descendisse cognoscat. Noverit quoque eam cum sacerdotali Aaron genere cognationis habuisse propinquitatem. Unde ei per angelum dicitur: «Et ecce Elisabeth cognata tua, et ipsa concepit filium in senectute sua (Luc. I).» Et jure Redemptor noster de sacerdotali, simul et regia generatione carnem suscipere voluit, qui Rex ante saecula existens, utpote verus sacerdos, semetipsum Patri pro nobis suavitatis hostiam immolavit. Nam et rex David cum panes propositionis, quos non licebat nisi solis edere sacerdotibus manducavit (II Reg. XXI), in una eademque persona Jesu Christi Domini nostri utrumque futurum, id est, regnum et sacerdotium, figuravit. Nec solum Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus, Rex et Sacerdos congrue dicitur, sed et quicunque illi perfecto amore conjungitur, utriusque dignitatis vocabulum promeretur. Unde et per Petrum dicitur: «Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis (I Petr. II).» Et in Apocalypsi Joannis: «Dignus es, Domine Deus, accipere librum et aperire signacula ejus; quoniam occisus es, et redemisti nos Deo in sanguine tuo ex omni tribu, et lingua, et populo, et natione, et fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum, sacerdotes, et regnabimus super terram (Apoc. V).» Reges enim per Christi gratiam sumus, quia crucis vexillum in fronte portamus. Sacerdotes autem jure dicimur, quia sancti Spiritus oleo, et chrismatis unctione linimur.

But in the generation of Christ those persons ought rightly to have been ordered through whom the descent to Joseph might be made, and not turn aside to Mary, who was from one and the same tribe with him. For it had been the custom of the ancients that in the genealogy of men they scarcely ever placed the names of women. But if they had wished to describe the lineage of women, they took care sometimes to propagate it through women. The evangelist Luke testifies to our assertion, who took care to show Zechariah the father of John through the male lineage, but to designate Elizabeth through the female sex. "There was," he said, "in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron (Luke 1:5)." So that indeed appropriately a man might be seen to be propagated from men, a woman from women.

Matthew therefore, who had proposed to describe the lineage of the man, namely of him of whom it is said through the prophet: "Behold the man whose name is the Orient (Zechariah 6:12)," wished learnedly to descend through Joseph; but he judged it superfluous to place the parents of Mary.

He therefore who desires to have knowledge of the parents of Mary, let him know that she descended from the seed of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, from the royal stock of David. Let him know also that she had a proximity of kinship with the priestly race of Aaron. Whence it is said to her through the angel: "And behold Elizabeth your kinswoman, and she herself has conceived a son in her old age (Luke 1:36)." And rightly our Redeemer wished to take up flesh from the priestly and at the same time royal generation, who, existing as King before the ages, as the true priest, sacrificed himself to the Father for us as a victim of sweetness. For also king David, when he ate the loaves of proposition, which it was not lawful for any but the priests alone to eat (1 Samuel 21), figured that both things would be in the one and the same person of Jesus Christ our Lord, that is, the kingdom and the priesthood. And not only is the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ, appropriately called King and Priest, but also whoever is joined to him with perfect love deserves the title of both dignities. Whence also it is said through Peter: "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (1 Peter 2:9)." And in the Apocalypse of John: "You are worthy, Lord God, to take the book and to open its seals; since you were slain, and have redeemed us to God in your blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and have made us a kingdom and priests to our God, and we shall reign upon the earth (Revelation 5:9-10)." For we are kings through the grace of Christ, because we carry the standard of the cross on our forehead. But we are rightly called priests, because we are anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit and with the unction of chrism.

Inter cuncta autem hujus venerandae solemnitatis insignia, fratres charissimi, illud etiam non sine profundi causa mysterii contigisse creditur; ut Mater Domini sub ipso pene vindemiarum tempore nasceretur. Nunc quippe vinearum palmites proventu onusti fructuum ad ima defluunt; nunc uvarum botri gravida maturitate turgescunt; nunc agricolarum spes, quae toto anni circulo suspensa fuerat, uberes transacti laboris se carpere fructus exsultat; nunc arbores saporifera fructuum suavitate redolent, ut poma, quae acerbitate sua hominum gustus exasperaverant, grata maturitate demulcent. Sed per haec, quae exterius cernimus, reflectere oculos ad interiora debemus. Vinea quippe synagoga erat, quae legis et prophetarum dicta, quasi plantaria ad proferendos fructus acceperat. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: «Vinea autem Sabaoth, domus Israel est (Isa. V).» Et Psalmista: «Vineam, inquit, ex Aegypto transtulisti (Psal. LXXIX).» Sicut autem vinearum fructus toto anno exspectatur, in solo vero autumno colligitur; sic nimirum, sic Redemptor noster, quem lex praesignaverat, quem prophetae praedixerant, quem sancti omnes ab Adam usque ad transactam quintam aetatem summo desiderio exspectaverant, in solo Mariae tempore venit; et tunc quasi vinum ex spiritualibus uvis expressit, quia latentes sustemphyla litterae mysticos intellectus aperuit. Unde et per Apostolum dicitur: «Cum autem venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum factum ex muliere, factum sub lege (Gal. IV).»

O quanti hanc vindemiam aridis mentium faucibus sitiebant, quanti ad mustum evangelicae gratiae pertingere inenarrabili desiderio flagitabant. Unde et discipulis Veritas dicit: «Amen dico vobis quod multi prophetae, et reges voluerunt videre, quae vos videtis, et non viderunt, et audire, quae auditis, et non audierunt (Luc. XIX).» De hac vinea sponsus in Canticis canticorum loquitur, dicens: «Descendi ad hortum nucum, ut viderem poma convallium, et inspicerem si floruisset vinea, et germinassent mala punica (Cant. VI).» Malum quippe punicum amara quidem cortice tegitur, sed dulcis in ejus granulis suavitas occultatur. Sunt autem nonnulli, qui, dum per afflictionis amaritudinem, crucem Christi assidue patiuntur in corpore, per amoris desiderio dulcedine contemplationis intimae reficiuntur in mente. Mala ergo punica sponsi vinea germinat, quia tales parere sancta Ecclesia nunquam cessat. De hac eadem vinea in eisdem Canticis sponsa ad sponsum loquitur, dicens: «Mane surgamus ad vineam, videamus si floruit vinea, si flores fructus parturiunt; si floruerunt mala punica (Cant. VII).»

But among all the marks of this venerable solemnity, most dear brothers, that also is believed to have happened not without the cause of a profound mystery: that the Mother of the Lord should be born almost at the very time of the vintage. For now indeed the branches of the vines, burdened with the yield of fruits, flow down to the depths; now the clusters of grapes swell with a heavy maturity; now the hope of the farmers, which had been suspended through the whole circle of the year, exults that it plucks the rich fruits of past labor; now the trees are fragrant with the savory sweetness of fruits, so that the apples, which by their bitterness had exasperated the taste of men, soothe them with a pleasing maturity. But through these things which we discern outwardly, we ought to reflect our eyes to the interior things. For the vineyard was the synagogue, which had received the sayings of the law and the prophets like plantings for the purpose of bringing forth fruits. Whence also it is said through the prophet: "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel (Isaiah 5:7)." And the Psalmist: "A vine," he said, "thou hast brought out of Egypt (Psalm 79:9)." But just as the fruit of the vineyards is expected through the whole year, but is gathered in autumn alone; so indeed, so our Redeemer, whom the law had prefigured, whom the prophets had predicted, whom all the saints from Adam until the past fifth age had expected with the highest desire, came in the time of Mary alone; and then as if he expressed wine from spiritual grapes, because he opened the mystical understandings latent in the pressed skins of the letter. Whence also it is said through the Apostle: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law (Galatians 4:4)."

O how many thirsted for this vintage with the dry throats of their minds, how many flagged with unutterable desire to reach the must of evangelical grace. Whence also the Truth says to the disciples: "Amen I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them (Luke 10:24)." Concerning this vineyard the bridegroom speaks in the Canticle of Canticles, saying: "I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valleys, and to look if the vineyard had flourished, and the pomegranates had budded (Song of Solomon 6:10)." For the pomegranate is indeed covered with a bitter rind, but a sweet sweetness is hidden in its grains. But there are some who, while they assiduously suffer the cross of Christ in the body through the bitterness of affliction, are refreshed in the mind with the sweetness of inward contemplation through the desire of love. Therefore the vineyard of the bridegroom buds pomegranates, because the holy Church never ceases to bring forth such as these. Concerning this same vineyard, in the same Canticle, the bride speaks to the bridegroom, saying: "Let us go up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth (Song of Solomon 7:12)."

Hujus vineae ille vindemiator exstitit, qui in torculari passionis suae pressus, mysticos nobis divini eloquii sensus aperuit, et vinum nobis evangelicae gratiae propinavit. De quo videlicet vino in eisdem Canticis sponsae voce ad sponsum iterum dicitur: «Guttur tuum sicut vinum optimum, dignum dilecto meo ad potandum (Ibid.).»

Hunc vindemiatorem cruentum per crucem passionis sanguine longe ante Isaias prospexerat, cum prophetico plenus spiritu, sub interrogatione clamabat: «Quis est iste, qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra?» Et paulo post: «Quare ergo rubrum est indumentum tuum, et vestimentum tuum sicut calcantium in torculari?» (Isa. LXIII.) Indumentum quippe Christi nihil est aliud, nisi corpus quod sumpsit ex domina et virgine Maria. Nec tamen aliud est vestimentum ejus, atque illud ipse. Nam nostrum quoque vestimentum caro dicitur, sed tamen ipsi nos sumus caro, qua vestimur. De hoc vestimento per Joannem dicitur: «Habebat in vestimento, et in femore suo scriptum, Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium (Apoc. XIX).» Per femur quippe propagatio carnis fit. Qui ergo per propaginem generis humani in mundum hunc venit ex Virgine, et per Incarnationis suae mysterium, quia Rex esset, et Dominus, cunctis gentibus indicavit, in vestimento et in femore scriptum habuit: Rex regum et Dominus dominantium. Unde enim mundo innotuit, ibi scientiam suae majestatis inscripsit. Hoc autem indumentum rubrum prophetae apparuit, quia Redemptor noster proprium pro redemptione nostra sanguinem fudit. Cui ipse respondit: «Torcular calcavi solus, et de gentibus non est vir mecum (Isa. LXIII).» Solus enim torcular, in quo calcatus est, calcavit; quia sua potentia eam, quam sustinuit, passionem vicit. Nam qui usque ad mortem crucis patibulum pertulit, de morte ipsa cum gloria resurrexit. Bene autem dicitur, «et de gentibus non est vir mecum;» quia ii, pro quibus pati venerat, passionis ejus esse participes debebant. Qui pro eo, quod necdum crediderant, de ipsis in resurrectione conqueritur, quorum vita in ejus morte quaerebatur. Ipse etiam vitis dicitur, sicut per semetipsum in Evangelio testatur: «Ego, inquit, sum vitis vera, et Pater meus agricola est (Joan. XV).»

Haec denique sacratissima vitis totum per orbem sarmenta tetendit, quia ubique dilatata fructificans, quasi tot palmites misit, quot intra sanctam Ecclesiam sanctos per gratiam suae vocationis elegit. Unde idem quoque inculcando subjungit: «Ego sum, inquit, vitis, vos autem palmites; qui manet in me, et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum (Ibid.).» Hunc eumdem mediatorem Dei et hominum, hominem Christum Jesum, botrus ille signaverat, quem de terra repromissionis exploratores in phalanga ad filios Israel deferebant (Num. XIII).

Of this vineyard he stood forth as the vintager, who, pressed in the winepress of his passion, opened to us the mystical senses of the divine eloquence, and gave us to drink the wine of evangelical grace. Concerning which wine, namely, it is said again in the voice of the bride to the bridegroom in the same Canticle: "Thy throat is like the best wine, worthy for my beloved to drink (Song of Solomon 7:9)."

Isaiah had long before foreseen this bloody vintager through the blood of the passion on the cross, when, full of the prophetic spirit, he cried out under a question: "Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" And a little after: "Why then is your apparel red, and your garments like theirs that tread in the winepress?" (Isaiah 63:1-2.) For the apparel of Christ is nothing else but the body which he took from the lady and virgin Mary. Nor yet is his garment anything else but that very same thing. For our flesh also is called a garment, but yet we ourselves are the flesh with which we are clothed. Concerning this garment it is said through John: "He had written on his garment and on his thigh, King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16)." For through the thigh the propagation of the flesh is made. He therefore who through the propagation of the human race came into this world from the Virgin, and through the mystery of his Incarnation indicated to all nations that he was King and Lord, had written on his garment and on his thigh: King of kings and Lord of lords. For from where he became known to the world, there he inscribed the knowledge of his majesty. Moreover, this apparel appeared red to the prophet because our Redeemer shed his own blood for our redemption. To whom he himself replied: "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the nations there is not a man with me (Isaiah 63:3)." For alone he trod the winepress in which he was trodden, because by his own power he conquered the passion which he sustained. For he who endured the gibbet of the cross even unto death, rose again with glory from death itself. But well is it said, "and of the nations there is not a man with me;" because those for whom he had come to suffer ought to have been participants of his passion. Concerning those who had not yet believed, he complains in the resurrection, those whose life was sought in his death. He himself is also called the vine, as he testifies of himself in the Gospel: "I," he said, "am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman (John 15:1)."

Finally, this most sacred vine extended its branches through the whole world, because everywhere dilated and bearing fruit, it sent out as many branches as it chose saints within the holy Church through the grace of its vocation. Whence he also subjoins the same thing by inculcating it: "I am," he said, "the vine, and you are the branches; he who abides in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit (John 15:5)." That same cluster of grapes had signified this mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, which the scouts brought on a pole to the sons of Israel from the land of promise (Numbers 13:24).

Duobus autem portitoribus hinc inde suppositis, altero videlicet praecedente, altero subsequente, botrus in medio ferebatur, quia Redemptor noster, dum a patribus Veteris Testamenti venturus esse praedicitur, a Novi vero praedicatoribus jam venisse nuntiatur, quasi botrus in phalanga defertur, ut ad capessendam supernae repromissionis terram mens fidelium accendatur. Phalanga quippe delata humeris portitorum, divina lex est imposita cervicibus hominum. Cujus partes botrus ille medius continuavit, quia Salvator noster, qui fecit utraque unum, cum evangelica doctrina legis et prophetarum mandata conjunxit. Sed qui praecedebat, quod humeris portabat, oculis non videbat; qui autem sequebatur, onus suum semper intuebatur. Per illum ergo, qui praecedebat, populus Judaeorum; per illum vero, qui sequebatur, non incongrue designatur multitudo gentium. Ille enim per sacrae Scripturae paginas quasi in humeris Christum portavit; sed quia praesentem in carne, impediente infidelitatis suae caligine, non cognovit, dorsum ei quodammodo in faciem misit. Iste vero, qui sequitur, aspicit; quia gentilis populus Redemptorem suum, in quem fideliter credit, manifeste cognoscit.

Potest etiam per repromissionis terram non incongrue ipsum beatissimae Dei Genitricis corpus intelligi, ex quo Redemptor noster velut singularis botrus voluit humanitus germinari. Juxta illud, quod scriptum est: «Veritas de terra orta est (Psal. LXXXIV).» Et bene caro beatissimae Virginis terra repromissionis est dicta, quae longe ante paritura Salvatorem mundi a prophetis multifariam est promissa. Quae vere lac et mel manavit; dum Deum, et hominem intemerata virginitate profudit. Unde et per Isaiam dicitur: «Ecce virgo in utero concipiet, et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel; butyrum et mel comedet, ut sciat reprobare malum et eligere bonum (Isa. VII).» Merito ergo beata virgo Maria sub ipso vindemiarum tempore nascitur, ut jam novae gratiae mustum sic ex variis sacrae Scripturae sententiis, velut ex diversis uvarum folliculis exprimatur. Merito autumnali tempore nascitur, ut jam, velut in autumno totius saeculi fructus spiritualium arborum comedatur. In plenitudine temporis venit, quae gratia plena fuit: «Ave,» inquit angelus, «gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus (Luc. I).»

But with two porters placed under it on this side and that, with one indeed preceding and the other following, the cluster was carried in the middle, because our Redeemer, while he is predicted by the fathers of the Old Testament as being about to come, but is announced by the preachers of the New as having already come, is carried like a cluster on a pole, so that the mind of the faithful may be kindled to take possession of the land of supernal promise. The pole indeed, carried on the shoulders of the porters, is the divine law imposed on the necks of men. Whose parts that cluster in the middle continued, because our Savior, who made both one, joined the mandates of the law and the prophets with the evangelical doctrine. But he who preceded did not see with his eyes what he carried on his shoulders; but he who followed always gazed upon his burden. By him therefore who preceded, the people of the Jews is designated; but by him who followed, the multitude of the nations is not inappropriately designated. For the former carried Christ through the pages of sacred Scripture as if on his shoulders; but because he did not know him present in the flesh, with the darkness of his infidelity hindering him, he in a certain way turned his back to his face. But the latter, who follows, beholds; because the Gentile people manifestly knows its Redeemer, in whom it faithfully believes.

The land of promise can also not inappropriately be understood as the very body of the most blessed Mother of God, from which our Redeemer willed to be germinated humanly like a singular cluster of grapes. According to that which is written: "Truth is sprung out of the earth (Psalm 84:12)." And well is the flesh of the most blessed Virgin called the land of promise, which long before, being about to bring forth the Savior of the world, was promised in many ways by the prophets. Which truly flowed with milk and honey; while it brought forth God and man in unsullied virginity. Whence also it is said through Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel; butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good (Isaiah 7:14-15)." Deservedly therefore the blessed virgin Mary is born under the very time of the vintages, so that now the must of new grace may be expressed thus from the various sentences of sacred Scripture, as if from the different husks of the grapes. Deservedly she is born in the autumnal time, so that now, as if in the autumn of the whole age, the fruit of spiritual trees may be eaten. In the fullness of time she came, who was full of grace: "Hail," said the angel, "full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women (Luke 1:28)."

O dulce, o admirabile nuntium, o novum et inauditum angelicae salutationis obsequium! Plenam appellat gratia, quia ipse in eam descendebat, per quem omni mundo collata est gratia. «Dominus, inquit, tecum;» quia ille in te est, qui talem fecit te, ut et ipse fieret ex te. «Benedicta tu in mulieribus.» Per mulierem infusa est maledictio terrae, per mulierem redditur benedictio terrae. Per cujus manum potus mortis amarae porrigitur, per eam quoque dulcis vitae poculum exhibetur. Largissimum benedictionis novae fluentum totum detersit, maledictionis antiquae contagium. Sed quid ad haec Maria? Nunquid delato sibi coelitus nuntio, in immoderatae se laetitiae risum solvit? Nunquid in superbiae fastum cervicem mentis erexit? Nunquid non, antequam responderet, ipsum angelicae salutationis pondus librata mentis lance pensavit? Ait enim evangelista: «Quae cum audisset, turbata est in sermone ejus, et cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio (Luc. I).» Ubi sunt illae, quae dicunt, ego sum virgo, ego sum virgo? Verbosae, contentiosae, suspectuosae, superfluosae, veste compositae, moribus dissipatae? Ego sum virgo; nescio enim virum, ignoro conjugium. O virgo, quam felix esses, si quod habes in carne, servares in mente, custodires in actione! Quid enim prodest, solius carnis integritatem servare, et malignorum spirituum stupris mentis interiora corrumpere? Quid juvat virginem esse, et exigentibus actionum meritis nequaquam ad virginalem praemium pervenire? Virgo carne, non animo, virginitatis praemio non potitur. Aliud quippe est tentationum fortiter illecebris contraire, aliud eisdem blande irrepentibus, et si non corpore, mente tamen enerviter cedere.

Non ergo cuiquam sufficit ad capessenda praemia solus pudor virgineus, nisi et aliis fuerit ditatus virtutibus. Joanni quippe in Apocalypsi per angelum dicitur: «Hi sunt, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati. Virgines enim sunt, et sequuntur Agnum quocunque ierit (Apoc. XIV).» Agnus enim noster, ille videlicet, qui tollit peccata mundi, charitatem habuit, quia pro salute hominum proprium sanguinem fudit. Gratia humilitatis emicuit, quia humiliavit semetipsum usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Patientiam servavit, quia cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur. Mundanae dignitatis altitudinem sprevit, quia, sicut per Joannem dicitur, cum vellent illum regem constituere, montis latibulum petiit (Joan. VI). Inimicos dilexit, pro quibus et in cruce positus exoravit, dicens: «Pater, ignosce illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt (Luc. XXIII).» Ille itaque Agnum quocunque ierit sequitur, qui non sola virginitate ejus vestigia, sed per omnes quoque virtutum semitas, in quantum praevalet, imitatur. Ille Agnum sequitur in perventionis requie, qui illum imitari studuit in itineris adversitate.

O sweet, O admirable news, O new and unheard-of service of the angelic salutation! He calls her full of grace, because he was descending into her through whom grace was bestowed upon all the world. "The Lord," he says, "is with thee;" because he is in thee, who made thee such, that he himself might be made from thee. "Blessed art thou among women." Through a woman a curse was infused into the earth, through a woman a blessing is returned to the earth. Through whose hand the drink of bitter death is offered, through her also the cup of sweet life is exhibited. The most bountiful flow of the new blessing has wiped away all the contagion of the ancient curse. But what did Mary say to these things? Did she, at the news brought to her from heaven, break into the laughter of immoderate joy? Did she raise the neck of her mind in the pride of arrogance? Did she not, before she answered, weigh the very weight of the angelic salutation in the balanced scale of her mind? For the evangelist says: "Who, when she had heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be (Luke 1:29)." Where are those who say, I am a virgin, I am a virgin? Verbose, contentious, suspicious, superfluous, composed in dress, dissipated in manners? I am a virgin; for I know not a man, I am ignorant of marriage. O virgin, how happy you would be if what you have in the flesh, you would preserve in the mind, you would guard in action! For what does it profit to preserve the integrity of the flesh alone, and to corrupt the interior of the mind with the defilements of evil spirits? What does it help to be a virgin, and by the demanding merits of actions by no means to arrive at the virginal reward? A virgin in flesh, not in mind, does not possess the reward of virginity. For it is one thing to firmly resist the allurements of temptations, another thing to yield to them as they creep in blandly, and if not in body, yet weakly in mind.

Therefore, virginal modesty alone is not sufficient for anyone to take the rewards, unless it be also enriched with other virtues. For it is said to John in the Apocalypse through the angel: "These are they who were not defiled with women. For they are virgins, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (Revelation 14:4)." For our Lamb, namely, he who taketh away the sins of the world, had charity, because he shed his own blood for the salvation of men. The grace of humility shone forth, because he humbled himself even unto death, even the death of the cross. He preserved patience, because when he was reviled, he reviled not; when he suffered, he threatened not. He despised the height of worldly dignity, because, as is said through John, when they would have made him king, he sought the hiding place of a mountain (John 6:15). He loved his enemies, for whom also, being placed on the cross, he prayed, saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)." He, therefore, follows the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, who imitates his footsteps not by virginity alone, but through all the paths of virtues, as far as he prevails. He follows the Lamb in the rest of arrival, who studied to imitate him in the adversity of the journey.

Sed plerumque conversatione conjugatorum vita confunditur virginum, cum et illi ultra habitum assumunt opera, et isti juxta ordinem proprium non excitant corda. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: «Erubesce, Sidon, ait mare (Isa. XXV).» Quasi enim per vocem maris ad verecundiam Sidon adducitur, quando per comparationem vitae saecularium, atque in hoc mundo fluctuantium, ejus qui munitus, et quasi stabilis cernitur, vita reprobatur. Saepe enim nonnulli ad Dominum post carnis peccata redeuntes, tanto se ardentius in bonis operibus exhibent, quanto damnabiliores se de malis vident. Et saepe quidam in carnis integritate perdurantes, dum minus se respiciunt habere, quod defleant, plene sibi sufficere vitae suae innocentiam putant, atque ad fervorem spiritus nullis se ardoris stimulis inflammant. Et fit plerumque Deo gratior amore ardens vita post culpam, quam securitate torpens virginis innocentia. Unde et voce Judicis dicitur: «Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum (Luc. VII).» Et iterum: «Gaudium est angelis Dei super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente, quam supra nonaginta novem justis, qui non indigent poenitentia (Luc. XV).»

Illa ergo virginitas perfecta est, quae reliquis virtutibus cingitur, quae vera mentis humilitate conditur. Quae non solum illibatam se servat in carne, sed etiam pudicam custodit in ore. Unde et beata virgo Maria, audito angelicae legationis mysterio, solitum modesti silentii rigorem tenuit; et si ipsa enim intra se discutere non posset qualis esset illa salutatio, verbis tamen inquirere superfluum deputavit. Sed mox tacendo audire meruit, quod interrogando inquirere non praesumpsit. Ait enim angelus ei: «Ne timeas, Maria; invenisti enim gratiam apud Dominum; ecce concipies in utero, et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum (Luc. I).» Quod propheta multo ante futurum praedixit, hoc praesens adesse eisdem verbis angelus nuntiavit. Dicit enim, ut praemissum est, Isaias: «Ecce virgo in utero concipiet; et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel (Isa. VII).» Illic Jesus, qui Salvator dicitur; hic Emmanuel, qui nobiscum Deus interpretatur.

Qua laetitia, quo tripudio, fratres mei, Mariae mens repleta esse potuerat, quando haec prophetica et evangelica verba inter se invicem conferebat: «Maria enim, inquit evangelista, conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo (Luc. II).» In quanta se excellentia super omne humanum genus sublimari conspexerat, quae se Creatoris sui matrem fieri audiebat? Sed quae tanto apud Deum fastigio crescere meruit, quanta se apud semetipsam humilitatis dejectione substravit? Ait enim: «Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum (Ibid.).»

But for the most part, the life of virgins is confounded by the conduct of the married, when both the latter take up works beyond their state, and the former do not stir up their hearts according to their own order. Whence it is also said through the prophet: "Be ashamed, O Sidon, says the sea (Isaiah 23:4)." For as if through the voice of the sea, Sidon is brought to shame, when by a comparison of the life of seculars, and of those fluctuating in this world, the life of him who is seen fortified and as it were stable, is reproved. For often some returning to the Lord after sins of the flesh, exhibit themselves so much more ardently in good works as they see themselves more damnable from evil ones. And often some persisting in the integrity of the flesh, while they see themselves to have less which they may bewail, think the innocence of their life fully sufficient for them, and they inflame themselves with no stings of fervor to the fervor of the spirit. And there often becomes more pleasing to God a life burning with love after a fault, than the innocence of a virgin torpid with security. Whence also it is said by the voice of the Judge: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much (Luke 7:47)." And again: "There is joy to the angels of God over one sinner doing penance, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need not penance (Luke 15:7)."

That virginity, therefore, is perfect, which is girded with the remaining virtues, which is seasoned with true humility of mind. Which not only preserves itself unspotted in the flesh, but also keeps itself chaste in the mouth. Whence also the blessed virgin Mary, having heard the mystery of the angelic legation, held the usual rigor of modest silence; and if she indeed could not discuss within herself what manner of salutation this was, yet she thought it superfluous to inquire by words. But soon by being silent she deserved to hear what she did not presume to inquire by questioning. For the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with the Lord; behold, thou shalt conceive in the womb, and shalt bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus (Luke 1:30-31)." What the prophet predicted long before as being about to come, this the angel announced in the same words as being present. For Isaiah, as was premissed, says: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb; and shall bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14)." There Jesus, who is called Savior; here Emmanuel, which is interpreted God with us.

With what joy, with what exultation, my brothers, could the mind of Mary have been filled, when she compared these prophetic and evangelical words between themselves: "For Mary," says the evangelist, "kept all these words, conferring them in her heart (Luke 2:19)." In what excellence did she behold herself sublimated above all the human race, who heard that she was becoming the mother of her Creator? But she who deserved to grow with such height before God, with how great a dejection of humility did she prostrate herself before herself? For she said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word (Luke 1:38)."

Dei mater ab angelo dicebatur, et ipsa se ancillam Domini fatebatur. Et vere mater, simul et ancilla. Ancilla siquidem per communem conditionis humanae naturam, mater vero per ineffabilem divini muneris gratiam. Mater in eo quod genuit; ancilla in eo quod genita fuit. Necdum Evangelium scriptum erat, et jam evangelica praecepta servabat. Praecipit enim Dominus: «Quanto major es, humilia te in omnibus (Math. XXIII; Eccli. III).» Quid enim majus matre Domini? Quid humilius ancilla Domini? «Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.» Unde bene in Canticis canticorum haec sponsa, et mater Domini, sponsi sui voce laudatur, cum dicitur: «Quae ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi, ex aromatibus myrrhae, et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentarii?» (Cant. III.) Beata quippe Maria sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus ascendit, quia ex vitae suae virtutibus in interni semper incensi rectitudinem proficere studuit; nec sparsa per cogitationes defluxit, sed sese intra arcana cordis in rigoris virga constrinxit. Quae ea, quae egit, dum recogitare semper ac retractare non destitit, myrrham quidem et thus habebat in opere, sed pulverem in cogitatione. Et bene virgula fumi haec dicitur quae per virgam quoque Aaron mystice figuratur. Illa enim amygdalinas nuces absque ullo humore terreni cespitis protulit; ista vero absque ullo virili semine Dei Filium generavit. Ipse quoque virgae illius fructus, si studiose discutitur, aliquam cum Christo habere similitudinem invenitur. Sicut enim amygdalina nux ex nucleo constat, osse et cortice; ita Redemptor noster ex divinitate constat, et anima simul et carne.

Quia vero absque ullo virili semine de Virgine nasciturus erat, ipse multo ante per Prophetam dixerat: «Ego autem sum vermis et non homo (Psal. XXI).» Sicut enim vermis ex ligno absque alieno nascitur semine; ita et Christus absque ulla carnis concupiscentia de beata natus est Virgine. Hinc est enim, quod per prophetam alium dicitur: «Ecce Dominus ascendet super nubem levem (Isa. XIX).» Sol quippe cum nube tegitur, ab humanis visibus occultatur. Sic nimirum, sic Salvator noster, sumpta ex Virgine se carne vestivit, in qua divinitas latens humano intuitu videri non potuit.

She was called the mother of God by the angel, and she herself confessed that she was the handmaid of the Lord. And truly mother, at once and handmaid. Handmaid indeed through the common nature of the human condition, but mother through the ineffable grace of the divine gift. Mother in that which she brought forth; handmaid in that which she was brought forth. Not yet was the Gospel written, and already she kept the evangelical precepts. For the Lord commands: "The greater thou art, humble thyself in all things (Matthew 23:12; Ecclesiasticus 3:20)." For what is greater than the mother of the Lord? What humbler than the handmaid of the Lord? "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." Whence well in the Canticle of Canticles this spouse, and mother of the Lord, is praised by the voice of her spouse, when it is said: "Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a rod of smoke, of the aromatical spices of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer? (Canticles 3:6)." For the blessed Mary like a rod of smoke went up from aromatical spices, because from the virtues of her life she studied to profit always in the rectitude of internal incense; nor did she flow down scattered through thoughts, but she constrained herself within the secrets of the heart in the rod of rigor. Since she did not cease always to rethink and retract those things which she did, she had indeed myrrh and frankincense in work, but powder in thought. And well is she called a rod of smoke who is also mystically figured by the rod of Aaron. For the former brought forth almond nuts without any moisture of the earthly clod; but the latter generated the Son of God without any male seed. Also the fruit of that rod itself, if it is studiedly discussed, is found to have some similitude with Christ. For as an almond nut consists of a kernel, a bone, and a shell; so our Redeemer consists of divinity, and at once a soul and flesh.

Because he was about to be born of the Virgin without any male seed, he himself had said long before through the Prophet: "But I am a worm and no man (Psalm 21:7)." For as a worm is born from wood without any other seed; so also Christ was born of the blessed Virgin without any concupiscence of the flesh. Hence it is that it is said through another prophet: "Behold, the Lord shall ascend upon a light cloud (Isaiah 19:1)." For when the sun is covered with a cloud, it is hidden from human sight. So surely, so our Savior, having taken flesh from the Virgin, clothed himself, in which his divinity lying hidden could not be seen by human intuition.

Quae nubes idcirco levis dicitur, quia beatissima Virgo nullo viri semine gravida, sola sancti Spiritus gratia fecundatur. Quae et dignitatem Genitricis obtinuit, et virginalem pudicitiam non amisit. Quae sine contaminatione concepit, et sine dolore filium procreavit. Non secutus est dolor partum, quia non praecessit libido conceptum. Dictum namque fuerat Evae: «In dolore paries filium (Gen. III).» Quae sententia in aliis matribus viguit, in Maria vero modum sui juris amisit. In mulieribus fixa perstitit, in Virgine praevalere non potuit. Quae enim Virgo permansit concipiendo, dolorem sentire non potuit patiendo. Ille quippe, qui ex ea ineffabiliter prodiit, claustrum virginalis pudicitiae non corrupit. Virginem denique veniens, introivit, Virginem nihilominus exiens, dereliquit. Haec enim est hortus conclusus, fons signatus (Cant. IV), quae et fructum fecunditatis edidit, et virginitatis meritum non imminuit.

O mirabilis, o singulariter nobilis caro beatissimae Virginis, in qua muliebris natura mutatur, humana conditio non tenetur! Per coitum quidem est genita, sed per efficaciam coitus non enixa. Edita communi nascentium jure, edidit singularis gratiae novitate. In humano denique genere ille nobilis dicitur, qui claris majorum titulis insignitur; beata vero Maria, licet de generosa sit patrum stirpe progenita, ab illo tamen trahit excellentissimae nobilitatis genus, qui de illa est novo nascendi genere procreatus, et per clarissimam sobolem omnem humani stemmatis excedit nobilitatem. Clara proavorum titulis, sed incomparabiliter clarior generositate prolis. Filia siquidem regum; sed Mater Regis regum: «Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei (Psal. LXXXVI).» Sed quidquid de te a mortali homine dicitur, celsitudinis tuae meritis non aequatur. Quam enim excellens gratia super angelos elevat, ad ejus digne efferenda praeconia humana fragilitas non aspirat. Rogamus te, clementissima, ipsius pietatis et misericordiae mater, ut qui tuae laudis insignia frequentare gaudemus in terris, tuae intercessionis auxilium habere mereamur in coelis; quatenus sicut per te Dei Filius dignatus est ad nostra descendere, ita et nos per te ad ejus valeamus consortium pervenire. Qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et gloriatur per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo XLVII.

*I. DE EXALTATIONE SANCTAE CRUCIS. (XIV SEPT.)*

Which cloud is therefore called light because the most blessed Virgin, pregnant by no seed of man, is fecundated by the grace of the Holy Spirit alone. Who both obtained the dignity of a Mother and did not lose virginal modesty. Who conceived without contamination and brought forth a son without pain. Pain did not follow the birth because lust did not precede the conception. For it had been said to Eve: "In pain thou shalt bring forth a son (Genesis 3:16)." Which sentence flourished in other mothers, but in Mary it lost the measure of its own right. In women it persisted fixed, in the Virgin it could not prevail. For she who remained a Virgin in conceiving, could not feel pain in suffering. For he who ineffably proceeded from her did not corrupt the cloister of virginal modesty. Finally, coming, he entered a Virgin; going out, he nonetheless left her a Virgin. For she is the garden enclosed, the fountain sealed (Canticles 4:12), who both brought forth the fruit of fecundity and did not diminish the merit of virginity.

O wonderful, O singularly noble flesh of the most blessed Virgin, in which female nature is changed, human condition is not held! It was indeed generated through intercourse, but it did not bring forth through the efficacy of intercourse. Brought forth by the common right of those being born, it brought forth by the novelty of singular grace. Finally, in the human race, he is called noble who is distinguished by the clear titles of his ancestors; but the blessed Mary, although she was begotten from the generous stock of the fathers, yet draws her most excellent kind of nobility from him who was procreated from her by a new kind of being born, and through her most clear offspring exceeds all nobility of the human lineage. Clear by the titles of her ancestors, but incomparably clearer by the generosity of her offspring. Daughter indeed of kings; but Mother of the King of kings: "Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God (Psalm 86:3)." But whatever is said of thee by a mortal man is not equal to the merits of thy loftiness. For how excellent grace elevates thee above the angels, human fragility does not aspire worthily to utter thy praises. We beseech thee, most clement, mother of piety and mercy itself, that we who rejoice to frequent the insignias of thy praise on earth, may deserve to have the help of thy intercession in the heavens; so that as through thee the Son of God deigned to descend to ours, so also we through thee may be able to arrive at his fellowship. Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and is glorified through infinite ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon XLVII.

*I. ON THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS. (SEPTEMBER 14)*

De virga Jesse devenimus ad virgam crucis, et principium redemptionis fine concludimus. Ex illa Jesus Christus Virgo virga virgine mirabiliter est generatus; in ista martyr martyrum caput, et martyrii forma turpiter est appensus. Illa virga directionis, virga regni tui (Psal. XLIV), ait illud familiare Spiritus sancti organum, quia nihil Virgine rectius, subtilius nihil. Audi et de alia: «Virgam virtutis tuae emittit Dominus ex Sion (Psal. CIX).» Profecto crux fuit virga virtutis, in qua Dominus virtutum viriliter pugnavit, et vicit. «Assumpsi mihi duas virgas, ait propheta; unam vocavi decorem, et alteram funiculum (Zach. XI).» Virga pulchritudinis, uterus Virginis. «Pulchra, inquit, ut luna (Cant. VI),» virga funiculi, lignum patibuli, disterminans utraque regnum Dei et diaboli, imponens frenum malitiae ejus, latamque ejus pervagationem validissima potestate coercens. In hac confossum est latus innoxium, et ad horam crucifixus est innocens manibus, et mundo corde. Terribilis ille latro, cujus manus plenae sunt sanguine, in hac item confossus est, et confectus. Sed Christus aliter, aliter ipse. Christus ad monumentum, ille in aeternum. Debellavit aereas potestates, ait Apostolus (Coloss. II), et affixit eas cruci suae. Ex altera parte crucifixus est Redemptor noster, ex alia summus ille praevaricator.

Rex Hai ut narrat historia (Jos. VIII sec. LXX), suspensus est in gemino patibulo, ita rex mortis in duplici patibulo suspenditur, quia dum Christum interficit, in ipsa cruce crucifigitur, quem invenit magnum sacramentum crucis, nec est aliquid hoc sacramento sacratius. Respice crucem stantem, et vide quam recta cacuminatione de terris erigatur ad coelum, et veritatem rei ipsa imagine protestetur. Nonne tibi videtur figura ejus coelum, et terram sublimi continuatione conjungere? Haec est firmissimum ac indissolubile gluten, quo conglutinantur rationales creaturae, ut ex utrisque fiat illa civitas, cujus participatio ejus in idipsum (Psal. CXXIX). Vide etiam quomodo quadrifaria ratione quatuor mundi climata comprehendat, et omnem ad se pertrahat creaturam. Astat Jesus in medio, quadrifaria sui corporis parte distentus, et expansis manibus omnibus ad se ex omni parte venientibus amplissimum misericordiae sinum ostendit. Nam «apud Dominum misericordia, et copiosa apud eum redemptio (Psal. CXXIX).» Prorsus copiosa, non stricta; quia largiter unda sanguinis de corpore Christi per quinque partes emanavit. Sufficeret ad redemptionem orbis, vel una pretiosissimi sanguinis gutta; sed data est copia, ut virtus diligentis in beneficii redundatione clarescat.

From the rod of Jesse we have come to the rod of the cross, and we conclude the beginning of redemption with the end. From the former Jesus Christ the Virgin was wonderfully generated from the virgin rod; on the latter the head of the martyrs and the form of martyrdom was basely hung. That rod of direction, the rod of thy kingdom (Psalm 44:7), says that familiar organ of the Holy Spirit, because nothing is more upright than the Virgin, nothing more subtle. Hear also of the other: "The Lord will send out the rod of thy strength from Zion (Psalm 109:2)." Truly the cross was the rod of strength, on which the Lord of virtues fought manfully and conquered. "I took unto me two rods," says the prophet; "one I called beauty, and the other a cord (Zechariah 11:7)." The rod of beauty, the womb of the Virgin. "Fair," he says, "as the moon (Canticles 6:9);" the rod of the cord, the wood of the gibbet, each determining the kingdom of God and the devil, imposing a bridle on his malice, and restraining his wide wandering with the strongest power. In this the harmless side was pierced, and for an hour the innocent in hands and pure in heart was crucified. That terrible thief, whose hands are full of blood, was likewise pierced and finished on this. But Christ in one way, he in another. Christ to the tomb, he to eternity. He defeated the aerial powers, says the Apostle (Colossians 2:15), and fixed them to his cross. On the one side our Redeemer was crucified, on the other that highest prevaricator.

The king of Ai, as the history relates (Joshua 8:29 according to LXX), was hung on a double gibbet; so the king of death is hung on a twofold gibbet, because while he kills Christ, he is crucified on that very cross, which he found to be the great sacrament of the cross, nor is there anything more sacred than this sacrament. Behold the cross standing, and see with how upright an ascent it is raised from the earth to heaven, and protests the truth of the matter by its very image. Does not its figure seem to you to join heaven and earth in a sublime continuation? This is the firmest and indissoluble glue, by which rational creatures are glued together, so that from both may be made that city, whose participation is in the same thing (Psalm 121:3). See also how in a fourfold manner it comprehends the four quarters of the world, and draws every creature to itself. Jesus stands in the middle, stretched out in a fourfold part of his body, and with expanded hands shows to all coming to him from every part the widest bosom of mercy. For "with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption (Psalm 129:7)." Truly plentiful, not narrow; because the wave of blood flowed bountifully from the body of Christ through five parts. One drop of most precious blood would suffice for the redemption of the world; but plenty was given, so that the power of the one who loves may shine forth in the redundancy of the benefit.

Sed ne forte occurreret tibi, ut ubique terrarum currens, Redemptorem tuum invenire non posses, a quaqua mundi parte procedas, sive ab Oriente, sive ab Occidente, seu a Meridie, vel a Septentrione paratus est ipse suscipere venientem, et blanda confovere dulcedine. Sed attende quid tibi exprimitur de corde Altissimi. Venis ad hominem crucifixum? crucifixus venias, aut crucifigendus. Qui enim Christi sunt, crucifixerunt carnem suam cum vitiis, et concupiscentiis (Gal. V). Sic lignum Christo, necessarium tibi. Sed jam ascende ad verbi hujus celsiora fastigia, et vide quidnam sit quod egreditur. Scriptum est in Regum historia, quia beata illa mater ait ad Eliam: «En colligo duo ligna (III Reg. XVII).» Duo ligna, duo crucis brachia sunt. In his duobus humanam et angelicam naturam intellige. Et illud quidem lignum, quod recta sublimitate tendit ad coelos, superiorem accipe naturam, quae stetit in rectitudine, et officiosissima devotione voluntati Dominantis adhaesit. Illud vero, quod transversum est, humanam designat, quae transversa, imo, ut verius dicamus, eversa, status sui perdidit aequitatem. Intuere cum quanto sacramento jungantur. In utroque ligno fit scissio, et ex occasione vulnerum junctio junctura componitur. Supercoelestes spiritus non mediocre vulnus acceperunt, cum Deus in angelis suis reperit pravitatem (Job IV); nec contemnenda plaga, cum eam resarciri oporteat, quia non restituto sociali numero, numerositas cadens facta videtur in vanum. Inferior vero nature a planta pedis usque ad verticem ita venenifera fermentatione infecta est, ut nesciat unde veniat, aut quo vadat.

Utrorumque spirituum igitur utrisque vulneribus non mediocriter hiantibus, impressio facta est juncturalis, quae Christo conjungente ita est resarcita, ut nihil vulniferum videatur inesse. Christus enim in utrisque et pro utrisque confixus, utrosque cavilla corporis sui validus nectit, et corpus proprium juncturis opponit, ne valeant resilire. Crux igitur jungit coelum et terram; Christus in cruce trahit omnia; leo rugiens ibi ligatur; angelus confoederatur et homo; totumque per eam reficitur, quidquid fecit manus Altissimi.

Excede ergo paulisper sensus carnis, et irruentia corporearum phantasmata voluptatum, et intuere divinae naturae bonitatem, suavitatem, dignationem. Meditare positionem crucifixi corporis. Vide si aliquid est in eo, quod non peroret pro te apud Patrem. Divinum illud caput multiplici spinarum densitate densatum, usque ad cerebri teneritudinem confixum est dum configitur spina. «Spinis peccatorum suorum,» ait Dominus per Prophetam, «circumdedit me populus iste (Psal. XXI).» Ad quid hoc? Ne doleret caput tuum, ne tua vulneraretur intentio.

But lest perhaps it should occur to you, that running everywhere on earth, you could not find your Redeemer, from whatever part of the world you proceed, whether from the East, or from the West, or from the South, or from the North, he himself is ready to receive the one coming, and to cherish him with bland sweetness. But attend to what is expressed to you from the heart of the Most High. Do you come to a crucified man? You should come crucified, or about to be crucified. For they who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences (Galatians 5:24). So the wood is necessary to you as to Christ. But now ascend to the higher summits of this word, and see what it is that goes forth. It is written in the history of Kings, that that blessed mother said to Elijah: "Behold, I gather two sticks (3 Kings 17:10)." Two sticks, two arms of the cross they are. In these two understand the human and angelic nature. And that stick indeed, which with upright sublimity tends to the heavens, take as the superior nature, which stood in rectitude, and adhered to the will of the Ruler with the most dutiful devotion. But that which is transverse designates the human nature, which transverse, nay, that we may speak more truly, overturned, lost the equity of its state. Intuit with how great a sacrament they are joined. In both sticks a cleavage is made, and from the occasion of the wounds the joining of the juncture is composed. The supercelestial spirits received no mediocre wound, when God found wickedness in his angels (Job 4:18); nor is it a contemptible plague, since it behooves it to be repaired, because if the social number is not restored, the falling numerosity seems to have been made in vain. But the inferior nature from the sole of the foot even unto the top is so infected with poisonous fermentation, that it knows not whence it comes, or whither it goes.

Therefore, the wounds of both kinds of spirits being widely gaping, a junctional impression was made, which by Christ joining it was so repaired that nothing wounding seems to be in it. For Christ being fixed in both and for both, joins both with the strong bolt of his body, and opposes his own body to the junctures, lest they be able to spring back. The cross therefore joins heaven and earth; Christ on the cross draws all things; the roaring lion is bound there; the angel is federated and man; and the whole is restored through it, whatever the hand of the Most High made.

Exceed therefore for a little while the senses of the flesh, and the rushing phantasms of corporeal pleasures, and behold the goodness, sweetness, and deigning of the divine nature. Meditate on the position of the crucified body. See if there is anything in it which does not plead for you before the Father. That divine head, thickened with a manifold density of thorns, was pierced even to the tenderness of the brain while the thorn was fixed. "With the thorns of their sins," says the Lord through the Prophet, "this people has surrounded me (Psalm 21:7)." For what is this? Lest thy head should ache, lest thy intention should be wounded.

Caligaverunt in mortem oculi sui, et illa luminaria, quae illuminant orbem, ad horam exstincta sunt. Nonne illis obtenebrantibus, tenebrae factae sunt per universam terram, et illa duo magna luminaria cum illis luminaribus submota sunt? Hoc autem totum factum est ut averterentur oculi tui ne viderent vanitatem, et si viderent, non adhaererent. Aures illae, quae in coelis audiunt: «Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Lord Deus Sabaoth (Isa. VI);» audierunt in terris: «Daemonium habes (Joan. VII),» et: «Crucifige, crucifige eum (Luc. XXIII).» Ut quid istud? Ne aures tuae obsurdescerent ad clamorem pauperis, ne reciperent auditum vanum, ne detractionis virus apertis propitiisque auribus susciperent. Speciosa illa facies speciosi forma prae filiis hominum sputis illita est, afflicta colaphis, addicta delusionibus; sic namque scriptum est: «Coeperunt conspuere in eum, et percutere faciem ejus et illudere ei dicentes: Prophetiza quis est qui te percussit?» (Matth. XXVI.) Quare hoc? Ut facies tua illuminaretur, illuminata confirmaretur, et diceretur de te: «Vultus ejus non sunt amplius in diversa mutati (I Reg. I).» Os illud quod docet angelos, homines instruit, quod dixit, et factum est, parumper obmutuit, ut veritatem et judicium loqueretur os tuum et confiteretur Dominum Deum suum. Manus illae, quae fundaverunt coelos, extensae sunt in cruce clavisque transverberatae durissimis, ut manus tuae extenderentur ad inopem et dicere posses: «Anima mea in manibus meis semper (Psal. CXVIII).» Quod tenemus in manibus, non facile obliviscimur, sic et qui animam suam bonae operationi imprimit non tradit eam oblivioni. Pectus illud, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae Dei absconditi (Col. II), lancea militari perfossum est, ut pectus tuum a pravis cogitationibus mundaretur, mundatum sanctificaretur, conservaretur sanctificatum. Pedes illi, quorum scabellum adorare debemus, quia sanctum est (Psal. XCVIII), dura transfixione confixi sunt, ne pedes tui festinarent ad malum, sed currerent viam mandatorum Domini. Quid plura? «Foderunt manus ejus et pedes, et dinumeraverunt omnia ossa sua (Psal. XXI).» Pro te carnem et animam suam posuit, ut corpus et spiritum tuum sibi vindicaret. Toto se totum te comparavit. Quid ultra debuit facere et non fecit? Absolvit vinctum, illuminavit caecum, quia «Dominus solvit compeditos, Dominus illuminat caecos (Psal. CXLV).» Reduxit erroneum, reconciliavit reum, qui te portavit in humeris suis, qui pro te Patri proprio sanguine satisfecit.

His eyes grew dark unto death, and those luminaries which illuminate the world were for an hour extinguished. Did not, with those darkening, darkness fall over the universal earth, and those two great luminaries were withdrawn with those luminaries? But all this was done that thy eyes might be turned away lest they should see vanity, and if they did see, they should not adhere to it. Those ears, which in heaven hear: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth (Isaiah 6:3);" heard on earth: "Thou hast a devil (John 7:20)," and: "Crucify, crucify him (Luke 23:21)." Why this? Lest thy ears should grow deaf to the cry of the poor, lest they should receive a vain hearing, lest they should receive the virus of detraction with open and favorable ears. That beautiful face, beautiful in form above the sons of men, was smeared with spittle, afflicted with blows, addicted to delusions; for so it is written: "They began to spit upon him, and to strike his face and to mock him saying: Prophesy who is it that struck thee? (Matthew 26:67-68)." Why this? That thy face might be illuminated, being illuminated it might be confirmed, and it might be said of thee: "His countenances are no longer changed into different things (1 Kings 1:18)." That mouth which teaches the angels, instructs men, which said, and it was done, was silent for a little while, that thy mouth might speak truth and judgment and might confess the Lord its God. Those hands, which founded the heavens, were stretched out on the cross and transfixed with the hardest nails, that thy hands might be stretched out to the needy and thou couldst say: "My soul is in my hands always (Psalm 118:109)." What we hold in our hands, we do not easily forget, so also he who imprints his soul on good work does not deliver it to oblivion. That breast, in which are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Colossians 2:3), was pierced by a military lance, that thy breast might be cleansed from perverse thoughts, being cleansed it might be sanctified, being sanctified it might be preserved. Those feet, the footstool of which we ought to adore because it is holy (Psalm 98:5), were fixed with a hard transfixing, lest thy feet should hasten to evil, but should run the way of the mandates of the Lord. Why more? "They dug his hands and feet, and numbered all his bones (Psalm 21:17-18)." He placed his flesh and his soul for thee, that he might claim thy body and spirit for himself. All he compared himself to all of thee. What more ought he to have done and did not do? He loosed the bound, he illuminated the blind, because "the Lord looseth the fettered, the Lord illuminateth the blind (Psalm 145:7-8)." He brought back the wandering, he reconciled the guilty, who carried thee on his shoulders, who for thee satisfied his Father with his own blood.

Attende ergo consilium Dei tui, non solum cum Patre regnantis, sed et dulcissimi amici tui in cruce pendentis; nec enim falli potest, quia sapientia est, nec fallere te vult, pro quo ignominiosam sustinet poenam: «Si quis, inquit, vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam et sequatur me (Luc. IX).» Audi consilium, non praeceptum. Si enim praeceptum esset, quicunque effectui non manciparent, cruciatus possent exspectare perpetuos; sed cum dicit: «Si quis vult,» in nostra posuit voluntate, utrum ex aequo cum eo currere festinemus. Grandis profecto labor, sed praemium incomparabile. «Post me,» inquit. Post eum eundum est, quia ipse est veritas, ne decipiamur; per eum, quia ipse via, ne aberremus; ad eum, quia ipse est vita, ne moriamur: «Ego sum,» ait, «via, veritas et vita (Joan. XIV).» Sequitur: «abneget semetipsum.» Primus ille parens, praefixis obedientiae legibus coarctatus, in campum malae libertatis exivit. Acceperat in praecepto, ut voluntatem Creatoris praeponeret suae, sed usus, imo abusus propria voluntate, cum beare se voluit, perdidit semetipsum. Depulsus ergo ab illa felici haereditate exsilium sortitus est pro patria, mortem pro vita, pro gloria ignominiam. Si vis ergo ad tuam haereditatem reverti, tuam abnega voluntatem.

In hac abnegatione duo solummodo sunt, adversus quae pugnare et expugnare oporteat; elatio in mente, voluptas in corpore. Fuge regem et regis exercitum, superbiam et superbiae prolem, et illum secutus illum consecutus es qui dixit: «Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde (Matth. XI).» Pretiosa vestis, epulae lautiores et voluptas secretior longe sint a te, et carnes tuas timore Domini confixisti. Abnegatio igitur voluntatis, haereditatis est recuperatio.

Sequitur: «Tollat crucem suam.» Si non cecidisset Adam et in illa sui status dignitate mansisset, esset tamen alias evocandus et in ordinem promovendus angelicum; ob duplicem enim causam factus erat, et ad resarciendum numerum imminutum, et ad illum implendum qui deerat, si angelus non cecidisset.

Habens itaque Moyses virgam in manu, hoc insuper addidit ut brachia sua in modum crucis expanderet, sicque jam factum est, ut catervarum adversantium acies ligno et signo hoc pleno crucis mysterio superaret. Hoc enim sacra testatur historia, cum dicit: «Dum levaret manus Moyses, vincebat Israel; sin autem paululum remisisset, superabat Amalech (Exod. XVII).» Hoc plane factum, fratres mei, non solum spiritalis intelligentiae sacramentum, sed et virtutis nobis saluberrimum convectat exemplum.

Attend therefore to the counsel of thy God, not only reigning with the Father, but also of thy most sweet friend hanging on the cross; for he cannot be deceived, because he is wisdom, nor does he want to deceive thee, for whom he sustains an ignominious penalty: "If any man," he says, "will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me (Luke 9:23)." Hear the counsel, not a precept. For if it were a precept, whoever did not commit it to effect, could expect perpetual tortures; but when he says: "If any man will," he has placed it in our will, whether we hasten to run equally with him. A great labor indeed, but an incomparable reward. "After me," he says. He is to be gone after, because he is the truth, lest we be deceived; through him, because he is the way, lest we wander; to him, because he is the life, lest we die: "I am," he said, "the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)." It follows: "let him deny himself." That first parent, constrained by prefixed laws of obedience, went out into the field of evil liberty. He had received in a precept that he should prefer the will of the Creator to his own, but using, nay, abusing his own will, when he wanted to bless himself, he lost himself. Driven out therefore from that happy inheritance, he was allotted exile for a fatherland, death for life, ignominy for glory. If you want therefore to return to your inheritance, deny your own will.

In this abnegation there are only two things against which it is necessary to fight and to conquer; pride in the mind, pleasure in the body. Flee the king and the king's army, pride and the offspring of pride, and having followed him, you have attained him who said: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart (Matthew 11:29)." Let a precious garment, more sumptous feasts, and more secret pleasure be far from thee, and thou hast fixed thy flesh with the fear of the Lord. The abnegation therefore of the will, is the recovery of the inheritance.

It follows: "Let him take up his cross." If Adam had not fallen and had remained in that dignity of his state, he would nevertheless have had to be called elsewhere and promoted into the angelic order; for he was made for a twofold cause, both to repair the diminished number, and to fulfill that which was lacking, if the angel had not fallen.

Moses, therefore, having the rod in his hand, added this besides, that he should expand his arms in the manner of a cross, and so it was already done, that he might overcome the battle lines of the opposing crowds by the wood and by this sign full of the mystery of the cross. For sacred history testifies to this when it says: "When Moses lifted up his hands, Israel prevailed; but if he had let them down a little, Amalek overcame (Exod. XVII)." This deed plainly, my brothers, conveys to us not only a sacrament of spiritual understanding, but also a most salutary example of virtue.

Nam dum crucem post Dominum tollimus, dum corda nostra cum manibus ad Deum levamus, rectores tenebrarum protinus corruunt, in ima prostrati fractis viribus eliduntur. Si vero manus remittimus, et obliti coelestium, terrena sectamur, protinus hostis victor insequitur, et nos amissa victoria persequentium gladiis obtruncamur. In omni sane spiritali certamine crucis debemus praeferre vexillum, quod nimirum si viriliter agentes attollimus, procul dubio victores existimus; alioquin si segniter vivendo deponimus, ad primos persequentium impetus necesse est enerviter concidamus. Unde et insignis ille militiae spiritalis instructor Paulus ait: «Remissas manus, et dissoluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris, ne claudicans quis erret (Hebr. XII).»

Hoc nempe vexillum et Gedeon sibi, suisque commilitonibus typice praetulit, qui contra arma, arma deseruit, inermis armatos invasit, et ad debellandum Madianitarum multitudinem dimissa multitudine cum paucis venit (Jud. VII). Divina siquidem sibi admonitione praeceptum est ut ad fluvium veniens, omnes quos flexis genibus aquas haurire conspiceret a bellorum congressionibus amoveret. Factumque est, et trecenti viri tantummodo, qui stantes manibus aquas hauserant, remanserunt. Quid est autem quod Gedeon trecentis contentus militibus ad bella progreditur, nisi quia hic numerus in Thau littera, quae videlicet crucis exprimit speciem, continetur? Cui profecto litterae si super transversam lineam id adderetur, quod in cruce superius eminet, non jam crucis species, sed potius ipsa crux esset. Quia igitur trecentenarium numerum Thau littera continet, quae figuram crucis exhibet, non immerito in his trecentis Gedeonem sequentibus, illi omnes designati sunt, quibus dicitur: «Si quis vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur me (Luc. IX).» Qui nimirum sequentes Dominum tanto verius crucem tollunt, quanto et ipsi acrius affliguntur, et erga delinquentes proximos, vel egentes piae compassionis incendio concremantur. Unde per Ezechielem dicitur: «Signa Thau super frontes virorum gementium et dolentium super cunctis abominationibus, quae fiunt in medio Hierusalem (Ezech. IX).» Vel certe in his trecentis, qui Thau littera continentur, hoc exprimitur, quod ferrum hostium crucis ligno superetur. In eodem quoque crucis mysterio, et Abraham triumphum victor obtinuit, qui quinque reges cum trecentis decem et octo vernaculis debellavit (Gen. XIV). Crucis mysterium et illa in se diluvii arca continuit, cujus longitudinem trecentorum fuisse cubitorum Scriptura definit (Gen. VI).

For while we bear the cross after the Lord, while we lift up our hearts with our hands to God, the rulers of darkness immediately fall, and being prostrated into the depths, they are crushed with broken strength. But if we let down our hands, and forgetting heavenly things, we follow earthly ones, immediately the enemy follows as victor, and we, having lost the victory, are cut down by the swords of those pursuing us. In every spiritual struggle, indeed, we ought to hold forth the banner of the cross, which certainly if we raise it acting manfully, we undoubtedly stand as victors; otherwise, if by living sluggishly we lay it down, it is necessary that we fall feebly at the first onset of the pursuers. Whence also that distinguished instructor of the spiritual warfare, Paul, says: "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way (Hebr. XII)."

This banner indeed Gideon also typically set before himself and his fellow soldiers, who against arms, deserted arms, and being unarmed invaded the armed, and for the purpose of defeating the multitude of the Midianites, having dismissed the multitude, he came with a few (Jud. VII). For it was commanded to him by divine admonition that coming to the river, he should remove from the engagements of wars all whom he should see drawing water with bent knees. And it was done, and three hundred men only, who standing had drawn water with their hands, remained. But why is it that Gideon proceeds to the wars content with three hundred soldiers, except because this number is contained in the letter Tau, which clearly expresses the form of the cross? To which letter indeed, if that were added above the transverse line which stands out higher in the cross, it would no longer be the appearance of the cross, but rather the cross itself. Since therefore the letter Tau contains the number three hundred, which exhibits the figure of the cross, not undeservedly in these three hundred following Gideon, all those were designated to whom it is said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luc. IX)." Who indeed, following the Lord, take up the cross so much more truly, as they themselves are more sharply afflicted, and are burned with the fire of pious compassion toward their delinquent neighbors or those in need. Whence it is said through Ezekiel: "Mark Tau upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that mourn for all the abominations that are done in the midst of Jerusalem (Ezech. IX)." Or certainly in these three hundred, who are contained in the letter Tau, this is expressed, that the iron of the enemies is overcome by the wood of the cross. In the same mystery of the cross, Abraham also as victor obtained a triumph, who defeated five kings with three hundred and eighteen household servants (Gen. XIV). This mystery of the cross that ark of the deluge also contained in itself, the length of which the Scripture defines to have been three hundred cubits (Gen. VI).

Porro sicut Noe cum suis per aquam lignumque salvatur, sic et Christi familia aqua salvatur et ligno, dum et baptismo salutis abluitur, et vivificae crucis impressione signatur. Quae videlicet arca ut in sacramento Christi humani corporis videatur aequiparare mensuram, trecentos habuisse cubitos in longitudine, quinquaginta in latitudine, triginta vero in altitudine perhibetur. Trecenti namque quinquagenarium numerum sexies, et tricenarium in se decies includunt. Et humani corporis longitudo, a vertice videlicet usque ad pedes, sexies tantum habet quam latitudo, quae est a dextera usque ad sinistram, et decies tantum quam altitudo, quae est ante et retro. Sic nimirum arca et in trecentenario longitudinis suae numero speciem crucis, et in totius suae dimensionis habitudine figuram tenet Dominici corporis. Et sicut septem animae donantur Noe, ut per lignum salventur in undis, sic septem Ecclesiae septiformi Spiritu repletae salvantur in Christo per lignum crucis et aquam baptismatis. Per lignum nempe nos servituti princeps superbiae subdidit, per lignum nos humilitatis auctor in libertatis titulos revocavit. Per lignum nos tyrannus perpetuo relegavit exsilio, per lignum mitissimus Rex haeredes decrevit in regno. Per lignum sumus ad porcorum custodiam et siliquarum indigentiam devoluti; per lignum quoque paternis sumus amplexibus redditi, perceptaque stola cum annulo in consortium pristinae sumus haereditatis adsciti. Lignum nos improbo exactori censitos reddidit, lignum omnia simul inexhausti foenoris nostri tributa persolvit. Per lignum porro ab haustu perennis fontis aruimus, per lignum rore coelestis gratiae copiosius inundamur.

Hanc plane coelestium charismatum inundantiam Moyses typice figuravit, quando in Cades, quae est in deserto Sin divinae promissionis addubitans largissimas aquas silicem percutiendo, produxit (Num. X). Propter peccata scilicet populi, quod et ipse jam fecerat rursus se facere posse diffidit, atque ideo in repromissionis terram eumdem populum Domino prohibente nullatenus introduxit. Quam videlicet dubietatem, et ipsius Moysis verba testantur, cum ait: «Audite, rebelles et increduli, num de petra hac vobis aquam poterimus elicere»? (Ibid.) Tanquam diceret, nos non valeamus quod supra humanitatis vires est, facere, quia vos non acquiescitis quod humanum est adimplere; nec signum possumus ex virtute divinitatis ostendere, quia vos nunquam desinitis Deo per rebellionis contumaciam contraire. Sed petra illa, juxta Apostolum, Christus erat (I Cor. X).

Furthermore, just as Noah with his own is saved through water and wood, so also the family of Christ is saved by water and wood, while it is washed by the baptism of salvation, and is signed by the impression of the life-giving cross. Which ark indeed, that it may be seen to equal the measure in the sacrament of Christ's human body, is said to have had three hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and thirty in height. For three hundred includes the number fifty six times, and the number thirty ten times. And the length of the human body, clearly from the crown of the head to the feet, is six times as much as the breadth, which is from the right to the left, and ten times as much as the height, which is from front to back. Thus indeed the ark, both in the number three hundred of its length, holds the appearance of the cross, and in the proportion of its whole dimension, it holds the figure of the Lord's body. And just as seven souls are given to Noah, that they may be saved through wood in the waves, so seven Churches filled with the sevenfold Spirit are saved in Christ through the wood of the cross and the water of baptism. By wood indeed the prince of pride subjected us to servitude, by wood the author of humility recalled us to the titles of liberty. By wood the tyrant banished us into perpetual exile, by wood the most mild King decreed us heirs in the kingdom. By wood we were devolved to the keeping of swine and the lack of husks; by wood also we were returned to the paternal embraces, and having received the robe with the ring, we were admitted into the fellowship of the pristine inheritance. Wood made us subject to the wicked exactor, wood paid all at once the tributes of our inexhaustible debt. By wood furthermore we withered from the draft of the perennial fountain, by wood we are more copiously inundated by the dew of heavenly grace.

This inundation indeed of heavenly charisms Moses typically figured, when in Kadesh, which is in the desert of Zin, doubting the divine promise, he produced most abundant waters by striking the rock (Num. XX). Namely, on account of the sins of the people, because he had already done it, he mistrusted that he could do it again, and therefore he by no means introduced that same people into the land of promise, the Lord prohibiting it. Which doubt indeed even the words of Moses himself testify, when he says: "Hear, ye rebels and incredulous, can we elicit water for you out of this rock?" (Ibid.) As if he were saying, we cannot do what is above the powers of humanity, because you do not acquiesce to fulfill what is human; nor can we show a sign from the power of divinity, because you never cease to go against God through the contumacy of rebellion. But that rock, according to the Apostle, was Christ (I Cor. X).

Accedit igitur virga ad silicem, et haurienda populis aqua producitur; adhibetur crux Christo, et omnium corda credentium gratia sancti Spiritus irrigantur. Hic est enim lapis, de quo per Zachariam dicitur: «Super lapidem, inquit, unum septem oculi sunt (Zach. III).» Quod videlicet sacramentum et ipse Moyses per spiritum non ignorasse cognoscitur, si ejusdem subtiliter verba pensantur: «Aperi, inquit, Domine, thesaurum tuum fontem aquae vivae, ut satiati, cesset murmuratio eorum (Num. XX).» Neque enim tam magnificis atque divinis verbis elementum describeret ex cavernis videlicet terrae profluum, ac deinceps in successuum cuniculos egerendum. Nunquid enim dignum fuit, viles aquas Dei appellare thesaurum? Sed Dei thesaurum illum procul dubio nominat, de quo Apostolus dicit: Quia in pectore Jesu sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi (Col. II). Fontem etiam aquae vivae illum perhibet, de quo dicitur: «Qui biberit aquam, quam ego dabo ei, fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam (Joan. IV).» Alioquin qua rationis consequentia diceret: «ut satiati, cesset murmuratio eorum?» cum postmodum idem populus murmurans, dicat: Cur eduxisti nos de Aegypto, ut moreremur in solitudine? (Num. XXI) Deest panis, non sunt aquae, et alia multa quae prodigiosa dementia tumultuatus evomuit. Sed affectus taedio Moyses tam durae, ac seditiosae multitudinis, adventum anxie flagitat Salvatoris. Sicut et tunc petierat, cum dicebat: «Obsecro, Lord, mitte quem missurus es (Exod. IV).» Quod autem petram non credendo percussit, atque ideo ad promissam terram cum populo non pervenit, populum significat Judaeorum, qui profecto Christum Dei virtutem esse non credens, in ligno suspendit, atque ideo in terra viventium intrare non meruit.

Sed quo pacto tentamus ea quae in divinis litteris continentur crucis in unum exempla colligere, cum videamus omnem sacri eloquii seriem huic terribili signo quadam spiritus intentione servire? Hoc est enim propitiatorium, quod duo cherubim versis in se invicem vultibus aspiciunt, quia in eum, qui in cruce suspensus est, duo Testamenta, Novum scilicet et Vetus, concorditer et indifferenter intendunt. Dicit enim Joannes: Quia «ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris (I Joan. II).» Et Petrus de Patribus loquens, ait: «Per gratiam Christi credimus salvari, quemadmodum et illi (Act. XV).»

The rod therefore approaches the flint, and water to be drawn by the people is produced; the cross is applied to Christ, and the hearts of all believers are irrigated by the grace of the Holy Spirit. For this is the stone of which it is said through Zechariah: "Upon one stone," he says, "are seven eyes (Zach. III)." Which sacrament indeed Moses himself is known not to have been ignorant of through the spirit, if his words are subtly weighed: "Open, O Lord," he says, "Thy treasure, the fountain of living water, that being satisfied, their murmuring may cease (Num. XX)." For he would not describe with such magnificent and divine words an element flowing from the caverns of the earth, and thereafter to be cast out into the channels of outcomes. For was it worthy to call vile waters the treasure of God? But he undoubtedly names that treasure of God of which the Apostle says: That in the breast of Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. II). He also shows that fountain of living water of which it is said: "He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, there shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting (Joan. IV)." Otherwise, by what consequence of reason would he say: "that being satisfied, 252 their murmuring may cease?" when afterwards the same people, murmuring, say: Why didst thou bring us out of Egypt, that we might die in the wilderness? (Num. XXI) There is no bread, there are no waters, and many other things which the tumultuous crowd vomited out in prodigious madness. But Moses, affected by weariness of such a hard and seditious multitude, anxiously implores the coming of the Savior. Just as he had also then petitioned, when he said: "I beseech Thee, O Lord, send whom Thou wilt send (Exod. IV)." But that he struck the rock by not believing, and therefore did not arrive at the promised land with the people, signifies the people of the Jews, who indeed not believing Christ to be the power of God, suspended Him on the wood, and therefore did not deserve to enter into the land of the living.

But in what way do we attempt to collect into one the examples of the cross which are contained in the divine letters, when we see the whole series of the sacred eloquence serve this terrible sign with a certain intention of the spirit? For this is the propitiatory, which the two cherubim behold with their faces turned toward each other, because toward Him who was suspended on the cross, the two Testaments, namely the New and the Old, concordantly and indifferenter look. For John says: That "He is the propitiation for our sins (I Joan. II)." And Peter, speaking of the Fathers, says: "We believe that we are saved through the grace of Christ, even as they (Act. XV)."

Crux igitur est concordia Scripturarum, et limes quidam atque confluvium veterum et novorum. Crux coelestia et terrena confoederat; crux homines simul et angelos in antiquae concordiae unanimitate reformat. Crux denique mors est vitiorum, et omnium fons ac vita virtutum. Crux insipientibus semita, currentibus via, pervenientibus requies est secura. Crux est tyronibus donativum, militantibus robur, emeritis municipium. Crux est fortiter agentium, virtus, recuperatio labentium, corona victorum. Crux mortem ingerit momentaneam, et vitam compensat aeternam. Crux nos terrenis exspoliat, ut coelestibus ditet; esurire docet, ut satiet; humilitatem praecipit, ut exaltet; patientiam adhibet, ut coronet. Crux est in Christo viventibus regula, expressa justitiae norma, ac omnibus probis moribus disciplina. Crux diabolum terret, ut effugiat; angelos, ut ad nos ingrediantur, invitat; cogitationum phantasmata reprimit, et Spiritum sanctum castis, ac mundis pectoribus introducit. Crux denique lassos recreat, infirmos roborat, et titubantia desperatae mentis arcana confortat.

Et quid amplius dicam? Quandoquidem per crucem Rex gloriae et nos de catena cruenti praedonis eripuit, et tartarea claustra violentus pervasor irrupit. Omnes insuper electos de vinculis antiquae damnationis absolvit, quos etiam secum per resurrectionis gloriam suscitavit. Quid, inquam, de beatae crucis praeconio referam? cum et ipsa latronem coelo, ut revera sui fructus primitias, intulit, et per hunc paradisi januas, quas deinceps electi omnes scanderent, patefecit? Enimvero cherubim ille, qui rompheam exclusionis acceperat, signaculum in eo crucis aspexit, cui se nequaquam contradictor opposuit; nec ejus crucis certe, quam pertulit, sed illius potius, cujus mysterium credidit, in cujus virtute speravit, dicens: 253 «Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum (Luc. XXIII)» Et o talis damnati mira libertas! o justificantis tui immensa potentia! Judicatus judicat, et addictus crimini, crimen ex potestate relaxat. Ipsam porro crucem, in qua pendet, et quodammodo dictantis censurae solium facit, et inter latronem et latronem, velut jam inter agnos et haedos, aequitatis jura discernit. Dixerat Dominus: «Ego si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum (Joan. XII).»

The cross therefore is the concord of the Scriptures, and a certain boundary and confluence of the old and the new things. The cross joins together heavenly and earthly things; the cross reforms men and angels together in the unanimity of the ancient concord. Finally, the cross is the death of vices, and the fountain and life of all virtues. The cross is the path for the foolish, the way for those running, and secure rest for those arriving. The cross is a donative for recruits, strength for those serving, and citizenship for the emeriti. The cross is the virtue of those acting bravely, the recovery of those falling, the crown of the victors. The cross inflicts momentary death, and compensates with eternal life. The cross despoils us of earthly things, that it may enrich us with heavenly ones; it teaches us to hunger, that it may satisfy; it commands humility, that it may exalt; it applies patience, that it may crown. The cross is the rule for those living in Christ, the express norm of justice, and the discipline for all honest morals. The cross terrifies the devil, so that he may flee; it invites the angels, that they may enter in to us; it represses the phantasms of thoughts, and introduces the Holy Spirit into chaste and clean breasts. Finally, the cross recreates the weary, strengthens the weak, and comforts the wavering secrets of a desperate mind.

And what more shall I say? Since through the cross the King of glory both snatched us from the chain of the bloody predator, and as a violent invader burst through the Tartarean enclosures. Moreover, He absolved all the elect from the bonds of the ancient damnation, whom He also raised with Himself through the glory of the resurrection. What, I say, shall I relate concerning the praise of the blessed cross? when it even brought the thief into heaven, as indeed the firstfruits of its fruit, and through him opened the gates of paradise, which thereafter all the elect should ascend? For indeed that cherub, who had received the sword of exclusion, beheld in him the sign of the cross, to which he by no means opposed himself as a contradicter; not indeed of that cross which he bore, but rather of that whose mystery he believed, in whose power he hoped, saying: 253 "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom (Luc. XXIII)." And oh, such wondrous liberty of one condemned! oh, immense power of Him who justifies thee! Being judged, He judges, and being assigned to a crime, He releases the crime by His power. Furthermore, the cross itself on which He hangs, He makes as it were the throne of His dictating censure, and between thief and thief, as if already between lambs and goats, He discerns the laws of equity. The Lord had said: "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself (Joan. XII)."

Eorum itaque, qui trahendi erant, latro praevius fuit, cui mox dicit: «Hodie mecum eris in paradiso (Luc. XXIII).» Quem ergo de perpetuae mortis laqueo primum traxit, hunc ad vitam primitus introduxit. Per crucem igitur, imo per eum, qui suspendi in cruce dignatus est, omnia sunt instaurata, omnia benedicta, omnia coelestis gratiae rore perfusa. Praesertim humana mens, quae sterilis erat, amara, atque insipida, ad Salvatoris adventum fertilis, et dulcis effecta, divinae insuper est sapientiae sale condita. Quod nimirum satis expresse figuravit illud Elisei prophetae miraculum. Nam cum viri Jericho sibi conquererentur, quod aquae essent pessimae et terra sterilis: «Afferte, inquit, mihi vas novum, et mittite in illud sal (IV Reg. II).» Deinde aquarum fonti sal illud immersit, sicque aquas ab omni morte et sterilitate sanavit. Quod nimirum, ut totum brevi sermone concludam, nihil aliud insinuat, nisi quod Verbum caro fieret, et habitaret in nobis. Quid enim aquae, nisi mundani sunt populi? Quid vas novum, nisi corpus Dominicum, nulla scilicet praevaricationis antiquae labe nigratum, nulla veteris hominis abusione detritum? Quid porro sal, nisi coelestis sapientia?

Sapientia igitur Patris in corpus descendit humanum, et sic ad fertilitatem et vitalis intelligentiae dulcedinem omnium convertit fidelium mentes. Quae nimirum dulcedo tandiu latuit, usque dum sal mergeretur in aquam, id est, usque dum ille penderet in cruce, qui dixit: «Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam introierunt aquae usque ad animam meam (Psal. LXVIII).» Ex tunc enim homo didicit quid deberet appetere, quid vitare.

Interea, fratres mei, non vos pigeat de sacramento Dominicae passionis, vel incarnationis aliquid subtile cognoscere, et breviter dictum arctius memoriae commendare. Sex nempe diebus omnipotens Deus omnia sua opera condidit, et sexto die hominem ad suam imaginem, similitudinemque formavit (Gen. I, II). Sexta quoque aetate saeculi Filius Dei factus est Filius hominis, ut nos reformaret ad imaginem Dei. Sexta insuper feria ipse Dominus passus est, ut ea nimirum die homo fieret ejus morte redemptus, quo dudum fuerat ipsius operatione plasmatus. Eodem porro die de costa viri formata est Eva, quo de latere Christi per aquam et sanguinem exivit Ecclesia.

Videamus itaque quomodo per eumdem senarium numerum Dominici corporis templum divinae providentiae sit arte constructum. Templum sane illud Hierusalem per quadraginta et sex annorum curricula fuerat fabricatum; unde et a Judaeis Domino dicitur: «Quadraginta et 254 sex annis aedificatum est templum hoc, et tu in triduo reaedificas illud?» (Joan. VIII.) Qui videlicet numerus si per senarium ducitur, omne tempus, quo Dominus in matris utero mansit, impletur. Nam quadragies sexies seni, ducenti septuaginta sex dies fiunt.

Of those, therefore, who were to be drawn, the thief was the forerunner, to whom He soon says: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise (Luc. XXIII)." Him therefore whom He first drew from the snare of perpetual death, he first introduced to life. Through the cross therefore, or rather through Him who deigned to be suspended on the cross, all things are restored, all things blessed, all things suffused with the dew of heavenly grace. Especially the human mind, which was sterile, bitter, and insipid, at the coming of the Savior was made fertile and sweet, and was moreover seasoned with the salt of divine wisdom. Which thing indeed that miracle of Elisha the prophet figured quite expressly. For when the men of Jericho complained to him that the waters were very bad and the land sterile: "Bring me," he said, "a new vessel, and put salt into it (IV Reg. II)." Then he immersed that salt into the fountain of the waters, and so healed the waters from all death and sterility. Which thing indeed, that I may conclude the whole in a brief discourse, suggests nothing else than that the Word should become flesh and dwell among us. For what are the waters, but the worldly peoples? What is the new vessel, but the Lord's body, blackened by no stain of the ancient prevarication, worn by no misuse of the old man? What furthermore is the salt, but heavenly wisdom?

The wisdom of the Father therefore descended into a human body, and thus converted the minds of all the faithful to fertility and the sweetness of vital intelligence. Which sweetness indeed lay hidden so long, until the salt was merged into the water, that is, until He hung on the cross, who said: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul (Psal. LXVIII)." For from then on man learned what he ought to seek, what to avoid.

Meanwhile, my brothers, let it not weary you to know something subtle concerning the sacrament of the Lord's passion or incarnation, and to commend what is briefly said more closely to memory. In six days indeed Almighty God founded all His works, and on the sixth day He formed man according to His image and likeness (Gen. I, II). In the sixth age of the world also the Son of God was made the Son of man, that He might reform us to the image of God. On the sixth day furthermore the Lord Himself suffered, so that on that very day man might be made redeemed by His death, on which he had long ago been fashioned by His operation. On the same day also from the rib of the man was Eva formed, on which from the side of Christ through water and blood went forth the Church.

Let us see, therefore, how by the same sixfold number the temple of the Lord's body was constructed by the art of divine providence. That temple of Jerusalem, indeed, had been fabricated through the courses of forty-six years; whence also it is said to the Lord by the Jews: "Forty and 254 six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" (Joan. VIII.) Which number indeed, if it be multiplied by six, the whole time in which the Lord remained in His mother's womb is fulfilled. For forty-six times six becomes two hundred and seventy-six days.

Qui dierum numerus complet novem menses, et sex dies, qui videlicet tanquam decem menses parientibus feminis imputantur. Non quia omnes mulieres ad sextum diem post nonum mensem pariturae perveniant, sed quia tot diebus, ad partum perducta ipsa perfectio Dominici corporis comperitur, sicut a majoribus traditur, et firma auctoritate Ecclesiae custoditur. Octavo namque Kalendas Aprilis conceptus creditur, quo et passus. Eo videlicet die sepultus est in monumento novo, ubi nec ante, nec post quisquam est positus mortuorum, quo conceptus est in utero Virginis, ubi constat nullum seminatum fuisse mortalium. Natus autem traditur octavo Kalendas Januarias.

Ab ipso ergo conceptionis die usque ad diem Nativitatis ducenti septuaginta sex reperiuntur dies, qui senarium numerum quadragies sexies continent. Quo igitur numero lapideum illud templum antiquitus est aedificatum, eodem quoque numero et templum Dominici corporis per senarium est perfectum. Hac tantummodo discretione servata, quod in constructione templi annorum numerus ponitur, in aedificatione vero corporis Domini dierum calculus supputatur.

Annorum igitur numerus templi illius antiqui si per senarium ducitur, omnes dies, quibus mansit Dominus in virgineo ventre completur. Conjuncto itaque numero, quo Deus opera sua fecit, cum illo quo templum est conditum, Domini corpus efficitur, ut nobis detur intelligi, quia per illud divinitatis templum, quod in Virginis utero constructum est, universa sunt Dei opera restaurata. Sicut dicit Apostolus: «Quia proposuit Deus in dispensatione plenitudinis temporum instaurare omnia in Christo, quae in coelis, et in terris sunt in ipso (Ephes. I).» Sed hoc corporis templum, quod per senarium numerum fieri divina providentia voluit, tribus horis Judaica impietate resolutum, triduo reaedificavit, sicut ipse dicit: «Solvite templum hoc, et post triduum reaedificabo illud. Hoc autem, inquit evangelista, dicebat de templo corporis sui (Joan. II).» Nec mirum, si quod per senarium factum est, per ternarium sit solutum, per ternarium quoque rursus aedificatum, cum et ipse senarius, sicut ex ternario crescit, ita nihilominus et in ternarium resolvatur. Unus enim, et duo, et tres, sex fiunt: et reciproce dimidium senarii tres sunt, tertia pars duo, sexta unum. Qui videlicet numerus idcirco perfectus dicitur, quia sic ex suis partibus constat. Uno plane die integro, et duabus noctibus in sepulcro Dominus jacuit; quia una sui corporis morte a duabus nos, animae videlicet et corporis mortibus, liberavit. Et recte per diem mors Domini designatur, qua nos ad lucem reducimur. Nostra autem mors utraque per noctem, quae nimirum nobis ex peccato debetur. Totum autem hoc triduum in humanae salutis expenditur evidentissime sacramentum.

Which number of days completes nine months and six days, which indeed are imputed as ten months to women bringing forth. Not because all women arrive at the sixth day after the ninth month to bring forth, but because in so many days the very perfection of the Lord's body is found to have been brought to birth, as is handed down from the ancestors, and is guarded by the firm authority of the Church. For He is believed to have been conceived on the eighth of the Kalends of April, on which day He also suffered. On that day indeed He was buried in a new monument, where neither before nor after was any of the dead placed, on which He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin, where it is certain that no seed of mortals was sown. But He is handed down as born on the eighth of the Kalends of January.

From the very day of conception, therefore, up to the day of Nativity, two hundred and seventy-six days are found, which contain the sixfold number forty-six times. By which number therefore that stone temple was built of old, by that same number also the temple of the Lord's body was perfected by the six. This distinction only being observed, that in the construction of the temple the number of years is placed, but in the building of the Lord's body the calculus of days is computed.

If the number of years, therefore, of that ancient temple be multiplied by six, all the days in which the Lord remained in the virginal womb are completed. The number, therefore, by which God made His works being joined with that by which the temple was built, the Lord's body is effected, so that it may be given us to understand that through that temple of divinity, which was constructed in the Virgin's womb, all the works of God are restored. As the Apostle says: "Because God purposed in the dispensation of the fullness of times to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven and on earth in Him (Ephes. I)." But this temple of the body, which divine providence willed to be made by the sixfold number, being dissolved in three hours by Judaic impiety, He rebuilt in three days, as He Himself says: "Destroy this temple, and after three days I will rebuild it. But this, says the evangelist, he spoke of the temple of his body (Joan. II)." Nor is it a wonder if what was made by the six was dissolved by the three, and also built again by the three, since the six itself, as it grows from the three, so nonetheless it is resolved into the three. For one, and two, and three, make six: and conversely half of six is three, the third part two, the sixth part one. Which number indeed is called perfect for this reason, because it so consists of its parts. One whole day, plainly, and two nights the Lord lay in the sepulcher; because by one death of His body He liberated us from two deaths, namely of the soul and of the body. And rightly the death of the Lord is designated by the day, by which we are led back to the light. But our death, both of them, by the night, which indeed is owed to us from sin. But this whole three-day period is expended most evidently in the sacrament of human salvation.

Nam sexta feria 255 passus, Sabbato in sepulcro quievit, die Dominico resurrexit. Tota autem haec vita nobis sexta feria est; quia videlicet crucem post Dominum bajulare jubemur. A die autem exitus nostri usque ad judicium quasi Sabbatum ducitur, quia interim beata requie sanctae animae perfruuntur. In resurrectione autem corporum paschalis nobis oritur dies, qui nullo fine concluditur, sed perpetuae jucunditate laetitiae feriatur.

Ut ergo ad hanc Dominicam per Sabbatum valeamus congruenter attingere, necesse est, nos nunc crucem post Jesum bajulantes, sextam jugiter feriam celebrare. Alioquin si praepostero ordine nunc sub carnis lege viventes quasi Dominicam ducimus, procul dubio postmodum non gaudium gaudio, sed tribulatione mutamus. Hinc est enim quod Dominus sicut quadraginta diebus in eremo vixit, totidemque post resurrectionem cum discipulis fuit; ita etiam ab ipso suae mortis articulo, usque ad diluculum resurrectionis quadraginta horas habuit. Sicut igitur illorum dierum numero, ita nihilominus et horarum, quas diximus, totius vitae nostrae tempus exprimitur, ut sicut ille quadragenario horarum numero mortuus mansit, ita et nos illi commortui quandiu hic vivimus, in carnis semper mortificatione vivamus.

Ad superandum ergo diabolum, crucis insigne nobis noster imperator exhibuit; et ne nobis grave videretur, prius ipse gestavit. Hoc denique salutis nostrae signaculum non solum sacris, sive sacrandis rebus imprimimus, sed etiam alimentis, sive quibuslibet etiam rebus domesticis adhibemus; ut evidenter appareat, quod et homo, et quaeque humano sunt usui necessaria, hujus virtute signi a jure sunt daemonum absoluta. Nam et in ipso Redemptoris nostri patibulo, tanto non humanae, sed divinae artis beata crux librata est magisterio; ut caput Domini ad orientem, pedes ad occidentem, dextera ad aquilonem, sinistra tenderet ad meridiem; quatenus mundi principem ab omnibus undique plagis excluderet, dum quadrifidi orbis climata per quadratam crucis speciem occuparet. Unde et ipse dicit: «Nunc judicium est mundi, nunc princeps hujus mundi ejicietur foras (Joan. XII).» Sic sic nempe decuit omnium pervasorem ab omnibus simul ejici, talis pro totius mundi salute hostia debuit immolari, quae et per sacramentum cuncta respiceret, et ex virtute omnia liberaret. Tunc plane erat crux humiliata cum Domino, ecce veniet exaltata cum Domino.

For on the sixth day 255 He suffered, on the Sabbath He rested in the sepulcher, on the Lord's day He rose again. But this whole life is the sixth day to us; because indeed we are commanded to carry the cross after the Lord. But from the day of our departure up to the judgment it is led as a sort of Sabbath, because in the meantime the holy souls enjoy blessed rest. But in the resurrection of bodies the paschal day arises for us, which is concluded by no end, but is celebrated with the delight of perpetual joy.

That we may be able, therefore, to reach this Lord's day congruously through the Sabbath, it is necessary that we, now carrying the cross after Jesus, should continually celebrate the sixth day. Otherwise, if in a reverse order, living now under the law of the flesh, we lead as it were a Lord's day, without a doubt we shall afterwards exchange not joy for joy, but for tribulation. For hence it is that the Lord, just as He lived forty days in the desert, and was with the disciples for the same number after the resurrection; so also from the very moment of His death up to the dawn of the resurrection, He had forty hours. As therefore by the number of those days, so nonetheless also by the number of hours which we have mentioned, the time of our whole life is expressed, so that as He remained dead for the forty-fold number of hours, so also we, dying with Him as long as we live here, may live always in the mortification of the flesh.

To overcome the devil, therefore, our Emperor exhibited to us the ensign of the cross; and lest it should seem heavy to us, He Himself bore it first. Finally, this seal of our salvation we imprint not only on sacred things, or things to be consecrated, but we apply it also to foods, or to any domestic things whatever; so that it may evidently appear that both man, and whatever things are necessary for human use, are by the power of this sign absolved from the right of demons. For also on the very gibbet of our Redeemer, the blessed cross was balanced with such great mastery not of human but of divine art; that the head of the Lord tended toward the east, His feet toward the west, His right hand toward the north, and His left toward the south; so that it might exclude the prince of the world from all regions on every side, while it occupied the climates of the fourfold world through the squared form of the cross. Whence also He Himself says: "Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out (John XII)." Thus, thus indeed it was fitting for the invader of all to be cast out by all at once; such a victim ought to have been immolated for the salvation of the whole world, which both through the sacrament might regard all things, and from its power might liberate all. Then plainly was the cross humbled with the Lord; behold, it shall come exalted with the Lord.

Nolo vos lateat, fratres mei, quia in tremendi examinis die beata crux ulnis advehitur angelorum, et ante omnium ponitur ora mortalium. Non auro jam, vel gemmis ornata, sed radiantior erit sole, vel stellis ex virtute divina. Proposita certe tunc erit in eorum gloriam, qui eam diligentes ex charitate complexi sunt, et e diverso in eorum opprobrium, qui eam post Redemptorem suum portare noluerunt. Nam, ut taceamus interim de his, qui eum pupugerunt, et quia plangent se super se omnes tribus terrae, omnis in quo tunc hujus salutiferi signi figura non cernitur, velut extraneus et ignotus inter reprobos, justitia 256 dictante, repellitur: qui autem hujus divini tituli reperiuntur impressione signati, quia Redemptoris sui facti sunt imitatores in poena, tunc eidem Judici participes efficientur in gloria.

Tunc itaque fiet quod Apostolus ait: «Quia cum tradiderit regnum Deo Patri, cum evacuaverit omnem principatum, et omnem potestatem, et virtutem, saevissima destruetur mors (I Cor. XV).» Regnum autem Patri tradere profecto nihil est aliud, quam credentes in se ad divinae contemplationis arcana perducere. Tunc completur illa Zachariae prophetae visio (Zach. III), qua videlicet contemplatus est Jesum, sacerdotem magnum in sordido habitu; devictoque atque increpato diabolo, qui ad ejus accusationem stabat, sordida mox veste Jesus exuitur, et honoris ac gloriae indumento vestitur. Corpus nempe Jesu Ecclesia dicitur, quae videlicet nunc in hujus peregrinationis aerumna quasi sordida tribulationum ac pressurarum veste foedatur. Sed tunc, damnato et reprobato diabolo, sancta Ecclesia foedis exuta, stola beatae immortalitatis induitur, et de peregrinationis luctu ad patriam quietis aeternae transfertur. Sicut in dedicationis psalmo perspicue canitur: «Convertisti, inquit, planctum meum in gaudium mihi; conscidisti saccum meum, et praecinxisti me laetitia (Psal. XXIX).» De reprobis quoque tunc illud impletur, quod per Ezechielem dicitur: «Transite per civitatem, et percutite; non parcat oculus vester, ne misereamini; senem et adolescentem, et virginem, parvulos et mulieres interficite usque ad internecionem; omnem autem, super quem videritis Thau, ne occidatis (Ezech. IX).» Expleto itaque judicio, cum ipsa cruce omnes justi simul provehuntur ad regnum, cujus olim sive in pace, sive in persecutione pertulere supplicium. In illa igitur immortalitatis gloria crucem splendidissimam semper aspiciunt, signumque victoriae, quo redempti sunt mundumque vicerunt, habere se prae oculis ineffabiliter gratulantur. Propterea et Salvatoris sui jugiter laudes alternant, eique semper gratias referentes in illa perpetuae jucunditatis amoenitate tripudiant.

I do not wish it to be hidden from you, my brothers, that on the day of the tremendous examination the blessed cross is brought on the arms of angels, and is placed before the faces of all mortals. Not adorned now with gold or gems, but it will be more radiant than the sun or stars from divine power. It will certainly then be set forth for the glory of those who, loving it, have embraced it out of charity, and on the other hand for the reproach of those who were unwilling to carry it after their Redeemer. For, to be silent for the time about those who pierced Him, and because all the tribes of the earth shall wail over themselves, everyone in whom the figure of this salutary sign is not then seen, as a stranger and unknown among the reprobate, justice dictating, is repelled: but those who are found marked with the impression of this divine title, because they have become imitators of their Redeemer in punishment, shall then be made participants with the same Judge in glory.

Then therefore shall come to pass what the Apostle says: "Because when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God the Father, when he shall have brought to nought all principality, and all authority, and power, the most cruel death shall be destroyed (I Cor. XV)." Now, to deliver up the kingdom to the Father is surely nothing else than to lead those believing in Him to the secrets of divine contemplation. Then is fulfilled that vision of the prophet Zechariah (Zach. III), in which indeed he contemplated Jesus, the high priest in filthy garments; and the devil, who stood for his accusation, having been conquered and rebuked, Jesus is soon stripped of the filthy garment, and is clothed with the raiment of honor and glory. For the body of Jesus is called the Church, which indeed is now defiled in the hardship of this pilgrimage as if by a filthy garment of tribulations and pressures. But then, the devil having been condemned and reprobated, the holy Church, stripped of foul things, is clothed with the robe of blessed immortality, and is transferred from the mourning of pilgrimage to the fatherland of eternal rest. As is clearly sung in the psalm of dedication: "Thou hast turned," it says, "my mourning into joy for me; thou hast cut off my sackcloth, and hast girded me with gladness (Psal. XXIX)." Concerning the reprobate also, that which is said through Ezekiel is then fulfilled: "Pass through the city, and strike; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay old and young, and maiden, and little children and women even to utter destruction; but kill not any man upon whom ye see the Tau (Ezek. IX)." The judgment having been completed, therefore, with the cross itself all the just are advanced together to the kingdom, whose punishment they once bore whether in peace or in persecution. In that glory of immortality, therefore, they always behold the most splendid cross, and they ineffably rejoice to have before their eyes the sign of victory, by which they were redeemed and overcame the world. Therefore also they continually alternate the praises of their Savior, and always returning thanks to Him, they exult in that pleasantness of perpetual delight.

Itaque et nos in laudem beatae crucis libet exclamare: O beata crux, quae illum meruisti nova libratione suspendere, quem coelum et terra nequeunt sustinere! O crux purior vitro, rutilantior auro, quae tanquam vernantibus gemmis et margaritis, membris ornata es Salvatoris! O crux luna micantior, sole splendidior, quae prae divini magnitudine luminis, stellarum jubar, et omnia coeli astra praecedis! Tu sola inter omnia ligna silvarum electa es ad humanae redemptionis officium. Tu pondus illud sustinere meruisti, cujus virtute coelum volvitur, terra suspenditur, et universa mundi machina nunquam casura libratur. Te tartara metuunt, angeli venerantur, et omnis rerum creatura miratur.

O vere nobilis arbor, quae de terreno quidem cespite orta procedis, sed super astra coeli felices ramos expandis! Olim quidem fructus tuus gehennae erat obnoxius, tunc cedros germinas paradiso; et vivi ex te lapides prodeunt, quibus supernae Hierusalem aedificia construuntur. O beata crux, quia cum sol radios absconderet, ne sacrilegium videret; cum terra tremeret, cum elementa nutantia formidine palpitarent; tu morienti Domino individua meruisti comes assistere, brachia devota substernere, et tuo insuper miti gremio confovere! O beata crux, quae Redemptoris mundi es affixione conspicua, et pretioso immaculati Agni rubes sanguine purpurata! Tu salus mundi perditi, tu lux in tenebris constituti, tu medicina languentium, tu convalescentium virtus, tu periclitantibus portus, tu evadentibus de fauce mortis aufugium. Per te peregrini transeunt in domesticos, et eos, qui dudum fuerant hospites, apostolorum reddis esse concives. In te mors cruenta dum occidit occiditur, auctor et ipse mortis exstinguitur, vita hominibus perdita reparatur. Tu armasti manum Jahel clavo, quo videlicet Sisaram per tempus capitis utrumque transfoderet (Judic. IV), et in typo Ecclesiae diabolum trucidaret. Tu fundam David implesti lapide, quo Philisthaeum Goliath signatus in fronte percutiat (I Reg. XVII), ubi videlicet profanus tui signaculum non habebat. O beata crux, te patriarcharum fides, te vaticinia prophetarum, te judex apostolorum senatus, te martyrum victor exercitus, omniumque sanctorum agmina venerantur, praedicant et honorant! Odor fragrantiae tuae omnia vincit aromata, nectar tuum cunctas pigmentorum species et universa mella praecedit.

And so it pleases us also to exclaim in praise of the blessed cross: O blessed cross, which hast merited to suspend in a new balance Him whom heaven and earth cannot sustain! O cross purer than glass, more ruddy than gold, which as if with budding gems and pearls, art adorned with the members of the Savior! O cross brighter than the moon, more splendid than the sun, which before the magnitude of divine light, precedest the radiance of the stars and all the constellations of heaven! Thou alone among all the trees of the forests wast chosen for the office of human redemption. Thou hast merited to sustain that weight, by whose power the heaven is rolled, the earth is suspended, and the whole machine of the world is balanced, never to fall. Thee the infernal regions fear, the angels venerate, and every creature of things admires.

O truly noble tree, which indeed proceedest having risen from the earthly turf, but expandest thy happy branches above the stars of heaven! Once indeed thy fruit was subject to Gehenna, then thou germinatest cedars for paradise; and living stones come forth from thee, by which the buildings of the supernal Jerusalem are constructed. O blessed cross, because when the sun hid its rays, lest it should see the sacrilege; when the earth trembled, when the tottering elements throbbed with dread; thou didst merit to stand as an inseparable companion to the dying Lord, to spread thy devoted arms beneath Him, and moreover to cherish Him in thy mild bosom! O blessed cross, which art conspicuous by the fastening of the Redeemer of the world, and art empurpled, reddening with the precious blood of the immaculate Lamb! Thou art the salvation of the lost world, thou the light of those set in darkness, thou the medicine of the sick, thou the strength of the convalescing, thou the harbor for those in danger, thou the refuge for those escaping from the jaw of death. Through thee strangers pass into members of the household, and those who had long been guests, thou renderest to be fellow-citizens of the apostles. In thee, while bloody death kills, it is killed, the author of death himself is extinguished, and the lost life is repaired for men. Thou didst arm the hand of Jael with a nail, with which indeed she might pierce Sisera through both temples of his head (Judic. IV), and in a type of the Church might slay the devil. Thou didst fill the sling of David with a stone, with which he might strike Goliath the Philistine, marked on his forehead, where indeed the profane man did not have thy seal (I Reg. XVII). O blessed cross, the faith of the patriarchs, the prophecies of the prophets, the judging senate of the apostles, the victorious army of the martyrs, and the ranks of all the saints venerate, preach, and honor thee! The odor of thy fragrance overcomes all spices, thy nectar precedes all species of pigments and all honeys.

O beata crux, titulus gloriae, insigne victoriae, signaculum redemptionis aeternae! Tibi debent terrena, quod vivunt; coelestia insuper quod ad suae integritatis plenitudinem redeunt. Per te siquidem ad patriam exsul homo revertitur, et angelorum numerus, qui diminutus fuerat, instauratur. Tu facis, ut daemonum servi, Dei fiant per adoptionem filii, et olim idolorum cultores, nunc Christi sint cohaeredes. O crux gloriosa, o crux admiranda, cui totius orbis imperia procidunt, omnis sceptra principatus obediunt, cunctorumque regnorum jura subduntur!

Sed cur nos obrizo, sive carbunculo adhibere extrinsecus ornamenta contendimus, quibus utique quidquid apponitur, suppar et decolorius invenitur? Non enim, o beata crux! quaelibet humana lingua tua praevalet aequare praeconia, in qua nimirum aeterna vita pependit, quam salus mundi proprio cruore perfudit, et summi Patris Verbum singulari sui corporis contubernio decoravit. Solus igitur tua laus est, qui pependit in te. Tu enim decepisti nova arte diabolum, et reddidisti de victore captivum. Tu siquidem consueveras electas illi escas offerre, atque ad ejus insatiabile guttur, quaeque tibi fierent obnoxia, destinare. Novissime autem talem hianti, ac devorare cupienti cibum, o beata crux, obtulisti, qui et fauces ejus occultae virtutis hamo transfigeret, et veternosae malitiae ventrem his qui jam absorpti fuerant, vacuaret. O crux gloriosa, quae omnia benedicis! O crux benedicta, quae ab omnibus benediceris! Benedictio enim tua cuncta sanctificat, omniumque benedictio rerum in te copiosa redundat. O crux veneranda, o crux adoranda, forma mirabilis, figura terribilis! Sicut enim fluit cera a facie ignis, sic pereunt peccatores a facie tua; nec reperiunt phantasmata remorandi, vel cedendi locum, ubi tuum conspexere signaculum. O crux amabilis et dilecta, suavis nimirum et decora; amoris tui flamma omne cor sanum sapiens aestuat, tuae charitatis igne postquam mens fidelis accenditur, ad amorem mox coelestium inenarrabiliter inflammatur. Quis igitur, o beata crux! dignis te laudibus efferat, in qua videlicet auctor vitae moriens mortem perdidit, ipsamque deglutiens mortuos nos ad immortalitatis suae gloriam suscitavit? Salva, quaeso, benedic et protege, o figura benedicta, populum supplicem, in tuis hodie laudibus communiter exsultantem; ut qui te nostrae redemptionis fieri voluit instrumentum, per te quoque ad suae gloriae nos dignetur transferre consortium: et quos per te de servitutis eripuit vinculo, per te etiam, juxta promissionem sanctam, constituat haeredes in regno. Salus illi et gratiarum actio, laus, honor, virtus et imperium, cum Patre et Spiritu sancto per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

O blessed cross, title of glory, ensign of victory, seal of eternal redemption! To thee earthly things owe that they live; and moreover heavenly things that they return to the fullness of their integrity. For through thee the exiled man returns to his fatherland, and the number of angels, which had been diminished, is restored. Thou makest it so that the servants of demons become sons of God through adoption, and those who were once worshippers of idols are now co-heirs of Christ. O glorious cross, O admirable cross, to which the empires of the whole world fall down, to which all the scepters of principality obey, and to which the laws of all kingdoms are subjected!

But why do we strive to apply outward ornaments of pure gold or carbuncle, to which certainly whatever is added is found to be inferior and paler? For indeed, O blessed cross, no human tongue prevails to equal thy praises, on which indeed eternal life hung, which the salvation of the world drenched with its own blood, and which the Word of the most high Father decorated with the singular companionship of His body. He alone, therefore, is thy praise, who hung on thee. For thou didst deceive the devil with a new art, and didst render him a captive from a victor. For thou wast accustomed to offer him chosen baits, and to destine for his insatiable throat whatever things became subject to thee. But most recently, O blessed cross, thou didst offer such food to the one gaping and desiring to devour, as might both transfix his jaws with the hook of hidden power, and empty the belly of ancient malice of those who had already been swallowed up. O glorious cross, which blessest all things! O blessed cross, which art blessed by all! For thy blessing sanctifies all things, and the blessing of all things redounds copiously in thee. O venerable cross, O adorable cross, admirable form, terrible figure! For as wax melts before the face of fire, so do sinners perish before thy face; nor do phantasms find a place of tarrying or yielding, where they have seen thy seal. O amiable and beloved cross, sweet indeed and decorous; with the flame of thy love every sound and wise heart seethes, and after the faithful mind is kindled by the fire of thy charity, it is soon ineffably inflamed to the love of heavenly things. Who therefore, O blessed cross, could extol thee with worthy praises, on which indeed the Author of life, dying, destroyed death, and swallowing it up, raised us dead ones to the glory of His immortality? Save, I beseech thee, bless and protect, O blessed figure, the suppliant people exulting today together in thy praises; that He who willed thee to become the instrument of our redemption, may also deign to transfer us through thee to the fellowship of His glory: and those whom He snatched through thee from the bond of servitude, may He also, according to the holy promise, establish as heirs in the kingdom through thee. Salvation to Him and thanksgiving, praise, honor, power, and empire, with the Father and the Holy Spirit through all ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermo XLIX.

*I. DE SANCTO MATTHAEO APOSTOLO ET EVANGELISTA. (XXI SEPT.)*

Solemnitatis hodiernae laetitia, dilectissimi, omnem desperationis aculeum de nostris mentibus amputat, ad praesumendum de divina misericordia titubantia corda confirmat, atque ut adeamus cum fiducia thronum gratiae, sicut et Apostolus hortatur, invitat (Hebr. IV). Quis enim audiens publicanum a Domino non modo in clientelam discipulatus electum, sed et senatus insuper apostolici conscendisse fastigium, non protinus animetur ad consequendam suorum veniam peccatorum? De telonio quippe cumulandae pecuniae in cathedram transfertur Ecclesiae, et qui prius exigendi vectigalis fungebatur officio, constitutus est fidei, divitiarumque coelestium ministrare thesauros (Luc. V; Marc. II): quippe tunc turpis lucri quaestu, satagebat implere marsupium, nunc per mundi latitudinem spargit coelesti eloquii sacramentum.

Inter omnes plane sanctos, qui coelesti gloriae de triumphato mundo victoryae titulos intulerunt, beatus Matthaeus mihi videtur insignis, atque conspicuus, et quemdam inter eos dignitatis obtinere primatum; atque, ut audenter dicam, nemo post Christum est cui magis debeat sancta universalis Ecclesia. Nam quod mundus vivit, haec est causa, quia lux nobis evangelica coruscavit. Constat autem quia primus omnium Matthaeus Hebraico stylo Evangelium scripsit; sicque his qui erant ex circumcisione fidelibus neotericae fidei quoddam quasi speculum procuravit. Quia igitur ad sanctum Evangelium describendum primus iste prorupit, scribendi caeteris evangelistis viam praecessor aperuit, et tanquam dux vexillum sequentibus praetulit, suoque eos exemplo, ut scriberent, incitavit. Illi ergo debemus Evangelium, quem evangelicae narrationis constat intulisse principium; et quem caeteris novimus primum, non ambigimus inter eos cujusdam privilegii tenere primatum. Unusquisque nimirum trium evangelistarum beati Matthaei librum, antequam suum inciperet, novit; et sicut sibi divinitus inspiratum est, non superfluam cooperationem sui laboris adjunxit. Eorum quippe fuerat praeparare fideliter animos ad scribendum; Dei autem erat in id, quod vellet, dirigere stylum.

Plane, sicut Moyses et prophetis non absurde praeponitur, et omnibus quicunque scripserunt aliquid in Veteri Testamento; ita beatus evangelista Matthaeus omnes jure praecellit, qui scripsisse reperiuntur in Novo. Sicut enim ille nascentis mundi texit originem, sic iste, tanquam spiritalis cujusdam mundi, orientem describit Ecclesiae novitatem. Unde, Spiritu sancto calamum temperante, provisum est ut uterque non diversum, sed unum idemque suis libris praemitteret initium, dicens: «Liber generationis (Matth. I).» Sed illa generatio filios protulit irae, ista filios parturit gratiae.

## Sermon XLIX.

*I. ON SAINT MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST. (SEPTEMBER 21)*

The joy of today's solemnity, most beloved, cuts away every sting of despair from our minds, confirms wavering hearts to presume upon divine mercy, and invites us to approach with confidence the throne of grace, even as the Apostle exhorts (Hebr. IV). For who, hearing that a publican was not only chosen by the Lord into the company of discipleship, but moreover ascended to the height of the apostolic senate, would not be immediately encouraged to obtain the pardon of his sins? For from the tax office of accumulating money he is transferred to the chair of the Church, and he who before performed the office of exacting tribute, was appointed to minister the treasures of faith and of heavenly riches (Luke V; Mark II): for then he was busy in filling his purse with the gain of base lucre, now through the breadth of the world he scatters the sacrament of heavenly eloquence.

Among all the saints, plainly, who have brought titles of victory over the triumphed world to heavenly glory, blessed Matthew seems to me distinguished and conspicuous, and to obtain a certain primacy of dignity among them; and, that I may say it boldly, there is no one after Christ to whom the holy universal Church owes more. For the reason that the world lives is this: because the evangelical light has flashed upon us. It is certain that Matthew was the first of all to write the Gospel in the Hebrew style; and thus he provided a certain mirror, as it were, of the new faith for those faithful who were of the circumcision. Since therefore he was the first to burst forth to describe the holy Gospel, as a predecessor he opened the way of writing to the other evangelists, and as a leader he held out the banner to those following, and by his example incited them to write. To him, therefore, we owe the Gospel, whom it is certain introduced the beginning of the evangelical narrative; and whom we know as first among the others, we do not doubt to hold a primacy of a certain privilege among them. Each of the three evangelists, of course, knew the book of blessed Matthew before he began his own; and as it was divinely inspired in them, he added a not superfluous cooperation of his labor. For it had been theirs to prepare their minds faithfully for writing; but it was God's part to direct the pen into that which He willed.

Plainly, just as Moses is not absurdly preferred even to the prophets, and to all whoever wrote anything in the Old Testament; so the blessed evangelist Matthew by right excels all who are found to have written in the New. For just as that one wove the origin of the nascent world, so this one describes the rising novelty of the Church, as if of a certain spiritual world. Whence, the Holy Spirit tempering the pen, it was provided that each should prefix not a different but one and the same beginning to his books, saying: "The book of the generation (Matth. I)." But that generation brought forth sons of wrath, this one brings forth sons of grace.

Illa generatio sortita est paradisum terrae, fertilium quidem arborum et herbarum decore vernantem; sed ista coelestem meruit paradisum, incomparabilium deliciarum copiis affluentem. Ex illo tamen paradiso primus homo per lignum posteritatem sui generis expulit, secundus homo per crucem coelestibus nos pascuis introduxit. Ille dum narrat Deum dixisse, Fiat lux (Gen. I), ostendit conditam lucem; iste Christum de Virgine natum perhibens, exortum lucis insinuat Conditorem. Moyses itaque veterem Adam, atque terrenum, veterem mundum, vetus digerit Testamentum: Matthaeus autem pro veteribus nova, pro terrenis sive carnalibus spiritualia, pro temporalibus introducit aeterna. Pro Adam siquidem Christum, pro lege veteri Evangelium, pro mundo vel terra herbis arboribusque florente sanctam describit Ecclesiam, diversa spiritualium fructuum victualia germinantem. «Primus enim homo, sicut Apostolus ait, de terra terrenus, secundus de coelo coelestis (I Cor. XV);» qualis terrenus, tales et terreni; qualis coelestis, tales et coelestes. Factus est primus Adam in animam viventem, novissimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem. Sed non prius quod spirituale est, sed quod animale, deinde quod spirituale.

Moyses ergo describit quomodo visibilia quaeque sint originaliter condita; Matthaeus autem docet non modo terrena, sed et coelestia per Mediatoris Dei et hominum gratiam noviter instaurata; sicut idem dicit Apostolus: «Ut notum faceret nobis sacramentum voluntatis suae, secundum beneplacitum ejus, quod proposuit in eo, in dispensatione plenitudinis temporum, instaurare omnia in Christo, quae in coelis, et quae in terris sunt in ipso (Ephes. I).»

Hanc mundi renovationem David praevidebat, cum aliquando coram Domino constitutus oraret. Nam cum per Nathan prophetam clementia sibi divina promitteret, ex ejus semine nasciturum qui suo sancto nomini construeret templum, et Christum manifeste denuntians, adjecisset: «Ego ero illi in patrem, et ipse erit mihi in filium (II Reg. VII);» moxque Ecclesiam, quae corpus est Christi, qualis esset futura depromeret dicens: «Et fidelis erit domus tua, et regnum tuum usque in aeternum ante faciem meam, et thronus tuus erit firmus jugiter.» Ille gratias agens, inter caetera orationis suae verba sic ait: «Sed et hoc parum visum est in conspectu tuo, Domine Deus meus,» quia dilexisti me, «nisi loquereris etiam de domo servi tui in longinquum;» moxque subjunxit: «Ista est enim lex Adam, Domine Deus.» Ac si perpetue dicat: Sicut in terreni mundi hujus exordio Adam constituisti posteritatis secuturae parentem, atque ex hac radice totius humani generis decrevisti pullulare propaginem; ita nunc cum mundum renovare disponis, me quasi novum Adam facis, dum Christum ex meo semine nasciturum, qui est auctor et caput Ecclesiae, polliceris.

That generation was allotted the paradise of the earth, blooming indeed with the beauty of fertile trees and herbs; but this one has merited the heavenly paradise, abounding with stores of incomparable delights. From that paradise, however, the first man through a tree expelled the posterity of his race; the second man through the cross introduced us into heavenly pastures. While that one narrates that God said, Let there be light (Gen. I), he shows the light created; this one, presenting Christ born of the Virgin, suggests the Creator of light arisen. Moses, therefore, arranges the old Adam, and the earthly, the old world, the old Testament: but Matthew introduces new things for the old, spiritual for the earthly or carnal, eternal for the temporal. For Adam indeed he describes Christ, for the old law the Gospel, for the world or the earth flourishing with herbs and trees he describes the holy Church, germinating diverse provisions of spiritual fruits. "For the first man, as the Apostle says, was of the earth, earthly; the second man from heaven, heavenly (I Cor. XV);" such as the earthly is, such also are the earthly; such as the heavenly is, such also are the heavenly. The first Adam was made into a living soul, the last Adam into a quickening spirit. But not first that which is spiritual, but that which is animal, then that which is spiritual.

Moses therefore describes how all visible things were originally founded; but Matthew teaches that not only earthly, but also heavenly things were newly restored through the grace of the Mediator of God and men; just as the same Apostle says: "To make known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, to restore all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in him (Ephes. I)."

David foresaw this renewal of the world, when once established before the Lord he prayed. For when through Nathan the prophet divine clemency promised him that from his seed should be born one who would build a temple to His holy name, and clearly announcing Christ, had added: "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son (II Reg. VII);" and soon brought forth what the Church, which is the body of Christ, would be in the future, saying: "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be faithful for ever before my face, and thy throne shall be firm continually." He, giving thanks, among the other words of his prayer spoke thus: "But even this has seemed little in thy sight, O Lord my God," because thou hast loved me, "unless thou shouldst speak also of the house of thy servant for a long time to come;" and soon added: "For this is the law of Adam, O Lord God." As if he should say perpetually: Just as in the beginning of this earthly world thou didst appoint Adam the parent of the posterity to follow, and from this root thou didst decree the offspring of the whole human race to sprout; so now when thou disposest to renew the world, thou makest me a sort of new Adam, while thou promisest Christ to be born of my seed, who is the author and head of the Church.

«Ista est, inquit, lex Adam,» quia sicut ille erat in filiis suis hunc mundum visibilem possessurus; ita et ego populi spiritualis in Christo pater efficior, cum illo qui in coelis est, perpetuo regnaturus. Sicut enim de costa illius formata est viventium mater Eva (Gen. II); ita de latere Christi qui ex me nasciturus est, victura perenniter egredietur Ecclesia. De hoc novo et spirituali mundo scriptum est: «Domini sunt cardines terrae, et posuit super eos orbem (I Reg. II).» Orbis enim super terrae cardines ponitur, cum sancta Ecclesia tanquam super bases doctrinis evangelicis solidatur. De qua et alibi dicitur: «Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis (Psal. LXXXVI).» Qui enim illic cardines, hic appellati sunt montes.

Evangelistarum plane numero congruit et mundi situs, et temporum cursus; quia et quatuor mundi partes, et totidem sunt temporum diversitates. Non ergo mirum, si spiritualis mundus visibili huic conferatur, dum nonnullas invicem habere similitudines uterque dignoscitur.

Et notandum, quia summus architectus, videlicet omnipotens Deus, dum hujus spiritalis mundi, hoc est, sanctae universalis Ecclesiae fabricam super quatuor evangelistas, quasi super columnas totidem construit, duas potiores et egregias altrinsecus ordinat, quibus scilicet omne surgentis machinae pondus incumbat; duas autem minores in medio statuit, sicque coelestis fabricae pulchritudinem alterna varietate distinguit, ut pluralitas ad fundamentum, diversitas pertineat ad ornatum, et divinum opus sic robore permaneat inconcussum, ut sit etiam varietate conspicuum. Haec denique quatuor sunt columnae, de quibus ad Moysen dicitur, cum in typo Ecclesiae tabernaculum figeretur: «Facies columnas quatuor, et bases earum vestitas argento (Exod. XXVII).» In argento enim quid aliud quam claritas divini sermonis accipitur? Sicut scriptum est: «Eloquia Domini, eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum, probatum terrae (Psal. XI).» Bases ergo argento vestitae quatuor columnas tabernaculi sustinent, quia praedicatores Ecclesiae divino eloquio decorati, ut in cunctis se exemplum praebeant, quatuor evangelistarum dicta et ore et operibus portant.

His, et hujusmodi clarescentibus in evangelica descriptione sententiis, liquet B. Matthaeum in prosequenda regia stirpe Domini, tenacius quam caeteros fuisse versatum. Unusquisque siquidem sanctorum evangelistarum proprium ac specialem ordinem servat, et in ejus, qua coepit, intentionis custodia perseverat. Nam Joannes propensius occupatur ad declarandam in Christo divinitatis essentiam. Matthaeus autem, ut dictum est, ostendit regiam dignitatem.

"This is," he said, "the law of Adam," because just as he was to possess this visible world in his sons; so also I am made the father of a spiritual people in Christ, to reign perpetually with Him who is in heaven. For just as from his rib Eve the mother of the living was formed (Gen. II); so from the side of Christ who is to be born of me, the Church shall go forth to live perennially. Of this new and spiritual world it is written: "The hinges of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them (I Reg. II)." For the world is placed upon the hinges of the earth, when the holy Church is solidified upon the evangelical doctrines as if upon bases. Of which also it is said elsewhere: "Its foundations are in the holy mountains (Psal. LXXXVI)." For those which were hinges there, are called mountains here.

The layout of the world and the course of the seasons plainly agree with the number of the evangelists; because there are both four parts of the world, and just as many diversities of the seasons. It is no wonder, therefore, if the spiritual world be compared to this visible one, since both are discerned to have several similarities to each other.

And it should be noted that the supreme Architect, namely almighty God, while He builds the fabric of this spiritual world, that is, of the holy universal Church, upon the four evangelists as upon as many columns, ordains two more powerful and excellent ones on either side, upon which indeed the whole weight of the rising machine rests; but He set two smaller ones in the middle, and thus distinguishes the beauty of the heavenly fabric by alternating variety, so that plurality pertains to the foundation, diversity to the ornament, and the divine work remains so unshaken in strength that it is also conspicuous in variety. These, finally, are the four columns of which it is said to Moses, when the tabernacle was being fixed in a type of the Church: "Thou shalt make four columns, and their bases overlaid with silver (Exod. XXVII)." For in silver, what else is understood than the clarity of divine speech? As it is written: "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried by fire, proved from the earth (Psal. XI)." Therefore the bases overlaid with silver sustain the four columns of the tabernacle, because the preachers of the Church, decorated with divine eloquence, that they may present themselves as an example in all things, carry the sayings of the four evangelists both in mouth and in works.

From these sentences, and others of this kind shining forth in the evangelical description, it is clear that Blessed Matthew was more tenaciously occupied than the others in following the royal lineage of the Lord. For each of the holy evangelists keeps his own special order, and perseveres in the custody of the intention with which he began. For John is more fully occupied in declaring the essence of the divinity in Christ. Matthew, however, as has been said, shows the royal dignity.

Marcus vero tanquam assecla sive breviator ejus esse videtur, dum per ejus vestigia subsequens graditur, et sic illi sive ejusdem verbis, sive eodem sensu in omnibus pene concordat, ut tanquam a praecedentis se tramite non recedat. Lucas etiam proprium modum et ordinem tenet, dum sacerdotalem Domini stirpem describit atque personam; et sic per totam styli sui seriem in hac intentione perdurat, ut diversari circa templum, vel sacerdotes usque ad finem Evangelii non omittat. Nam ipsum quoque suae narrationis exordium quid aliud coacervat, quam diversorum nomina sacerdotum? «Fuit, inquit, in diebus Herodis regis Judaeae sacerdos quidam, nomine Zacharias, de vice Abia, et uxor ejus de filiabus Aaron (Luc. I).» Eumdem postmodum Zachariam in templo ante altare constituit, Mariam quoque virginem domui sacerdotis inducit. Quadragesimo autem Nativitatis die puerum ad templum cum muneribus portat (Luc. I), duodenem quoque in templo audientem, et interrogantem cum doctoribus inthronizat. Deinde parentes Domini narrat per omnes annos ascendisse Hierusalem ad templum in die solemnitatis Paschae.

Demum Evangelium suum hoc fine conclusit, ut diceret: «Ipsi adorantes regressi sunt Hierusalem, et erant quotidie in templo laudantes Deum, et benedicentes Dominum (Luc. XXIV).» Mediator quippe Dei et hominum secundum humanam naturam unus idemque rex esse voluit et sacerdos, ut per vires nos regalis apicis regeret, et per sacerdotis officium expiaret. Hae siquidem duae personae sub figura Christi specialiter sunt a Patribus commendatae, cui principaliter ac singulari praerogativa dedit Deus sedem David patris ejus, ut regni ejus non esset finis, et ut sacerdos esset in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech (Psal. CIX).

Utriusque ergo ministerii dignitatem Matthaeus et Lucas ita inter se invicem dividunt, ut alter Christi regnum, alter indicet sacerdotium. Spiritus enim sanctus per organa sua sic propriae potestatis jura dispensat, ut dum per duos unus eloquitur, idem sentientium quaedam in verbis diversitas exprimatur. Unde cum Matthaeus, qui regalem Domini personam susceperat describendam, in genealogiae contextu reges enumeret; Lucas ad ipsum David non regium schema prosecutus ascendit, sed per eos qui reges non fuerant, exiit ad Nathan filium David, qui nec ipse rex fuit. Unde divinitus actum est, ut non habeat socium subsequentem, qui styli sui teneat seriem, quoniam sacerdos in Sancta sanctorum solus intrabat, atque idcirco hic sine comite est, quia se circa Domini sacerdotium specialiter occupat; Matthaeus autem, ut praedictum est, breviatorem Marcum atque pedissequum habuit, quia Christi regiam dignitatem reges enumerando descripsit. Regiae quippe sublimitatis est, ut non sine comitum gradiatur obsequio.

Mark indeed seems to be his attendant or abridger, while he walks following through his footsteps, and thus agrees with him almost in all things, whether in the same words or in the same sense, so that he does not depart from the path of the one preceding him. Luke also holds his own manner and order, while he describes the priestly (sacerdotalem) lineage and person of the Lord; and thus through the whole series of his style he persists in this intention, so that he does not omit to be occupied about the temple or the priests until the end of the Gospel. For what else does the very beginning of his narration gather together than the names of various priests? "There was," he says, "in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest, by name Zechariah, of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron (Luke 1)." Afterward he places the same Zechariah in the temple before the altar, and brings the Virgin Mary into the house of the priest. On the fortieth day of the Nativity he carries the boy to the temple with gifts (Luke 1), and also enthrones him at twelve years old in the temple hearing and questioning among the teachers. Then he relates that the parents of the Lord ascended every year to Jerusalem to the temple on the day of the solemnity of the Passover.

Finally he concluded his Gospel with this end, saying: "They, worshipping, returned to Jerusalem, and were daily in the temple praising God and blessing the Lord (Luke 24)." For the mediator of God and men according to his human nature wished to be one and the same king and priest, that he might rule us through the powers of the royal summit, and expiate us through the office of the priest. These two persons, indeed, were specially commended by the Fathers under the figure of Christ, to whom God gave, by a principal and singular prerogative, the seat of David his father, so that there should be no end to his kingdom, and that he should be a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psal. 109).

Matthew and Luke therefore divide the dignity of each ministry between themselves in such a way that one indicates the kingdom of Christ, the other the priesthood. For the Holy Spirit so dispenses the rights of his own power through his instruments that while one speaks through two, the same diversity of words is expressed by those who feel the same. Hence when Matthew, who had undertaken to describe the royal person of the Lord, enumerates kings in the context of the genealogy; Luke ascended to David himself not having followed the royal scheme, but through those who had not been kings, he went out to Nathan the son of David, who was not a king himself. Whence it was divinely brought about that he does not have a subsequent companion who holds the series of his style, since the priest entered alone into the Holy of Holies, and therefore he is here without a companion, because he occupies himself specially about the priesthood of the Lord; Matthew, however, as was said before, had Mark as an abridger and a follower, because he described the royal dignity of Christ by enumerating kings. For it is of royal sublimity that it should not walk without the service of companions.

Hunc ducem et nos sequamur, dilectissimi fratres mei, non Evangelium breviando, sed evangelica praecepta servando. Hunc ad vitam sequamur itineris praevium. Hujus salutiferum imitemur exemplum, qui mox, ut vocantis se Salvatoris audivit imperium (Matth. IX), non cunctatus est, non sua disponendi quaesivit inducias, non amicorum communicanda consilia, sed illico divitias sprevit, necessarios abdicavit, carnalium affectuum nexus abrupit, sicque solutus post Christi vestigia laetus et impiger properavit, tanquam post naufragium delatus in portum, divinum illud celeuma cantavit: «Dirupisti, Domine, vincula mea, tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis (Psal. CXV).» Vel illud, quod sponsa modulatur in Canticis canticorum: «Paululum cum pertransissem eos, inveni quem diligit anima mea, tenui, nec dimittam eum (Cant. III),» qui est benedictus in saecula. Amen.

## Sermo L.

*II. DE SANCTO MATTHAEO APOSTOLO ET EVANGELISTA. (XXI SEPT.)*

O quam dulcis, quam jucunda, quam delectabilis est ista festivitas, fratres mei, in qua scilicet ad amorem Dei peccator accenditur; fides augetur; mens, quae diffidebat, erigitur; certae spei gratia cumulatur. Nam quod alibi verbis instruimur, hic vivis operibus experimur. Legimus siquidem: «Agite poenitentiam; appropinquabit enim regnum coelorum (Matth. III).» Inter poenitentiam scilicet regnumque coelorum nihil est medium. Haec autem praeclara festivitas non modo dat poenitentibus spem regni coelorum, sed et poenitenti narrat exhibitum coelestis excellentiae principatum Quis enim nesciat B. Matthaeum telonarium exstitisse, atque ideo peccatorem? (Matth. IX, X; Marc. I). Quod certe idem ipse non tacet, dum se in ipso apostolorum catalogo publicanum perhibet: «Thomas, inquit, et Matthaeus publicanus (Luc. V);» caeteri vero evangelistae Levi potius eum vocant, ne consortem, imo primarium evangelici operis notabilem reddant. Ipse autem publicanum se ideo asserit, ut et humilitatis in se regulam teneat, et nostras ad sperandum de peccatis veniam mentes accendat. Ac si cum coapostolo suo ipse etiam dicat: «Christus venit in hunc mundum peccatores salvos facere, quorum primus ego sum; sed ideo misericordiam consecutus sum, ut in me primum ostenderet Christus Jesus omnem patientiam ad exemplum eorum, qui crediturus sunt illi in vitam aeternam (I Tim. I).»

Let us also follow this leader, my most beloved brothers, not by abridging the Gospel, but by keeping the evangelical precepts. Let us follow him as the guide of the journey toward life. Let us imitate his salutary example, who as soon as he heard the command of the Savior calling him (Matt. 9), did not hesitate, did not seek delays for disposing of his affairs, nor the shared counsels of friends, but immediately spurned riches, renounced his relatives, broke the bonds of carnal affections, and thus loosed he hastened joyful and diligent after the footsteps of Christ, as if brought into port after a shipwreck, he sang that divine refrain: "Thou hast broken my bonds, O Lord, I will sacrifice to thee the host of praise (Psal. 115)." Or that which the bride modulates in the Canticle of Canticles: "When I had a little passed by them, I found him whom my soul loveth, I held him, and I will not let him go (Cant. 3)," who is blessed for ever. Amen.

## Sermon L.

*ON SAINT MATTHEW THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST. (SEPTEMBER 21)*

O how sweet, how pleasant, how delectable is this festivity, my brothers, in which surely the sinner is kindled to the love of God; faith is increased; the mind, which was despairing, is raised up; the grace of certain hope is heaped up. For what we are instructed elsewhere in words, here we experience in living works. For we read: "Do penance (poenitentiam); for the kingdom of heaven will draw near (Matt. 3)." Between penance, surely, and the kingdom of heaven there is nothing in the middle. This distinguished festivity not only gives the hope of the kingdom of heaven to those doing penance, but also tells of the established primacy of heavenly excellence to the one doing penance. For who does not know that Blessed Matthew was a tax collector (telonarium), and therefore a sinner? (Matt. 9, 10; Mark 1). Which certainly he himself does not keep silent, while he declares himself a publican (publicanum) in the very catalogue of the apostles: "Thomas," he says, "and Matthew the publican (Luke 5);" while the other evangelists call him Levi rather, lest they make their companion, or rather the primate of the evangelical work, notable. But he himself asserts that he is a publican for this reason, that he may both hold the rule of humility in himself, and kindle our minds to hope for the pardon of sins. As if with his co-apostle he himself also says: "Christ came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the first; but for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might show all patience for an example of those who are to believe in him unto life eternal (1 Tim. 1)."

Provocat ergo nunc nos ad sperandam veniam verbo, sicut olim eos, qui aderant, incitavit exemplo. Dicit enim ipse: «Quia factum est, discumbente Jesu in domo, ecce multi publicani et peccatores venientes discumbebant cum Jesu et discipulis ejus (Matth. IX);» ubi scilicet et Matthaeus erat. Nisi enim iste cum Domini discipulis interesset, tam familiariter ad Dominum peccatores accedere non auderent. Nisi peccatorem contubernio Salvatoris inhaerere conspicerent, quos scelerum accusabat enormitas, quos conscientia remordebat, appropinquare nullatenus praesumpsissent.

Sed cum iste sedulus in Domino diversatur obsequio, insuper et mensae participatur, factus collega convivio, suo peccatores ad fontem pietatis cohortatur exemplo. Quanto per eum nunc ad sperandam misericordiam fiducialius provocamur, quem videlicet cernimus ad tantae sublimitatis culmen evectum? Qui simul et in apostolicum allectus est ordinem, et angelicam sortitus est dignitatem. Quis enim nesciat evangelistam ab angelico vocabulo derivari? Non solum itaque apostolus est, sed et evangelista. Et, ut ita fatear, evangelista evangelistarum non immerito dicitur, qui dux, et praecessor ac primus omnium reperitur. Unde et illius quadrigae coelestis, quam vel Joannes in Apocalypsi se vidisse perhibuit (Apoc. IV), vel Ezechiel in prophetica visione conspexit (Ezech. X), hic congrue potest non modo pars, sed et auriga vocari. Qui dum ad scribendum Evangelium primus erupit, quasi quamdam lineam praecedendo tetendit; et unde caeteri currerent, rectitudinis semitam designavit; ut sicut de Elia dicitur (II Reg. II), hic etiam currus, et auriga illius mystici sacramenti merito nuncupetur.

Nulli plane mortalium hoc Deus omnipotens contulit, ut haec duo praeeminentium dignitatum fastigia in una simul persona concurrant, scilicet ut apostolus quisquam sit, et evangelista, nisi Matthaeo et Joanni; quorum scilicet alter publicanus, alter est virgo. Et hoc profunda divini dispensatione consilii. Nimirum ut et iste ad misericordiae fontem peccatoribus se exhibeat praevium, et ille custoditis et innocentibus sit exemplum; quatenus et lapsis quibusque peracti sceleris magnitudo non obviet, et mundos ac nullis criminibus obrutos patens janua gratiae coelestis invitet.

He therefore now provokes us to hope for pardon by word, just as of old he incited those who were present by example. For he himself says: "Because it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners coming sat down with Jesus and his disciples (Matt. 9);" where surely Matthew also was. For unless he were present with the disciples of the Lord, sinners would not dare to approach the Lord so familiarly. Unless they saw a sinner clinging to the companionship (contubernio) of the Savior, those whom the enormity of their crimes accused, whom conscience remorsefully pricked, would in no way have presumed to draw near.

But since he is occupied in diligent service to the Lord, and moreover participates in the table, made a colleague in the feast, he exhorts sinners to the fountain of piety by his example. How much more trustfully are we now provoked by him to hope for mercy, whom we see indeed raised up to the summit of such great sublimity? Who was at once both called into the apostolic order, and obtained the angelic dignity. For who does not know that the word evangelist is derived from the angelic name? Not only, therefore, is he an apostle, but also an evangelist. And, if I may so speak, he is not undeservedly called the evangelist of evangelists, who is found as the leader, and predecessor, and first of all. Whence also of that heavenly chariot (quadrigae), which either John declared himself to have seen in the Apocalypse (Apoc. 4), or Ezekiel beheld in prophetic vision (Ezek. 10), he can fittingly be called not only a part, but even the driver (auriga). Who, while he first broke forth to write the Gospel, as it were stretched a certain line by preceding; and he designated the path of rectitude whence the others might run; so that as it is said of Elijah (2 Kings 2), he also may be worthily named the chariot and the driver of that mystic sacrament.

To none of mortals plainly has Almighty God granted this, that these two summits of preeminent dignities should concur at the same time in one person, namely that anyone should be both an apostle and an evangelist, except for Matthew and John; of whom surely one was a publican, the other is a virgin. And this by the profound dispensation of divine counsel. Namely, that the former might show himself as a guide for sinners to the fountain of mercy, and the latter might be an example for those who are guarded and innocent; so that the magnitude of a past crime might not be an obstacle to any who have fallen, and the open gate of heavenly grace might invite the clean and those overwhelmed by no crimes.

Porro, sicut Phison primus inter paradisi fluvios legitur (Gen. II), sic inter sanctos evangelistas primus invenitur. Et bene sibi haec comparatio congruit; Phison siquidem oris mutatio interpretatur. Os enim suum ipse mutavit, quod videlicet a saecularibus verbis ad praedicandum Evangelium transtulit; et quod suum prius carnaliter fuerat, ut Dei esset, effecit. Dicente per prophetam Domino: «Si separaveris pretiosum a vili, quasi os meum eris (Jerem. XV).» Factum est ergo in B. Matthaeo, quod scriptum est: «Quia ubi abundavit peccatum, superabundavit et gratia (Rom. V).» Sicut enim vera est illa Scripturae sententia, qua dicitur: «Quia non est divinae virtuti differentia, sive in multis, sive in paucis vincere (I Reg. XXV);» ita etiam divinae pietati nil differt sive minimis quibusque peccatis, sive gravibus indulgere. In hoc igitur egregio viro divina gratia mirabiliter abundavit, cui scilicet gemina praerogativa concessit, non modo cum apostolis Evangelium praedicare, sed cum evangelistis etiam scribere: et ut excellentius adhuc emineat, primum in eorum ordine, qui inter caeteros sanctos insignes sunt et mirabiles, obtinet locum.

Enimvero haec sunt sancta illa animalia, quae undique plena oculis referuntur (Ezech. I), in quibus utique sicut revera Cherubin, exuberat scientiae plenitudo; aspectus eorum, quasi carbonum ignis ardentium, et tanquam radiantium repraesentant speciem lampadarum. Coram facie sua semper incedunt, quo scilicet impetu spiritus impelluntur. Istae porro sunt quadrigae illae, quas Zacharias propheta designat: cum dicit: «Et conversus sum, et vidi, et ecce quatuor quadrigae egredientes de medio duorum montium, et erant montes aerei (Zach. VI).» De quibus et paulo post dicitur: «Isti sunt quatuor venti coeli, qui egrediuntur, ut stent coram dominatore omnis terrae (Ibid.).» Et notandum quia non una quatuor evangelistarum quadriga dicitur, sed unusquisque eorum quadriga vocatur, quia et unus in quatuor, et quatuor sunt in uno, dum per ejusdem fidei intentionem quod scribitur a singulis, reperitur in cunctis, et quod dicitur ab universis, invenitur in singulis.

Duo vero montes aerei, de quorum medio dicuntur egressi, duo sunt Testamenta, quae ad instar aeris durabilia sunt et sonora. Quia et usque ad finem saeculi non inveniunt terminum, et per omnia mundi spatia dant tinnitum. «In omnem enim terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum (Psal. XVIII).» Qui et venti esse referuntur; quia de his scriptum est: «Ubi erat impetus spiritus, illuc gradiebantur (Ezech. I).»

Furthermore, just as Pison (Phison) is read as the first among the rivers of paradise (Gen. 2), so he is found first among the holy evangelists. And this comparison fits itself well; for Pison is interpreted as "change of mouth" (oris mutatio). For he himself changed his mouth, which surely he transferred from secular words to preaching the Gospel; and what had previously been his carnally, he made to be God's. As the Lord said through the prophet: "If thou shalt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth (Jer. 15)." There was done therefore in Blessed Matthew what is written: "That where sin abounded, grace did superabound (Rom. 5)." For just as that sentence of Scripture is true, by which it is said: "That there is no difference for divine power, whether to overcome in many or in few (1 Kings 25);" so also for divine piety it differs nothing whether to indulge in the smallest sins or in the most grave. In this distinguished man, therefore, divine grace wonderfully abounded, to whom surely a twofold prerogative granted, not only to preach the Gospel with the apostles, but also to write it with the evangelists: and so that he might yet more excellently stand out, he obtains the first place in their order, who among the other saints are distinguished and wonderful.

Truly these are those holy animals, which on every side are reported full of eyes (Ezek. 1), in which indeed, just as truly in the Cherubim (Cherubin), the fullness of knowledge overflows; their appearance is like coals of burning fire, and they represent the likeness of lamps as if radiating. They always go before their face, whither surely they are driven by the impulse of the spirit. These furthermore are those chariots (quadrigae) which the prophet Zechariah designates when he says: "And I turned, and saw, and behold four chariots coming out from the midst of two mountains, and they were mountains of bronze (Zech. 6)." Of which it is also said a little after: "These are the four winds of heaven, which go out to stand before the ruler of all the earth (dominatore omnis terrae) (Ibid.)." And it is to be noted because not one chariot of the four evangelists is spoken of, but each one of them is called a chariot, because both one is in four, and four are in one, while through the intention of the same faith what is written by each is found in all, and what is said by all is found in each.

But the two mountains of bronze, from the midst of which they are said to have gone out, are the two Testaments, which after the manner of bronze are durable and sonorous. Because even until the end of the age they do not find a term, and through all the spaces of the world they give a tinkling sound. "For their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Psal. 18)." Who are also reported to be winds; because of these it is written: "Whither the impulse of the spirit was, thither they went (Ezek. 1)."

Qui etiam egrediuntur, ut stent coram dominatore omnis terrae, quia quod sancti praedicatores ex fidelium fructificatione proficiunt, non sibi tribuunt, sed auctori, a quo eorum omnia lucra procedunt. De quibus ad B. Job dicitur: «Nunquid immittes fulgura, et ibunt, et revertentia dicent tibi, Adsumus?» (Job XXXVIII.) Hae sunt illae quatuor hydriae, quas Elias sacrificaturus jussit impleri, et tribus super holocaustum vicibus superfundi (III Reg. XVII). Hic est ille quadrifidus fluviorum cursus, qui de Christo tanquam de paradisi fonte progreditur et arentia quadrati orbis arva perfundit (Gen. II). De quo vir ille sapiens ait: «Legem mandavit Moyses in praeceptis justitiarum, et haereditatem domus Jacob, et Israel promissiones (Eccli. XXXIV).»

Ut autem in his verbis non diutius immoremur, lex ista, quae haereditas promissionis dicitur, sanctum est Evangelium, quod quidem antiquis Patribus est promissum, nobis autem haereditario jure, Christo veniente, collatum, ubi praesto subjungitur: «Posuit David puero suo excitare regem ex ipso fortissimum, ut throno honorum sedentem in sempiternum. Qui implet quasi Phison sapientiam, et sicut Tigris in diebus novorum. Qui adimplet quasi Euphrates sensum, qui multiplicat quasi Jordanis in tempore messis. Qui mittit disciplinam sicut lucem, et assistens quasi Gehon in die vindemiae (Ibid.).»

Haec itaque, fratres mei, tam lucide, tam aperte de Christo et sanctis evangelistis dicta sunt, ut ad hoc insinuandum exponi non egeant. Sed dum in sanctis, ac mysticis verbis vindemiae nomen auditis, qui ex temporis occasione terrenas vindemias prae manibus habetis, debetis a circumstantibus ad interiora recurrere, et spiritualem vindemiam sancta vestra prudentia cogitare. Ait enim in fine sententiae: «Qui mittit disciplinam sicut lucem, et assistens quasi Gehon in die vindemiae.» Quis est ille qui mittit disciplinam sicut lucem, nisi is qui post velatam faciem Moysi, possesso tenebris mundo, radiantem Evangelii sui ingerit claritatem? Assistit itaque quasi Gehon, de quo et per prophetam dicitur: «Dominus Deus noster fluvius gloriosus exiliens in terram sitientem.» Quae est autem vinea, cui quasi Gehon assistit, et praedicationis suae madoribus irrigare non desinit, nisi illa de qua per prophetam dicitur: «Vinea autem Domini Sabaoth, domus Israel est?» (Isa. V.) Hanc vineam de Aegypto vetustae legis Dominus transtulit, et ad terram Evangelii, quae mel et lac manat, induxit.

Who also go out, that they may stand before the ruler of all the earth, because what the holy preachers profit from the fructification of the faithful, they do not attribute to themselves, but to the author from whom all their gains proceed. Of whom it is said to Blessed Job: "Shalt thou send out lightnings, and will they go, and returning will they say to thee, We are present? (Job 38)." These are those four water jars (hydriae), which Elijah about to sacrifice ordered to be filled, and to be poured over the holocaust (holocaustum) three times (3 Kings 17). This is that fourfold course of rivers, which from Christ as from the fountain of paradise (paradisi fonte) proceeds and pours over the parched fields of the four-cornered world (Gen. 2). Of which that wise man says: "Moses commanded a law in the precepts of justices, and an inheritance of the house of Jacob, and promises to Israel (Ecclus. 34)."

But so that we may not dwell longer on these words, that law, which is called the inheritance of promise, is the holy Gospel, which indeed was promised to the ancient Fathers, but was conferred upon us by hereditary right, Christ having come, where it is immediately subjoined: "He set David his servant to raise up from him a most strong king, to sit upon the throne of honors forever. Who fills wisdom like Pison (Phison), and like Tigris in the days of new things. Who fills up sense like Euphrates, who multiplies like Jordan (Jordanis) in the time of harvest. Who sends discipline like light, and assisting like Gihon (Gehon) in the day of vintage (vindemiae) (Ibid.)."

These things, therefore, my brothers, were said so clearly, so openly of Christ and the holy evangelists, that they do not need to be explained to suggest this. But while in the holy and mystic words you hear the name of vintage (vindemiae), you who from the occasion of the time have the earthly vintages in hand, you ought to run back from the circumstances to the interior things, and by your holy prudence think upon the spiritual vintage. For it says at the end of the sentence: "Who sends discipline like light, and assisting like Gihon in the day of vintage." Who is he who sends discipline like light, except he who after the veiled face of Moses, when the world was possessed by darkness, brings in the radiating clarity of his Gospel? He assists, therefore, like Gihon, of whom it is also said by the prophet: "Our Lord God is a glorious river leaping forth into a thirsty land." But what is the vineyard (vinea), which he assists like Gihon, and does not cease to water with the moisture of his preaching, except that of which it is said by the prophet: "But the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth (vinea Domini Sabaoth) is the house of Israel? (Isa. 5)." The Lord transferred this vineyard from the Egypt (Aegypto) of the old law, and led it into the land of the Gospel (terram Evangelii), which flows with milk and honey.

Hujus autem vineae primitias attulit potrus ille, quem duo viri in vecte posuerunt, et Israelitico populo detulerunt (Num. XIII). Duo scilicet viri, duo sunt populi, Judaicus et gentilis. Hi botrum posuerunt in vecte, quia Salvatorem suspenderunt in cruce. Sed praecessor, quod portabat, non aspiciebat; qui sequebatur, intuebatur. Et Judaeorum populus, qui nos temporibus antecessit, Dominum, quem in prophetis et lege portaverat, dum obedientiae vultum semper avertit, videre non potuit; gentilis autem qui sequitur, tanquam prae oculis positum assidue contemplatur. Hunc botrum Gedeon figuravit cum Ephrataeis calumniantibus sub excusatione respondit: «Nonne melior est racemus Ephraim vindemiis Abiezer? (Jud. VIII).» Nam quia Ephraim, qui fecunditatem sonat, Ecclesiam exprimit, quid per racemum Ephraim, nisi Christum? Quid per vindemias Abiezer, nisi Judaicorum multitudinem sacerdotum? Sive etiam per racemum parvus fidelium numerus primitivae Ecclesiae, per vindemiam vero multitudo intelligenda est Synagogae.

Melior est ergo racemus Ephraim vindemiis Abiezer, quia beatior fuit primitiva Ecclesia, quae usque in finem saeculi renascentium sobole fecundatur, quam Synagoga, quae paulatim quotidie defectura minuitur; unde et per Isaiam dicitur: «Lauda, sterilis; quae non paris, decanta laudem, et hymnos [hymni], quae non pariebas, quoniam multi filii desertae magis quam ejus quae habet virum; dilata locum tentorii tui, et pelles tabernaculorum tuorum extende, ne parcas, longos fac funiculos tuos et clavos tuos consolida; ad dexteram enim, et ad laevam penetrabis, et semen tuum gentes haereditabit (Isa. LIV).»

## Homilia LI.

*DE SANCTO MATTHAEO APOSTOLO ET EVANGELISTA. (XXI SEPT.)*

In illo tempore: «Cum transiret Jesus per civitatem suam, vidit hominem sedentem in telonio, Matthaeum nomine (Matth. IX).» Et reliqua.

Haec sane cujus semen gentes haereditat, Ecclesia est, quae quotidie genus humanum per suos filios ad fidei unitatem vocat. Haec est, de qua dicitur in Psalmis, «pro ea quae consequitur haereditatem (Psal. III, in tit.).» Haec est vinea, quae laudem decantare praecipitur: sicut et apud eumdem prophetam alibi reperitur: «In illa die vinea meri cantabit ei; ego Dominus, qui servo eam (Isa. XXVII).»

But of this vineyard that cluster (botrus) brought the firstfruits, which two men placed on a pole (vecte) and brought to the Israelite people (Num. 13). Surely the two men are the two peoples, the Jewish and the Gentile. These placed the cluster on a pole, because they suspended the Savior on the cross. But the one who went before did not see what he carried; the one who followed gazed upon it. And the people of the Jews, who preceded us in time, while they always turned away the face of obedience, could not see the Lord whom they had carried in the prophets and the law; but the Gentile who follows contemplates him as if placed before his eyes. Gideon figured this cluster when he answered the Ephraimites (Ephrataeis) calumniating him under an excuse: "Is not the cluster (racemus) of Ephraim better than the vintages of Abiezer? (Jud. 8)." For because Ephraim, which sounds as "fecundity," expresses the Church, what is understood by the cluster of Ephraim, except Christ? What by the vintages of Abiezer, except the multitude of the Jewish priests? Or also by the cluster is to be understood the small number of the faithful of the primitive Church, but by the vintage the multitude of the Synagogue (Synagogae).

The cluster of Ephraim is better, therefore, than the vintages of Abiezer, because more blessed was the primitive Church, which until the end of the age is made fruitful by the offspring of those being reborn, than the Synagogue, which daily diminishing is about to fail little by little; whence also it is said through Isaiah: "Praise, thou barren, that bearest not; sing forth praise, and hymns, thou that didst not travail, for many are the children of the desolate more than of her that hath a husband; enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch out the skins of thy tabernacles, spare not, make thy cords long and strengthen thy nails; for thou shalt penetrate to the right and to the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles (Isa. 54)."

## Homily LI.

*ON SAINT MATTHEW THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST. (SEPTEMBER 21)*

At that time: "When Jesus passed through his city, he saw a man sitting at the tax office (telonio), Matthew (Matthaeum) by name (Matt. 9)." And the rest.

Truly this is she whose seed inherits the Gentiles, the Church, which daily calls the human race through her children to the unity of the faith. This is she of whom it is said in the Psalms, "for her who follows the inheritance (Psal. 3, in tit.)." This is the vineyard, which is commanded to sing praise: as is also found elsewhere in the same prophet: "In that day the vineyard of pure wine shall sing to him; I the Lord, who keep it (Isa. 27)."

De hac vinea beatus quoque Matthaeus Dominum dixisse commemorat: «Quia homo erat paterfamilias, qui plantavit vineam, et sepem circumdedit ei, et fodit in ea torcular, et aedificavit turrim, et locavit eam agricolis, et peregre profectus est (Matth. XXI).» Haec vinea ex illo prodiit botro, qui pedibus Judaeorum atque gentilium in crucis calcatus est praelo, ex quo pretiosi sanguinis unda profluxit, quae mentes hominum male sobrias vino spiritualis gratiae salubriter debriavit. De quo scilicet vino cum diversis linguis per Spiritum sanctum loquerentur apostoli, dictum est: «Musto pleni sunt isti (Act. II).» Vae illi, qui prorsus ab hoc musto jejunat, et terreni vini crapulam, quo aestuat, ingurgitatus eructat. «Vae vobis, ait propheta, qui potentes estis ad bibendum vinum, et viri fortes ad miscendam ebrietatem (Isa. V).» Infelix plane, qui se a vino sancti Spiritus servat abstemium, et pulmonem portat vini carnalis acroribus aestuantem, cujus venter epulis atque potationibus intumescit, et spiritualis gratiae vinum in sui cordis cellario non recondit.

Vos autem, dilectissimi, sic terrae proventibus colligendis insistite, ut memineritis etiam vinum divini charismatis in mentium vestrarum tunnulis convasare. Quisquis autem se a proximo per discordiae fomitem dividit, non avis Domini, sed terrenum animal vinum gratiae coelestis ignorat. Unde est, quod Abraham cum sacrificaret, caetera quidem animalia per medium dividens, utrasque partes contra se altrinsecus posuit, aves autem non divisit (Gen. XV): hoc insinuans quia quisquis per scissuram odii a fratre dividitur, per terram terrenus ambulat, non ut avis ad coelum volat; qui vero se virtutum pennis in alta sustollit, divisionem nescit. Quod si ab inimicis tuis laedendum te esse formidas, nisi adversus eos arma corripias, compone cum Deo, et procul dubio, quiefactus non laederis a proximo: «Dominus» enim, ait, «mihi adjutor est, non timebo quid faciat mihi homo (Psal. CXVII).» Quod etiam patriarcha Jacob docuit, cum Deos alienos infodit Nam, sicut Scriptura testatur (Gen. XXXV), dederunt ei domestici sui omnes Deos alienos, quos habebant, et inaures, quae erant in auribus eorum. At ille infodit ea subter terebinthum, quae est post urbem Sichem. Ubi protinus subinfertur: «Cumque profecti essent, terror Domini invasit omnes per circuitum civitates, et non sunt ausi persequi recedentes (Ibid.).» Constat ergo quia mox, ut Dominum placavit, terreni furoris arma non timuit. Inter domum itaque Jacob et Deum pace composita, omnis undique controversia divino premitur terrore sedata.

Of this vineyard Blessed Matthew also commemorates the Lord to have said: "Because there was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge (sepem) around it, and dug a winepress (torcular) in it, and built a tower, and let it out to farmers, and went into a far country (Matt. 21)." This vineyard came forth from that cluster (botro), which was trodden in the winepress of the cross by the feet of the Jews and Gentiles, from which the wave of precious blood flowed forth, which healthfully inebriated the ill-sober minds of men with the wine of spiritual grace. Of which wine surely when the apostles spoke in different tongues through the Holy Spirit, it was said: "These are full of must (musto) (Acts 2)." Woe to him who is altogether fasting from this must, and eructates the hangover (crapulam) of earthly wine, with which he seethes, having been engorged. "Woe to you," says the prophet, "who are mighty to drink wine, and stout men at drunkenness (ebrietatem) (Isa. 5)." Unhappy plainly is he who keeps himself abstemious from the wine of the Holy Spirit, and carries a lung seething with the sours of carnal wine, whose belly swells with feasts and drinkings, and does not store up the wine of spiritual grace in the cellar of his heart.

But you, most beloved, so insist upon collecting the fruits of the earth, that you may remember also to store up (convasare) the wine of divine charisma in the vessels (tunnulis) of your minds. But whoever divides himself from his neighbor through the fuel of discord (discordiae fomitem), is not a bird of the Lord, but an earthly animal ignorant of the wine of heavenly grace. Whence it is that Abraham, when he was sacrificing, dividing the other animals through the middle, placed both parts over against each other, but the birds he did not divide (Gen. 15): suggesting this, that whoever is divided from a brother through the scission of hatred, walks on the earth as an earthly thing, and does not fly to heaven as a bird; but he who raises himself on high with the wings of virtues, knows no division. But if you fear to be harmed by your enemies, unless you take up arms against them, settle with God, and without doubt, being made quiet, you will not be harmed by your neighbor: "For the Lord," he says, "is my helper, I will not fear what man may do to me (Psal. 117)." Which also the patriarch Jacob taught, when he buried the foreign gods. For, as Scripture (Scriptura) testifies (Gen. 35), all his household gave him the foreign gods which they had, and the earrings which were in their ears. And he buried them under the terebinth tree, which is behind the city of Shechem (Sichem). Where immediately it is subjoined: "And when they had set out, the terror of the Lord invaded all the cities round about, and they did not dare to pursue those receding (Ibid.)." It is clear therefore that as soon as he appeased the Lord, he did not fear the arms of earthly fury. Peace having been settled therefore between the house of Jacob and God, every controversy on every side is pressed down, being settled by divine terror.

Quapropter, dilectissimi, de mentium vestrarum vasculis omnes simultatis et odii pestes egerite; tanquam frementium bestiarum impetus, carnis illecebras edomate, terrenae concupiscentiae flammas exstinguite, atque ad fluenta sancti Spiritus haurienda sitientes animos praeparate. Unusquisque dicentes: «Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum (Psal. LVI).»

Omnipotens Deus, qui per B. Matthaeum ad se peccatores invitat, januam vobis suae misericordiae clementer aperiat, ac mentibus vestris gratiae coelestis dona diffundat. Qui vivit et regnat in Trinitate perfecta unus et verus Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Evangelica lectio, quae nunc auribus vestris insonuit, dilectissimi, velut insignis inter caetera Dominicae eruditionis oracula moerentem peccatorum conscientiam recreat, tabescentes animos erigit, pusillanimitatis et diffidentiae frigus excludit, et ad concipiendam spem veniae dejectum cor in alta suspendit. Quis enim de scelerum suorum quantumlibet immanium enormitate diffidat, cum audiat B. Matthaeum venalis lucri quaestibus inhiantem, non modo repente vocatum, sed ad obtinenda praecipua duo ministeria curiae coelestis adscitum? Nimirum ut apostolicis senatus conscenderet apicem, et inter sanctos evangelistas in eo, quod primus est, privilegio susciperet dignitatem. Quod utrumque munus nulli prorsus alii collatum est, nisi Matthaeo tantummodo et Joanni. Et quia Joannes Dei gratia dicitur, Matthaeus etiam donatus interpretatur, dum uterque geminae dignitatis dona promeruit, utrique profecto gratia doni coelestis infulsit. Sed, ut impleretur illa sententia, qua dicitur: «Ubi abundavit iniquitas, superabundavit gratia (Rom. V);» Matthaeus, quia scribendi in evangelica veritate fecit originem, ducis ac praeceptoris inter caeteros evangelistas possidet claritatem. Cui nimirum aptissime congruit illa sententia, qua dicitur: «Fidelis sermo, et omni acceptione dignus, quia Christus Jesus venit in hunc mundum peccatores salvos facere, quorum primus ego sum; ut in me primum ostenderet omnem patientiam ad informationem eorum qui crediturus sunt illi in vitam aeternam (I Tim. I).»

Unde factum est, sicut evangelica nunc narravit historia, ut eo discumbente in domo ejusdem Matthaei, multi publicani et peccatores venientes discumberent cum Jesu et discipulis ejus (Matth. IX). Quos enim scelerum suorum mordax conscientia a Redemptoris accessu compescere poterat, hos Matthaei familiare cum Domino contubernium, ut accederent, provocabat; et dum ad pietatis fontem propinquare conspiciunt publicanum, felici jam audacia praesumente, ipsum fontem non addubitant ire reliquis cum peccatoribus publicatum.

Therefore, most beloved, cast out from the vessels of your minds all the plagues of grudge and hatred; tame like the impulse of raging beasts those allurements of the flesh, extinguish the flames of earthly concupiscence, and prepare your thirsting souls to draw from the flows of the Holy Spirit. Each one saying: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready (Psal. 56)."

May Almighty God, who through Blessed Matthew invites sinners to himself, mercifully open to you the gate of his mercy, and pour into your minds the gifts of heavenly grace. Who lives and reigns in perfect Trinity, one and true God forever and ever. Amen.

The Gospel reading that has just sounded in your ears, most beloved, like a distinguished oracle among the other teachings of the Lord, refreshes the mourning conscience of sinners, lifts up fainting souls, excludes the cold of faint-heartedness and distrust, and suspends the dejected heart on high to conceive the hope of pardon. For who should despair of the enormity of his crimes, however immense, when he hears that Blessed Matthew, gasping after the gains of venal profit, was not only suddenly called, but admitted to obtain the two chief ministries of the heavenly court? Namely, that he might ascend the summit of the apostolic senate and receive the dignity among the holy evangelists in that privilege which is first. Both of these gifts were granted to absolutely no one else, except to Matthew alone and to John. And because John is said to be "the grace of God" (Dei gratia), and Matthew is also interpreted as "given" (donatus), while both merited the gifts of a double dignity, the grace of the heavenly gift surely shone upon both. But, so that the sentence might be fulfilled which says: "Where iniquity abounded, grace superabounded (Rom. 5)"; Matthew, because he made the beginning of writing in evangelical truth, possesses the brightness of a leader and teacher among the other evangelists. To him surely most aptly fits that sentence which says: "A faithful word, and worthy of all acceptance, because Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the first; that in me first he might show all patience for the information of those who are to believe in him unto eternal life (1 Tim. 1)."

Whence it happened, as the Gospel history has now narrated, that while he was reclining at table in the house of the same Matthew, many publicans and sinners coming sat down with Jesus and his disciples (Matt. 9). For those whom the biting conscience of their crimes could restrain from approaching the Redeemer, the familiar companionship of Matthew with the Lord provoked to approach; and while they see the publican drawing near to the fountain of piety, with a happy audacity already presuming, they do not hesitate to go to the fountain itself, now made public with the rest of the sinners.

De qua nimirum publicatione fontis aeterni per prophetam dicitur: «In illa die erit fons patens domus David habitantibus in Hierusalem in ablutione peccatoris et menstruatae (Zach. XIII).» Fons quippe occultus est unigenitus Patris invisibilis Deus; fons vero patens est idem Deus incarnatus. Qui fons patens recte domus David dicitur, quia Redemptor noster ad nos venisse ex David genere non dubitabitur.

Hunc profecto misericordiae fontem, o Pharisaica superbia, paras obstruere, dum sitientes, et aridos ab ejus accessu niteris elato supercilio prohibere. Hic per os Isaiae tibi promittebatur haustus, cum dicebat: «Effundam enim aquam super sitientem, et fluenta super aridam; effundam spiritum meum super semen tuum, et benedictionem meam super stirpem tuam, et germinabunt inter herbas quasi salices juxta praeterfluentes aquas (Isa. XLI).» Hic iterum tibi promittebatur, cum et alibi diceret: «Et eris quasi hortus irriguus, et sicut fons aquarum, cui non deficiunt aquae (Isa. LVIII).» Sed tu in fastum tumidae elationis impudenter erecta, et de falsae justitiae singularitate lenocinanter inflata, gratis expositam salutis aeternae fontem contumaciter despicis et vivifica superni fontis fluenta fastidis. Accedens enim ad discipulos Domini tumens et arrogans, Pharisaee, pestiferum superbiae virus, quod in pectore tuo grassabatur, effundis: et elationis ventum, quem tumida mente conceperas, per lividi ac male spumantis oris spiramen exsufflas, «Quare, inquiens, cum publicanis et peccatoribus manducat magister vester?» (Matth. IX.) Idcirco plane cum talibus comedit, ut de publicanis justos, de peccatoribus sanctos, de criminosis reddat apostolos. Vocat enim peccatores, ut eos propria virtute justificans, efficiat innocentes. Sic nimirum, sic alibi dum bona tua, Pharisaee, in templo constitutus, arroganter enumeras, et alterum publicanum, te praeferendo, condemnas, et ille de reatus sui barathro ad promerendam veniam justificatus ascendit, et tu a falsae justitiae tuae culmine ante omnipotentis Dei oculos infeliciter corruisti.

Hoc itaque modo dum de fucato vacuae justitiae vestrae nitore praesumitis, et caeteros de suis excessibus judicabiles submordetis, et justitia vestra per elationem in peccatum vertitur, et illorum perpetrata nequitia ad obtinendam veniam per humilitatis gratiam reparatur. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: «Et erit desertum in Charmel, et Charmel in saltum reputabitur (Isa. XXIX).» Quid scilicet intelligatur per desertum, nisi qui in carnis suae legibus vivunt, qui voluptatum suarum illecebris serviunt, et dum nulli divini verbi vomeres eorum cor, velut arvum rationale, persulcant, nullas bonorum operum segetes germinant; unde scilicet in coelestibus horreis frumenta recondant?

Concerning which publication of the eternal fountain it is said through the prophet: "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner and the unclean (Zech. 13)." For the hidden fountain is the only-begotten of the Father, the invisible God; but the open fountain is the same God incarnate. Which open fountain is rightly called the house of David, because it will not be doubted that our Redeemer came to us from the lineage of David.

This fountain of mercy, O Pharisaic pride, you strive to obstruct, while you attempt with a haughty brow to prohibit the thirsty and the dry from access to it. This draught was promised to you through the mouth of Isaiah, when he said: "For I will pour out water upon the thirsty, and streams upon the dry land; I will pour out my spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your stock, and they shall spring up among the herbs like willows by the running waters (Isa. 44)." This was again promised to you, when he said elsewhere: "And you shall be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of waters, whose waters do not fail (Isa. 58)." But you, impudently erect in the haughtiness of tumid elation, and alluringly inflated with the singularity of a false justice, contumaciously despise the freely offered fountain of eternal salvation and loathe the life-giving streams of the supernal fountain. For approaching the disciples of the Lord, swollen and arrogant, O Pharisee, you pour out the pestiferous virus of pride that was raging in your breast; and the wind of elation, which you had conceived in your tumid mind, you blow out through the breath of a livid and ill-foaming mouth, saying: "Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? (Matt. 9)." He eats with such people plainly for this reason: that from publicans he may make just men, from sinners holy men, and from criminals apostles. For he calls sinners, that by justifying them by his own power, he may make them innocent. Thus indeed, thus elsewhere while you, O Pharisee, standing in the temple, arrogantly enumerate your good deeds, and condemn the other publican by preferring yourself, he ascended justified from the abyss of his guilt to merit pardon, and you unhappily fell from the height of your false justice before the eyes of Almighty God.

In this way, therefore, while you presume upon the feigned brightness of your empty justice, and backbite others as judgeable for their excesses, both your justice is turned into sin through elation, and their perpetrated wickedness is repaired to obtain pardon through the grace of humility. Whence it is also said through the prophet: "And the desert shall be in Carmel (Charmel), and Carmel shall be reputed as a forest (Isa. 29)." What is to be understood by the desert, if not those who live in the laws of their flesh, who serve the allurements of their pleasures, and while no ploughshares of the divine word furrow their heart, as a rational field, they germinate no harvests of good works; whence, that is, should they store up grain in the heavenly barns?

Quid vero per Charmel, qui scientia verae circumcisionis dicitur, nisi illi debent intelligi, qui per nitorem exterioris justitiae a carnalibus videntur operibus circumcisi, et de circumcisionis ejusdem quasi singulari non cessant scientia gloriari, et dum non qualiscunque, sed verae circumcisionis suae scientiam arrogant, alios quodammodo de non verae circumcisionis falsitate condemnant?

Desertum ergo in Charmel vertitur, et Charmel in saltum econtrario reputatur, cum et peccatores ad justorum merita participando conscendunt, et ii qui justi videbantur, ad agrestis et infructuosi germinis opera praecipites corruunt. Huic simile est et quod Apostolus dicit: «Circumcisio quidem prodest, si legem observes; si autem praevaricator legis sis, circumcisio tua praeputium facta est (Rom. II).» Quid ergo, Pharisaee, prodest, quod te per arrogantiam jactas, quod scientiam tibi verae circumcisionis usurpas, dum ut praevaricatorem legis evidentissime reproba vita convincat? Unde te de singularitate falsae justitiae gloriantem, ac per hoc albuginem in oculo tolerantem inspector mentium Dominus sprevit, et publicanum hunc, quem despicis ac despiciendo contemnis, in conturbernium proprii comitatus adlegit: «Sequere, inquit, me; et surgens, secutus est eum (Matth. IX).»

Quam fortis et valida manus hujus coelestis agricolae! Arborem scilicet terrae radicitus inhaerentem, et mundanae concupiscentiae tenaciter incubantem, mox ut concussit, evulsit, asportavit, et in terra viventium transplantavit. Ubi videlicet «justus, ut palma florebit et sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur (Psal. XCI).» Cui nimirum per immutationem dextrae Excelsi congrua dispositione collatum est, ut non modo praedicandi, sed et scribendi sortiretur officium, sicque mereretur humano generi coelestem ministrare thesaurum. Quatenus qui terreni quaestus lucra contempserat, coelestium talentorum dispensator existeret, et thesauros coelestis eloquii, quos impartiendos acceperat, fideliter erogaret. Ut sicut Redemptor noster piscatoribus suis ante jam dixerat: «Venite post me, et faciam vos fieri piscatores hominum (Matth. IV),» sic isti quodammodo diceret: Qui lucris temporalibus inhias, qui certe ut auro vel argento diteris impatienter anhelas, me quantocius sequere, moxque te faciam immortales superni regni divitias per mundi latitudinem dispensare. Tu scilicet aurum quaeris cum saeculo transiturum, et ego tibi Evangelii thesaurum dabo per cuncta procul dubio saecula permansurum.

What indeed by Carmel, which is called "knowledge of true circumcision," if not those should be understood who, through the brightness of external justice, seem circumcised from carnal works, and do not cease to glory in the same circumcision as if it were a singular knowledge, and while they arrogate the knowledge of not just any, but of their true circumcision, they somehow condemn others for the falsity of a non-true circumcision?

The desert therefore is turned into Carmel, and Carmel on the contrary is reputed as a forest, when both sinners ascend to participate in the merits of the just, and those who seemed just fall headlong to the works of a wild and unfruitful growth. Similar to this is what the Apostle says: "Circumcision indeed profits, if you observe the law; but if you be a transgressor of the law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision (Rom. 2)." What therefore, O Pharisee, does it profit that you boast through arrogance, that you usurp for yourself the knowledge of true circumcision, while an evidently reprobate life convicts you as a transgressor of the law? Whence the Lord, the inspector of minds, spurned you glorying in the singularity of a false justice, and thereby tolerating a white spot (albuginem) in the eye, and chose this publican, whom you despise and by despising contemn, into the companionship of his own company: "Follow, he said, me; and rising, he followed him (Matt. 9)."

How strong and valid is the hand of this heavenly farmer! Namely, the tree clinging by its roots to the earth, and tenaciously brooding over mundane concupiscence, as soon as he shook it, he uprooted it, carried it away, and transplanted it into the land of the living. Where indeed "the just shall flourish like the palm tree and shall be multiplied like the cedar of Libanus (Ps. 91)." To whom surely, through the change of the right hand of the Most High, it was granted by a fitting disposition, that he should obtain the office not only of preaching, but also of writing, and thus merit to minister the heavenly treasure to the human race. Inasmuch as he who had despised the gains of earthly profit, should exist as a dispenser of heavenly talents, and faithfully bestow the treasures of heavenly eloquence which he had received to be imparted. That just as our Redeemer had already said to his fishermen: "Come after me, and I will make you become fishermen of men (Matt. 4)," so he might say in a way to this man: You who gasp after temporal gains, you who certainly pant impatiently that you may be enriched with gold or silver, follow me immediately, and soon I will make you dispense the immortal riches of the supernal kingdom through the breadth of the world. You indeed seek gold that will pass away with the world, and I will give you the treasure of the Gospel that will undoubtedly remain through all ages.

Hinc forte est quod de fluvio illo paradisi, qui apud Genesim Phison appellatur, ita legitur: «Quia circuit omnem terram Evilath, ubi nascitur aurum; et aurum terrae illius optimum est (Gen. II).» Sicut enim Phison primus est fluviorum de paradisi fonte procedentium, ita B. Matthaeus inter reliquos evangelistas primum obtinet locum. Satis ergo conveniens est, et intimae rationi aptissime congruit, ut sicut apud Phison optimum reperitur aurum, sic et apud hunc beatissimum evangelici ordinis primicerium intelligamus inesse thesauri coelestis incomprehensibile sacramentum. Cui profecto convenienter aptatur, quod per Salomonem dicitur: «Thesaurus desiderabilis requiescit in ore sapientis (Prov. XIV).» Ubi scilicet non fulva carnalibus oculis vena metalli vibrantis irradiat, sed mysticus intellectus vivifici spiritus splendore coruscat. Nec aurum hoc nutantibus lancibus emptor attrutinat, sed auditor potius in sui pectoris arca reconditum subtiliter librat.

Hoc aurum plane designabat et Moyses, cum de se tanquam de alio in Deuteronomio diceret: «Haec sunt verba, quae locutus est ad omnem Israel trans Jordanem, in solitudine campestri, contra mare Rubrum, inter Pharan, et Thophel, et Laban, et Aseroth, ubi auri est plurimum (Deut. I).» In loco sane, ubi divina lex fuerat promulgata, sicut dicitur, auri plurimum erat, quia sub aggesto illo superductae locutionis pulvere, multi gravesque thesauri coelestis sapientiae delitescebant et tanquam grana triticeo sub culmo litterae servabantur occulta. Et bene sanctis doctoribus, Moysi scilicet et Matthaeo, aurum aequaliter congruit, quorum alter in lege veteri, alter in Evangelico scribendi fecit initium, ut per hos utriusque Testamenti principes ostendantur his, quae scripserunt, inesse divitiae spiritales. Quanquam et hoc aurum, quod in Deuteronomio dicitur, specialiter B. Matthaeo congruere videtur. Deuteronomium siquidem secunda lex dicitur, per quam videlicet Evangelium designatur. Aurum ergo, quod in Deuteronomio dicitur, evangelistae Matthaeo non immerito congruit, qui secundam legem, hoc est, Evangelium primus omnium scripsit.

Nec ignorandum quod per quatuor illa loca, id est, Pharan, et Thophel, Laban, et Aseroth, inter quae videlicet divina lex datur, et inesse auri plurimum dicitur, quatuor evangelistarum numerus designatur. Inter quos nimirum, velut inter quatuor spiritalia loca, coelestis sapientiae thesaurus versatur in medio; dum per eos lex evangelica promulgatur. Quorum videlicet interpretationes nominum sub celeritate perstringimus, ut qualiter unumquodque cuilibet Evangelistarum specialiter congruat, exprimamus. Pharan plane ferus eorum, vel ferocitas, sive etiam frugifer dicitur.

Hence perhaps it is that concerning that river of paradise, which in Genesis is called Phison, it is thus read: "Because it encompasses all the land of Havilah (Evilath), where gold is born; and the gold of that land is the best (Gen. 2)." For as Phison is the first of the rivers proceeding from the fountain of paradise, so Blessed Matthew holds the first place among the other evangelists. It is therefore quite fitting, and most aptly agrees with intimate reason, that just as the best gold is found near Phison, so also in this most blessed first-leader (primicerium) of the evangelical order we should understand that there is the incomprehensible sacrament of the heavenly treasure. To whom surely fits what is said through Solomon: "A desirable treasure rests in the mouth of the wise (Prov. 14)." Where, namely, no yellow vein of vibrating metal radiates to carnal eyes, but a mystic understanding flashes with the splendor of the life-giving spirit. Nor does a buyer weigh this gold with nodding scales, but the hearer rather finely balances it stored in the chest of his own heart.

Moses also clearly designated this gold, when he said of himself as of another in Deuteronomy: "These are the words which he spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan, in the desert plain, over against the Red Sea, between Paran (Pharan), and Tophel (Thophel), and Laban, and Hazeroth (Aseroth), where there is very much gold (Deut. 1)." In the place, surely, where the divine law had been promulgated, as it is said, there was very much gold, because under that heap of dust of the superinduced speech, many and heavy treasures of heavenly wisdom lay hidden and were kept concealed like grains under the wheaten stalk of the letter. And well does gold equally fit the holy doctors, namely Moses and Matthew, of whom one made the beginning of writing in the old law, the other in the Gospel, so that through these princes of both Testaments there might be shown to be in those things which they wrote, spiritual riches. Although this gold also, which is spoken of in Deuteronomy, seems specially to fit Blessed Matthew. For Deuteronomy is called the second law, by which surely the Gospel is designated. The gold, therefore, which is spoken of in Deuteronomy, not undeservedly fits the evangelist Matthew, who was the first of all to write the second law, that is, the Gospel.

Nor should it be ignored that by those four places, that is, Paran (Pharan), and Tophel (Thophel), Laban, and Hazeroth (Aseroth), among which namely the divine law is given, and very much gold is said to be present, the number of the four evangelists is designated. Among whom surely, as if among four spiritual places, the treasure of heavenly wisdom is centered in the middle; while through them the evangelical law is promulgated. Whose etymologies of names we touch upon with speed, that we may express how each one specially fits any of the Evangelists. Paran plainly is called "their wild one" (ferus eorum), or "ferocity," or also "fruitful."

Quod nimirum beato non ambigitur convenire Matthaeo, qui, dum feroces Aethiopum populos ad praedicandum in propria sorte suscepit, eos tanquam mitissimas oves ad coelestis pascuae frumenta praevius pastor induxit. Thophel autem, sive Thobel, interpretatur offerre, vel ductus ad luctum. Quod utique S. Lucae manifesta ratione concordat, qui sub specie vituli victimam signat. Quia nimirum dum per totam Evangelii sui seriem saepius versatur in templo, et apostolorum de passione Domini luctum, et ipsum Dominum Salvatorem nunc in templo, nunc in ligno demonstrat oblatum. Aseroth autem vestibula, vel atria, seu beatitudinem sonat. Quod nimirum a B. Marco non discrepat, quoniam idcirco tanquam leo vox clamantis intonat in deserto, ut nobis vestibula, vel atria, sive etiam, quod optandum summopere est, beatitudinem parat in coelo.

Et notandus est ordo, quia prius ad vestibulum fidei Christianiae, deinde ad atrium supernae gloriae ducimur, ut aeterna mox beatitudine perfruamur. Laban postremo, quod candidatio dicitur, nulli melius congruit, quam Joanni, qui certe cuncta mundanae caliginis obscura contemnens, dum in eum qui candor est lucis aeternae (Sap. VII) radios cordis infixit, indeficientis thesauri nobis divitias patefecit. Et haec loca contra mare Rubrum esse dicuntur, qui tota quadriga sancti Evangelii contra cruentum dimicat mundum.

Sed auditis his quae de phrenetico Pharisaeorum ore proruperant, quid eis coelestis Sapientia responderit, audiamus: «Non est opus, inquit, valentibus medicus, sed male habentibus (Matth. IX).» Et Pharisaei plane male habentes erant, sed prae nimia infirmitate languorisque gravedine se esse languidos ignorabant, et quia se prorsus arbitrabantur incolumes, nullisque languorum molestiis deprimi, non merebantur oblata coelestis medici virtute curari. Cum vero, sicut asserunt, qui postquam experti sunt, ex illo periculo reviviscere potuerunt, ii qui fulminibus afflantur nil penitus sentiunt, cum illi qui vulnerantur, vel etiam levius affliguntur, sensum amaritudinis et molestiae non admittunt, sic isti immanissimo lethargi sopore depressi, eam, qua deprimebantur, aegritudinem ignorabant. Illos plane curatione sua dignos animarum medicus arbitrabatur, qui se debiles et aegrotos aspiciunt, qui se certa calamitate depressos et languidos veraciter ingemiscunt.

Which surely is not doubted to fit Blessed Matthew, who, while he received the fierce peoples of the Ethiopians to preach to in his own lot, like a preceding shepherd led them as most mild sheep to the grain of the heavenly pasture. Tophel, however, or Thobel, is interpreted "to offer," or "led to mourning." Which surely by manifest reason agrees with St. Luke, who signifies the victim under the appearance of a calf. Because surely while through the whole series of his Gospel he is more often engaged in the temple, he demonstrates both the mourning of the apostles concerning the passion of the Lord, and the Lord Savior himself now in the temple, now on the wood, offered as a sacrifice. Hazeroth, however, sounds like "vestibules," or "atria," or "blessedness." Which surely does not differ from Blessed Mark, because for that reason he thunders in the desert like the voice of a lion crying, that he may prepare for us the vestibules, or atria, or also, which is to be desired above all, blessedness in heaven.

And the order is to be noted, because first we are led to the vestibule of the Christian faith, then to the atrium of supernal glory, that we may soon enjoy eternal blessedness. Laban, finally, which is called "whitening" (candidatio), fits no one better than John, who certainly despising all the obscurities of mundane darkness, while he fixed the rays of his heart on him who is the "brightness of eternal light (Wisd. 7)," opened to us the riches of the unfailing treasure. And these places are said to be over against the Red Sea, because the whole four-horse chariot (quadriga) of the holy Gospel fights against the bloody world.

But having heard these things which had broken forth from the phrenetic mouth of the Pharisees, let us hear what heavenly Wisdom answered them: “It is not the healthy, he said, who need a doctor, but the sick (Matt. 9).” And the Pharisees plainly were the ones who were sick, but because of too much infirmity and the weight of their languor, they were ignorant that they were languid, and because they thought themselves entirely sound, and to be depressed by no troubles of languors, they did not merit to be cured by the offered power of the heavenly doctor. Since indeed, as they assert who after they have experienced it were able to revive from that danger, those who are struck by lightning feel nothing at all, while those who are wounded, or even more lightly afflicted, do not lack the sense of bitterness and trouble; so these, depressed by a most immense sleep of lethargy, were ignorant of the sickness by which they were depressed. Those plainly the doctor of souls deemed worthy of his cure, who see themselves weak and sick, who truly groan that they are depressed and languid with certain calamity.

Et o singularis et incomparabilis clementiae medicus, qui super semetipsum omnium infirmitates et aegritudines exaggerat, ut ex infirmitate sua languidus convalescat! «Vere» enim «dolores nostros ipse portavit; vulneratus est siquidem propter peccata nostra, attritus est propter scelera nostra (Isa. LIII).» Qui profecto, ut hominis sauciati vulneribus cicatrices valeant superinduci, gravia sibi vulnera sponte permisit infligi; imo non modo medendi nobis exhibuit curam, sed ipse nobis factus est medicina. Intra crucis quippe mortarium tritum est coeleste pigmentum, ex quo scilicet antidotum salutis aeternae produxit, per quod genus humanum antiqui serpentis virus evomuit. Quinque nimirum sunt Dominici corporis vulnera, et per quinque corporis sensus, quasi per fenestras totidem mors in hominem fuerat pestilenter ingressa. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: «Mors intravit per fenestras nostras (Jer. IX).» Illa ergo quinque vulnera quinque partiti sensus nostri facta sunt medicina. De quibus profecto vulneribus mutato nomine sponsus dicit in Canticis: «Surge, amica mea, sponsa mea, et veni, columba mea, in foraminibus petrae, in cavernis maceriae (Cant. II).»

Vocat amicam sponsus, id est, dilectam cujusque fidelis animam, cui Christus haec dicit: «Surge, amica mea, sponsa mea, et veni.» Noli, inquit, sponsa mea, otioso torpore lentescere, sed surge, et veni, hoc est, exempla virtutum proximis extrinsecus praebe. Quod vero subjungit, «columba mea in foraminibus petrae.»

Petra, sicut dicit Apostolus, est Christus (I Cor. X).

Et foramina ergo petrae, sunt vulnera Redemptoris. In his itaque foraminibus quaeque fidelis anima commoratur, quia totam suae salutis summam in Salvatoris sui passione constituit, et in ea spem suam collocans, de gloria sempiterna fida securitate confidit.

Et hoc modo forte valet intelligi, quod Apostolus ait: «Volo, inquit, in Ecclesia quinque verba sensu meo loqui, ut et alios instruam, quam decem millia in lingua (I Cor. XIV).» Id est, utilius judico passionem Domini, quae videlicet quinque est procurata vulneribus, et corde cognoscere et alios edocere, quam legem veterem, quae per Decalogum data est, multiplicibus verbis ad ostentationes inaniter praedicare. Haec nimirum quinque verba illis locutus fuerat, quibus postmodum aiebat: «Nihil me judicavi scire inter vos, nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum (I Cor. II).»

And O doctor of singular and incomparable clemency, who heaps upon himself the infirmities and sicknesses of all, that from his infirmity the languid might grow well! "Truly" for "he has borne our griefs; he was wounded indeed for our sins, he was bruised for our crimes (Isa. 53)." Who surely, so that the scars of the wounded man's wounds might be able to be closed, spontaneously permitted grave wounds to be inflicted upon himself; nay, he not only exhibited the care of healing to us, but he himself was made medicine for us. Within the mortar of the cross was ground the heavenly pigment, from which surely he produced the antidote of eternal salvation, through which the human race vomited out the virus of the ancient serpent. There are surely five wounds of the Lord's body, and through the five senses of the body, as through as many windows, death had pestilentially entered into man. Whence it is also said through the prophet: "Death has entered through our windows (Jer. 9)." Those five wounds therefore were made the medicine of our fivefold senses. Concerning which wounds the bridegroom says under a changed name in the Canticles: "Arise, my love, my bride, and come, my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the hollows of the wall (Cant. 2)."

The bridegroom calls his love, that is, the beloved soul of each faithful person, to whom Christ says these things: "Arise, my love, my bride, and come." Do not, he says, my bride, grow slow with idle torpor, but "arise, and come," that is, provide examples of virtues to those near you outwardly. What indeed he subjoins, "my dove in the clefts of the rock."

The rock, as the Apostle says, is Christ (1 Cor. 10).

And the clefts of the rock, therefore, are the wounds of the Redeemer. In these clefts therefore each faithful soul dwells, because it has placed the whole sum of its salvation in the passion of its Savior, and placing its hope in it, it confides with faithful security in eternal glory.

And in this way it can perhaps be understood what the Apostle says: "I wish," he says, "to speak five words in the Church with my mind, so that I may also instruct others, rather than ten thousand in a tongue (1 Cor. 14)." That is, I judge it more useful to know with the heart and to teach others the passion of the Lord, which was surely brought about with five wounds, than to preach the old law, which was given through the Decalogue, with manifold words for vain ostentation. These are surely the five words he had spoken to those to whom he afterwards said: "I judged myself to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2)."

Porro autem sicut in paradiso quatuor fluminibus ex uno fonte procedentibus, quinque fluenta sunt, quae totius mundi latitudinem irrigant, sic de paradiso Dominici corporis quinque partitus cruor effulsit, qui videlicet humani generis inquinamenta purgavit. Quanquam per illos paradisi gurgites, qui ex unius fontis origine prodeunt, luce clarius beati evangelistae signantur, qui nimirum de Christi plenitudine profluxerunt. In illo praeterea fronte loti sunt, quicunque commissorum veniam sunt consecuti. Ipse quippe, sicut Joannes ait, est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris; ubi et sequitur: «Non pro nostris autem tantum, sed et pro totius mundi (I Joan. II).» Hinc est quod Pharisaeis misericordiae viscera nescientibus, ait: «Euntes autem discite quid est: Misericordiam volo, et non sacrificium (Matth. IX).»

Videte, fratres charissimi, videte redemptionis humanae pontificem, videte nostrae salutis auctorem pro nobis stantem, et contra diaboli membra fortiter dimicantem. De illo plane dicit Apostolus: «Quoniam assistit vultui Patris et interpellat pro nobis (Rom. VIII).» Illic certe per humanitatis assumptae mysterium pro nobis intervenit hic sua misericordia accusantium, et immaniter oblatrantium ora concludit: Et quia, sicut idem Joannes ait: «Advocatum habemus, Jesum Christum justum (I Joan. II),» quasi advocatus pro nobis in examine litigat, et propriis allegationibus obloquentium nobis argumenta condemnat. Unde postquam nescientes misericordiam ad discendam misericordiam destinasset, dicens: «Euntes discite, quid est: Misericordiam volo, et non sacrificium (Matth. IX);» mox ad defensionem justitiae, et nostrae partis auxilium aliud etiam invictae rationis intulit argumentum. Ait enim: «Non enim veni vocare justos, sed peccatores (Ibid.).» Ac si dicat: Non veni vocare justos qui videlicet in nostra non sunt, sed peccatores qui omnes communiter sunt. «Omnes enim, sicut ait Apostolus, peccaverunt, et egent gloria Dei (Rom. II).»

Porro autem ut firmam spem peccatoribus daret, non illos ad apostolatus culmen elegit, qui credebantur inter homines justi et aliqua sanctitate videbantur insignes, sed vel ignaros justitiae, vel etiam peccatores. Hinc est quod non Zachariam, qui incedebat in omnibus mandatis et justificationibus Domini sine querela (Luc. I); non denique Nathanaelem, in quo dolus non erat et cui verum se praebebat Israelitam (Joan. I); non certe Simeonem, in quo Spiritus sanctus erat, cui etiam Christum Dominum, antequam moreretur, videndum esse promiserat (Luc. II); non ex his vel hujusmodi quemlibet ad apostolicae dignitatis culmen evexit, sed simplices potius ac peccatores hoc sublimandos esse fastigio judicavit;

Furthermore, just as in paradise there are four rivers proceeding from one fountain, so there are five streams which irrigate the breadth of the whole world; thus from the paradise of the Lord's body the fivefold blood shone forth, which surely purged the defilements of the human race. Although through those whirlpools of paradise, which come forth from the origin of a single fountain, the blessed evangelists are signaled more clearly than light, who surely flowed forth from the fullness of Christ. In that fountain furthermore were washed all whoever have attained the pardon of their committed sins. He indeed, as John says, is the propitiation for our sins; where it also follows: "Not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (1 John 2)." Hence it is that he says to the Pharisees, who did not know the bowels of mercy: "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice (Matt. 9)."

Behold, most beloved brothers, behold the high priest of human redemption, behold the author of our salvation standing for us, and fighting strongly against the members of the devil. Concerning him the Apostle plainly says: "Since he assists at the face of the Father and intercedes for us (Rom. 8)." There certainly, through the mystery of the assumed humanity, he intervenes for us; here by his mercy he closes the mouths of those accusing and barking immensely. And because, as the same John says: "We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the just (1 John 2)," he pleads for us in the trial as an advocate, and by his own allegations he condemns the arguments of those speaking against us. Whence, after he had destined those ignorant of mercy to learn mercy, saying: "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice (Matt. 9)"; soon for the defense of justice and the aid of our side, he also brought in another argument of invincible reason. For he said: "For I have not come to call the just, but sinners (Ibid.)." As if he were to say: I have not come to call the just who surely are not in our number, but sinners who are all in common. "For all," as the Apostle says, "have sinned, and lack the glory of God (Rom. 2)."

Furthermore, so that he might give firm hope to sinners, he did not choose to the height of the apostolate those who were believed just among men and seemed distinguished by some sanctity, but either those ignorant of justice, or even sinners. Hence it is that he did not elevate to the height of apostolic dignity Zacharias, who walked in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without complaint (Luke 1); nor finally Nathanael, in whom there was no guile and to whom he showed himself a true Israelite (John 1); nor certainly Simeon, in whom was the Holy Spirit, to whom he had even promised that he would see Christ the Lord before he died (Luke 2); he did not elevate anyone from these or such as these to the height of apostolic dignity, but rather judged that simple men and sinners were to be sublimated by this eminence;

ut unusquisque eorum veraciter dicat: «Gratia Dei sum id quod sum (I Cor. XV),» quatenus quod a summa provecti sunt, non propriis ascribant meritis, sed gratiae potius clementissimi deputent largitoris; cui sit gloria, decus et imperium in omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo LII.

*DE SANCTO MICHAELE ARCHANGELO. (XXIX SEPT.)*

Circa rerum cardinem versamur, et magnificentiam operum Domini stylo prosequimur impolito; nec est praesumptio, sed devotio, quia non temerarii scrutatores, sed pii pulsatores accedimus. Honoraverunt siquidem stylum majestas Virginis, et dignitas crucis, et utrumque praesumpsimus utroque salvati. Nunc ad angelos sermonem convertimus, et illius purioris naturae contemplamur originem, et hoc quidem convenienter. In primis namque locis illa duo prima posuimus, quae sibi primatum vindicant in rerum creaturis. Tertium autem locum sortiuntur angeli, sicut in coelo, ita in scripto, sentitque anima quod continet pagina, et auctoritas ratione munitur. Beata illa regio supernarum virtutum, in qua felices spiritus circumvolant Dominum Sabaoth, et sublimi pennarum applausu in plateis supernae Hierusalem: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus clara voce decantant. «Vidi, inquit propheta, Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, et plena erat omnis terra majestate ejus, et ea, quae sub ipso erant, replebant templum. Seraphim stabant super illud, sex alae uni, et sex alae alteri (Isa. VI).» Singula ista verba suo pondere librata sunt, et diligentissimam quaerunt expositionem, cujus nos immunes insipientia et ineloquentia fecit, aliquid nihilominus exculpere tentabimus, si non ita solemniter, veraciter tamen.

Visio haec corporalis non est, vel phantasticis involuta praestigiis, sed spiritalis et pura purioris intelligentiae desiderans sanctitatem. Hanc non vident nisi videntes, et qui mundi caliginem supergressi, splendorem divinitatis lucidissima mente suscipiunt? Et, ut breviter eam diffiniamus, Spiritus Dei nostro spiritui dulciter applicatus hanc efficit visionem, cum nos de praescientia cumulat futurorum. Hoc igitur modo ille totius prophetalis eloquence gloria vidit Dominum et sedentem.

so that each one of them may truly say: "By the grace of God I am what I am (1 Cor. 15)," so that what they are promoted to by the highest, they may not ascribe to their own merits, but rather depute to the grace of the most clement giver; to whom be glory, honor, and empire for all ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon LII.

*ON SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL. (SEPT. 29)*

We are turning around the hinge of things, and we pursue the magnificence of the works of the Lord with an unpolished style; nor is it presumption, but devotion, because we approach not as rash scrutinizers, but as pious knockers. The majesty of the Virgin and the dignity of the cross have indeed honored our style, and we have presumed both, having been saved by both. Now we turn our speech to the angels, and we contemplate the origin of that purer nature, and this indeed appropriately. For in the first places we have put those two first things which claim primacy for themselves among the creatures of things. But the angels obtain the third place, as in heaven, so in writing, and the soul feels what the page contains, and authority is fortified by reason. Blessed is that region of supernal virtues, in which the happy spirits fly around the Lord of Sabaoth, and with a sublime applause of wings in the streets of the supernal Jerusalem, they chant with a clear voice: Holy, holy, holy. "I saw," says the prophet, "the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated, and all the earth was full of his majesty, and those things which were under him filled the temple. Seraphim stood above it, six wings to one, and six wings to the other (Isa. 6)." Each of those words is weighed with its own weight, and they seek the most diligent exposition, from which our foolishness and ineloquence has made us immune; nevertheless we shall attempt to carve out something, if not so solemnly, yet truly.

This vision is not corporeal, or wrapped in phantastic deceits, but spiritual and pure, desiring the sanctity of a purer intelligence. Do any see this except those seeing, and those who, having overstepped the darkness of the world, receive the splendor of the divinity with a most lucid mind? And, to define it briefly, the Spirit of God sweetly applied to our spirit effects this vision, when he heaps us with the foreknowledge of future things. In this way therefore that glory of all prophetic eloquence saw the Lord, and him sitting.

Filius Dei triginta et tribus annis servus fuit non Dominus, minister, non magister, vilis, non gloriosus, et licet dixerit discipulis: «Vox vocatis me Magister et Domine, et bene dicitis; sum etenim (Joan XIII):» Et: «Ego sum lux mundi (Joan. VIII):» pauci tamen verborum altitudinem notaverunt, Pharisaeis invidentibus, Judaeis non credentibus, et illum arguentibus praesumptionis. Sed postquam resurrexit a mortuis, et in triumphali sede receptus est, imperatoria decreta propalata sunt urbi, fixitque Crucifixus in totam mundi latitudinem suae dominationis insigne. Jam majestativis nominibus circumfunditur ille pauper, et unicus, et servilium nominum vilitate dimota, Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium multa luce praefulgurat. Vidit ergo eum filius Amos, non humilem, sed sublimem; non judicatum, sed judicem; non opprobrium hominum, sed gloriam angelorum.

«Sedentem,» inquit. Triplicem legimus Creatoris sessionem, unam post mundi creationem, quando requievit ab omni opere, quod patrarat (Gen. II); aliam post ascensionem, quando assumptus est in coelum, et sedet a dextris Dei (Marc. XIX); tertiam post resurrectionem, cum sederit in sede majestatis suae, et nos cum eo sedebimus (Matth. XIX). Solet quietem labor praecedere, statio sessionem. Sed quando laboravit illa majestas, quae nec afficitur passione, nec labore distringitur? Audi quomodo plurimus ei labor incubuit, cum illum pessimum praesumptorem de coelis ad inferna detrusit, et hominem peccato pene simili comprehensum, de paradiso voluptatis in aerumnosum immisit exsilium. Quantum putas tumultum in coelestibus efferbuisse palatiis, cum mortifer ille vastator irreparabile dissidium in illa coelesti curia fabricavit, conventum angelicum proscidit, et nomina stellantia secum traxit in mortem? Desaevit tunc Omnipotentis indignatio, totaque divinitatis dextera percussus est inimicus, et in perditionis devolutus est abyssum.

Huic tam gravi damno, tam graviter vindicato successit et aliud. Peccavit namque ille, qui huic resarciendae ruinae fuerat subrogatus, propter quem omnia subcoelestia fuerant constituta. Peccante autem illo, multum splendoris sidereis detractum est luminaribus totamque elementorum materiam infectio deploranda confudit. Nondum aversus erat furor Domini, sed adhuc manus ejus extenta, et dexteram ejus singulari vulnere fatigatam provocavit in se fragilis et lutosa substantia, sensitque reliquias fulminei furoris miser homunculus, et personale delictum proscripsit universos. Deturbatur igitur tumultibus frequentibus rationabilium creaturarum, Dominus majestatis, et super suis hostibus vindicatus, cadentes angelos cum desperatione damnavit, et hominem castigavit in spe, praevidens quanta bona de illius peccato esset facturus. Et ob hoc forsitan angelicum peccatum in Scripturis non invenitur expressum, ne Scripturae mandaretur quod emendari non poterat.

The Son of God was a servant for thirty and three years, not Lord; a minister, not a master; vile, not glorious; and although he said to the disciples: "You call me Master and Lord, and you say well; for so I am (John 13)": And: "I am the light of the world (John 8)": yet few noted the height of the words, while the Pharisees were envying and the Jews were not believing, and were arguing him of presumption. But after he rose from the dead, and was received into the triumphal seat, imperial decrees were published to the city, and the Crucified fixed the ensign of his domination in the whole breadth of the world. Now that poor and unique one is surrounded by majestic names, and the vileness of servile names having been moved away, the King of kings and Lord of lords shines forth with much light. The son of Amoz saw him therefore, not humble, but sublime; not judged, but judge; not the reproach of men, but the glory of angels.

"Sitting," he says. We read of a threefold session of the Creator: one after the creation of the world, when he rested from all the work which he had performed (Gen. 2); another after the ascension, when he was taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God (Mark 16); the third after the resurrection, when he shall sit on the seat of his majesty, and we shall sit with him (Matt. 19). Labor is wont to precede rest, standing to precede sitting. But when did that majesty labor, which is neither affected by passion, nor distracted by labor? Hear how a very great labor lay upon him, when he thrust down that worst presumptuous one from the heavens to the hells, and sent man, caught in a nearly similar sin, from the paradise of pleasure into a troublesome exile. How much tumult do you think boiled forth in the heavenly palaces, when that death-bearing vastator fabricated an irreparable dissension in that heavenly court, rent the angelic assembly, and drew the starry names with him into death? Then the indignation of the Omnipotent raged, and the enemy was struck by the whole right hand of the divinity, and was rolled down into the abyss of perdition.

To this so grave a loss, so gravely vindicated, another also succeeded. For he sinned who had been substituted to repair this ruin, for whose sake all things under the heavens had been established. But when he sinned, much of splendor was taken away from the starry lights, and a deplorable infection confounded the whole matter of the elements. Not yet was the fury of the Lord turned away, but his hand was still extended, and a fragile and muddy substance provoked against itself his right hand fatigued by a singular wound, and miserable little man felt the remains of the lightning-like fury, and personal fault proscribed everyone. Therefore the Lord of majesty, being disturbed by the frequent tumults of rational creatures, and having been vindicated over his enemies, damned the falling angels with desperation, and chastised man in hope, foreseeing how much good he was going to make out of his sin. And for this reason perhaps the angelic sin is not found expressed in the Scriptures, lest there be committed to Scripture what could not be amended.

Requievit ergo Deus rationabili fine tantis malis imposito, sed rursus tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus, et peccantium hominum enormitate gravatus, delevit quem creaverat hominem, et diluvium inhabitare fecit (Gen. VII); nec hoc contentus, super Sodomam et Gomorrham ignem pluit, et sulphur (Gen. XIV); Aegyptios submersit in fluctibus (Exod. XVI), Israelitarum cadavera prostravit in eremo, ubique turbulentioris Domini repraesentans imaginem; ad extremum venit ipse in nube nostrae carnis abjectus (Luc. II), et dolorum particeps, et laborum didicit obedientiam ex his quae passus est (Hebr. V).

Consummata autem carnis susceptione, elevatus est in coelum, et sedet a dextris Dei (Marc. XVI); nec tamen sedet ad plenum, quia assistit adhuc vultui Dei pro nobis. Erit autem ei tertia sessio gloriosa, cum bonos et malos diverso fine, diversisque clausuris incluserit (Matth. XXV). Sedebit in sede majestatis suae, cum nos traxerit ad se, «et erit Deus omnia in omnibus (I Cor. XV).» Prima sessio est gratiae qua gratis omnia fecit; secunda misericordiae, qua nos misericorditer redemit; tertia gloriae, cum nos glorificabit. Attende autem sedentis gloriam et excellentiam sessionis, ubi nulla creatura consedere praesumit. «Seraphim, inquit, stabant (Isa. VI),» non sedebant. «Vidi Dominum, et universam militiam coeli assistentem ei (Ibid.),» ait propheta: assistentem dicit, non sedentem. «Millia millium ministrabant ei, et decies millies centena millia assistebant ei (Dan. VII),» Daniele testante. «Omnes angeli stabant in circuitu throni (Apoc. VII),» ait evangelista. Et alibi: «Vidi turbam magnam, quam dinumerare nemo poterat ex omnibus populis, et linguis, stantes ante thronum (Ibid.).» Sed et Virgo singularis astat a dextris in vestitu deaurato (Psal. XLIV). Moyses, ut videat transeuntem Dominum, stat in petra (Exod. XXXIII), et Elias stat in conspectu Domini, et omnis creatura imperatoriae majestatis assistit. Solus ille transfuga spiritus, dissensionis principium, princeps malitiae, malorum summa, voluit consedere. Sedebo, inquit, in monte testamenti (Isa. XIV). Omnes stant, omnes ministrant, et tu pacis inimice, sedere praesumis? Ipse Filius, idem quod Pater, sedere nescit, donec dicat ei Pater: «Sede a dextris meis (Psal. CIX).» Talem vidit eum Isaias, et Dominatorem universae terrae et in aureo throno suae divinitatis sedentem, in illa secunda sessione, quo carnem nostram coelis invexit.

God rested therefore, a rational end having been imposed upon such great evils; but again touched by grief of heart within, and weighted by the enormity of sinning men, he destroyed the man whom he had created, and made a deluge to inhabit (Gen. 7); nor content with this, he rained fire and sulfur upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19); he submerged the Egyptians in the waves (Exod. 14), he prostrated the carcasses of the Israelites in the desert, everywhere representing the image of a more turbulent Lord; at the end he came himself, abject in the cloud of our flesh (Luke 2), and a sharer of sorrows and labors, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered (Heb. 5).

But the assumption of the flesh having been consummated, he was elevated into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God (Mark 16); yet he does not sit to the full, because he still assists at the face of God for us. But there will be for him a third glorious session, when he shall have enclosed the good and the bad with a different end and in different enclosures (Matt. 25). He shall sit on the seat of his majesty, when he shall have drawn us to himself, "and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15)." The first session is of grace, by which he made all things freely; the second of mercy, by which he mercifully redeemed us; the third of glory, when he shall glorify us. But attend to the glory of the one sitting and the excellence of the session, where no creature presumes to sit together. "Seraphim," he says, "stood (Isa. 6)," they did not sit. "I saw the Lord, and all the host of heaven assisting him (Ibid.)," says the prophet: he says assisting, not sitting. "Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand assisted him (Dan. 7)," Daniel testifying. "All the angels stood in the circuit of the throne (Apoc. 7)," says the evangelist. And elsewhere: "I saw a great multitude, which no one could number, from all peoples and tongues, standing before the throne (Ibid.)." But also the unique Virgin stands at the right hand in gilded clothing (Psalm 45). Moses, that he might see the Lord passing by, stands on the rock (Exod. 33), and Elijah stands in the sight of the Lord, and every creature assists the imperial majesty. Only that fugitive spirit, the principle of dissension, the prince of malice, the sum of evils, wished to sit together. I will sit, he says, on the mount of the testament (Isa. 14). All stand, all minister, and you, enemy of peace, presume to sit? The Son himself, the same as the Father, knows not how to sit, until the Father says to him: "Sit at my right hand (Psalm 110)." Such Isaiah saw him, both the Ruler of the whole earth and sitting on the golden throne of his divinity, in that second session, by which he brought our flesh into the heavens.

Sequitur: «Super solium excelsum.» Excelsum solium angelicam naturam intellige, primam Omnipotentis creationem, et primaria dignitate praeditam potestatem. Super hanc sedet, et supervehitur filius Virginis, susceptum hominem ordinibus provehit angelorum, quia etsi melior est natura, fortior est gratia; si magna dignitas, major Dei voluntas, quam omni nexu naturae summus ille philosophorum astruit altiorem. Elevata est ergo magnificentia Dei non solum super coelos (Psal. VIII), sed et super angelos, quia tanto melior angelis effectus, quanto differentius prae illis nomen haereditavit (Hebr. I). Et plena erat majestate ejus omnis terra. Ipse Dominus Deus noster in universa terra judicia ejus (Psal. CIV), ait Psalmista. Et quomodo nunc post hanc ejus elevationem asserit Propheta omnem terram majestate ejus esse repletam? (Psal. LXXI.) Sed cum dicit plenam majestate, intelligit dicere majestatis cognitione quam ante ejus incarnationem aut nulli meruerunt, aut pauci. Sed nunc ab ortu solis usque ad occasum nomen Dei magnum (Psal. CXII) praedicatur in gentibus, suntque omnes docibiles Dei (Joan. VI), quos ejus unctio docet de omnibus (I Joan. II). Nam etsi in Israel magnum nomen ejus, non tantum jam uni angulo, sed toti mundo notitia se divinitatis infudit.

Sequitur: «Et ea quae sub ipso erant replebant templum.» Templum accipe civitatem Dei viventis, sponsam ejus, quae non habet maculam, neque rugam (Ephes. V). Sub ipso sunt incarnatio, passio, mors, et omnis illa horariae dispensationis molestia, quia resurgens ex mortuis jam non moritur (Rom. VI). Haec sunt quae replent Ecclesiam, quorum recordatio nobis annuas parit solemnitates. Replebitur in bonis domus tuae (Psal. LXIV), sanctum est templum tuum, quod tunc profecto mirabile est in aequitate, cum Ecclesia personas non accipit, respuit munera, veritatem eligit, diligit rationem.

Sequitur: «Seraphim stabant super illud, sex alae uni et sex alae alteri.» Duo Seraphim, angelum et hominem accipe: Qui incendentes, vel ardentes dicuntur, cum ille ardeat praesentia, hic memoria.

Primum de alis angelorum videamus, et quali volitatione ferantur; et quia nota est sententia illa, quomodo caput et pedes velent, et tantum media videantur, id est, quod fuit ante mundum, et quod post eum erit, his, quae in presentia sunt, aliquantulum apparentibus, Ezechielem adducamus in medium qui animalium alas hoc modo distinguit, dicens: «Duabus alis volabant, et duae pennae singulorum jungebantur, et duae tegebant eorum corpora (Ezech. I).» Prima eorum ala est, dignitas suae productionis. Transi parumper in arcanum hujus intelligentiae et dignitatem hujus considera creaturae.

It follows: "Above a high throne." Understand the high throne as the angelic nature, the first creation of the Omnipotent, and a power endowed with primary dignity. Above this sits, and is carried above, the Son of the Virgin; he promotes the assumed man to the orders of the angels, because although nature is better, grace is stronger; if the dignity is great, the will of God is greater, which that greatest of philosophers asserts to be higher than every bond of nature. The magnificence of God was elevated therefore not only above the heavens (Psalm 8), but also above the angels, because he was made so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more different name than they (Heb. 1). And all the earth was full of his majesty. The Lord our God himself, his judgments are in all the earth (Psalm 105), says the Psalmista. And how now after this his elevation does the Prophet assert all the earth to be filled with his majesty? (Psalm 72.) But when he says full of majesty, he intends to say with the knowledge of majesty which before his incarnation either none merited, or few. But now from the rising of the sun even to its setting the name of God is preached great among the nations (Psalm 113), and all are teachable by God (John 6), whom his unction teaches concerning all things (1 John 2). For although in Israel his name was great, the notice of the divinity has infused itself not only into one corner now, but into the whole world.

It follows: "And those things which were under him filled the temple." Take the temple as the city of the living God, his bride, which has neither spot nor wrinkle (Ephes. 5). Under him are the incarnation, passion, death, and all that trouble of the hourly dispensation, because rising from the dead he now dies no more (Rom. 6). These are the things which fill the Church, the record of which produces annual solemnities for us. Your house shall be filled with the good things (Psalm 65), your temple is holy, which then surely is wonderful in equity, when the Church does not accept persons, rejects gifts, chooses truth, loves reason.

It follows: "Seraphim stood above it, six wings to one and six wings to the other." Take the two Seraphim as the angel and the man: who are called inflaming or burning, since the former burns by presence, the latter by memory.

First let us see concerning the wings of the angels, and with what sort of flight they are carried; and because that sentence is known, how they veil the head and feet, and only the middle things are seen, that is, what was before the world and what shall be after it, with those things which are in the present appearing somewhat, let us bring Ezekiel into the midst who distinguishes the wings of the animals in this way, saying: "With two wings they flew, and two wings of each were joined, and two covered their bodies (Ezek. 1)." Their first wing is the dignity of their production. Pass for a little while into the secret of this intelligence and consider the dignity of this creature.

Ipsa est principium viarum Dei, ait Scriptura (Job XL). Quantum privilegium quod illa cogitatio Altissimi in hoc primum opus prorupit. Decebat profecto, ut singulari gloria praefulgeret, quod de manibus Dominantis primitiva creatione processit. «Tu signaculum similitudinis, plenus sapientia, et perfectus decore, in deliciis paradisi Dei fuisti, dicit propheta (Ezech. XXVIII).» Non solum similitudo, sed et signaculum similitudinis, ut tanto subtilius imago Dei insinuetur expressa quanto differentius signaculum similitudinem praecedit. Ubi autem plenitudo sapientiae, decoris perfectio, paradisi deliciae nominantur, tota simul jungitur beatitudo. Subdit autem Scriptura quod superexcellit et quod totius eloquentiae superat facultatem. Quem pretiosiorem fecit Deus. Hic dictum est quidquid dici potuit.

Secunda ala gratia est confirmationis. Haec ala feliciori velatu lassitudinem nescit, per omnia similis praecedenti, nec inferior. Cadentibus quippe praesumptuosis, et istis in humilitate durantibus incircumscriptus ille Spiritus remanentes summa prosecutus est largitate, dans eis in munere, ne possent amplius aliqua labefactione corrumpi. Confirmati igitur, et de sui status stabilitate securi, lucidioris gratiae subiere fastigium. Serviunt ergo illi, cui servire regnare est, et felici securitate, et secura felicitate. His duabus alis volant angeli volatione utique indefessa, et creati digniter et fortiter confirmati.

Tertia ala est singularis amor sui Creatoris; et haec quidem felicissima subtilibusque pennulis intertexta. Amant enim, et ardent, et desiderant in eum prospicere, cujus amore feliciter incenduntur. Quanto enim propiores, tanto ferventiores; et in lumen majestatis absorpti indicibili modo et semper ardent et semper satiantur.

Quarta est assidua visio divinitatis. Sed et haec pennis floridioribus intertexta. Quantae dignitatis est assidue videre Deum? Et illi quidem spiritus, etiam cum mittuntur, non fraudantur gloria visionis, quia ubique occurrit divinitatis essentia, quae intus est, omnia continendo, gubernando exterius. De his duabus scriptum est: «Duae pennae singulorum jungebantur (Ezech. I);» cum singularis amor ex assidua visione nascatur, et assiduam visionem singularis amor efficiat.

Quinta est gaudium nostrae Redemptionis, et ipsa multiplici picturata varietate. Quis verborum copia comprehendat quantum gaudium Deus homo virtutibus angelicis ingeneravit, cum et eorum collegam, qui ab eis exierat, sed non erat ex eis, vexillo crucis irruente, confregit, et hominem perditum ad regna revocavit coelestia? Nec mirum, quia videbant materiam repurgatam, de qua superna illa civitas reaedificatur, cujus participatio ejus in idipsum (Psal. CXXI).

It is the beginning of the ways of God, says the Scripture (Job 40). How great a privilege that that thought of the Most High broke forth into this first work. It was surely fitting that it should shine forth with singular glory, which proceeded from the hands of the Ruler in the primitive creation. "You were the seal of likeness, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty, you were in the delights of the paradise of God, says the prophet (Ezek. 28)." Not only likeness, but also the seal of likeness, so that the image of God may be insinuated as expressed so much more subtly as a seal more differently precedes the likeness. But where fullness of wisdom, perfection of beauty, and the delights of paradise are named, the whole beatitude is joined together at once. But the Scripture subjoins what excels even this and what surpasses the faculty of all eloquence. Whom God made more precious. Here was said whatever could be said.

The second wing is the grace of confirmation. This wing, by a more happy covering, knows not weariness, in all things similar to the preceding one, nor inferior. For when the presumptuous ones fell, and these endured in humility, that uncircumscribed Spirit pursued those remaining with the highest largesse, giving to them as a gift that they could no longer be corrupted by any slipping. Confirmed therefore, and secure concerning the stability of their status, they underwent the height of a more lucid grace. They serve him therefore, to serve whom is to reign, both with happy security and secure happiness. With these two wings the angels fly with a truly unwearied flight, both created worthily and strongly confirmed.

The third wing is a singular love of their Creator; and this indeed most happy and interwoven with subtle feathers. For they love, and burn, and desire to look into him, with whose love they are happily inflamed. For the nearer they are, the more fervent they are; and absorbed into the light of majesty in an unspeakable way, they both always burn and are always satisfied.

The fourth is the assiduous vision of the divinity. But this also is interwoven with more flowery feathers. Of how great dignity is it to see God assiduously? And those spirits indeed, even when they are sent, are not defrauded of the glory of the vision, because everywhere the essence of the divinity occurs, which is within, containing all things, and governing them outwardly. Concerning these two it is written: "Two wings of each were joined (Ezek. 1)"; since singular love is born from assiduous vision, and singular love effects assiduous vision.

The fifth is the joy of our Redemption, and it is pictured with multiple variety. Who with a copy of words may comprehend how much joy God-man generated in the angelic virtues, when he both broke their colleague, who had gone out from them but was not of them, with the standard of the cross rushing in, and recalled lost man to the heavenly kingdoms? Nor is it a wonder, because they saw the matter purged, from which that supernal city is rebuilt, the participation of which is in itself (Psalm 122).

Sexta est restitutio supernae civitatis. Sed et haec picturis pulchrioribus colorata. Quid enim erit, cum, illo terribili judicio peracto, Dominus virtutum homines angelis sociabit, resarciens damnum, redintegrans numerum, et unumquemque ordinem ex meritis hominibus ad summam revehet numeralem? Tunc sicut, laetantium omnium habitatio erit in civitate Dei (Psal. LXVIII), quia varietate partium ordinata, nil erat amplius quod repugnet, vel quod a statutis locis valeat elocari. De his duabus dicitur: «Duae tegebant corpora eorum;» quia gaudium nostrae redemptionis et restitutio supernae civitatis beatorum spirituum corpora contegunt et resarciunt, ne tam ruinosa diminutio in illa superiori gloria cognoscatur. Et attendendum quanta benignitas gratiae genus humanum in istis administratoriis spiritibus accumulet, quia pugnant pro nobis, ut illud: «Factum est praelium magnum in coelo (Apoc. XII).» Vincunt pro nobis, sicut ibidem subjungitur: «Nunc facta est victoria (Ibid.).» Gaudent pro nobis, quia est «gaudium angelis Dei super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente (Luc. XV);» Flent pro nobis, sicut scriptum est: «Angeli pacis amare flebant (Isa. XXXIII).» Hae sunt felices pennae, quibus ille numerosus ordo supervolat, stans inirritabiliter, alacriter volans, et in aeternitatem.

Sed jam redeundum est ad nos, et stylus ad nostram retorquendus humanitatem, quos ab angelico consortio corporeae voluptates et iniquae voluntates dividunt et abjungunt. Et licet in hanc degeneravimus vanitatem, portamus tamen imaginem Creatoris, quae, etsi obscurari potest, nequit tamen deleri. Universa vanitas omnis homo vivens (Psal. XXXVIII), ait justus, sed et in imagine pertransit homo.

Assignemus ergo sex alas homini, et si non tales, qualescunque tamen. Prima hominis ala revertentis ad Deum amaritudo cordis est. In multis offendimus omnes (Jac. III), et non est numerus offensionum nostrarum. Sed cum, accedente et accendente gratia Dei cor nostrum, recogitamus omnes annos nostros in amaritudine animae nostrae, obscuratam declaramus imaginem, et in nostrum principium reformamur.

Sed quia «corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem (Rom. X),» sequitur secunda penna, confessio videlicet oris. Ante omnia confessio, dicit Scriptura, nihilque Deo gratius est quam confiteri et accusare quod fecisti. Plena est omnis Scriptura sacra tantae virtutis testimonio, cui tam Veteris Testamenti quam Novi tota servit auctoritas; istae siquidem duae virtutes sunt, quae multiplicem cumulum scelerum nostrorum ante Dei oculos abscondunt. De his dicitur: «Duae tegebant eorum corpora. «Beati,» enim, «quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata.

The sixth is the restitution of the supernal city. But this also is colored with more beautiful pictures. For what will it be, when, that terrible judgment having been performed, the Lord of virtues shall associate men with angels, repairing the loss, reintegrating the number, and shall bring back each order from the merits of men to the numerical sum? Then as it were, the habitation of all rejoicing shall be in the city of God (Psalm 87), because with the variety of parts ordained, there was nothing further which might repugn, or which might be able to be moved from the established places. Concerning these two it is said: "Two covered their bodies"; because the joy of our redemption and the restitution of the supernal city cover and repair the bodies of the blessed spirits, lest so ruinous a diminution be known in that superior glory. And it is to be attended how great a benignity of grace heaps up the human race in these administrative spirits, because they fight for us, as that: "There was made a great battle in heaven (Apoc. 12)." They win for us, as is subjoined in the same place: "Now is victory made (Ibid.)." They rejoice for us, because there is "joy to the angels of God over one sinner doing penance (Luke 15)"; They weep for us, as it is written: "The angels of peace wept bitterly (Isa. 33)." These are the happy feathers with which that numerous order flies over, standing unirritably, flying eagerly, and into eternity.

But now we must return to ourselves, and the stylus must be turned back to our humanity, whom corporeal pleasures and iniquitous wills divide and separate from the angelic fellowship. And although we have degenerated into this vanity, we nevertheless carry the image of the Creator, which, although it can be obscured, cannot however be deleted. "Every living man is universal vanity" (Psalm 39), says the just man, but also "man passes in an image."

Let us therefore assign six wings to man, and if not such [as the angels'], nevertheless of whatever sort. The first wing of man returning to God is bitterness of heart. "In many things we all offend" (James 3), and there is no number to our offenses. But when, with the grace of God approaching and inflaming our heart, we think back on all our years in the bitterness of our soul, we declare the image obscured, and we are reformed into our principle.

But because "with the heart it is believed unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10), the second feather follows, namely, confession of the mouth. "Before all things, confession," says the Scripture, and nothing is more pleasing to God than to confess and accuse what you have done. All sacred Scripture is full of the testimony of such great virtue, to which the whole authority of both the Old and New Testament serves; for these are the two virtues which hide the manifold heap of our crimes before the eyes of God. Concerning these it is said: "Two covered their bodies." For "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Beatus vir, cui non imputavit Dominus peccatum (Psal. XXXI).» Imputavit, dixit, non fecit. Qui enim peccatum non fecit, non est, nisi unus, et hic Filius Dei. Omne autem quod ipse nobis non imputare decreverit, sic est, quasi non fuerit.

Tertia ala est spes. Haec est, quae fragiles animos erigit ad superna, quae taedium exspectationis levigat, quae praesumit de misericordia judicis, et in divinae pietatis obversatur palatio. Quarta est timor. Iste est, qui succurit carneam vestem nostram ossa penetrans et ipsis se infundens medullis. Offer paululum oculis cordis imaginem Domini, et illius Domini, qui fecit coelum et terram, qui potestatem habet corpus et animam mittere in gehennam (Matth. X); cujus patientiam provocasti, thesaurizans tibi iram in die irae et revelationis justi judicii Dei (Rom. I).

Cum haec intuitu diligentiori prospexeris, timor et tremor venient super te, et formido mortis interiorem hominem validius intervertet (Psal. LIV). Quia igitur spes multum praesumit et timor diffidit nimis, utrumque jungere non moreris, ut in communi faciant quod divisa non possunt. Disce sic sperare ut timeas; sic timere, ut speres. De his scriptum est: «Duae pennae singulorum jungebantur.»

Quinta est humilitas. Prope est Dominus his qui obtinuerunt cor, ait Scriptura. Humilitas est mater virtutum, superbia vitiorum regina, haec sola virtus virtutum nutrix, quam solam in Virgine matre respexit Altissimus; cujus quandiu conversatus est in terris Filius Dei, et exsecutor exstitit et magister: «Discite a me, inquit, quia mitis sum et humilis corde (Matth. XI).»

Sexta est charitas. Haec est principium et finis, bonorum clausula, singularis filia summi Regis. Superfluum est eam verbis prolixioribus commendare, cui alludit tam saecularium quam divinarum litterarum tota facundia. De his dicitur: «Duabus alis volabant.» His geminis alis illi pennati evolant ad superna, de quibus dicitur: «Frustra jacitur rete ante oculos pennatorum (Prov. I).» Quod si istis volaverimus, nec defecerimus, quandoque etiam pennis angelorum volabimus et videbimus illum in decore suo, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

OCTOBER. XVIII. Sermo de S. Luca Evangelista. XXVIII. Sermo de S. Fidele martyre.

## Sermo LIII.

*DE S. LUCA EVANGELISTA. (XXVIII OCTOB.)*

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not imputed sin" (Psalm 32). He said "imputed," not "committed." For he who has not committed sin does not exist, except one, and this is the Son of God. But everything which he himself shall have decreed not to impute to us, is so as if it had not been.

The third wing is hope. This is what raises fragile souls to supernal things, which lightens the tedium of expectation, which presumes upon the mercy of the judge, and dwells in the palace of divine piety. The fourth is fear. This is what succors our fleshly garment, penetrating the bones and infusing itself into the very marrow. Offer for a little while to the eyes of the heart the image of the Lord, and of that Lord who made heaven and earth, who has power to cast body and soul into hell (Matthew 10); whose patience you have provoked, treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God (Romans 2).

When you have looked upon these things with a more diligent gaze, fear and trembling shall come upon you, and the dread of death shall more strongly overturn the interior man (Psalm 55). Therefore, because hope presumes much and fear distrusts too much, do not delay to join both, so that in common they may do what divided they cannot. Learn to hope so that you may fear; to fear so that you may hope. Concerning these it is written: "Two wings of each were joined."

The fifth is humility. "The Lord is near to those who have obtained the heart," says the Scripture. Humility is the mother of virtues, pride the queen of vices; this alone is the nurse of virtues, which alone the Most High respected in the Virgin Mother; of which as long as the Son of God conversed on earth, he stood forth as both executor and master: "Learn from me," he said, "because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matthew 11).

The sixth is charity. This is the beginning and the end, the closure of good things, the unique daughter of the highest King. It is superfluous to commend her with more prolix words, to which the whole eloquence of both secular and divine letters alludes. Concerning these it is said: "With two wings they flew." With these twin wings those feathered ones fly out to supernal things, concerning whom it is said: "In vain is the net cast before the eyes of the feathered ones" (Proverbs 1). But if we fly with these, and do not fail, we shall at some time also fly with the wings of angels and shall see him in his beauty, who is God blessed forever and ever. Amen.

OCTOBER. XVIII. Sermon on St. Luke the Evangelist. XXVIII. Sermon on St. Fidelis the martyr.

## Sermon LIII.

*ON ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST. (OCTOBER 28)*

Quia per Evangelium, dilectissimi, de tenebris ad lucem reductus est mundus, merito evangelistarum gloriam celebrat populus Christianus. Sed inter caeteros B. Lucas, cui praesens famulaturus est sermo, dum gemina styli species, et evangelicam et apostolicam contexit historiam, tanquam diversis agrum Ecclesiae frugibus ditat, unde videlicet populus esuriens vivat, unde grex Christi virentia salutis alimenta decerpat. Hae plane sunt fruges, quas Joseph fratribus contulit (Gen. XLII); haec pecunia, quam in ore sacci praecepit imponi (Gen. XLIV). Haec pecunia nunc in Ecclesiae mensa proponitur, ut usura postmodum a negotiatoribus requiratur. Sed et Benjamin hoc etiam prae caeteris additur, ut in sacco ejus etiam scyphus cum pecunia reponatur (Gen. XLIV). Quem enim Joseph per mysterium indicat, nisi Redemptorem nostrum, quem suo jam tunc ille mysterio praefigurabat? Ait enim Scriptura: «Quia vertit nomen illius Pharao, et vocavit eum lingua Aegyptiaca Salvatorem mundi (Gen. XLI).» Quid per fratres, nisi sancti designantur apostoli? Quid per Benjamin, nisi Paulus, qui de tribu Benjamin originem duxit?

Omnes ergo fratres fruges praedicationis accipiunt, quae serere per mundum debeant, et pecuniam, quam ad usurae lucrum in fidei mensa proponant. Soli vero Benjamin etiam scyphus adjicitur, ut per Paulum, quem ille signabat, non tabernaculi cyathus gentibus, sed amplum et patulum verbi poculum propinetur. Hinc est enim, quod ait: «Os nostrum patet ad vos, o Corinthii, cor nostrum dilatatum est, non angustiamini in nobis (II Cor. VI).» Ac si dicat: Quia me vobis verbi potum per uberem scyphum large videtis influere, et vos sitibundi cordis ad hauriendum ora laxate, ut decurrens unda non inaniter fluat, sed capacia vasa, in quae transfundatur, inveniat. De quo videlicet potu per Isaiam Dominus dicit: «Glorificabit me bestia agri, dracones et struthiones, quia dedi in deserto aquas, flumina in invio, ut darem potum populo meo, electo meo (Isa. XLIII).» Quid enim bestia designat agri, nisi gentilitatem utique rationis expertem? Quid per dracones, nisi malitiosi? Quid vero per struthiones, qui pennati sunt, sed volare nequeunt, nisi hypocritae figurantur? Hae ergo bestiae Deum glorificant, dum Christus gentili populo, qui desertus erat et invius, exuberantis Evangelii verba propinat.

Because through the Gospel, most beloved, the world has been led back from darkness to light, the Christian people deservedly celebrate the glory of the evangelists. But among the others, the Blessed Luke, whom the present sermon is about to serve, while a twin kind of style weaves together both the evangelical and apostolic history, enriches as it were the field of the Church with diverse fruits, from which namely the hungry people may live, from which the flock of Christ may gather the greening nourishments of salvation. These clearly are the fruits which Joseph brought to his brothers (Genesis 42); this is the money which he commanded to be placed in the mouth of the sack (Genesis 44). This money is now proposed on the table of the Church, so that usury may afterwards be required from the negotiators. But to Benjamin this also is added above the others, that in his sack the cup also with the money be placed (Genesis 44). For whom does Joseph indicate through a mystery, except our Redeemer, whom he already then prefigured by his own mystery? For the Scripture says: "Because Pharaoh changed his name, and called him in the Egyptian tongue the Savior of the world" (Genesis 41). What is meant by the brothers, except the holy apostles are designated? What by Benjamin, except Paul, who drew his origin from the tribe of Benjamin?

Therefore all the brothers receive the fruits of preaching, which they ought to sow throughout the world, and the money, which they may propose at the table of faith for the gain of usury. But to Benjamin alone the cup is also added, so that through Paul, whom he signified, not the small cup of the tabernacle might be offered to the nations, but an ample and open cup of the word might be propounded. For this is why he says: "Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is dilated, you are not straitened in us" (2 Corinthians 6). As if he were to say: Because you see me pouring in to you the drink of the word largely through an abundant cup, you also loosen your mouths of a thirsty heart for drinking, so that the down-running wave may not flow in vain, but may find capacious vessels into which it may be transfused. Concerning which drink namely, through Isaiah the Lord says: "The beast of the field shall glorify me, the dragons and the ostriches, because I have given waters in the desert, rivers in the pathless place, to give drink to my people, to my chosen one" (Isaiah 43). For what does the beast of the field designate, except gentility surely devoid of reason? What by the dragons, except the malicious? What indeed by the ostriches, who are feathered but unable to fly, except hypocrites are figured? These beasts therefore glorify God, while Christ propounds the words of the exuberant Gospel to the gentile people, who were deserted and pathless.

Scyphus itaque evangelicae praedicationis, in Benjamin datus est Paulo, ut ipse desertum gentilitatis specialiter excolat, et ariditatem ejus largo sanctae praedicationis imbre perfundat: De quo scilicet imbre scriptum est: «Qui operit coelum nubibus, et parat terrae pluviam (Psal. CXLVI).» Unde et ipse Paulus, qui se apostolum et magistrum gentium esse testatur (II Tim. I), ait ad Galatas: «Cum vidissent quod creditum est mihi Evangelium praeputii, sicut et Petro circumcisionis. Qui enim operatus est Petro in apostolatum circumcisionis, operatus est et mihi inter gentes (Gal. II).» Ubi notandum quanta beati Pauli dignitas, quanta sit gloria. Nimirum qui beatum Petrum, et caeteros apostolos adhuc passibilis ac mortalis edocuit, ipse Paulum jam glorificatus et super angelos exaltatus instruxit.

Magister apostolorum exstitit Christus, cum hominum subjaceret injuriis; Paulum docere non dedignatus est, cum jam virtutum coelestium vallaretur obsequiis. Cum aliis degebat apostolis, dum nostrae mortalitatis adhuc infirma perferret; Paulum sibi familiarem fecit, cum, calcato ac potenter everso mortis imperio, paternae majestatis solio praesideret. Hinc est quod ait: «Notum vobis facio, fratres, Evangelium, quod evangelizatum est a me, quia non est secundum hominem, neque enim ego ab homine accepi illud, neque didici, sed per revelationem Jesu Christi (Gal. I).» Ideoque licet sancti apostoli per corporales obtutus cuncta Salvatoris nostri gesta perspexerint, in nulla tamen beati Pauli praecessere notitiam, dum idem hunc de coelo magister instruxit qui ante cum illis in terra corporaliter habitavit. Unde est quod ad Corinthios per interrogationem dicit: «Num sum apostolus? Nonne Jesum Dominum nostrum vidi? Nonne opus meum vos estis in Domino? (I Cor. VIII.)» Deo itaque revelante, ad tantam pervenit scientiae plenitudinem, atque ita perductus est in omnem evangelicae regulae veritatem ut, cum omnes superessent, apostolorum magisterio non egeret. Hinc est quod ad Galatas dicit: «Cum autem placuit ei qui me segregavit ex utero matris meae, et vocavit per gratiam suam, ut revelaret Filium suum in me, ut evangelizarem illum in gentibus, continuo non acquievi carni et sanguini, neque veni Hierosolymam ad antecessores meos apostolos (Galat. I).» Quando autem ierit, aperit, cum subjungit: «Deinde post annos tres veni Hierosolymam videre Petrum (Ibid.)» Videre, non discere.

And so the cup of evangelical preaching was given in Benjamin to Paul, so that he himself might specially cultivate the desert of gentility, and pour over its aridity a large shower of holy preaching: concerning which shower namely it is written: "Who covers the heaven with clouds, and prepares rain for the earth" (Psalm 147). Whence also Paul himself, who testifies that he is the apostle and teacher of the nations (2 Timothy 1), says to the Galatians: "When they had seen that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to me, just as to Peter that of the circumcision. For he who worked in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision, worked also in me among the nations" (Galatians 2). In which it is to be noted how great the dignity of blessed Paul, how great is his glory. Surely he who taught blessed Peter and the other apostles while yet passible and mortal, himself instructed Paul now glorified and exalt above the angels.

Christ stood forth as the teacher of the apostles when he was subject to the injuries of men; he did not disdain to teach Paul when he was already walled about by the services of the celestial virtues. He lived with the other apostles while he yet bore the infirmities of our mortality; he made Paul familiar to himself when, the empire of death having been trodden upon and powerfully overturned, he presided upon the throne of paternal majesty. This is why he says: "I make known to you, brothers, the Gospel which was evangelized by me, because it is not according to man, for neither did I receive it from man, nor did I learn it, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1). And therefore, although the holy apostles perceived all the deeds of our Savior through corporeal sights, they nevertheless did not precede the knowledge of blessed Paul in anything, while the same teacher who previously dwelt with them on earth corporately instructed him from heaven. Whence it is that he says to the Corinthians through an interrogation: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?" (1 Corinthians 9). Therefore, with God revealing, he arrived at such a fullness of knowledge, and was so led into all the truth of the evangelical rule that, although all survived, he did not need the magisterium of the apostles. This is why he says to the Galatians: "But when it pleased him who segregated me from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might evangelize him among the nations, immediately I did not acquiesce to flesh and blood, nor did I come to Jerusalem to my predecessors the apostles" (Galatians 1). But when he went, he opens, when he subjoins: "Then after three years I came to Jerusalem to see Peter" (Ibid.). To see, not to learn.

Sed dicet aliquis: Hic sermo non Lucam evangelistam, sicut promiserat, loquitur, sed in Pauli apostoli disputatione versatur. Verum plane, nec possumus diffiteri. Sed cum beatus Lucas ejusdem apostoli individuus comes exstiterit atque ab eo didicerit omne quod scripsit, ubi dignitatem praeceptoris exprimimus, alumni quoque praeconium non tacemus. Et doctoris laus redundat in discipulum, dum evangelicae veritatis historiam, quam ille livinitus didicit, hic ex ejus ore percipiens fideliter apicibus exaravit. Quantae ergo dignitatis quantaeque sit excellentiae B. Lucas, in hoc liquido deprehenditur, quia cum Marcus a beato Pedro edoctus, et Matthaeus atque Joannes, qui Evangelium descripserunt, Redemptoris nostri gesta in terra didicerint, iste solus, ut ita loquar, hoc Evangelium scribere meruit, quod e coelo descendit, dum scilicet hoc Spiritus sanctus Paulo coelitus revelavit, et postmodum per eumdem Paulum, quasi per organum suum, B. Lucae Christus innotuit. Hinc est quod ipse Paulus ait: «Ad experimentum quaeritis ejus, qui in me loquitur Christus (II Cor. XIII).»

De coelo ergo Christus in Paulum gestorum suorum sacramenta profudit, eademque per Paulum in Lucam, velut aurea fistula mediante, transfudit, ut huic beato viro non immerito congruere videatur, quod per Isaiam dicitur: «Primus ad Sion dicit: Ecce adsum; et Hierusalem evangelistam dabo (Isa. XLI).» Ideoque non casu, sed Spiritus sancti magisterio factum est, ut beatus Matthaeus, qui a conversante in terra Domino Evangelium didicit, quadraginta generationes enumerando descendat (Matth. I); Lucas vero septuaginta septem cognationum gradus ascendendo, describat (Luc. III). Per quadragenarium quippe numerum labor exprimitur, quo videlicet Christus in corpore suo, quod est Ecclesia, per diverse vitae hujus tempora fatigatur. Hinc est quod Moyses (Exod. XXIV) et Elias per quadraginta dies continuavere jejunium (III Reg. XIX). Sed et ipse Dominus sub eodem numero abstinuit a perceptione ciborum (Matth. IV). Per Moysen itaque lex, per Eliam prophetia, per Christum vero Novi Testamenti patenter intelligitur gratia. Per afflictionem ergo legis, prophetiae, simul, et gratiae, labor innuitur universalis Ecclesiae, per universa mortalis hujus vitae saecula fatigatae. Hinc est quod filii Israel aerumnis atque laboribus diutinae peregrinationis attriti, post quadraginta annos terram sunt promissionis ingressi (Jos. V.), quia videlicet omnes electi, post emensum hujus peregrinationis excursum, mox haereditario jure terram viventium possidebunt.

But someone will say: This sermon does not speak of Luke the evangelist, as it promised, but is occupied in the disputation of Paul the apostle. This is clearly true, nor can we deny it. But since blessed Luke stood forth as the inseparable companion of the same apostle and learned from him all that he wrote, where we express the dignity of the preceptor, we do not keep silent the praise of the alumnus. And the praise of the teacher redounds to the disciple, while the history of evangelical truth, which the former learned divinely, the latter, perceiving it from his mouth, faithfully inscribed with letters. Of how great dignity and how great excellence therefore Blessed Luke may be, is clearly detected in this, because while Mark, taught by blessed Peter, and Matthew and John, who described the Gospel, learned the deeds of our Redeemer on earth, he alone, so that I may speak thus, merited to write this Gospel which descended from heaven, while namely the Holy Spirit revealed this to Paul from heaven, and afterwards through the same Paul, as if through his own organ, Christ became known to Blessed Luke. This is why Paul himself says: "You seek an experiment of him who speaks in me, Christ" (2 Corinthians 13).

Therefore from heaven Christ poured the sacraments of his deeds into Paul, and transfused the same through Paul into Luke, as if a golden pipe were mediating, so that to this blessed man there seems not undeservedly to agree what is said through Isaiah: "First to Zion he says: Behold I am here; and to Jerusalem I will give an evangelist" (Isaiah 41). And therefore not by chance, but by the magisterium of the Holy Spirit, it was done that blessed Matthew, who learned the Gospel from the Lord conversing on earth, should descend by enumerating forty generations (Matthew 1); but Luke should describe seventy-seven degrees of kinship by ascending (Luke 3). Indeed, through the number forty, labor is expressed, with which namely Christ is fatigued in his body, which is the Church, through the diverse times of this life. This is why Moses (Exodus 24) and Elijah continued a fast for forty days (1 Kings 19). But also the Lord himself abstained from the perception of foods under the same number (Matthew 4). Therefore through Moses the law is understood, through Elijah prophecy, but through Christ the grace of the New Testament is clearly understood. Through the affliction therefore of the law, of prophecy, and at the same time of grace, the labor of the universal Church is hinted at, fatigued through the universal ages of this mortal life. This is why the sons of Israel, worn out by the hardships and labors of a long pilgrimage, entered the land of promise after forty years (Joshua 5), because namely all the elect, after the course of this pilgrimage has been measured, shall soon possess the land of the living by hereditary right.

Per numerum ergo, quem Matthaeus ordinat, susceptio laboriosae mortalitatis nostrae; per illum vero, quem Lucas posuit, indubitanter exprimitur mysterium nostrae redemptionis. Per illum similiter numerum edocemur quia Christus, juxta prophetiam, peccata nostra ipse portavit (Isa. LIII); per istum vero consequenter addiscimus, quia, secundum Apostolum, omnia nobis delicta donavit (Col. II). Ipse quippe est, Agnus qui oblatus est, quia ipse voluit (Isa. LIII); ipse est, qui et abstulit peccata mundi (Joan. I). Septuagenarius quippe septimus numerus, quem Lucas posuit, remissionem significat peccatorum, sicut ipse Dominus innuit, cum Petro quaerenti quoties essent dimittenda fratri peccata, respondit: «Dico tibi non tantum septies, sed usque septuagies septies (Matth. XVIII).» Nec mirum, si per hunc numerum, qui ab undenario et denario nascitur, humanae pravitatis abolitio designatur. Undenarius quippe numerus si septies multiplicatur, profecto septuaginta septem summa completur. Sed denarius qui perfectus est numerus, Decalogum signat. Per undenarium vero, qui hunc transgreditur, quid, nisi legalis transgressio, figuratur?

Cum ergo in tota illa summa legis, simul et transgressionis uterque numerus comprehendatur, quid mirum, si per eam scelerum remissio designetur? Septenarius plane numerus, qui supra Dominum in columba descendit, nostrae pravitatis undenarium abolevit. De quo scilicet charismatum numero per Isaiam dicitur: «Requiescet super eum Spiritus sapientiae, et intellectus; Spiritus consilii, et fortitudinis; Spiritus scientiae, et pietatis; et implebit eum Spiritu timoris Domini (Isa. XI).» Unde B. Lucas, ut expiari nos a nostris sceleribus per adventum nostri Salvatoris ostendat, non ab evangelicae narrationis exordio, sed a baptismo duntaxat, Christi cognationis ordinem inchoat. Quod etiam in libro Geneseos evidenter ostenditur, ubi Lamech uxoribus suis dixisse narratur: «Septuplum ultio dabitur de Cain, de Lamech vero septuagies septies (Gen. IV).» Ultio quippe de Lamech septuagies septies danda dicitur, quia septuaginta septem homines de femoribus ejus perhibentur egressi, ac, postmodum diluvio vorante, referuntur absorpti. Sed quia Lamech percutiens, sive percussus exprimitur, quid per hunc, nisi primus parens humani generis figuratur, qui nimirum peccati telum, quo primus ipse percussus interiit, universo quoque generi successurae posteritatis inflixit? De hoc ergo Lamech septuagies septies ultio data est, quia peccatum, quod primus homo contraxit per septuaginta septem generationes in humano genere viguit. Usque ad Christum siquidem peccatum originale permansit, quod ipse per baptismi sui (unde Lucas incipit) sacramenta delevit.

Therefore through the number which Matthew ordains, the undertaking of our laborious mortality [is signified]; but through that which Luke placed, the mystery of our redemption is indubitably expressed. Similarly through that number we are taught that Christ, according to prophecy, himself bore our sins (Isaiah 53); through this one indeed we subsequently learn that, according to the Apostle, he has given us all our offenses (Colossians 2). For it is he himself, the Lamb who was offered because he himself willed it (Isaiah 53); it is he who also took away the sins of the world (John 1). Indeed, the seventy-seventh number which Luke placed signifies the remission of sins, as the Lord himself hinted when, to Peter asking how many times sins were to be forgiven to a brother, he replied: "I say to you not only seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matthew 18). Nor is it a wonder if through this number, which is born from eleven and ten, the abolition of human depravity is designated. Indeed, the number eleven, if it is multiplied seven times, surely the sum of seventy-seven is completed. But the number ten, which is perfect, signifies the Decalogue. But through the number eleven, which transgresses this, what is figured except the legal transgression?

Since therefore in that whole sum of the law, and at the same time of the transgression, both numbers are comprehended, what wonder if through it the remission of crimes is designated? Clearly the sevenfold number, which descended upon the Lord in a dove, abolished the eleven-fold [number] of our depravity. Concerning which number namely of charisms it is said through Isaiah: "The Spirit of wisdom and of understanding shall rest upon him; the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude; the Spirit of knowledge and of piety; and he shall fill him with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11). Whence Blessed Luke, so that he may show us to be expiated from our crimes through the advent of our Savior, begins the order of the kinship of Christ not from the beginning of the evangelical narration, but only from the baptism. Which also is evidently shown in the book of Genesis, where Lamech is narrated to have said to his wives: "Sevenfold vengeance shall be given concerning Cain, but concerning Lamech seventy times seven" (Genesis 4). Indeed vengeance is said to be given seventy times seven concerning Lamech, because seventy-seven men are recorded to have gone out from his loins, and, afterwards with the flood devouring, are reported to have been absorbed. But because Lamech is expressed as either striking or struck, what is figured through him except the first parent of the human race, who surely inflicted the weapon of sin, by which he himself first struck perished, also upon the whole race of the succeeding posterity? Concerning this Lamech therefore seventy times seven vengeance was given, because the sin which the first man contracted flourished through seventy-seven generations in the human race. Indeed original sin remained until Christ, which he himself deleted through the sacraments of his baptism (from where Luke begins).

Ubi videlicet de illo dicitur: «Ecce Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi (Joan. I).»

Redemptionis ergo nostrae materiam uterque sanctus evangelista sic invicem dividunt, et narrationis partem sibi quisque congruam sumunt ut Matthaeus per generationum lineam descendendo, Christum ad nos peccatores de coelis advenisse perhibeat; Lucas autem a sacramento baptismatis ad patrem usque conscendens, traxisse nos secum ad coelestem gloriam peccatorum sordibus ablutos ostendat. Ille siquidem astruit Christum ad terram misericorditer descendentem; iste fatetur eum nos ad coelestia sublevantem. Ostendit ille pastorem nonagintanovem oves in desertis pascuis relinquentem; docet iste, quam perdiderat, ovem scapulis impositam ad ovile proprium revocantem (Matth. XVIII; Luc. XV). Ille perhibet descendisse medicum ad aegrotos; fatetur iste ad incolumitatis aeternae gaudia secum nos reduxisse sanatos. Ostendit ille solum Unigenitum a Patre ad nos missum; docet iste quoniam ad coelestem patriam multitudinem transtulit electorum.

Porro utriusque evangelistae intentionem una B. Apostolus sententia comprehendit, dicens: «Misit Deus Filium suum in similitudinem carnis peccati, ut de peccato damnaret peccatum in carne (Rom. VIII).» Nam cum dicit: «Misit Deus Filium suum in similitudinem carnis peccati;» ostendit susceptionem mortalitatis nostrae, quam Matthaeus aperte declarat, cum ad Abraham descendendo, quadraginta generationes enumerat. Cum vero subjungit: «Et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne,» abolitionem perhibet peccatorum, quam Lucas indubitanter exprimit, cum septuaginta septem cognationum lineam texit. Quam videlicet utramque sententiam idem Paulus uno alibi versiculo complexus est, dicens: «Jesus Christus traditus est propter delicta nostra, et resurrexit propter justificationem nostram (Rom. IV).» Descendit enim Christus ut nos a peccatis eriperet: surrexit autem ut candore justitiae nitidos exhiberet.

Quae nimirum utriusque beati evangelistae diversitas etiam in hoc evidenter ostenditur, quia Matthaeus per Salomonem, in cujus matre David per adulterium corruit, Dominicae generationis lineam descendendo producit; Lucas autem per Nathan ascendit, per cujus videlicet aequivocum prophetam hoc ipsum ejusdem David peccatum Dominus expiavit, et sic quasi lapsum miseratus erexit. Ille itaque docet Dei Filium ad nos humiliter inclinatum; iste pronuntiat nobiscum simul cum triumphali gloria coelitus exaltatum. Descendit enim Christus ad jacentes, ut eos secum provehat in astra victores. Unde non sine divino factum praesagio creditur quod beatus hic evangelista tali vocabulo nuncupatur. Lucas enim Hebraice, ipse consurgens sive elevans vertitur in Latinum.

Where namely it is said of him: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1).

The matter therefore of our redemption both holy evangelists thus divide in turn, and each takes for himself the congruous part of the narration, so that Matthew, by descending through the line of generations, may report that Christ came from the heavens to us sinners; but Luke, by ascending from the sacrament of baptism up to the Father, may show that he has drawn us with himself to celestial glory, having been washed from the filths of sins. The former surely asserts Christ mercifully descending to the earth; the latter confesses him lifting us up to celestial things. The former shows the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine sheep in the deserted pastures; the latter teaches [him] bringing back the sheep which he had lost, placed upon his shoulders, to his own sheepfold (Matthew 18; Luke 15). The former reports the physician descended to the sick; the latter confesses that he has led back us, having been healed, with himself to the joys of eternal safety. The former shows only the Only-begotten sent from the Father to us; the latter teaches because he transferred a multitude of the elect to the celestial fatherland.

Furthermore, the Blessed Apostle comprehends the intention of both evangelists in one sentence, saying: "God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, so that concerning sin he might condemn sin in the flesh" (Romans 8). For when he says: "God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin," he shows the undertaking of our mortality, which Matthew openly declares when, by descending to Abraham, he enumerates forty generations. But when he subjoins: "And concerning sin he condemned sin in the flesh," he reports the abolition of sins, which Luke indubitably expresses when he weaves the line of seventy-seven kinships. Which both sentences namely the same Paul elsewhere embraced in one little verse, saying: "Jesus Christ was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification" (Romans 4). For Christ descended that he might rescue us from sins; but he rose that he might exhibit [us] shining with the brightness of justice.

Which diversity of both blessed evangelists namely is also evidently shown in this: that Matthew, through Solomon, in whose mother David fell through adultery, produces the line of the Lord's generation by descending; but Luke ascends through Nathan, through whose namesake prophet namely the Lord expiated this very sin of the same David, and thus as if having pitied the one who had fallen, he raised him up. The former therefore teaches the Son of God humbly inclined toward us; the latter pronounces Him exalted from heaven together with us in triumphal glory. For Christ descended to those lying prostrate, so that he might advance them as victors with himself into the stars. Whence it is believed to have been done not without a divine presage that this blessed evangelist is called by such a name. For Luke in Hebrew is turned into Latin as himself rising or lifting up.

Hoc igitur in proprio nomine praetulit quod ipse postmodum de Salvatore conscripsit. Redemptor enim noster et ipse de morte surrexit, et nos ad coelestia viventes de mortuis elevavit. Unde et per Apostolum dicitur: «Qui nos conresuscitavit, et consedere fecit secum in coelestibus (Ephes. II).» Ipse itaque principaliter consurgens, sive elevans dicitur, quoniam ad hoc de morte surrexit, ut nos in morte prostratos erigeret: ad hoc ascendit in coelum, ut secum nos ad coelestia sublevaret. Quod igitur B. Lucas de Christo scribendo perhibuit, hoc quasi prophetice proprio nomine designavit. Et hoc magnum certe mysterium, quod B. Lucas a baptismo Salvatoris incipit, et usque ad Deum Patrem generationum lineam ascendendo producit. Per lavacrum quippe sacri baptismatis a peccatis abluimur, et sic Deo Patri per Mediatorem Dei et hominum reconciliamur. In baptismo itaque est nostrae ascensionis initium, et sic ad Deum a viventibus pervenitur per boni operis incrementum.

Nec praetereundum quia cum Redemptor noster verus utique sit rex et sacerdos, sicut B. Matthaeus regiam ejus texuit describendo progeniem; sic e diverso Lucas sacerdotalem indicat per omnem textum sui voluminis dignitatem. In sacerdotali quippe plerumque versatur officio, et dum diversa Dominici operis gesta percurrit, ab his tamen quae ad sacerdotium pertinent, non recedit. Modo enim sacerdoti delegatum narrat officium, modo progeniem, modo vicem, modo sacrificium, modo nominat templum, et cum plurima intra sacrae historiae seriem comprehendat, intentione tamen, qua coeperat, prosequendi sacerdotii perseverat. Nam ipso suae narrationis initio sic exorsus est, dicens: «Fuit in diebus Herodis regis Judaeae sacerdos quidam, nomine Zacharias, de vice Abia, et uxor illius de filiabus Aaron (Luc. I).» Deinde ipsum sacerdotem ad adolendum ante altare sacrificium statuit. Postmodum quoque ad ejusdem sacerdotis domum Mariam virginem dirigit. Tria quoque cantica in Ecclesia cantanda describit, quod nullum evangelistarum praeter eum fecisse reperitur: unum scilicet Zachariae, secundum Mariae, tertium Simeonis (Luc. I et II). Quadragesimo vero die postquam natus est, Dominum cum mulieribus in templo narrat oblatum. Deinde duodennem in eodem templo inter doctores constituit residentem. Parentes quoque Domini narrat per singulos annos in solemnitate paschali orationis gratia Hierusalem ascendere solitos. Postremo Evangelium suum hoc fine concludit, ut dicat: «Ipsi adorantes regressi sunt in Hierusalem cum gaudio magno, et erant semper in templo laudantes, et benedicentes Deum (Luc. XXIV).»

This therefore he preferred in his own name which he himself afterwards wrote concerning the Savior. For our Redeemer himself also rose from death, and lifted us up, living, from the dead to celestial things. Whence also it is said by the Apostle: "Who has raised us up together with him, and made us sit together in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2). He therefore is principally called "rising" or "lifting up," since he rose from death for this purpose, that he might raise us prostrate in death: for this he ascended into heaven, that he might lift us up with himself to celestial things. What therefore Blessed Luke reported by writing concerning Christ, this he designated as if prophetically by his own name. And this certainly is a great mystery, that Blessed Luke begins from the baptism of the Savior, and produces the line of generations by ascending even unto God the Father. For through the washing of sacred baptism we are cleansed from sins, and thus we are reconciled to God the Father through the Mediator of God and men. In baptism therefore is the beginning of our ascension, and thus one arrives to God from those living through the increase of good work.

Nor must it be passed over that since our Redeemer is truly both king and priest, just as Blessed Matthew wove His royalty by describing His progeny, so on the other hand Luke indicates the priestly dignity through the whole text of his volume. Indeed, he is mostly occupied in the priestly office, and while he runs through the diverse deeds of the Lord's work, he nevertheless does not recede from those things which pertain to the priesthood. For now he narrates the office delegated to the priest, now the progeny, now the turn, now the sacrifice, now he names the temple, and although he comprehends very many things within the series of sacred history, he nevertheless perseveres in the intention of following the priesthood which he had begun. For from the very beginning of his narration he thus started, saying: "There was in the days of Herod, king of Judea, a certain priest, named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron" (Luke 1). Then he placed the priest himself before the altar to offer the sacrifice. Afterwards also he directs the Virgin Mary to the house of the same priest. He also describes three canticles to be sung in the Church, which none of the evangelists is found to have done besides him: one namely of Zechariah, the second of Mary, the third of Simeon (Luke 1 and 2). On the fortieth day truly after he was born, he narrates the Lord offered in the temple with the women. Then he constituted him at twelve years old sitting in the same temple among the teachers. He also narrates that the parents of the Lord were accustomed to ascend to Jerusalem every single year on the solemnity of the Passover for the sake of prayer. Finally, he concludes his Gospel with this, so that he says: "They, adoring, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were always in the temple praising and blessing God" (Luke 24).

Unde fit ut B. Lucas vituli speciem teneat, sicut et Ezechiel propheta (Ezech. I) et Joannes Evangelista (Apoc. IV) se vidisse pronuntiant. Vitulus siquidem in templo solebat offerri. Et bene vitulus, quia sacrae linguae vomere cordis nostri arva prosulcat, eaque evangelici seminis jactu vitali fruge fecundat. Vel certe idcirco B. Lucas vituli praetendit imaginem, quia dum evangelicam atque apostolicam describit historiam, hostes Christi atque adversarios verae fidei, tanquam duobus cornibus ventilat, eosque, ne aream catholicae Ecclesiae depopulentur, expugnat. His itaque cornibus praemunitur, quibus et Judaeos feriat non credentes, et haereticos hinc inde concludat a regula verae fidei declinantes.

Scripsit itaque B. Lucas apostolorum labores, et actus, quibus et ipse collaborator interfuit. Scripsit et Evangelium, quod quasi signatum magni thesauri pondus de coelo percepit. Cui videlicet illud Isaiae vaticinium congruenter aptatur, quo dicitur: «Et erit vobis visio omnium, sicut verba libri signati, quem cum dederint scienti litteras, dicent: Lege istum, et respondebit: Non possum: signatum est enim (Isa. XXIX).» Quis enim est liber ille signatus, nisi sanctum Evangelium mysticis figuratum sententiis obvolutum, et ab humanae mentis intelligentia procul arcana quadam profunditate remotum? Hic profecto liber ille est, de quo Joannes ait: «Vidi in dextera sedentis supra thronum librum scriptum intus, et foris, signatum sigillis septem (Apoc. V).» Quae sunt autem sigilla, quibus liber evangelicus obsignatus dicitur, nisi septem illa sacramenta, quibus utique totus ordo Dominicae dispensationis impletur? videlicet incarnatio Domini, nativitas, passio, resurrectio, ad coelos ascensio, deinde judicium, postremo regnum? His itaque sigillis liber evangelicus ita signatus est, ut nisi eum Christus aperuisset, cuilibet omnino patere non posset. Unde subjungitur: «Ecce vicit leo de tribu Juda, radix David, aperire librum, et solvere septem signacula ejus (Apoc. V).» In Actibus vero apostolorum dum quasi nudam narrat historiam, quodammodo nascentis Ecclesiae teneram lactat infantiam.

Whence it happens that Blessed Luke holds the appearance of a calf, just as both the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1) and John the Evangelist (Apocalypse 4) pronounce themselves to have seen. For the calf was accustomed to be offered in the temple. And well a calf, because it furrows the fields of our heart with the plow of the sacred language, and fecundates them with the vital fruit by the casting of the evangelical seed. Or certainly for this reason Blessed Luke holds forth the image of the calf, because while he describes the evangelical and apostolic history, he winnows the enemies of Christ and the adversaries of the true faith as if with two horns, and he expels them, lest they depopulate the floor of the catholic Church. With these horns therefore he is fortified, with which he may both strike the non-believing Jews, and from here and there conclude the heretics declining from the rule of the true faith.

He wrote therefore Blessed Luke the labors of the apostles, and the acts, in which he himself as a collaborator was present. He wrote also the Gospel, which he perceived from heaven as if a sealed weight of a great treasure. To which namely that prophecy of Isaiah is congruously adapted, by which it is said: "And the vision of all shall be to you as the words of a sealed book, which when they shall have given to one who knows letters, they shall say: Read this, and he shall answer: I cannot: for it is sealed" (Isaiah 29). For what is that sealed book, except the holy Gospel figured with mystic sentences, enveloped, and removed far from the intelligence of the human mind by a certain secret depth? This indeed is that book, concerning which John says: "I saw in the right hand of him sitting upon the throne a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals" (Apocalypse 5). But what are the seals, with which the evangelical book is said to be signed, except those seven sacraments, by which surely the whole order of the Lord's dispensation is fulfilled? namely the incarnation of the Lord, his birth, passion, resurrection, ascension into heaven, then judgment, finally the kingdom? With these seals therefore the evangelical book is thus signed, so that unless Christ had opened it, it could not be open to anyone at all. Whence it is subjoined: "Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered to open the book, and to loose its seven seals" (Apocalypse 5). But in the Acts of the Apostles while he narrates as if a naked history, he in a certain way suckles the tender infancy of the nascent Church.

Sed si diligenter attendimus quia medicus est ille qui scribit, nil aliud in illa reperimus historia, nisi duntaxat animarum languentium medicinam. Humanae quippe conversationi, quasi quamdam rectitudinis lineam tendit, et per eam nos velut per semitam dirigit; ut sicut primitivam Ecclesiam vixisse perpendimus, in quantum facultas suppetit, et ipsi vivere studeamus, quatenus eadem puritas, quae de origine fontis emanat, etiam per declivia nihilominus postrema decurrat, et qualis oriendo progreditur, talis in fine servetur. Unus est enim ipse de quatuor fluminibus paradisi, qui videlicet uberibus doctrinae suae fluentis universam mundi latitudinem irrigavit. De quibus videlicet aquis per Isaiam dicitur: «Scissae sunt in deserto aquae, et torrentes in solitudine, et quae erat arida in stagnum, et sitiens in fontes aquarum (Isa. XXXV).»

Recurramus itaque, dilectissimi, ad innocentiam primitivae Ecclesiae, ut discamus, et possessa relinquere, et in regiae paupertatis simplicitate gaudere. Non in ima nos terrenae substantiae pondus deprimat, quod ad supernae Hierusalem gloriam Rex coelestis invitat. Nos non ab hoc temere carnalis illecebrae retrahat lenocinium, quibus utique per praecedentis nostri Redemptoris introitum patet aula coelorum. Nam dum generationis ejus ordo ab humilitate baptismatis ad Patrem usque producitur, liquet procul dubio, quia patriae coelestis ingressum se sequentibus pollicetur, et quo prior introivit, sibi ministrantibus viam stravit. «Volo, inquit Pater, ut ubi ego sum, illic sit et minister meus (Joan. XII);» ut nimirum ad caput se membra colligant, et (sicut eodem spondente promittitur) ubi fuerit corpus et aquilae congregentur (Matth. XXIV)

## Sermo LIV.

*DE SANCTO FIDELE MARTYRE. (XXVIII OCTOBR.)*

Nostis, fratres charissimi, quia idcirco ad audiendas martyrum Christi victorias frequenter ex institutione ecclesiastica convenimus, ut dum eorum gestis instruimur, ad amorem coelestis patriae, quam viriliter decertantes adepti sunt, ferventius accendamur; dumque illos audivimus edicta regum, minas principum, tribunalia judicum contemnentes, tot suppliciorum genera percurrisse, pudeat ingenuos fidelium animos saltem carnis suae vitiis non obsistere.

But if we diligently attend because he is a physician who writes, we find nothing else in that history except namely the medicine of languishing souls. For to human conduct, he as if extends a certain line of rectitude, and through it he directs us as if through a path; so that just as we consider the primitive Church to have lived, in as much as faculty is available, we also may study to live, so that the same purity, which emanates from the origin of the fountain, may also flow down nevertheless through the following descents, and such as it proceeds in arising, such it may be preserved in the end. For he himself is one of the four rivers of paradise, who namely through the flowing breasts of his doctrine has irrigated the whole breadth of the world. Concerning which waters namely it is said through Isaiah: "Waters are broken out in the desert, and torrents in the solitude, and that which was dry into a pool, and the thirsty into fountains of waters" (Isaiah 35).

Let us recur therefore, most beloved, to the innocence of the primitive Church, that we may learn both to relinquish possessed things, and to rejoice in the simplicity of royal poverty. Let not the weight of earthly substance depress us into the depths, since the celestial King invites to the glory of the supernal Jerusalem. Let not that allurements of carnal seduction rashly retract us from this, for whom surely the court of the heavens is open through the entry of our preceding Redeemer. For while the order of his generation is produced from the humility of baptism even up to the Father, it is clear beyond a doubt, that he promises the entrance of the celestial fatherland to those following him, and where he first entered, he paved the way for those ministering to him. "I will," says the Father, "that where I am, there also my minister may be" (John 12); so that surely the members may collect themselves to the head, and (as is promised by the same one pledging) where the body shall be, there also the eagles may be gathered (Matthew 24).

## Sermon LIV.

*ON ST. FIDELIS THE MARTYR. (OCTOBER 28)*

You know, most beloved brothers, that for this reason we frequently assemble from ecclesiastical institution to hear the victories of the martyrs of Christ, so that while we are instructed by their deeds, we may be more fervently kindled to the love of the celestial fatherland, which they obtained by manfully contending; and while we heard those ones contemning the edicts of kings, the threats of princes, the tribunals of judges, [and] having run through so many kinds of torments, it may shame the noble minds of the faithful at least not to resist the vices of their own flesh.

Pudendum namque est sic bellatorum Christi spectare victorias, ut dum alios triumphalibus titulis insignitos, spolia ex hostibus reportare conspicimus, ipsi in pace domestica subrepentibus vitiis, velut insidiantibus adversariis enerviter succumbamus. Porro autem beati martyres, et antequam in certamine sanguinem funderent, diversis floruere virtutibus. Nobis autem, quia pro defensione fidei mori non possumus, consummata victoria est, si in sanctarum conversatione virtutum vivere studeamus, ut inde nos protinus transferamur ad regnum, unde illi meruere martyrium. Ex vitae quippe meritis, quibus illi obtinere meruerunt sui certaminis palmam, inde nos absque ullo persecutionis obstaculo perducimur ad coronam.

Aliud igitur in sanctis martyribus solummodo venerari et admirari debemus, aliud etiam imitari. Admiremur scilicet constanter et ingenue morientes, imitemur honesta morum conversatione viventes. Veneremur in illis, quod corpus suum pro fide diversis tradidere suppliciis; imitemur autem, quod carnem suam ante crucifixerunt cum vitiis, et concupiscentiis. Admiremur illos viriliter morientes, ne vitam ipsi negarent, sed et imitemur per charitatis zelum sanctis exhortationibus insistentes, ut ad vitam et alios traherent. Et ut breviori, quod gestio, sermone concludam, tunc memoria martyrum digne recolitur, si dum mors eorum ingerit audita miraculum, praecedens etiam vita ducitur in exemplum.

Ecce B. martyr iste Fidelis, cujus hodie festivitatem colimus, sicut gestorum ejus testatur historia, et antequam martyrii occasio praeberetur, vitam martyrio dignam duxisse cognoscitur. Nam cum claris natalium titulis fulciretur, et arridente rerum copia, viam mundi posset non ingloriosus arripere, spreto magnatum quorumlibet patrocinio, religioso devotus episcopo maluit adhaerere, ut se patenter ostenderet, non ad gratiam, vel divitias anhelare potentis, sed benedictionem potius eligere sacerdotis. Cum quo videlicet non ad litigiorum forensium jurgia, non ad praestigiosa figmenta scenarum, non ad theatralia dignum duxit commeare spectacula, sed martyrum potius carceres visitabat. Et quia devotus martyribus fuit, quandoque martyr fieri et ipse promeruit.

For it is shameful thus to behold the victories of the warriors of Christ, so that while we behold others distinguished with triumphal titles, reporting spoils from the enemies, we ourselves in domestic peace, with vices creeping up, or as if with adversaries lying in wait, should feebly succumb. Furthermore, the blessed martyrs, even before they poured out their blood in the contest, flourished with diverse virtues. To us, however, because we cannot die for the defense of the faith, the victory is consummated if we study to live in the conduct of holy virtues, so that from there we may be immediately transferred to the kingdom, from where they merited martyrdom. Indeed, from the merits of life, by which they merited to obtain the palm of their contest, from there we without any obstacle of persecution are led to the crown.

One thing therefore in the holy martyrs we ought only to venerate and admire, another also to imitate. Let us admire namely those dying constantly and nobly; let us imitate those living in honest conduct of character. Let us venerate in them that they delivered their body for the faith to various torments; but let us imitate that they first crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences. Let us admire those manfully dying lest they themselves should deny life, but let us also imitate [them] by insisting with the zeal of charity upon holy exhortations, so that they might draw others also to life. And so that I may conclude in a shorter sermon what I desire, then the memory of the martyrs is worthily recalled, if while their heard death brings in a miracle, the preceding life also is led as an example.

Behold this Blessed martyr Fidelis, whose festivity we celebrate today, as the history of his deeds witnesses, is known to have led a life worthy of martyrdom even before the occasion for martyrdom was provided. For when he was supported by clear titles of birth, and with a smiling abundance of things, he could have taken the way of the world not ingloriously, having spurned the patronage of any of the great ones, he preferred to adhere devotedly to a religious bishop, so that he might patently show himself not to pant for the favor or riches of a potentate, but rather to choose the blessing of a priest. With whom namely he did not think it worthy to resort to the quarrels of forensic litigations, nor to the prestigious figments of scenes, nor to theatrical spectacles, but rather he visited the prisons of the martyrs. And because he was devoted to the martyrs, he himself also eventually merited to become a martyr.

Sic olim dispensator ille domus regiae Abdias, quia prophetas centum in specubus absconditos pavit, prophetalem gratiam et ipse postmodum digne remuneratus, accepit (III Reg. XVIII). Et qui tunc pane simul et aqua prophetarum aluit piae sedulitatis ministerio turbam, nunc prophetiae suae oraculis, coelestibus videlicet alimentis, universam recreat, et pascit Ecclesiam. Sic Josue, qui Moysi, ductori videlicet Israeliticae plebis, obsequium famulatus impendit, eidem postmodum plebi, et laudabiliter praefuit, et de ejus adversariis cum magna gloria triumphavit (Jos. I). Quid Eliseum referam, qui dum ab Elia separari nec ad momentum patitur, ejus subinde spiritum duplicem promeretur? (IV Reg. II.) Ac si jam tunc Dominus illud evangelicum intonaret: «Qui recipit prophetam in nomine prophetae, mercedem prophetae accipiet (Matth. X).»

Enimvero nec solum sanctis martyribus beatus iste Fidelis officium piae humilitatis exhibuit, sed diligentiam suam ad lucrandos etiam eos, qui idolorum erroribus tenebantur, extendit. Et sicut ipse propriis videtur verbis asserere, dum in saeculari militia versaretur, magis divino parebat imperio, quam terreno, adeo ut nonnullos a profana idololatriae cultura compesceret, et ad veri Dei notitiam salutiferis admonitionibus advocaret. Militaribus quidem castris inter erat, sed coelestis militiae signa gerebat. Armatorum denique videbatur cuneis admisceri, sed pro coelestibus castris sociare sibi alienae professionis milites satagebat. Quibus nimirum non terrenae militiae balteum, non temporalis stipendii donativum, sed coelestis promittebat curiae municipium.

Sub terrenae itaque militiae chlamyde pro castris coelestibus stabat, ut de terrena transfugas faceret, quibus numerum coelestis militiae augeret. Huic et David simile quid fecisse cognovimus, videlicet cum apud Achis regem Geth, Saulem fugiens moraretur. Opulenta nimirum spolia de his saepe regionibus auferebat, quibus praedictus Achis imperabat; et juxta quae Scriptura testatur, ut ejusdem verbis loquar: «Percutiebat David omnem terram, nec relinquebat viventem virum et mulierem, tollensque oves et boves, et asinos, et camelos, et vestes, revertebatur, et veniebat ad Achis.»

Thus formerly that dispenser of the royal house, Obadiah, because he fed a hundred prophets hidden in caves, he himself was worthily remunerated afterwards, receiving prophetic grace (III Kings 18). And he who then fed the crowd of prophets with both bread and water by the service of pious diligence, now by the oracles of his prophecy, namely with celestial nourishments, he recreates and feeds the whole Church. Thus Joshua, who paid the service of servitude to Moses, namely the leader of the Israelite people, afterwards both laudably presided over the same people, and triumphed over its adversaries with great glory (Joshua 1). Why should I mention Elisha, who while he does not allow himself to be separated from Elijah even for a moment, subsequently merits his double spirit? (IV Kings 2.) As if already then the Lord intoned that evangelical [saying]: "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matthew 10).

Indeed, nor did this blessed Fidelis exhibit the office of pious humility only to the holy martyrs, but he also extended his diligence to winning even those who were held by the errors of idols. And as he himself is seen to assert in his own words, while he was engaged in secular warfare, he obeyed the divine command more than the earthly one, to such an extent that he restrained some from the profane culture of idolatry, and called them to the knowledge of the true God with salutary admonitions. He was present indeed among the camps of the armed men, but he bore the standards of celestial warfare. Finally, he seemed to be mixed with the wedges of the armed, but for the sake of the celestial camps he busied himself with associating to himself soldiers of an alien profession. To whom surely he did not promise the belt of earthly warfare, nor the donative of temporal pay, but the citizenship of the celestial court.

Under the cloak of earthly warfare therefore he stood for the celestial camps, so that he might make fugitives from the earthly, for whom he might increase the number of celestial warfare. We know something similar to this to have been done also by David, namely when he was staying with Achish king of Gath, fleeing Saul. He often carried away rich spoils namely from those regions over which the aforesaid Achish commanded; and according to what the Scripture witnesses, to speak in his own words: "David struck the whole land, nor did he leave a living man or woman, and taking sheep and oxen, and asses, and camels, and garments, he returned, and came to Achish."

Quem cum interrogaret Achis: «in quem irruisti hodie?» (I Reg. XVII.) fatebatur ille se contra meridiem Juda, vel contra regiones Israel insiluisse. David itaque alienigenae regi, quasi devotum se urgente necessitate, praebuerat; sed ex profano ejus populo strages plurimas coacervabat. Beatus vero Fidelis sub saecularis professione militiae in procinctu castrorum coelestium, desudabat. Propterea mundo imo principi hujus mundi, cui specie tenus servire videbatur, illudens, sequaces quousque satagebat abstrahere, potiorisque militiae coetibus aggregare.

Ille igitur ferro nationes barbaricas obtruncabat; iste gladio Spiritus, quod est Verbum Dei (Ephes. VI), a carnali vita inconditi, et revera barbarici ritus homines occidebat. Ille diversorum turmas animalium rapuit; hic brutos homines ad Ecclesiae stabulum, et capessendae rationis pabulum vitale perduxit. Ille consultus Dei se populo testabatur exstitisse contrarium, iste etiam parti fidelium quodammodo se perhibebat obsistere, dum saecularem militiam videretur cum infidelibus bajulare. Militari namque professione superficietenus videbatur asserere, quod haereditatem Dei, cujus ipse pars erat, diversis moribus velut quibusdam gladiis, oppugnaret. Sic nimirum, sic sancta fraus liberius procedebat, dum is, cui suspicio deerat, acquirendis Christo fidelibus insistebat. Videbimus igitur, quia B. Fidelis ad coronam martyrii, merito praecedente pertinuit, qui lucrandis animabus vere charitatis studio et ante martyrium desudavit. Quasi enim bona terra, et ferax prius germen sancti operis protulit, et sic deinde triumphalis gloriae lumen excepit. Hinc est enim, quod in hujus mundi primordio prius terra germinare praecipitur, sequenti vero die luminaria in coelo fiunt (Gen. I); quia necesse est, nos primo sanctae operationis vitales fructus afferre, ut ad contemplandum summae veritatis lumen, valeamus postmodum pervenire. Domum nempe suam supra firmam petram in pace fundaverat, unde postmodum dum venti minarum furerent, dum diversi suppliciorum fluctus impingerent, immobilis permanebat (Matth. VII). Et tanquam radix egregii trunci robur prius in occulto conceperat, quo fulta postmodum adulta seges auris impellentibus non cadebat. In pace igitur ex bona operatione promeruit, quod invictus in persecutionis stadio, et imperterritus stetit. Elaboravit in otio, quod superavit in bello. Intra pacis moenia conquisivit, quod in campo victor obtinuit.

Whom when Achish asked: "Against whom have you rushed today?" (I Kings 27), he confessed that he had rushed against the south of Judah, or against the regions of Israel. David therefore had offered himself as if devoted by pressing necessity to the foreign king; but he was heaping up very many slaughters from his profane people. Blessed Fidelis truly under the profession of secular warfare was toiling in the preparation for the celestial camps. Therefore he, mocking the world, or rather the prince of this world, whom he seemed to serve in appearance, was busy with abstracting followers as far as he could, and aggregating them to the assemblies of a more powerful warfare.

That one therefore was cutting down barbaric nations with iron; this one was killing men of an unformed and truly barbaric rite from carnal life with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6). The former snatched away crowds of various animals; this one led brute men to the stable of the Church, and to the vital fodder of receiving reason. The former, consulted, witnessed that he had stood contrary to the people of God; this one also reported himself in a certain way to resist the part of the faithful, while he seemed to carry on secular warfare with the infidels. For by military profession he seemed on the surface to assert that he was attacking the inheritance of God, of which he himself was a part, with diverse characters as if with certain swords. Thus surely, thus holy fraud proceeded more freely, while he, to whom suspicion was lacking, was insisting upon acquiring the faithful for Christ. We shall see therefore, because Blessed Fidelis pertained to the crown of martyrdom by a preceding merit, who toiled in the study of true charity for winning souls even before martyrdom. For as if good earth, he first brought forth the seed of holy work, and thus then received the light of triumphal glory. Hence it is indeed, that in the beginning of this world the earth is first commanded to germinate, but on the following day the luminaries are made in heaven (Genesis 1); because it is necessary that we first bring forth the vital fruits of holy operation, so that we may be able afterwards to arrive at contemplating the light of the supreme truth. Surely he had founded his house upon a firm rock in peace, whence afterwards while the winds of threats were raging, while various floods of torments were dashing against it, it remained immobile (Matthew 7). And as if the root of an excellent trunk, it had first conceived strength in secret, supported by which afterwards the adult crop did not fall when the breezes were pushing. In peace therefore from good operation he merited, that he stood unvanquished and undaunted in the stadium of persecution. He worked in leisure, what he overcame in war. Within the walls of peace he acquired, what as victor he obtained in the field.

Inter caetera autem meritorum ejus insignia, illud quantae gloriae est, quod beatus hic, et invictissimus martyr, mox ut capite caesus est, turbida tempestas, et nimia coruscatio dicitur emersisse? Hoc siquidem divinae fuit aequitatis judicium, ut per hoc manifesta claresceret, quod qui martyrem suum recipiebat in gloria, tortores ejus digne terrebat in ira.

Ad terrificandum itaque reprobos coruscatio, et tempestas erupit; quibus videlicet comitantibus supernus arbiter ad judicium veniet, sicut per prophetam dicitur: «Ignis ante eum praeibit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psal. XIX; Matth. XXVII).» Porro in morte Domini elementa turbata leguntur. Quantae ergo dignitatis est, quamque nobilis insigne triumphi, ad instar Dominicae mortis, etiam in decollatione martyris elementa fuisse commota? ut ex aliqua parte mortis ejus moriendo teneret formam, cujus imitatus est vivendo doctrinam.

Illud etiam parvipendendum non est, quod quidam ex persecutoribus a daemonio perhibetur arreptus, qui nimirum cum promitteret sepulturae se corpus martyris cum magna reverentia traditurum, si eo interveniente mereretur a daemonio liberari, mox ut cadaver martyris tetigit, daemon abscessit. In hoc etiam ejusdem nostri Redemptoris perspicue videtur exemplum. Siquidem ex ipsis persecutoribus Domini quicunque mysterium sacrosancti corporis ejus attingere meruerunt, a daemonum jugo soluti sunt, ipso redempti sanguine, quem fuderunt. Atque ut in martyrio suo servus passionem Domini sui videatur quasi pedissequus imitari, dum carnifices principi suo miracula, quae per beatum martyrem ostensa fuerant, nuntiarent; cuiquam talia referre omnino prohibuit, perpetuoque celare territus imperavit. Quis enim hoc audiens, non illud protinus ad memoriam revocet, quod principes sacerdotum dixere custodibus: «Dicite, inquit, quia discipuli ejus noctu venerunt, et furati sunt eum, vobis dormientibus; et si auditum fuerit a praeside, nos suadebimus ei, et securos vos faciemus (Matth. XXVIII).» Isti siquidem docuere custodes, ut mendacium fingerent; ille praecepit officialibus, ut veritatem silentio supprimerent. Utrique nimirum veritatis sunt inimici, dum aut commenta fallaciae nequiter fabricant, aut veritatem silentio malignitatis occultant.

Among the other signs of his merits, however, of how great glory is that, that this blessed and most unvanquished martyr, as soon as he was struck in the head, a turbulent tempest and excessive flashing is said to have emerged? This surely was the judgment of divine equity, so that through this it might become manifest and clear, that he who was receiving his martyr in glory, was worthily terrifying his torturers in wrath.

For the terrifying of the reprobate therefore the flashing and tempest erupted; which namely accompanying, the supernal arbiter shall come to judgment, as is said through the prophet: "Fire shall go before him, and round about him a mighty tempest" (Psalm 96; Matthew 27). Furthermore, in the death of the Lord the elements are read to have been disturbed. Of how great dignity therefore is it, and how noble a sign of triumph, after the likeness of the Lord's death, that also in the beheading of the martyr the elements were moved? so that from some part he might hold the form of his death by dying, whose doctrine he imitated by living.

That also must not be undervalued, that a certain one of the persecutors is reported to have been seized by a demon, who surely when he promised that he would deliver the body of the martyr to burial with great reverence, if through his intervention he merited to be freed from the demon, as soon as he touched the corpse of the martyr, the demon departed. In this also the example of the same our Redeemer is clearly seen. Since from the very persecutors of the Lord whoever merited to touch the mystery of his most holy body, were loosed from the yoke of demons, redeemed by that very blood which they shed. And so that in his martyrdom the servant might be seen to imitate the passion of his Lord as if a follower, while the executioners announced the miracles to their prince, which had been shown through the blessed martyr; he altogether prohibited anyone to report such things, and, terrified, commanded to conceal them perpetually. For who hearing this, would not immediately recall to memory that which the princes of the priests said to the guards: "Say," he said, "that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while you were sleeping; and if it shall be heard by the governor, we will persuade him, and make you secure" (Matthew 28). Those ones surely taught the guards to feign a lie; he commanded the officials to suppress the truth with silence. Both surely are enemies of truth, while they either wickedly fabricate the comments of fallacy, or hide the truth with the silence of malignity.

Nos autem, fratres charissimi, qui tam egregii constantiam praeliatoris audivimus, qui tantae virtutis insignia tanquam posita sub oculis intuemur, et ipsi virtutes habere cum Dei omnipotentis auxilio studeamus. Pudeat sub ignaviae torpore languescere, quia alios cernimus cum tanta ad coelum gloria penetrare. Incalescat mens nostra ad agonem certaminis; et si non timet audacter cum hoste confligere, non dubitet duce Christo, facilem sibi victoriam provenire. Et quidem nobis minor est labor, cum tamen commune sit praemium. Quis enim nesciat incomparabiliter esse difficilius gladio cervicem subdere, quam gulae illecebras cohibere? Quis non malit aestuare laboribus, vel nuditate frigescere, quam flammarum furentium incendia sustinere? Quis non levius censeat esurire, et sitire, quam radi ungulis, vel bestiarum morsibus tradi? An non periculosius est, in publico micantia frementium regum mandata contemnere, quam latenter in mente pravis cogitationibus contraire? Semetipsum morti ultroneum tradere, quam voluntates proprias, et carnis desideria refrenare? Cum itaque minus laborando ad eamdem beatitudinem tendimus, cur decertantes in stadio imitari negligimus, ut consortes in patria victoribus existere valeamus.

Pugnemus igitur, fratres mei, et infestantium nos vitiorum illecebras amputare curemus; non enim, juxta Pauli vocem; possumus hic gaudere de saeculo, et illic regnare cum Christo. Et quidem beatos martyres cum membris diaboli dimicasse cognoscimus; nos autem cum ipso iniquorum capite infoederabilis pugnae luctamen habemus. Illi vicerunt eum per membra sua immaniter saevientem; nos superare praecipur sub insidiarum fraudibus latitantem. Utroque modo triumphum de illo gloriosus martyr Fidelis obtinuit, qui et in pace per aedificationis gratiam ab ejus vinculo nonnullos eripuit, et oblato persecutionis articulo, blandientem nihilominus, et terrentem per sua membra contempsit. Victus vicit, dejectus ascendit, proprium caput gladio subdidit, et cervicem diaboli perpetuae victoriae pede calcavit. Nunc procul dubio inter ignitos supernae Hierusalem lapides emicat, et cum purpuratis commilitonibus imperatori suo coelestis harmoniae carmen alternat. Felici nimirum commercio fragilem corporis exuit tunicam, et candidam immortalitatis adeptus est stolam. Caput decollatus amisit, et pretioso nunc lapide coronatus incedit. Ille quippe eum remunerat in aeterna jam quiete victorem, qui et inter bella dudum protexerat decertantem, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

NOVEMBER. I. Homilia de omnibus sanctis.

But we, most beloved brothers, who have heard the constancy of so excellent a warrior, who behold the signs of so great virtue as if placed before our eyes, let us also study to have virtues with the help of Almighty God. Let it shame [us] to languish under the torpor of laziness, because we see others penetrate with so great glory to heaven. Let our mind grow warm for the struggle of the contest; and if it does not fear to clash boldly with the enemy, let it not doubt that, with Christ as leader, an easy victory will come to it. And indeed to us the labor is less, although nevertheless the reward is common. For who does not know it to be incomparably more difficult to submit the neck to the sword, than to restrain the allurements of the gullet? Who would not rather toil with labors, or freeze with nakedness, than sustain the fires of raging flames? Who would not judge it lighter to hunger and thirst, than to be scraped with claws, or delivered to the bites of beasts? Or is it not more dangerous to contemn the flashing commands of raging kings in public, than to go against depraved thoughts in the mind secretly? To deliver oneself voluntarily to death, than to refrain one's own wills and the desires of the flesh? Since therefore we tend to the same beatitude with less laboring, why do we neglect to imitate those contending in the stadium, so that we may be able to exist as consorts with the victors in the fatherland.

Let us fight therefore, my brothers, and let us take care to cut off the allurements of the vices attacking us; for we cannot, according to the voice of Paul, rejoice here in the world, and reign there with Christ (II Timothy 2). And indeed we know the blessed martyrs to have fought with the members of the devil; we however have the struggle of an irreconcilable fight with the very head of the iniquitous ones. They conquered him raging immensely through his members; we are commanded to overcome [him] lurking under the frauds of snares. In both ways the glorious martyr Fidelis obtained a triumph over him, who both in peace through the grace of edification snatched away some from his bond, and when the moment of persecution was offered, nevertheless contemned him wheedling and terrifying through his members. Conquered he conquered, cast down he ascended, he submitted his own head to the sword, and trampled the neck of the devil with the foot of perpetual victory. Now beyond a doubt he shines among the fiery stones of the supernal Jerusalem, and with his purple-clad fellow soldiers alternates the song of celestial harmony to his emperor. By a happy commerce surely he put off the fragile tunic of the body, and obtained the bright stole of immortality. Having been beheaded he lost his head, and now proceeds crowned with a precious stone. He indeed remunerates him as victor in eternal rest now, who also among wars had recently protected the one contending, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

NOVEMBER. I. Homily on all the saints.

XI. Sermo de S. Martino episcopo et confessore. (XI NOV.) XXX. Sermo I de S. Andrea apostolo. Sermo II de eodem.

LV. HOMILIA IN FESTO OMNIUM SANCTORUM. In illo tempore: «Videns Jesus turbas ascendit in montem: et cum sedisset accesserunt ad eum discipuli ejus.» Et reliqua. Hodie dies serenior arrisit nobis, et sol solito lucidior terris illuxit. Non enim unus, sed universi sancti sanctificant eam, et splendoribus irradiant luminosis. Spectabilis illa coelorum solemnitas, quae non annuis, sed continuis, gaudiis, inclarescit; ubi lumen videtur in lumine, et Trinitatis substantia beatis oculis, oculo ad oculum aperitur. Ibi cognoscitur gignentis, genitique, et procedentis ratio sempiterna, quae hic credi potest, comprehendi non potest. Illic regina virginum virginibus innumeris comitata, mansiones perambulat angelorum, et utrisque naturis gloriam ejus admirantibus dicit: Quid me admiramini? Divinum est mysterium hoc quod cernitis, divinum profecto, non humanum, nec humanis unquam rationibus comprehensum. Ibi numerosus angelorum exercitus sacratis divisionibus splendescit, volitatorio delectatus obsequio, non velat, sed revelat Domini majestatem. Illic patriarcharum electio primitiva, reverenda societas prophetarum, gloriosus apostolorum chorus, purpurea martyrum multitudo, congregatio florida confessorum, candida virginum turma, monachorum numerus infinitus. Sedet in medio Domiminus virtutum, et de refusione gloriae suae inebriat intuentes: «Inebriabuntur namque, ait Propheta, ab ubertate domus tuae (Psal. XXXV).» Ibi pax secura, requies voluptuosa, vita perpetua, sapientia mentis, agilitas corporis, cordis illummatio. «Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine (Psal. LXXXIII).» Sicut laetantium omnium habitatio est in te (Psal. LXXXVI), civitas Dei: et in plateis tuis vox exsultationis dulcioribus modulis intonatur. «Quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare conturbas me? Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi (Psal. XLI, XLII).» Confitebor illi ibi: nam hic stadium, illic praemium; hic pugna, ibi corona. Vanum est ante lucem surgere. Indurandus est animus, et a blandimentis voluptatum procul abstrahendus, et utriusque substantiae materia repurganda, si ad proprios ortus volumus evolare. Amanda est interim tenuitas paupertatis, sermo suspendendus amarior, elatio fugienda, sustinendi labores, cum vitiis congrediendum, eliminandae divitiae saeculares.

XI. Sermon on St. Martin, bishop and confessor. (NOV 11) XXX. Sermon I on St. Andrew the apostle. Sermon II on the same.

LV. HOMILY ON THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS. At that time: "Jesus seeing the crowds went up into a mountain: and when he was set down his disciples came to him." And the rest. Today a more serene day has smiled upon us, and the sun has shone more brightly than usual upon the lands. For not one, but all the saints sanctify it, and irrigate it with luminous splendors. That spectacular solemnity of the heavens, which becomes famous not with annual, but with continuous joys; where light is seen in light, and the substance of the Trinity is opened to blessed eyes, eye to eye. There is known the eternal reason of the one begetting, and the one begotten, and the one proceeding, which here can be believed, [but] cannot be comprehended. There the queen of virgins accompanied by innumerable virgins, perambulates the mansions of the angels, and with both natures admiring her glory she says: Why do you admire me? It is a divine mystery this which you behold, divine indeed, not human, nor ever comprehended by human reasons. There the numerous army of angels shines in sacred divisions, delighted by flying service, it does not veil, but reveals the majesty of the Lord. There the primitive election of the patriarchs, the reverend society of the prophets, the glorious choir of the apostles, the purple multitude of the martyrs, the florid congregation of the confessors, the bright troop of the virgins, the infinite number of monks. The Lord of virtues sits in the midst, and from the pouring out of his glory he inebriates those beholding: "For they shall be inebriated," says the Prophet, "by the abundance of your house" (Psalm 35). There secure peace, voluptuous rest, perpetual life, wisdom of mind, agility of body, illumination of heart. "Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord" (Psalm 83). Just as the habitation of all the rejoicing is in you (Psalm 86), city of God: and in your streets the voice of exultation is intoned with sweeter melodies. "Why are you sad, my soul, and why do you disturb me? Hope in God, because I shall yet confess to him" (Psalm 41, 42). I shall confess to him there: for here the stadium, there the reward; here the fight, there the crown. It is vain to rise before the light. The mind must be hardened, and abstracted far from the allurements of pleasures, and the matter of both substances must be purged, if we wish to fly away to our own origins. The thinness of poverty must be loved meanwhile, a more bitter speech suspended, pride fled, labors sustained, one must engage with vices, secular riches eliminated.

Hoc est, quod ille pauper, et unicus (Psal. XXIV) in hodierna sancti Evangelii lectione pauperibus, quos de mundi paupertate vocaverat, ait: «Beati pauperes spiritu (Matth. V).» Haec sunt octo, imo septem beatitudines, quia octava eadem quae et prima. Felicissimi gradus, quibus itur ad Dominum, quos omnes in persona sua prius ascendit qui ascendit in montem, et aperuit os suum, ut doceret discipulos suos. Denique, quis pauperior illo, qui non habuit ubi caput suum reclinaret (Luc. IX)? Quis illo mitior, qui mitis est et humilis corde (Matth. XI)? Qui videns civitatem flevit super illam (Luc. XIX), flevit Lazarum (Joan. XI) justitiam docuit, justitiam fecit, in cujus ore non est inventus dolus (Isa. LIII) Quis illo misericordior, qui mulierem adulteram liberavit? Peccatricem sanavit septem daemonibus cumulatam. Quis mundior illo, qui peccatum non fecit? (I Petr. II.) Pacificare venit, et quae in coelis, et quae in terris; pacem reliquit discipulis suis (Joan. XIV), persecutionem pro justitia passus est, flagellatus in carne, suspensus in cruce, morte turpatus (Luc. XXIII). Qui dicit se in Christo manere, debet, sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare (I Joan. II). Canta ergo canticum graduum, et gradatim ascende, nec praepropero saltu aliquem praetermitte; quia, qui offenderit in uno, factus est omnium reus (Jac. II).

Sis ergo pauper spiritu, nec putes hunc primum gradum leviter attingendum, cum multae sollicitudinis, sit mundum, et mundana relinquere, et a consuetudinario cursu cor, corpus et studium revocare. Qui enim pauper est spiritu, vilitate gaudet, humilitatem amplectitur, desideria terrena conculcat; sed quia illa paupertas exsecrabilis est, quae regio spiritu intumescens discordias seminar, inservit litibus, detractoriis sermonibus jucundatur, evolandum est ad secundi gradus sublimitatem, ut sit mitis. Mitis est, qui nulli reddit malum pro malo. Laesus veniam petit, et benefacit laedentibus. Nec plenam jactet victoriam, quisquis hunc fortassis ascendit, cum sit omni lacrymarum fonte plangendum, quod tandiu luto, et lateri sub Pharaonis servierimus potestate; et ideo beati, qui lugent. Luctus autem sanctorum non est de diminutione rerum, de corporum infirmitate, de ferocitate sublimioris potestatis; lugent enim peccata, vel propria, vel aliena, ruinam mundi, detrimentum fidei, contemptum justitiae, abundantiam iniquitatis, dilationem regni.

This is what that poor and only one (Psalm 24) in today's reading of the holy Gospel says to the poor, whom he had called from the poverty of the world: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5). These are the eight, or rather seven beatitudes, because the eighth is the same as the first. Most happy steps, by which one goes to the Lord, all of which he first ascended in his own person who ascended into the mountain, and opened his mouth, so that he might teach his disciples. Finally, who was poorer than he, who did not have where he might recline his head (Luke 9)? Who was milder than he, who is mild and humble of heart (Matthew 11)? Who seeing the city wept over it (Luke 19), wept for Lazarus (John 11), taught justice, did justice, in whose mouth guile was not found (Isaiah 53). Who was more merciful than he, who delivered the adulterous woman? He healed the sinner woman accumulated with seven demons. Who was cleaner than he, who did not commit sin? (I Peter 2.) He came to pacify, both those things which are in the heavens, and those which are on the earth; he left peace to his disciples (John 14), he suffered persecution for justice, scourged in the flesh, suspended on the cross, defiled by death (Luke 23). He who says he remains in Christ, ought, just as he walked, also himself to walk (I John 2). Sing therefore the song of degrees, and ascend step by step, nor with a premature leap pass over any; because, he who shall have offended in one, is made guilty of all (James 2).

Be therefore poor in spirit, nor think this first step to be touched lightly, since it is of much solicitude to relinquish the world and worldly things, and from the customary course to recall the heart, body, and study. For he who is poor in spirit, rejoices in vileness, embraces humility, tramples earthly desires; but because that poverty is execrable, which swelling with a royal spirit sows discords, serves litigations, is delighted by detracting speeches, one must fly away to the sublimity of the second step, so that he may be mild. Mild is he who returns evil for evil to no one. Having been hurt he asks for pardon, and does good to those hurting [him]. Nor let anyone boast of a full victory, whoever perhaps has ascended this [step], since it is to be lamented with every fountain of tears, that we have served for so long in the mud and the brick under the power of Pharaoh; and therefore blessed are those who mourn. But the mourning of the saints is not concerning the diminution of things, concerning the infirmity of bodies, concerning the ferocity of a more sublime power; for they mourn sins, either their own or those of others, the ruin of the world, the detriment of faith, the contempt of justice, the abundance of iniquity, the delay of the kingdom.

Nec hic consummationis terminus imponendus, cum perfecta justitia sit diligere proximum sicut seipsum; et ejus excessus libera discretione, et discreta redarguere libertate. Qui enim pro persona, quam gerit, non resistit peccantibus, de suo se noverit silentio esse damnandum. Esurit ergo, et sitit justitiam, qui vitia destruit, construit virtutes; sobrius sibi, justus proximo, pius Deo. Cujus animam urit zelus domus Dei, qui cantat cum justo: «Tabescere me fecit zelus tuus, quia obliti sunt verba tua inimici mei.»

Sed quia secundum vocem oratoris, plerumque summum jus malitia est, et inconsiderata justitia praecipitium parturit, ideo sequitur: «Beati misericordes.» Misericordia est speciosum humanae naturae ornamentum, cujus expers male degenerat, et hominem diffitetur. Est autem vera misericordia, cum superexaltatur misericordia judicio, cum vel largitate substantiae, vel bona voluntate, vel doctrina verbi, vel exemplo facti, proximi corpus, et animam refovemus. Cum autem jam a claritate in claritatem sic coeperimus ambulare, a claritate cordis nostri, ad clarificandum cor proximi, mundandi sumus ab omni inquinamento carnis et spiritus, ab omni hujus mundi aspersione, pure presseque tergendi, sicut subjungitur: «Beati mundo corde.» Quis gloriabitur castum se habere cor (Prov. XX)? Pravum est cor hominis, et incrustabile. Quis cognoscet illud? (Jer. XVII.) Difficile est illud mundare, cum in suis abditis delitescens, irruentium recipiat agmina cogitationum, plurimum etiam renitentibus nobis, sed nequaquam obniti valentibus. Ille igitur mundum cor habet, qui utriusque hominis motibus mitigatis, passiones non modo reprimit, sed ignorat, naturali cursu bonorum operum communitus, crucifixus mundo, et cui crucifixus est mundus (Gal. II). Pauci autem, quibus se infuderit tantae gratiae plenitudo. Quicunque autem illi sunt, jam sunt prope palmam supernae vocationis, si pace, qua refecti sunt, pacificare studeant dissidentes, et dicere cum Propheta: «Cum his qui oderunt pacem eram pacificus (Psal. CXIX).» Idcirco subinfertur: «Beati pacifici,» non solum pacati, sed pacifici, facientes pacem, concordiae semina seminantes.

Nor is the limit of consummation to be imposed here, since perfect justice is to love one's neighbor as oneself; and to rebuke his excesses with free discretion, and discrete liberty. For he who, for the sake of the person whom he bears, does not resist those sinning, let him know himself to be condemned by his own silence. He hungers therefore, and thirsts for justice, who destroys vices, constructs virtues; sober to himself, just to his neighbor, pious to God. Whose soul the zeal of the house of God burns, who sings with the just one: "Your zeal has made me to pine away, because my enemies have forgotten your words."

But because according to the voice of the orator, very often the highest right is malice, and inconsiderate justice brings forth a precipice, therefore there follows: "Blessed are the merciful." Mercy is a beautiful ornament of human nature, of which he who is void degenerates badly, and denies the human. But it is true mercy, when mercy is superexalted by judgment, when either by the largess of substance, or by good will, or by the doctrine of the word, or by the example of the deed, we refresh the body and soul of the neighbor. But when we have already begun thus to walk from clarity into clarity, from the clarity of our heart, to the clarifying of the heart of the neighbor, we must be cleansed from all defilement of flesh and spirit, from all aspersion of this world, to be wiped purely and closely, as is subjoined: "Blessed are the clean of heart." Who shall boast that he has a chaste heart (Proverbs 20)? Depraved is the heart of man, and inscrutable. Who shall know it? (Jeremiah 17.) It is difficult to cleanse that, since lurking in its hidden places, it receives crowds of rushing thoughts, very much even with us resisting, but by no means being able to strive against them. He therefore has a clean heart, who with the motions of both men mitigated, not only represses passions, but is ignorant of them, fortified by the natural course of good works, crucified to the world, and to whom the world is crucified (Galatians 2). But few are they, into whom the fullness of so great grace has poured itself. Whoever however they are, they are already near the palm of the supernal vocation, if by the peace, with which they have been refreshed, they study to pacify those disagreeing, and to say with the Prophet: "With those who hated peace I was peaceable" (Psalm 119). Therefore there is subjoined: "Blessed are the peacemakers," not only pacified, but peacemakers, making peace, sowing the seeds of concord.

Sed quia saepius vel adulatione potentium, vel amore temporalium, justitiam aut dimittimus, aut non defendimus dimissam, ad metam cursus porrigenda est dextera, ut pro justitia non solum nostra, sed et alterius persecutionem patiamur, et resistamus usque ad sanguinem, vel usque ad mortem. Et hoc est, quod subsequitur: «Beati, qui persecutionem patiuntur propter justitiam.» Post haec autem quid? Hic adhaeremus Domino, et unus cum eo spiritus efficimur. Hic disrumpitur nubes, et transit oratio. Hic revelata facie gloriam Domini speculamur. Hic dulcedo spiritus, cordis suavitas, jubilatio mentis. Beatus populus, qui scit jubilationem (Psal. LXXXVIII).

Primum ergo videamus apud nos peccatorum abundantiam. «Propter nomen tuum, Domine, propitiaberis peccato meo: multum est enim (Psal. XXIV),» ait unicus ille consecrarius regis aeterni. Peccavimus super numerum arenae maris, et multiplicata sunt peccata nostra. Tu innumerabilia numerare contendis, et in summa ponere quod summam exsuperat? Ecce, grandis acervus, impetuosus torrens, nec potest discuti tanta miseria; quoniam iniquitates nostrae supergressae sunt caput nostrum (Psal. XXXVII). Ambulavimus collo extento, oculi nostri pleni sunt vanitate, aures detractione. Odoremus non odorem unguentorum, in quo sponsa se currere gloriatur; sed odorem mortis in mortem, quorum os maledictione et amaritudine plenum esse describitur. Manus nostrae plenae sunt sanguine, pedes veloces ad sanguinem effundendum; contritio, et infelicitas in viis nostris, et via pacis abjecta; non est timor Dei ante oculos nostros (Psal. XIII). Quid igitur faciendum, in quo sperandum, quove confugiendum? Standum est in hoc acervo, non novarum, sed veterum frugum (Ezech. III), et videnda visio timescenda, et statuamus nos ante oculos nostros, ne judex quandoque arguat nos, et statuat nos ante faciem nostram. In hac visione Dei videtur a nobis ventus turbinis, quia secundum virum justum, hic involutae sunt semitae gressuum eorum (Job VI). Ne putes autem hanc visionem inter parva connumerandam, cum haec perducat ad visionem cherubim, et animalium pennatorum; et ad ipsius dominantis introducat aspectum.

Visa igitur abundantia peccatorum nostrorum, videamus secundo negligentiam nostram. Traximus peccata nostra sicut restem longam, et sanguis sanguinem tetigit, et dissimulavimus; vulnus, et livor, et plaga tumens, et non aspeximus (Isa. I). Zelus Dei recessit a nobis, et nos contempsimus. Sic peccatorum multitudini negligentiam cumulantes, obstruximus nobis iter confessionis, semitas justitiae evitamus, non solum negligentes, sed et de negligentia gloriantes, juxta illud viri sapientissimi: «Qui cum malefecerint, laetantur et exsultant in rebus pessimis (Prov. II).»

But because quite often either by the adulation of the powerful, or by the love of temporal things, we either dismiss justice, or do not defend it when dismissed, the right hand must be stretched out to the goal of the course, so that for justice we may suffer persecution not only for our own, but also for another's, and resist even unto blood, or even unto death. And this is that which follows: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of justice." But after these things what? Here we adhere to the Lord, and are made one spirit with him. Here the cloud is broken, and the prayer passes through. Here with revealed face we speculate the glory of the Lord. Here sweetness of spirit, sweetness of heart, jubilation of mind. Blessed is the people that knows jubilation (Psalm 88).

First, therefore, let us see in ourselves the abundance of sins. "For your name's sake, O Lord, you will be propitiated for my sin: for it is much (Psalm 24)," says that unique confidant of the eternal king. We have sinned above the number of the sand of the sea, and our sins are multiplied. Do you strive to count the innumerable, and to put in a sum that which exceeds the sum? Behold, a great heap, an impetuous torrent, nor can so great misery be discussed; since our iniquities have gone over our head (Psalm 37). We have walked with neck extended, our eyes are full of vanity, our ears with detraction. Let us smell not the odor of ointments, in which the bride boasts that she runs; but the odor of death unto death, whose mouth is described to be full of cursing and bitterness. Our hands are full of blood, our feet swift to shed blood; contrition and unhappiness are in our ways, and the way of peace is cast away; there is no fear of God before our eyes (Psalm 13). What therefore is to be done, in what is there to be hoped, or whither is there to be fled? One must stand in this heap, not of new, but of old fruits (Ezekiel 3), and a vision to be feared must be seen, and let us set ourselves before our eyes, lest the judge at some time rebuke us, and set us before our face. In this vision of God a whirlwind is seen by us, because according to the just man, here the paths of their steps are entangled (Job 6). But do not think this vision to be numbered among small things, since this leads to the vision of the cherubim, and of the winged animals; and introduces to the aspect of the ruler himself.

The abundance of our sins having been seen, therefore, let us see secondly our negligence. We have drawn our sins like a long rope, and blood has touched blood, and we have dissembled; wound, and bruise, and swelling sore, and we have not looked (Isaiah 1). The zeal of God has departed from us, and we have despised it. Thus accumulating negligence upon the multitude of sins, we have blocked for ourselves the way of confession, we avoid the paths of justice, being not only negligent, but also boasting of negligence, according to that saying of the wisest man: "Who when they have done evil, rejoice and exult in the worst things (Proverbs 2)."

Vis scire, quia de peccatorum abundantia, negligentia pessima filia generatur? «Peccator cum venerit in profundum malorum, contemnit (Prov. XVIII).» E contrario autem, qui Deum timet, nihil negligit; quia, «qui modica spernit, paulatim decidet.» Peccatorum multitudo negligentiam, negligentia contemptum, contemptus mortem interminat sempiternam.

Vide et tertio patientiam et longanimitatem Dei nostri. «Haec fecisti, et tacui (Prov. XV).» Omnia videt et omnia audit, nihilque remotum ab oculis ejus, de quo dicitur: «Oculi Domini in omni loco contemplantur bonos et malos (Psal. LXXIV).» Oculos hominum timuisti, oculos autem Altissimi non expavisti? Ecce ipse cognovit omnia novissima, et antiqua, neque ab Oriente, neque ab Occidente, neque a desertis montibus locus est fugiendi, quoniam Deus judex est. Vidit opera tua, recursus et excursus flagitiorum tuorum; et continuit iram suam. Coelum non fulminavit, aqua non submersit, non absorbuit tellus; et cum omnis terra plena sit gloria Domini, in gloria ejus tuam miseriam evomuisti, nec reveritus es praesentem Dominum, et coram tanta munditia tuas immunditias exercere. Ipse autem quid? «Ego, inquit, quasi non videns.» Nunquid alicui ministrorum suorum, qui vindices sunt irae ejus, in hoc ipsum constituti revelavit ignominiam tuam? Ecce, videt, et tacet; videt, nec manifestat; videt, nec judicat; videt, nec vindicat; videt, et videre dissimulat; vocat, et non audis; promittit, et contemnis; minatur, nec metuis, et thasaurizas iram tibi in die irae. Cum ergo sit judex justus et fortis, multum est patiens, nec irascitur per singulos dies (Psal. VII). Ecce continet iram, reprimit furorem, avertit oculos, peccantibus parcit; et illi omnia haec in suum judicium congregant omnium rei. Nunquid qui ita tacuit, et siluit, semper ita tacebit? An non legisti, quia ad judicium veniet, patientiam abjiciens, humilitatem nesciens, ignorans misericordiam?

Attendisti patienter tacentem, attende et impatienter loquentem: «Sicut parturiens, inquit, loquar (Isa. XLII).» Vidisti dissimulantem, vide etiam quaecunque minima numerantem. «Vestigia, inquit, pedum meorum dinumerasti (Job XIII).» Quis locus erit spei, cum venerit judex, qui stetit sub judice, praecinentibus tubis, conclamantibus angelis, elementis ardentibus? Ad cujus fugiemus auxilium, cum ventis ex transverso furentibus, mundialis machina divelletur, et ignis incandescens coelum, et terram finalibus immiscebit incendiis?

Do you wish to know that from the abundance of sins, negligence, a most evil daughter, is generated? "The sinner, when he has come into the depth of evils, despises (Proverbs 18)." But on the contrary, he who fears God, neglects nothing; because, "he who despises small things, shall fall by little and little." The multitude of sins threatens negligence, negligence contempt, contempt everlasting death.

See also thirdly the patience and longanimity of our God. "These things you have done, and I was silent (Psalm 49)." He sees all and hears all, and nothing is removed from his eyes, of whom it is said: "The eyes of the Lord in every place contemplate the good and the bad (Proverbs 15)." Have you feared the eyes of men, but did not dread the eyes of the Most High? Behold, he himself has known all things last and ancient, nor from the East, nor from the West, nor from the desert mountains is there a place of fleeing, since God is the judge. He saw your works, the returns and excursions of your crimes; and he contained his wrath. Heaven did not thunder, water did not submerge, the earth did not swallow up; and since all the earth is full of the glory of the Lord, in his glory you have vomited your misery, nor have you revered the present Lord, and to exercise your uncleannesses before so great cleanness. But what did he himself do? "I," he says, "as if not seeing." Did he reveal your ignominy to any of his ministers, who are the avengers of his wrath, constituted for this very thing? Behold, he sees, and is silent; he sees, and does not manifest; he sees, and does not judge; he sees, and does not vindicate; he sees, and dissembles seeing; he calls, and you do not hear; he promises, and you despise; he threatens, and you do not fear, and you treasure up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath. Since therefore he is a just and strong judge, he is very patient, nor is he angry every day (Psalm 7). Behold, he contains his wrath, represses his fury, turns away his eyes, spares those sinning; and they gather all these things into their own judgment, guilty of all. Shall he who has thus been silent and still, always be thus silent? Or have you not read that he shall come to judgment, casting away patience, knowing not humility, ignorant of mercy?

You have waited patiently for him when silent, wait also for him when speaking impatiently: "As one bringing forth," he says, "I will speak (Isaiah 42)." You have seen him dissembling, see him also counting every smallest thing. "You have numbered," he says, "the footsteps of my feet (Job 13)." What place will there be for hope, when the judge shall come, who stood under a judge, with trumpets sounding before, with angels shouting together, with the elements burning? To whose aid shall we flee, when with winds raging from across, the worldly machine shall be torn asunder, and fire glowing white shall mix heaven and earth in final conflagrations?

Veniet ipse cum potestate magna et majestate; non cum dulcedine et humilitate, quia illic justitia plena est dextera ejus, quae hic misericordiam seminavit et sparsit. Tunc ille misericors oculus non parcet, et non miserebitur; sed percutiet et occidet, indutus iram, furore repletus, plenus crudelitate. Peccatores autem quid? Videntes turbabuntur timore horribili, sed incorrigibili, audientes illud horrendum tonitrum: «Ite, maledicti, in ignem aeternum (Matth. XXV).» Quanti putas doloris erit excludi a facie Dei, videre, et perdere Deum, cum rex gloriae civitatem sublimem intrabit, miseris peccatoribus omni spe misericordiae in perpetuum sigillata? Quisquis ergo es, qui contemnis divitias bonitatis, et patientiae Dei, relege textum Epistolae ad Romanos (Rom. V), et illa tibi plenius dicet quia non evasisti judicium Dei.

Aspice et quarto misericordiam ejus, licet peccaveris, licet neglexeris, et provocaveris patientiam Dei, paratus est tamen misereri, cum volueris, et reverti ad revertentem, oblivisci, et tegere peccata tua, et projicere in profundum maris. Nec erit mora inter confitentem, et remittentem; inter gementem, et gemitus exaudientem, quia benignus, et misericors est. Sunt homines mundi faciles ad iram, difficiles ad misericordiam; Deus autem et ad irascendum difficilis, et facilis ad miserandum. Revolant illi ad opprobria, quae remiserunt; iste cum remiserit, sic est quasi non fuerit. Ad limina potentium frequentius excubamus, non habentes liberos accessus ad colloquendum, et si quid deliquimus, supplicibus oculis, facie tribulata, verbis humilibus emendamus. Illi autem plerumque superbo oculo, et humero dedignati, pedibus suis pro volutos, vel respicere nolunt.

Non sic Dominus Jesus, qui libentius loquitur mecum quam ego secum; quem invenio quoties quaero; qui occurrit cum panibus fugienti, qui vultum laetum ostendit mihi, qui meam poenitentiam, sicut innocentiam amplexatur, ubique laetus, ubique bonus, ubique pius, ubique dulcis cum magna multitudine dulcedinis suae. Non facit supercilium, oculos non obliquat, non detorquet faciem, nec verba resonat ampullosa, sed occurrit revertenti, et accurrit in amplexus, flens super collum meum, et jubet proferri stolam primam, dari annulum intelligentiae (Luc. XV), et calceari pedes in praeparatione Evangelii (Ephes. VI), in choro, et symphonia ad superna gaudia revocari, et occidi vitulum saginatum in remissionem peccatorum meorum. Vides ergo quam longa patientia sit in Deo, quam velox misericordia. «Longanimis,» ait sanctus, «et multum misericors (Psal. CII).» Libenter igitur ad te confugio, Domine Jesu, qui diutius pateris, et velociter misereris, quia tu es Deus, et non homo sicut propheta dicit (Ose. XI), qui servet iram, abscondat malitiam, vindictam inquirat.

He himself shall come with great power and majesty; not with sweetness and humility, because there justice is full in his right hand, which here sowed and scattered mercy. Then that merciful eye shall not spare, and shall not pity; but shall strike and kill, clothed in wrath, filled with fury, full of cruelty. But what of the sinners? Seeing, they shall be troubled with a horrible fear, but incorrigible, hearing that horrendous thunder: "Go, you cursed, into eternal fire (Matthew 25)." Of how great sorrow do you think it will be to be excluded from the face of God, to see, and to lose God, when the king of glory shall enter the sublime city, with all hope of mercy forever sealed to the miserable sinners? Whoever you are, therefore, who despise the riches of goodness and patience of God, read again the text of the Epistle to the Romans (Romans 2), and it shall tell you more fully that you have not escaped the judgment of God.

Look also fourthly at his mercy; although you have sinned, although you have neglected, and have provoked the patience of God, he is nevertheless ready to have mercy when you wish, and to return to the one returning, to forget and to cover your sins, and to cast them into the depth of the sea. Nor will there be delay between the one confessing and the one remitting; between the one groaning and the one hearing the groans, because he is kind and merciful. The men of the world are easy to anger, difficult to mercy; but God is both difficult to be angry, and easy to have mercy. They fly back to the reproaches which they have remitted; he, when he has remitted, it is as if it had not been. We keep watch more frequently at the thresholds of the powerful, not having free access to speak, and if we have committed any fault, we amend it with suppliant eyes, with troubled face, with humble words. But they very often with proud eye, and shoulder disdained, do not wish even to look back upon those prostrate at their feet.

Not so the Lord Jesus, who more willingly speaks with me than I with him; whom I find as often as I seek; who meets the one fleeing with loaves, who shows a joyful countenance to me, who embraces my penance as innocence, everywhere joyful, everywhere good, everywhere pious, everywhere sweet with the great multitude of his sweetness. He does not knit his brow, he does not turn his eyes away, he does not twist his face, nor does he sound forth bombastic words, but he meets the one returning, and runs into embraces, weeping over my neck, and commands the first robe to be brought forth, the ring of understanding to be given (Luke 15), and the feet to be shod in the preparation of the Gospel (Ephesians 6), to be recalled in choir and symphony to supernal joys, and the fatted calf to be killed for the remission of my sins. You see therefore how long the patience is in God, how swift the mercy. "Long-suffering," says the saint, "and much merciful (Psalm 102)." Willingly therefore I flee to you, Lord Jesus, who suffer for a long time, and quickly have mercy, because you are God, and not man as the prophet says (Hosea 11), who would keep anger, hide malice, seek vengeance.

Ad haec et istud considerandum in misericordia miserantis quia saeculi homines semel, aut bis, aut multum septies, vel decies dimittunt, hic autem millies in die, si fieri posset, quae committimus dimittit, et hoc quandiu vivimus, quandiu peregrinamur ab ipso. Visis igitur his quae enumeravimus, attolle oculos etiam ad videndum Domini largitatem, sive familiaritatem. Si cui maxime potenti fecimus, quod ei displiceret, nunquid amplius nobiscum loqui, nedum aliquid largiri, vel familiaris dignatur? Graves sumus ei etiam ad videndum, et pro magno beneficio computat, si saltem a nostra laesione desistat; et licet multiplicibus et devotis obsequiis defendamus offensam, semper tamen injuriae memoria praetervolat oculos illius, nec oblitterari valet vel beneficio, vel obsequio, vel ipsa etiam vetustate. Nunquid ita Deus meus, misericordia mea? Absit. Consuevit enim honorare poenitentes, magis quam innocentes; revertentes, plusquam remanentes, quia devotior est fervidus poenitens quam tepidus innocens, cum ille materiam fervoris habeat, hic tepiditatis.

Fortassis praesumptionis arguar, qui, contra praeceptum Apostoli, verborum novitates induco, sed habeo ad manum testimonia, nec parva, nec pauca, quae et ipsa credibilia facta sunt nimis, et quae possint satisfacere murmuranti. Petrus apostolus, non quilibet apostolus, sed princeps apostolorum, cui traditus est principatus coeli et terrae (Matth. XVI), nunquid non de choro poenitentiis est, et de sorte graviter injustorum? Nonne ipse est, qui Deum negavit, reliquit magistrum, amicum deseruit, fefellit promissum? qui coepit detestari et jurare, quia non novit hominem (Matth. XXVI), negationi perjurium addens, crimini crimen adjiciens? Cecidit, sed non est collisus, quia Dominus supposuit manum suam. Vide quid dicat Scriptura: «Respexit, inquit, Dominus Petrum (Ibid.).»

Respectum Christi sequitur fletus Petri, et lacrymarum amaritudo dulcedinem antiquae dignitatis instaurat. Felices, sancte apostole, lacrymae tuae, quae culpam abluunt, gradum restituunt, debita dimittunt, ampliora committunt. Respexit pietas, et impietas cessit, et accessit prisca familiaritas. Denique: «Simon Joannis, diligis me plus his? Pasce oves meas (Joan. XXI):» et his similia, quid sunt, nisi magna documenta familiaritatis?

Illud etiam singulare sancti Spiritus organum, quem invenit Dominus secundum cor suum, cui revelata sunt incerta et occulta sapientiae Dei, nonne cum homicidio, et adulterio insignitus est nota et nomine proditoris? Sed vide quam celeri poenitentiae saltu resilivit ad arcem innocentiae, et grandia vulnera sic revinxit, ut non solum vulneris, sed nec etiam cicatricis vestigia remanerent. Redargutus enim a propheta et retorsione parabolica sugillatus dixit: «Peccavi (II Reg. XII).»

To these things also this is to be considered in the mercy of the one pitying, because the men of the world remit once, or twice, or at most seven times, or ten; but he remits a thousand times in a day, if it could be, what we commit, and this as long as we live, as long as we journey as pilgrims from him. These things which we have enumerated having been seen, lift up your eyes also to see the largess or familiarity of the Lord. If we have done something to any very powerful man that would displease him, does he deign to speak with us any more, much less to bestow anything, or to be familiar? We are burdensome to him even to be seen, and he counts it as a great benefit if at least he desists from harming us; and although we defend the offense with manifold and devoted services, yet always the memory of the injury flies before his eyes, nor can it be obliterated either by benefit, or by service, or even by old age itself. Is my God, my mercy, thus? Far be it. For he is accustomed to honor penitents more than the innocent; those returning, more than those remaining, because the fervent penitent is more devoted than the tepid innocent, since the former has the matter of fervor, the latter of tepidity.

Perhaps I shall be accused of presumption, who, against the precept of the Apostle, bring in novelties of words, but I have at hand testimonies, neither small nor few, which themselves have been made exceedingly credible, and which can satisfy the murmurer. The apostle Peter, not just any apostle, but the prince of apostles, to whom was delivered the principality of heaven and earth (Matthew 16), is he not from the choir of penitents, and from the lot of the gravely unjust? Is it not he who denied God, left the master, deserted the friend, failed the promise? Who began to detest and to swear that he knew not the man (Matthew 26), adding perjury to denial, adding crime to crime? He fell, but he was not crushed, because the Lord placed his hand under him. See what the Scripture says: "The Lord," it says, "looked upon Peter (Ibid.)."

The look of Christ is followed by the weeping of Peter, and the bitterness of tears restores the sweetness of the ancient dignity. Happy, O holy apostle, are your tears, which wash away fault, restore rank, remit debts, commit greater things. Piety looked back, and impiety ceased, and the former familiarity approached. Finally: "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? Feed my sheep (John 21):" and things similar to these, what are they, if not great documents of familiarity?

That singular organ of the Holy Spirit also, whom the Lord found according to his heart, to whom were revealed the uncertain and hidden things of the wisdom of God, was he not marked with the note and name of a traitor by homicide and adultery? But see with how swift a leap of penance he bounded back to the citadel of innocence, and so bound up the great wounds that not only did the traces of the wound not remain, but not even of a scar. For rebuked by the prophet and stung by the parabolic retort, he said: "I have sinned (2 Samuel 12)."

Et ille ex thesauro divinae misericordiae statim subintulit: «Transtulit Dominus peccatum a te, et non morieris (Ibid.).» Translatum est peccatum, et ablatum, quod dividebat inter David et Deum; et sublato eo David idem qui prius.

Sed et ille Vas electionis, qui volavit super pennas ventorum, qui plus omnibus laboravit, cui credita sunt eloquia Dei, nonne primus in primitivam Ecclesiam caeteris ardentius fertur efferbuisse? (I Cor. XV.) Actus apostolici sunt in testimonium, quanta mala fecerit sanctis Dei in Hierusalem. Hic autem, qui tanta mala fecerit, tanta postea passus est pro nomine Christi, et lucet in firmamento coeli, nec est aliqua gemma pretiosior in corona Regis aeterni. Accedat et illa mulier, quae septem daemoniis, id est universis vitiis cumulata fuit, cui multum amanti, multum dimittitur, quae prima videt Dominum a mortuis resurgentem, apostolorum apostola, dilecta proprie Salvatoris (Marc. XVI).

Veniet nunc omnis innocentium chorus, et tota virginea puritas adunetur, quis erit, qui ad istorum gloriam aspirare, nedum transcendere audeat? Propterea confitebor tibi, Domine Jesu, et laudem tribuam nomini tuo, quia apud te propitiatio est, et propter legem tuam sustinui te (Psal. CXXIX), Domine. Quae est ista lex, quae propitiatio? Quia offensus, te clementem promittis; poenitentiam admittis; punire praetermittis. Magna est igitur virtus poenitentia vera, cum Ambrosius dicat: Facilius inveni eos qui innocentiam servaverunt quam qui congruam egerunt poenitentiam.

Vide et sexto custodiam ejus, quia nisi ipse custodierit nos, frustra vigilamus. Decursis igitur sex visionibus istis, transeamus ad secundam Salvatoris vocem dicentis: «Vigilate.» Vigilandum omnino, et somnus ab oculis auferendus, quia latrones multi obsident iter nostrum toxicatis missilibus formidandi, nullum prorsus intentatum transire sustinentes. Tres enim hostes praecipuos habemus et praecipitium suadentes, carnem, diabolum, et mundum; ex quibus duo, et si aliquando intermittunt, nunquam tamen dimittunt; tertius autem, diabolus videlicet, ita inexorabile odium adversum nos exercet, ut nunquam ab eo inducias, vel in ictu oculi potuerimus extorquere. At ut verba illius oratoris ponamus, qui ubique redolet Ciceronem, cum hoc quotidianus et anceps congressus, ex hoc innumerum vulnus, nec ex facili cicatricem promittens; sub hoc casus frequens, et respiratio difficilis; de hoc rara, et nunquam secura victoria; huic voluntas semper iniqua, et fallendi principatus. Quis adversus hunc poterit vigilare, nisi custos ille de nocte venerit in auxilium nostrum? Per nos namque non sufficimus, imo deficimus, si confidamus in nobis.

And he from the treasury of divine mercy immediately added: "The Lord has transferred the sin from you, and you shall not die (Ibid.)." The sin was transferred and taken away, which was dividing between David and God; and it being taken away, David was the same as before.

But also that Vessel of election, who flew upon the wings of the winds, who labored more than all, to whom were entrusted the oracles of God, is it not said that he first burned more ardently than the others against the primitive Church? (1 Corinthians 15.) The Apostolic Acts are for a testimony of how great evils he did to the saints of God in Jerusalem. But he who did so great evils, afterwards suffered so great things for the name of Christ, and shines in the firmament of heaven, nor is there any gem more precious in the crown of the eternal King. Let that woman also approach, who was filled with seven demons, that is, with all vices, to whom, loving much, much is forgiven, who first sees the Lord rising from the dead, the apostle of the apostles, the specially beloved of the Savior (Mark 16).

Let now the whole choir of the innocent come, and let all virginal purity be united; who will be there who dares to aspire to their glory, much less to transcend it? Therefore I will confess to you, Lord Jesus, and I will give praise to your name, because with you there is propitiation, and because of your law I have waited for you (Psalm 129), O Lord. What is that law, what is that propitiation? That though offended, you promise yourself merciful; you admit penance; you omit to punish. Great therefore is the virtue of true penance, since Ambrose says: I have found more easily those who kept innocence than those who did fitting penance.

See also sixthly his custody, because unless he himself shall keep us, we watch in vain. The six visions therefore having been traversed, let us pass to the second voice of the Savior saying: "Watch." One must watch altogether, and sleep must be taken away from the eyes, because many robbers besiege our way, to be dreaded for their poisoned missiles, sustaining to pass nothing at all unattempted. For we have three principal enemies and persuaders of the precipice: the flesh, the devil, and the world; of which two, even if they sometimes intermit, yet they never dismiss; but the third, namely the devil, exercises such inexorable hatred against us that we can never extort a truce from him, even in the twinkling of an eye. But that we may put the words of that orator, who everywhere smells of Cicero: with him is a daily and uncertain encounter, from him is an innumerable wound, nor easily promising a scar; under him is frequent fall, and difficult breathing; concerning him is rare and never secure victory; to him the will is always iniquitous, and the principality of deceiving. Who shall be able to watch against him, unless that guardian from the night shall come to our aid? For through ourselves we are not sufficient, rather we fail, if we trust in ourselves.

Attende autem de hoste isto invisibili quantus ingrediatur ad singulare certamen, qualia gerit arma, quam fortia, quo turbine torqueat hastam. Recole librum Job, et historiam Regum, et armatum, et arma considera, quia qui Goliath in libro Regum, idem est diabolus in regno Christianorum. Habet enim hastam delectationis, obdurationis clypeum, desperationis loricam, gladium occisionis, armigerum superbiam, qui antecedit cum, et exprobrat agminibus Dei viventis, et dicit inimicus: «Persequar, et comprehendam, dividam spolia, implebitur anima mea (Exod. XV).» Tu autem quid? Assume apostolicam armaturam, scutum fidei, loricam justitiae, gladium spiritus, circumspectionis hastam; et praecedat te humilitas et dic: «Persequar inimicos meos, et comprehendam illos, et non convertar donec deficiant (Psal. VII).» O Domine Jesu, nunquid aequa pugna est hominis et daemonis, duplicis et simplicis, fortis et imbecillis? Invoca me in die tribulationis, ait Dominus, et eruam te, et honorificabis me (Psal. XLIX). Invoco te, Salvator, apprehende arma, et scutum (Psal. XXXIV), ut videam contra fortem armatum fortiorem armatum, et conteras Assyrium in terra tua. Facta ergo congressione, inimicos tuos comminuet, ut pulverem ante faciem venti, et ut lutum platearum delebit eos (Psal. LXXXII).

Sic autem contra istum vigilandum est ut semper de redivivo certamine timeas et de victoria non desperes.

Caro autem sub necessitatis specie furiosi tumultus sui velat imaginem, et nunc ferculorum varietate repleta, nunc pretiosa vina commutans, incipit lascivire, laxatisque frenis, tota fertur in praeceps. Satim recrudescunt affectus, cogitationes rebellant, visae proponuntur imagines, et pingimus in cordibus nostris quod multis diebus deleri non possit. Ingurgitati enim, non confortati; impleti, nec nutriti, et corpore, et corde distendimur, completurque illud satyricum: Inguinis et capitis nullum discrimen habetur.

Parco sermonibus, quia turpis sententia non nisi verbis turpibus explicari potest, et unicuique nostrum totum est, vel quod tacemus, vel quod volumus praeterire. Tenuis autem mensa, cibus asperior, simplicior potus, corpus firmant, confirmant animum, et utriusque hominis statum reddunt alacriorem.

Attend moreover concerning this invisible enemy, how great he enters into the singular contest, what kind of arms he bears, how strong, with what whirlwind he hurls the spear. Recall the book of Job, and the history of the Kings, and consider both the armed one and the arms, because he who is Goliath in the book of Kings, the same is the devil in the kingdom of Christians. For he has the spear of delight, the shield of obduration, the breastplate of despair, the sword of killing, the armor-bearer pride, who goes before him, and reproaches the ranks of the living God, and the enemy says: "I will pursue, and I will overtake, I will divide the spoils, my soul shall be filled (Exodus 15)." But what of you? Take up the apostolic armor, the shield of faith, the breastplate of justice, the sword of the spirit, the spear of circumspection; and let humility precede you and say: "I will pursue my enemies, and I will overtake them, and I will not turn back until they fail (Psalm 17)." O Lord Jesus, is there an equal fight of man and demon, of the double and the simple, of the strong and the weak? Call upon me in the day of tribulation, says the Lord, and I will rescue you, and you shall honor me (Psalm 49). I call upon you, Savior, take hold of arms and shield (Psalm 34), that I may see against the strong armed one a stronger armed one, and crush the Assyrian in your land. The encounter having been made, therefore, he shall crush your enemies like dust before the face of the wind, and like the mire of the streets he shall blot them out (Psalm 17).

Thus however one must watch against him that you may always fear concerning a renewed contest and not despair of victory.

The flesh however under the appearance of necessity veils the image of its furious tumult, and now filled with a variety of dishes, now changing precious wines, it begins to grow wanton, and the reins having been loosed, it is borne headlong altogether. Immediately the affections grow raw again, thoughts rebel, seen images are proposed, and we paint in our hearts what for many days cannot be blotted out. For being engorged, not comforted; filled, not nourished, we are distended both in body and in heart, and that satirical saying is fulfilled: No discrimination is held between the groin and the head.

I spare words, because a foul sentiment cannot be explained except by foul words, and for each of us it is all, either what we are silent about, or what we wish to pass over. But a thin table, harsher food, simpler drink, strengthen the body, confirm the soul, and render the state of both men more cheerful.

Mundus vero quid facit? Offert nobis quidquid pulchrum est visu, et concupiscentiam carnis, et oculorum et ambitionem saeculi, ut illaqueet miseros, illaqueatos strangulet, strangulatos sempiternis involvat incendiis. Tentat nos multiformibus insidiis, superius per superbiam, per luxuriam inferius; a dextris per prosperitatem, per adversitatem a sinistris; anterius per mundi concupiscentiam, posterius per praeteritorum vitiorum recordationem, in orbiculari motu per involutionem sensum.

Vigilare igitur necesse est adversus hujusmodi latrunculos, manumque sicariam, et cum Isaia dicendum: «Super speculam Domini ego sum, stans jugiter per diem; et super custodiam meam ego sum, stans totis noctibus (Isa. XXI).» Nec solum stare convenit, sed armatum stare armatura illa quam Apostolus dicit: «Induite vos armaturam Dei (Ephes. VI).» Alter nostrorum temporum Tullius, de quo superius mentionem feci, vernans ubique flore sermonum, armaturam in hunc modum lucidissimis capitulis inauravit. Si fabulosi spiritus et incantatores motus carnis circa te obstrepuerint, confide, et dic: «Discedite a me maligni, et scrutabor mandata Dei mei (Psal. CXVIII).» Si recalere carnem senseris, et velle revolare ad ineptias suas, esto constans et dic: «Confige timore tuo carnes meas, Domine (Ibid.).» Si paupertatem odisse coeperis, et desiderio divitiarum incoeperis suscitari, expergiscere et dic: «Vae vobis, divites, qui habetis hic consolationem vestram (Matth. VIII).» Si te demulceat adulator, et ad plebiculae laudes animus hilarescat, confortare, et dic: «Oleum peccatoris non impinguet caput meum (Psal. CXL).» Si tibi suggeratur in futurum tempus bonum differre propositum, consurge et dic: «Dies Domini sicut fur, ita in nocte veniet (II Petr. III).» Si gula desaeviens lautiores tibi commendaverit apparatus, recalcitra et dic: «Non est regnum Dei esca et potus (Rom. XIV).» His velut quibusdam increpationibus diffugiunt inimici, delabitur memoria voluptatum, carnis gurgulitas contiscescit, sanctae conversationis initia convalescunt, mundus contemnitur, superatur hostis antiquus.

Sic igitur videns et vigilans fac funiculum triplicem, qui difficile rumpitur, et transi ad orationes, ingrediens interiora veli cum summo pontifice Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui propitiatur omnibus iniquitatibus tuis, qui assistit vultui Dei pro te. Admissus autem non sic audacter, et frontose ingeras te oculis majestatis, sed humillima trepidatione concussus, saltem quomodo ad tanta miracula admitti potueris, admirare.

But what does the world do? It offers us whatever is beautiful to the sight, and the concupiscence of the flesh, and of the eyes, and the ambition of the age, that it may ensnare the miserable, strangle the ensnared, and involve the strangled in everlasting conflagrations. It tempts us with multiform snares: from above through pride, from below through luxury; on the right through prosperity, on the left through adversity; in front through the concupiscence of the world, behind through the recollection of past vices, in a circular motion through the involvement of the senses.

It is necessary therefore to watch against little robbers of this kind, and the hand of an assassin, and to say with Isaiah: "Upon the watchtower of the Lord I am, standing continually by day; and upon my ward I am, standing all nights (Isaiah 21)." Nor is it fitting only to stand, but to stand armed with that armor which the Apostle mentions: "Put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6)." Another Tullius of our times, of whom I made mention above, blossoming everywhere with the flower of sermons, has gilded the armor in this manner with most lucid chapters. If fabled spirits and incanting motions of the flesh should sound around you, trust, and say: "Depart from me, you wicked, and I will search the commandments of my God (Psalm 118)." If you feel the flesh growing warm again, and wishing to fly back to its ineptitudes, be constant and say: "Pierce my flesh with your fear, O Lord (Ibid.)." If you have begun to hate poverty, and have begun to be stirred by the desire for riches, awake and say: "Woe to you, rich, who have your consolation here (Matthew 6)." If an adulator should soothe you, and the mind grows cheerful at the praises of the little people, be strengthened, and say: "Let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head (Psalm 140)." If it should be suggested to you to defer a good purpose to a future time, arise and say: "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night (2 Peter 3)." If a raging gluttony should commend more sumptuous preparations to you, kick back and say: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink (Romans 14)." By these things, as if by certain rebukes, the enemies flee, the memory of pleasures slips away, the gurgling of the flesh grows silent, the beginnings of holy conduct grow strong, the world is despised, the ancient enemy is overcome.

Thus therefore seeing and watching make a threefold cord, which is with difficulty broken, and pass to prayers, entering the interior of the veil with our high priest the Lord Jesus Christ, who is propitiated for all your iniquities, who stands before the face of God for you. But having been admitted, do not so boldly and brazenly thrust yourself before the eyes of majesty, but shaken with most humble trepidation, at least wonder how you could have been admitted to such great miracles.

Sit ergo oratio verecunda, ut erubescamus peccata nostra, et tantae reverentiae deferemus; pura, ut nihil ab ipso praeter ipsum quaeramus; devota, ut in pinguedine spiritus eam et protendamus; ampla, ut extendamus eam usque ad inimicos; sit continua, ne intermissione fiat remissior; sit pacata, ne turbulentis cogitationum fluctibus submergatur. Fateor, excessi modum, et magis solito vestras aures onerare non timui, dum stylus in longinquitatem extenditur. Sed scio, quia patienter audistis me de illius patientia disputantem, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen.

Hodie, fratres charissimi, B. Andreae nobis festivitas votiva resplenduit, quae inter ipsam glacialis brumae caliginem, jucundam nostris mentibus induxit laetitiae serenitatem, et dum aeris inclementia extrinsecus obrigescit, tanti praeliatoris audita victoria, pia corda ad procinctum spiritalis certaminis incitat, et insignes bellatorum Christi animos igne divini amoris inflammat. Inter cuncta sane martyrii genera illud nobilius, illud non immerito judicatur esse praecipuum, quod in ipso Redemptore nostro, capite videlicet martyrum, cognoscitur dedicatum. Unde cum divina dispensatio Petrum et Andream consummari per crucis supplicium voluit, inter caeteros apostolos, licet omnes unius potestatis, et dignitatis sint, quodammodo egregios atque conspicuos fecit. Crux enim, quae regem praemisit ac sceptrum, eadem utrumque militem, subsequenter evexit ad praemium.

O beata germanitas, quam sicut mundo una consanguinitas edidit, sic eadem triumphalis mors victores ad astra transmisit, et quos in hac vita unius generis protulit natura consortes, in illam beatitudinem sempiternam crux parturivit aequales. Ejusdem nobilitatis in terra eamdem prosapiae celsitudinem sortiuntur in coelo. Qui enim hic sunt filii Joannis, illic sunt filii crucis. Isti enim sunt filii Chore, qui in quorumdam psalmorum titulis praenotantur. Crux enim, quae eos morientes huic vitae subtraxit, coelesti Hierusalem renascentes cum triumphali gloria novos cives invexit. Et Andreas quidem in apostolici senatus catalogo secundus ponitur, qui tamen agnitionem Domini, juxta evangelicam fidem, primus invenitur. Dicit enim Joannes evangelista: «Quia cum staret Joannes, et ex discipulis ejus duo, et respiciens Jesum ambulantem, dixit: Ecce Agnus Dei. Et audientes eum duo discipuli loquentem, secuti sunt Jesum.» Et paulo post: «Erat autem Andreas, inquit, frater Simonis Petri, unus ex duobus, qui audierant ab Joanne, et secuti fuerant eum.» Deinde sequitur: «Invenit hic primum fratrem suum Simeonem, et dicit ei: Invenimus Messiam, quod est interpretatum Christus, et adduxit eum ad Jesum (Joan. I).»

Let prayer therefore be modest, that we may blush for our sins, and defer to so great reverence; pure, that we may seek nothing from him besides himself; devoted, that we may extend it in the fatness of the spirit; ample, that we may extend it even unto enemies; let it be continuous, lest by intermission it become more remiss; let it be peaceful, lest it be submerged by the turbulent waves of thoughts. I confess, I have exceeded the limit, and have not feared to burden your ears more than usual, while the style is extended into length. But I know that you have heard me patiently disputing concerning the patience of him, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

Today, most dear brothers, the votive festivity of Blessed Andrew has shone for us, which amidst the very mist of the icy winter, has brought a pleasant serenity of joy to our minds; and while the inclemency of the air stiffens without, the heard victory of so great a warrior incites pious hearts to the preparation for spiritual contest, and inflames the distinguished minds of the warriors of Christ with the fire of divine love. Among all kinds of martyrdom indeed, that one is judged to be more noble, that one not undeservedly principal, which is known to have been dedicated in our Redeemer himself, the head namely of martyrs. Whence since the divine dispensation wished Peter and Andrew to be consummated through the punishment of the cross, among the other apostles, although all are of one power and dignity, he made them in a certain manner eminent and conspicuous. For the cross, which sent the king and the scepter before, the same subsequently raised both soldiers to the reward.

O blessed brotherhood, which as one consanguinity brought forth to the world, so the same triumphal death transmitted as victors to the stars; and those whom nature brought forth as consorts of one kind in this life, the cross brought forth as equals into that eternal beatitude. Of the same nobility on earth, they obtain the same loftiness of lineage in heaven. For those who are here sons of John, are there sons of the cross. For these are the sons of Korah, who are noted before in the titles of certain psalms. For the cross, which withdrew them as dying from this life, brought them in as new citizens being reborn with triumphal glory to the heavenly Jerusalem. And Andrew indeed is placed second in the catalog of the apostolic senate, who yet is found first in the recognition of the Lord, according to the evangelical faith. For John the Evangelist says: "That when John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus walking, he said: Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples hearing him speaking, followed Jesus." And a little after: "Andrew," he says, "the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who had heard from John and had followed him." Then there follows: "He first found his brother Simon, and says to him: We have found the Messiah, which is interpreted Christ, and he led him to Jesus (John 1)."

Ecce Andreas inter ipsa novi tirocinii sui rudimenta fructificat, et veritatis jam praedicator efficitur, cujus adhuc vix erat auditor. Novus discipulus factus, non est propria salute contentus, condiscipulos quaerit, ad lucrandos alios fraternus se amor extendit. Thesaurum reperit, gaudet aliis prodere, furtum deputat, illum sine consortibus possidere. Fausta denique et praeclara futurae indolis signa novus tiro praetendit, qui in ipso novitiae conversionis exordio, mox quod didicerat docuit, quod acceperat fideliter erogavit. Magnum nuntium nova et admiranda ralatio illum promittere visibiliter ostendendum, quem tot prophetarum oracula praecinuerant adfuturum.

Magni certe mysterii bajulus Andreas exstitit fratri, qui nimirum eum se reperisse testatus est, quem ab origine mundi omnes sancti cum magno desiderio praestolati sunt, et tamen videre non potuerunt. Non hoc praestitum est patriarchae Jacob, qui dicebat: «Salutare tuum exspectabo, Domine (Gen. XLIX).» Non Abrahae, cui divina sponsio facta est, quod in semine suo haereditaret omnes gentes (Gen. XXII). O quanti hoc pretii aestimasset insignis ille propheta Isaias, si ei ad hoc spectaculum aspirare licuisset! nimirum cum tanti desiderii ardore succensus flagitaret Mediatoris adventum, et tanquam morosae dilationis impatiens aestuans proclamaret: «Utinam dirumperes coelos, et descenderes. A facie tua montes defluerent, sicut exustio ignis tabescerent, aquae arderent igne; ut notum fieret nomen tuum inimicis tuis (Isa. LXIV).» Quam terribilis ac vehemens tuba vox haec in Petri corde personuit, et tanquam repentinum fulmen inopinato coruscans, attonitum fecit: «Invenimus, inquit, Messiam, qui dicitur Christus (Joan. I).»

Ad praeliandum plane Rex gloriae solus advenerat, et ideo ad procinctum belli paulatim sibi jam milites acquirebat. Venerat namque ut fortem armatum superveniens vinceret, et universa arma, in quibus confidebat, auferret (Luc. XI). Venerat, ut captivum hominem, qui sub diabolicae tyrannidis jugo premebatur, eriperet, et ad ingenuitatis antiquae titulos revocaret. Venerat, ut suum Israel de vinculo vetusti Pharaonis absolveret, et in manu forti, atque robusta, terrae lacte, et melle manati praevius ductor inferret. Non tamen eligebat in adjutorium sibi triumphalibus titulis claros, non strenuos bellatores, non frementium ascensores equorum, non denique philosophos et eloquentes, sed retium vectores, et perexilis naviculae remiges, ut victoria soli divinae potentiae, non humanis viribus ascribatur.

Behold Andrew fructifies amidst the very rudiments of his new apprenticeship, and is already made a preacher of the truth, of which he was still scarcely a hearer. Having been made a new disciple, he is not content with his own salvation, he seeks fellow disciples, fraternal love extends itself to the gaining of others. He finds a treasure, he rejoices to reveal it to others, he considers it a theft to possess it without consorts. Finally, the new recruit displays auspicious and illustrious signs of future character, who in the very beginning of his novice conversion, soon taught what he had learned, and faithfully disbursed what he had received. A new and wonderful relation brought a great message, to show him visibly about to be promised, whom the oracles of so many prophets had foretold would be present.

Andrew certainly stood as the bearer of a great mystery to his brother, who indeed testified that he had found him whom from the origin of the world all the saints waited for with great desire, and yet were not able to see. This was not granted to the patriarch Jacob, who said: "I will wait for your salvation, O Lord (Genesis 49)." Not to Abraham, to whom the divine promise was made, that in his seed he should inherit all nations (Genesis 22). O at how great a price that distinguished prophet Isaiah would have valued this, if it had been permitted to him to aspire to this spectacle! Doubtless when kindled with the ardor of so great a desire he was demanding the coming of the Mediator, and as if impatient of tedious delay he cried out, seething: "O that you would rend the heavens and descend. At your face the mountains would flow down, they would melt as the burning of fire, the waters would burn with fire; that your name might be made known to your enemies (Isaiah 64)." How terrible and vehement a trumpet this voice sounded in the heart of Peter, and like a sudden lightning flashing unexpectedly, it made him astonished: "We have found," he says, "the Messiah, who is called Christ (John 1)."

The King of glory had clearly come alone for the battle, and therefore he was already gradually acquiring soldiers for the preparation of war. For he had come so that, coming upon the strong armed man, he might overcome him and take away all the arms in which he trusted (Luke 11). He had come to rescue captive man, who was pressed under the yoke of diabolical tyranny, and to restore him to the titles of his ancient nobility. He had come to release his Israel from the bond of the old Pharaoh, and as a leading guide, to bring them with a strong and robust hand into the land flowing with milk and honey. Yet he did not choose for his aid those famous for triumphal titles, nor strenuous warriors, nor riders of snorting horses, nor finally philosophers and eloquent men, but bearers of nets and rowers of a very small boat, so that the victory might be ascribed to divine power alone, not to human strength.

Hanc porro victoriam illa urbis Jericho olim subversio figuravit, quando non telorum missilibus, non falaricis, non certe bellorum quibuslibet machinis, sed vociferantis populi strepitu, et tubis clangentibus munitissima ejus moenia corruerunt (Jos. XVI). Praeceperat namque Dominus Josue ut arcam foederis viri bellatores armati praecederent, sacerdotes autem septem buccinis clangerent, sicque per septem nihilominus dies Jericho moenia circuirent. Septimo itaque die, dum vociferatio populi tubis clangentibus admiscetur, Jericho protinus a fundamento collapsa subvertitur.

Quid est autem quod ad capiendam urbem non gladius educitur, non tela vibrantur, non jaculum mittitur, non acies militari cunei ad irruptionis impetum constipatur, sed tubis duntaxat sacerdotalibus clangitur, et sic victoria non jam jure belli, sed virtute potius sacramenti de superatis hostibus obtinetur? Deliramenti sane videretur ineptia, si evidens non fuisset victoria subsecuta. Sed per Jericho quae dicitur luna, non incongrue mundus innuitur, qui sic per labentium momenta temporum, tanquam per menstrua detrimenta finitur. Arca autem sancta erat Ecclesia; tubae vero apostoli sunt, vel quinque sancti doctores Ecclesiae, quorum videlicet admonitionibus dum pugnare semper contra carnis illecebras et antiqui hostis insidias nititur, velut ad conflictus aciem et conserenda bella tubarum clangoribus incitamur; quae nimirum tubae septem fuisse referuntur, quia praedicatores sancti septiformis Spiritus gratia sunt repleti. Septem quoque dierum vicissitudine omne tempus nostrae mortalitatis evolvitur.

Urbem ergo Jericho sacerdotes arcam ferentes et clangentes septem diebus circumeunt, et muri ejus per arcae praesentiam et tubarum sonitum cadunt, quia in hujus mortalis vitae decursu, dum circumquaque per orbem terrarum sancta movetur, et dilatatur Ecclesia, per sanctae praedicationis instantiam omnis elati mundi superbia frangitur, et cuncta infidelitatis obstacula subruuntur.

Et notandum quod armati milites cum sacerdotibus ire jubentur: nimirum, ut et ii, quibus non est injunctum promendi clangoris officium, nequaquam se remotos intelligant a congressione bellorum, quatenus et ii, qui non praedicant, contra occulti hostis insidias armati nihilominus, et circumspecti semper incedant. Hujus itaque belli duces ac principes sancti apostoli sunt, qui arcam foederis Jerichuntinis moenibus, cum tubarum clangore circumferunt; quia per totius mundi circulum, sanctae praedicationis officio Ecclesiae sacramenta diffundunt.

Furthermore, that ancient subversion of the city of Jericho prefigured this victory, when its most fortified walls collapsed not by missiles of spears, nor by heavy bolts, nor certainly by any machines of war, but by the shout of the shouting people and the clanging trumpets (Josh. 6). For the Lord had commanded Joshua that armed fighting men should precede the ark of the covenant, and that seven priests should blow seven trumpets, and thus they should circle the walls of Jericho for no less than seven days. On the seventh day, therefore, while the shouting of the people was mingled with the clanging trumpets, Jericho immediately collapsed from its foundation and was subverted.

But why is it that to capture the city no sword is drawn, no spears are brandished, no javelin is thrown, no military battle line is packed for the force of the assault, but only the sacerdotal trumpets are sounded, and thus the victory is obtained over the conquered enemies not now by the right of war, but rather by the power of the sacrament? It would certainly seem a folly of madness if the evident victory had not followed. But by Jericho, which is called the moon, the world is not incongruously suggested, which is thus finished through the passing moments of time, as if through monthly losses. Moreover, the holy ark was the Church; but the trumpets are the apostles, or the five holy doctors of the Church, by whose admonitions, while one strives always to fight against the allurements of the flesh and the snares of the ancient enemy, we are incited as if to the line of conflict and to join battle by the clanging of the trumpets; these trumpets are indeed said to have been seven, because the holy preachers are filled with the grace of the sevenfold Spirit. By the succession of seven days, also, the whole time of our mortality is unfolded.

Therefore, the priests carrying the ark and clanging for seven days circle the city of Jericho, and its walls fall through the presence of the ark and the sound of the trumpets, because in the course of this mortal life, while the holy Church moves and is expanded everywhere through the circle of the earth, through the insistence of holy preaching all the pride of the exalted world is broken, and all obstacles of infidelity are brought down.

And it should be noted that the armed soldiers are commanded to go with the priests: undoubtedly, so that those to whom the office of sounding the trumpet has not been enjoined should by no means understand themselves to be removed from the engagement of wars, so that even those who do not preach may nevertheless proceed always armed and circumspect against the snares of the hidden enemy. The leaders and princes of this war are the holy apostles, who carry the ark of the covenant around the walls of Jericho with the clanging of trumpets; because throughout the circle of the whole world, they diffuse the sacraments of the Church by the office of holy preaching.

«In omnem, enim, terram exixit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum (Psal. XVIII).» Evolutis autem sex diebus, septimo tandem die rex, Jericho cum omni populo gladio devorante consumitur, quia in die novissimo diabolus, qui est rex superbiae cum omnibus suis sequacibus, quasi quodam divinae sententiae gladio, morti perpetuae condemnatur. Tunc nempe fiet, quod per Apostolum dicitur: «Quia cum evacuaverit omnem principatum et omnem potestatem et virtutem, novissime inimica destructur mors (I Cor. XV).» Sola autem domus Rahab meretricis evasit, quam videlicet funiculus coccineus in fenestra discrevit. Domus autem illa unicam praefigurat Ecclesiam, quae purificata est a turpitudine fornicationis, per fenestram confessionis, in sanguinis remissione. Haec plane a communi pereuntis mundi liberatur excidio, quia in fenestra domus suae coccineum ligat funiculum, dum in ore corporis sui portare non desinit passionis Dominicae sacramentum. «Corde enim creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem (Rom. X).» Porro autem funiculus ille ad domum erat ligatus, sed exterius videbatur quia Dominicae crucis fides in corde retinetur, quae oris confessione depromitur. Reliquis quidem pereuntibus, omnes, qui in domo illa reperti sunt, mortis evasere periculum; quia sicut intra Ecclesiam omnes salvantur electi, ita extra Ecclesiam nemo poterit salvus inveniri.

Sed fortasse quaeritur quomodo et arca, quae urbem circumiens obsidebat, et domus Rahab, quae ipsius moenibus inhaerebat, utraque nimirum res unam designat Ecclesiam, cum arca videlicet obsideat et expugnet; domus autem videatur obsessa? Sed haec questio facile solvitur, si in membris Ecclesiae, quae sit diversitas, subtiliter attendatur. Ecclesia namque expugnat Ecclesiam, cum praedicatores, magistri, et discipuli praesidentes, et obtemperantes ex uno divinae regenerationis fonte procedere, unum denique corpus Ecclesiae tanquam diversa videantur membra complere. Cui nimirum Ecclesiae per Psalmistam dicitur: «Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii;» ipsi sane apostoli, qui ad capiendam humanae superbiae Jericho tam valida, tam robusta fulminea praedicationum suorum jacula contorsere.

Unius ejusdemque Ecclesiae et patres quodammodo videntur et filii, filii videlicet patriarcharum et prophetarum; patres vero subsequentium omnium deinceps electorum. Hinc est enim quod Moysi divina voce praecipitur, ut et bases argenteas fundat, et tabulas inauratas desuper erigat (Exod. XXVI). Quid autem per bases argenteas, nisi prophetarum videtur ordo signari, qui dum primi de sacramento Ecclesiae sunt locuti, quasi quasdam bases eos aspicimus a fundamento consurgere et superposita fabricae pondera sustinere.

"Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world (Psalm 18)." After six days have passed, on the seventh day at last, the king of Jericho with all the people is consumed by the devouring sword, because on the last day the devil, who is the king of pride, with all his followers, is condemned to perpetual death as if by a certain sword of divine judgment. Then indeed shall happen what is said by the Apostle: "When he shall have abolished all principality and all power and virtue, lastly the enemy death shall be destroyed (1 Cor. 15)." But only the house of Rahab the harlot escaped, which a scarlet cord in the window distinguished. That house prefigures the one Church, which was purified from the foulness of fornication through the window of confession, in the remission of blood. This house is clearly delivered from the common destruction of the perishing world, because she binds the scarlet cord in the window of her house, while she does not cease to carry in the mouth of her body the sacrament of the Lord's passion. "For with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10)." Furthermore, that cord was bound to the house, but was seen from the outside because the faith of the Lord's cross is retained in the heart, which is brought forth by the confession of the mouth. While the rest were perishing, all who were found in that house escaped the danger of death; because just as within the Church all the elect are saved, so outside the Church no one can be found saved.

But perhaps it is asked how both the ark, which besieged the city by circling it, and the house of Rahab, which was attached to its walls, both signify the one Church, since the ark besieges and expels, while the house seems besieged? But this question is easily solved if the diversity that exists in the members of the Church is subtly considered. For the Church expels the Church, when the preachers, teachers, and presiding disciples, and those who obey, proceed from the one source of divine regeneration, and finally seem to complete the one body of the Church as different members. To which Church indeed it is said through the Psalmist: "Instead of your fathers, sons are born to you;" the apostles themselves, who twisted such valid, such robust lightning-bolts of their preachings for the capture of the Jericho of human pride.

They seem to be in some way both the fathers and the sons of one and the same Church: the sons, namely, of the patriarchs and prophets; but the fathers of all subsequent elect from then on. For this is why it is commanded by the divine voice to Moses that he should cast silver bases and erect gilded boards above them (Exod. 26). What is signified by the silver bases, if not the order of the prophets, who, since they first spoke of the sacrament of the Church, we see rising from the foundation as certain bases and sustaining the weights of the structure placed upon them?

Quid vero per tabulas, nisi sancti figurantur apostoli, qui extensa per mundum praedicatione sunt amplissime dilatati? Apostolorum namque doctrina, quasi quibusdam basibus propheticae praedicationis innititur eorumque auctoritate ad status sui robur firmiter solidatur. Unde et conjunctae binae bases in singulis tabulis supponuntur, quia dum prophetae sancti in verbis suis invicem de futurae tunc Ecclesiae sacramento concordant, et subsequentes apostolos aedificantes aedificant; et cum a semetipsis in nullo dissentiunt, illos in se robustius figunt. Nec immerito bases, quibus prophetae signantur, ut ex argento debeant fundi praecipitur. Argenti quippe claritas ex usu servatur, sine usu autem in nigredinem vertitur. Prophetarum quoque dicta, antequam apostolica praedicatione clarescerent, quia in usu spiritualis intelligentiae non erant, dum conspici prae obscuritate non poterant, quasi nigra remanebant, at postquam apostolicae praedicationis manus vaticinia obscura detersit, quidquid lucis in eis latebat, inclaruit sensusque eorum mysticos in usum dedit, quia verba jam rebus esse exposita perspicue nuntiavit. Jure igitur praecipiuntur fieri et bases argenteae et tabulae deauratae, quia videlicet apostolica praecepta prophetarum oraculis longe sunt clariora.

Ut ergo ad superiora redeamus, non incongruum est si et arca et domus meretricis, quae obsidetur, unam eamdemque exprimere videantur Ecclesiam, cum ejusdem Ecclesiae, sicut dictum est, diversa sint membra, alia videlicet per sanctae praedicationis ambitum obsidentia, alia a suae infidelitatis, vel pravitatis munimine salutis doctrinae jaculis obruenda, alia jam domestica, alia adhuc per aversionem pravi operis aliena. Hunc in testimonium spiritualis pugnae conflictum Isaias jam odoraverat, cum, postquam Salvatoris adventum perspicue descripsisset, protinus addidit: «Et cor Aegypti tabescet in medio ejus, et concurrere faciam Aegyptios adversus Aegyptios, et pugnabit vir contra fratrem suum, et vir contra amicum suum, et civitas adversus civitatem, regnum adversus regnum, et dirumpetur spiritus Aegypti in visceribus ejus (Isa. XIX).»

Cum igitur per apostolicae praedicationis obsidionem, fratres charissimi, de pereuntis Jericho simus internecionibus eruti, imo de subversae gentilitatis excidio divinitus liberati, non gravemur duces nostros subsequi, quo praecedunt; non videatur onerosum quidquid nobis pro nostra salute praecipiunt.

But what is signified by the boards, if not the holy apostles, who were most amply expanded by their preaching extended through the world? For the doctrine of the apostles rests, as if upon certain bases, on the prophetic preaching and is firmly solidified by their authority for the strength of its status. Wherefore also two joined bases are placed under each board, because while the holy prophets in their words agree with one another concerning the sacrament of the future Church, they also build up the subsequent apostles who are building; and since they differ in nothing from themselves, they fix them more robustly in themselves. Nor without reason is it commanded that the bases, by which the prophets are signified, should be cast from silver. Indeed, the brightness of silver is preserved by use, but without use it is turned into blackness. The words of the prophets also, before they were clarified by apostolic preaching, because they were not in the use of spiritual understanding, while they could not be seen on account of obscurity, remained as if black; but after the hand of apostolic preaching wiped away the obscure prophecies, whatever light was lying hidden in them shone forth, and gave their mystical senses into use, because it clearly announced that the words were already exposed by facts. Rightly, therefore, are both silver bases and gilded boards commanded to be made, because apostolic precepts are much clearer than the oracles of the prophets.

To return, then, to the previous matters, it is not incongruous if both the ark and the house of the harlot which is besieged seem to express one and the same Church, since of the same Church, as has been said, the members are diverse: some indeed besieging through the circuit of holy preaching, others to be brought down from the fortification of their infidelity or depravity by the javelins of the doctrine of salvation, others already domestic, others still alien through the aversion of an evil work. Isaiah had already sensed this conflict in testimony of spiritual battle when, after he had clearly described the coming of the Savior, he immediately added: "And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof, and I will make the Egyptians concur against the Egyptians: and a man shall fight against his brother, and a man against his friend, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom; and the spirit of Egypt shall be broken in the bowels thereof (Isa. 19)."

Therefore, since through the siege of apostolic preaching, dearest brothers, we have been rescued from the destructions of the perishing Jericho, or rather divinely liberated from the destruction of subverted gentility, let us not be reluctant to follow our leaders where they precede; let not whatever they command us for our salvation seem burdensome.

Ecce beati apostoli Petrus et Andreas ad unum Domini jubentis imperium, non dubitaverunt quae possidebant cuncta relinquere, ut terrenis mererentur coelestia permutare. Dimittunt quae prae oculis sunt, ut invisibilia bona recipiant. Postponunt habita, ad sperata pertingunt, ad regnum per supplicium transeunt, ad aeternae vitae gaudia per momentaneum crucis patibulum provehuntur. Nihil sibi in peregrinatione reservant, ut pervenientes ad patriam omnia simul inveniant. Unde cum illis per immutationem dexterae Excelsi hoc factum est, ut qui tunc abjecti videbantur et humiles, nunc animarum judices et coelestis sint curiae senatores. Tunc vilium possessores retium, nunc in regnis coelestibus obtinent gloriae principatum. Et quos in terra positos ipsa terrenarum rerum copia destituerat, nunc et totius orbis monarchiam tenent et in illa coelesti Hierusalem judiciariae potestatis solis praesident. Quique extremi pene fuerant hominum, nunc concives sunt et participes angelorum. Boni siquidem magistri et grati remuneratoris adhaesere vestigiis, qui eis aurum pro coeno, cuncta pro nihilo, pro tenebris lucem, pro somnio reddidit veritatem. Quibus nimirum et in coelo ipse sit praemium, et in terris quoque omnium subjicit jura regnorum.

Per hanc ergo viam, fratres mei, qua nos praecessere, sequamur, si illuc, ubi sunt, pertingere volumus. Post hos itaque recta via gradientes, sic relinquamus Jericho, eorum obsidione submersam [subversam] atque destructam, ut nequaquam de ejus anathemate aliquid usurpemus. Prohibet nempe Jesus ille Nave, ne de facultatibus Jericho aliquis concupiscat (Jos. VI). Vetat et noster Jesus, vetus utique Salvator, ut nemo ea quae mundi sunt diligat. «Nolite, inquit, thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra (Matth. VI).» Et per apostolum suum: «Nolite diligere mundum, neque ea quae in mundo sunt (I Joan. I).» Non ergo ad exemplum infelicis Achan, de anathemate Jericho aliquid defraudemus (Jos. VII), ut videlicet nihil ex dissolutis mundanae conversationis moribus, disciplinis ecclesiasticis inseramus. Non auferamus pallium, ut post indumentum fidei, cultum conversationum saecularium nullatenus induamus. Non argenti siclos, ut qui aeternum thesaurum in coelo recondimus, nullam temporalem pecuniam per ambitionem in sudario reponamus.

Behold, the blessed apostles Peter and Andrew, at the one command of the Lord ordering them, did not hesitate to leave all things they possessed, that they might merit to exchange earthly things for heavenly. They dismiss what is before their eyes, that they may receive invisible goods. They postpone what they have, they reach for what they hope for, they pass to the kingdom through punishment, they are advanced to the joys of eternal life through the momentary gibbet of the cross. They reserve nothing for themselves in their pilgrimage, so that arriving at the fatherland they may find all things at once. Whence, with them this was done through the change of the right hand of the Most High, so that those who then seemed abject and humble, are now judges of souls and senators of the celestial court. Then possessors of cheap nets, now in the heavenly kingdoms they obtain the principality of glory. And those whom, while placed on earth, the very abundance of earthly things had destitute, now they hold the monarchy of the whole world and preside alone over the judicial power in that heavenly Jerusalem. And those who had been almost the last of men, are now fellow citizens and participants of the angels. Indeed, they adhered to the footsteps of a good teacher and a gracious rewarder, who returned to them gold for mud, all things for nothing, light for darkness, truth for a dream. To whom indeed he himself is the reward in heaven, and on earth also he subjects the laws of all kingdoms.

Through this way, therefore, my brothers, by which they preceded us, let us follow, if we wish to reach where they are. Following after them on the right way, let us so leave Jericho, submerged [overturned] and destroyed by their siege, that we may by no means usurp anything from its anathema. For that Joshua forbids that anyone should covet anything from the wealth of Jericho (Josh. 6). And our Jesus, the old Savior indeed, forbids that anyone should love those things which are of the world. "Lay not up," he says, "for yourselves treasures on earth (Matt. 6)." And through his apostle: "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world (1 John 2)." Let us not, therefore, after the example of the unhappy Achan, defraud anything from the anathema of Jericho (Josh. 7), so that, namely, we may insert nothing from the dissolved morals of worldly conduct into ecclesiastical disciplines. Let us not take away the cloak, so that after the garment of faith, we may in no way put on the dress of secular conducts. Not the shekels of silver, so that we who store up eternal treasure in heaven, may place no temporal money in a napkin through ambition.

Non denique regulam auream, ut in Ecclesiam Christi non accurata introducamus haereticorum dogmata, non trutinata philosophorum acute disputantium studia, vel poetarum elaborata figmenta. Haec est enim aurea illa regula, limato videlicet atque polito sermone directa, et velut aureo luculentae facundiae nitore vestita. Hanc autem regulam furati sunt Arius, Marcion et Appelles, aliaeque perversorum hominum pestes, qui dum philosophorum sectas in Ecclesiam conati sunt introducere, iram Dei quodammodo super castra Israel visi sunt provocare. Sed ii obruti sunt cum Achan sub acervo lapidum, quia oppressi sunt immanissimo pondere peccatorum.

Nos autem, fratres charissimi, quia philosophia nostra Christus est et hic crucifixus, atque ideo magistros habemus, non oratores, sed piscatores, non versutos et eloquentes, sed mites ac simplices, despiciamus sapientiam quae caecat; appetamus stultitiam quae discentes illuminat. «Quia enim, ut Apostolus ait, non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes (I Cor. I).»

Teneamus igitur in sua puritate doctrinam, et rectae fidei adhibeamus operis efficaciam. Enatemus procellosum mundanae perturbationis fluctum. Includi libeat tantorum retibus piscatorum. Incalescat cor nostrum ad tam promptae obedientiae, tam ferventissimae devotionis exemplum, et quod doctores nostros novimus tunc fecisse, ipsi etiam divina opitulante clementia, studeamus implere. Ecce beatos fratres, Petrum videlicet et Andream, nunquam post conversionem legimus carnali quadam necessitudine sibimet invicem familiarius adhaesisse, quam caeteris, non arctius inter se mutuo confoederatos affectu, non easdem provincias praedicationis gratia consortitos, et, ut magis stupeas, non moleste tulit Andreas quod in fide primus, factus est ordinis dignitate secundus; nec zelo ductus est, quod Petrus, qui ejus ducatu posterior credidit, cujusque ad fidem ipse praevius fuit, prioratus tamen inter omnes apostolos jura suscepit. Hanc nempe mortificationis regulam oculis nostris supernus magister apposuit, hanc nobis verae humilitatis normam, per quam illum recta via sequeremur, exhibuit. In illis namque primis discipulis, quos et mundi doctores instituit, omnium virtutum formam signanter expressit ut usque ad consummationem saeculi unusquisque fidelium ad eos imitationis oculos dirigat, et per eorum tramitem neutrolibet exorbitaturus incedat, quatenus tenendo vitales affluentiae rivos perveniamus ad fontem, sequendo milites recto itinere perducamur ad regem, Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Not finally the golden rule, so that we may not introduce into the Church of Christ the accurate dogmas of heretics, the unweighted studies of philosophers disputing acutely, or the elaborated fictions of poets. For this is that golden rule, directed by polished and refined speech indeed, and clothed as if with the golden brightness of brilliant eloquence. This rule Arius, Marcion, and Apelles, and other pests of perverse men, have stolen, who while they tried to introduce the sects of philosophers into the Church, seemed in some way to provoke the wrath of God over the camps of Israel. But these were crushed with Achan under a heap of stones, because they were oppressed by the immense weight of their sins.

But we, dearest brothers, because our philosophy is Christ and him crucified, and therefore we have fishermen as teachers, not orators, not crafty and eloquent, but mild and simple, let us despise the wisdom that blinds; let us seek the foolishness that illuminates those who learn. "For since," as the Apostle says, "the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1)."

Therefore, let us hold the doctrine in its purity, and let us apply the efficacy of work to the right faith. Let us swim out from the stormy wave of worldly perturbation. Let us be glad to be enclosed by the nets of such great fishermen. Let our heart grow warm at the example of such prompt obedience, of such most fervent devotion, and what we know our teachers did then, let us also strive to fulfill with the help of divine clemency. Behold, the blessed brothers, Peter namely and Andrew, we never read that after their conversion they adhered more familiarly to each other by a certain carnal necessity than to others, nor were they more closely joined among themselves by mutual affection, nor were they companions in the same provinces for the sake of preaching; and, so that you may wonder more, Andrew did not take it ill that he who was first in faith was made second in the dignity of order; nor was he led by zeal because Peter, who believed later by his guidance, and to whose faith he himself was the precursor, nevertheless received the rights of priority among all the apostles. Indeed, the heavenly master placed this rule of mortification before our eyes, and exhibited to us this norm of true humility through which we might follow him on the right way. For in those first disciples, whom he also instituted as teachers of the world, he significantly expressed the form of all virtues so that until the consummation of the world each of the faithful may direct the eyes of imitation toward them, and may walk through their path without being about to deviate to either side, so that by holding the rivers of vital abundance we may reach the fountain, and by following the soldiers on the right journey we may be led to the king, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermo LVIII.

*II. DE S. ANDREA APOSTOLO. (XXX NOVEMB.)*

Et quietum studium, et attentum silentium, et tanta tanti viri festivitas monent, imo compellunt aliquid dicere ad ostendendam gloriam deitatis, gloriam apostolicae dignitatis, confessionis virtutem. Demus gloriam laudis ejus (Psal. LXV), quem laudant omnes gentes, qui ministros suos et laudat et laudabiles facit. Ipse est, cui assistunt angeli ad audiendam vocem sermonum ejus (Psal. CII); qui stellas vocat, et dicunt: Adsumus (Baruc. III); cujus manus extendit coelos; qui fundavit terram super stabilitatem suam (Psal. CIII), qui graditur super fluctus maris; qui fecit mirabilia solus (Psal. LXXI); in quem desiderant angeli prospicere. Ipse est, qui fecit omnia, et in omnibus quae fecit, quaecunque voluit. Huic servire, regnare est; qui servivit pro nobis sub dura, et gravi necessitate, et purpuram suae divinitatis cilicio nostrae mortalitatis operiens, pauper, et mendicus venit in regionem nostram. Nunquid non ludus vobis videtur, Judaei, pagani, haeretici, et omnis illa subsannantium, imo insanientium turba, cum dicimus, Filium Dei carnem, crucem, mortem, clavos et lanceam tolerasse? Ludus profecto est, unde sic nobis luditur, ut vobis illudatur:

Unicus ille Sapiens hujus mysterii non ignarus ludum istum eleganti sermone praelusit. «Delectabar, inquit, per singulos dies, ludens coram eo in orbem terrarum (Prov. VIII).» Lusit quippe coram Deo, cum carnem ex ejus praecepto suscepit, et in orbem terrarum, quia ad redemptionem orbis terrarum, delectatus per singulos dies, in singulis apostolis jucundatus, dum uni tradidit regnum coelorum (Matth. XVI), alteri de pectore suo reclinatorium fecit (Joan. XIII). «Et deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum (Prov. VIII).» Putabam ego, Domine Jesu, quod deliciae tuae essent non cum filiis hominum, sed cum choris angelorum, ubi divinitatis gloria thronis et potestatibus admirandus, superiorum oculos reverberas naturarum. Ibi lucem habitas inaccessibilem (I Tim. VI), et circumstantiam clarissimorum luminum tui luminis obtegis majestate. Sed illa clementissima tua pietas et benignitas adoranda delicias suas dicit esse cum filiis hominum. Isti sunt filii hominum, qui speraverunt sub tegmine (Psal. XXXV), quos elegisti de plebe, quorum lavisti pedes, quibus tuum Spiritum infudisti, qui fidem tui nominis quadrigis evangelicis per orbem quadrifidum portaverunt.

## Sermon LVIII.

*II. ON ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE. (NOV. 30)*

Both the quiet study, and the attentive silence, and so great a festivity of so great a man advise, indeed compel me to say something to show the glory of the deity, the glory of the apostolic dignity, and the virtue of confession. Let us give him the glory of praise (Psalm 65), whom all nations praise, who both praises his ministers and makes them laudable. It is he before whom the angels stand to hear the voice of his sermons (Psalm 102); who calls the stars, and they say: We are here (Baruch 3); whose hand stretched out the heavens; who founded the earth upon its stability (Psalm 103), who walks upon the waves of the sea; who alone does wonderful things (Psalm 71); into whom the angels desire to look. It is he who made all things, and in all things which he made, whatever he willed. To serve him is to reign; who served for us under a hard and heavy necessity, and covering the purple of his divinity with the hairshirt of our mortality, he came poor and a beggar into our region. Does it not seem a game to you, Jews, pagans, heretics, and all that crowd of mockers, indeed of madmen, when we say that the Son of God tolerated the flesh, the cross, death, the nails, and the lance? It is certainly a game, whence it is so played by us that you are mocked:

That unique Wise One, not ignorant of this mystery, preplayed this game in elegant speech. "I was delighted," he says, "every day, playing before him in the world (Prov. 8)." For he played before God when he took up the flesh by his command, and in the world, because for the redemption of the world, delighted every day, he rejoiced in each of the apostles, while to one he delivered the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16), for another he made a place of reclining on his breast (John 13). "And my delights were with the sons of men (Prov. 8)." I used to think, Lord Jesus, that your delights were not with the sons of men, but with the choirs of angels, where admirable in the glory of the deity to the thrones and powers, you reflect the eyes of superior natures. There you inhabit inaccessible light (1 Tim. 6), and you cover the surrounding of the clearest lights with the majesty of your light. But that most clement piety of yours and adorable benignity says that its delights are with the sons of men. These are the sons of men, who have hoped under the cover (Psalm 35), whom you chose from the people, whose feet you washed, into whom you poured your Spirit, who carried the faith of your name through the fourfold world by the evangelical chariots.

Nota tamen quod dicit non cum hominibus, sed cum filiis hominum. Ego puto homines ad veterem hominem, filios vero hominum ad filium hominis pertinere, juxta quam intelligentiam puer citharista sic intonat: «Quis est homo quod memor es ejus, aut filius hominis, quoniam visitas eum? (Psal. VIII.)» Videsne, quia Deum hominis esse memorem, filium vero hominis se confirmat visitare? Praesumimus et suspiramus, quia faciet nobis misericordiam suam in conspectu filiorum hominum, si interim protegat nos in abscondito suae faciei a conturbatione hominum (Psal. XXX).

Quartus itaque gradus est confessio oris. Haec pure facienda est, quia non est pars peccatorum dicenda et altera retinenda, neque levia confitenda et gravia diffitenda, nec alter accusandus et ipse excusandus, sed cum justo dicendum: «Non declines cor meum in verba malitiae ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis (Psal. CXL).» Haec enim sunt verba malitiae et gravis malitiae, qua gravior vel pejor esse vix possit. Confitendum est, et humiliter, ut idem sit in corde quod sonabit in ore. Sunt enim nonnulli, qui narrare in confessionibus solent, quae vel arguere litteratorio, vel sortiter gladiatorio gessere conflictu, proh dolor! sub humilitatis pallio superbiam, inducentes et putantes se posse vitare oculos judicis cuncta cernentis. Nonne utrique reges Saul, et David redarguti a prophetis Samuele et Nathan dixerunt: «Peccavi.» Et tamen Saul audivit: «Transtulit regnum Dominus a te, et dabit illud aemulo tuo (I Reg. XV);» et David: «Transtulit Dominus peccatum tuum a te, et non morieris? (II Reg. XII).» Quid est, nisi quia quod Saul habuit in ore, non fuit in corde; et humilitas, quae in ore David exstitit, in corde etiam radiavit.

Dicendum est et fideliter ut in fide Ecclesiae credat sibi peccata dimitti, quia Cain et Judas puro et humiliter confessi sunt, sed nequaquam fideliter, nam alter eorum desperans ad laqueum cucurrit (Matth. XXVII), alter illud grande scelus evomuit: «Major est iniquitas mea, quam ut veniam merear (Gen. IV).» Mentiris, latro, quia major est pietas Dei quam quaevis iniquitas, quia «miserationes ejus super omnia opera ejus (Psal. CXLIV).»

Sequitur quintus gradus, maceratio carnis, quae jejuniis et vigiliis attenuanda est, ne nova prurigine ad voluptuosam revolet pravitatem. Haec autem facienda est cum licentia, quia quod sine licentia fit vanae gloriae deputabitur, non mercedi; occulte, ut «nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua (Matth. VI),» discrete, propter debilitatem corporis et multimodas infirmitates. Plerosque enim vidimus in principio conversionis ita discretionis infregisse repagula ut laudum solemnibus inhabiles redderentur, et apparatu deinceps lautiori diuturnis foveri temporibus indigerent.

Note however that he says not with men, but with the sons of men. I think men pertain to the old man, but the sons of men to the Son of Man, according to which understanding the boy harper thus intones: "What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you visit him? (Psalm 8)." Do you see that he confirms God to be mindful of man, but to visit the son of man? We presume and we sigh, because he will show us his mercy in the sight of the sons of men, if meanwhile he protects us in the secret of his face from the disturbance of men (Psalm 30).

The fourth degree, therefore, is the confession of the mouth. This must be done purely, because one part of the sins is not to be told and the other retained, nor light things confessed and grave things denied, nor another accused and oneself excused; but it must be said with the just man: "Do not incline my heart to words of malice, to make excuses in sins (Psalm 140)." For these are words of malice and of grave malice, than which one more grave or worse could hardly exist. Confession must be made, and humbly, so that the same thing may be in the heart which will sound in the mouth. For there are some who are accustomed to narrate in confessions what they did either by literary argument or by brave gladiatorial conflict—alas!—bringing in pride under the cloak of humility and thinking they can avoid the eyes of the judge who discerns all things. Did not both kings Saul and David, when rebuked by the prophets Samuel and Nathan, say: "I have sinned"? And yet Saul heard: "The Lord has transferred the kingdom from you, and will give it to your rival (1 Kings 15)"; and David: "The Lord has transferred your sin from you, and you shall not die (2 Samuel 12)"? What is this, except that what Saul had in his mouth was not in his heart; and the humility which existed in the mouth of David also radiated in his heart.

It must also be said faithfully, so that in the faith of the Church one believes his sins are forgiven, because Cain and Judas confessed purely and humbly, but by no means faithfully; for one of them, despairing, ran to the noose (Matthew 27), the other vomited that great crime: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon (Genesis 4)." You lie, thief, because the piety of God is greater than any iniquity, because "his mercies are over all his works (Psalm 144)."

There follows the fifth degree, the mortification of the flesh (maceratio carnis), which is to be thinned by fasts and vigils, lest by a new itch it fly back to voluptuous depravity. This, however, must be done with permission, because what is done without permission will be imputed to vain glory, not to reward; secretly, so that "your left hand may not know what your right hand is doing (Matthew 6)"; discreetly, on account of the weakness of the body and manifold infirmities. For we have seen many at the beginning of their conversion so break the barriers of discretion that they were rendered unfit for the solemnities of praise, and thereafter needed to be cherished for long periods with more refined preparation.

Jam sic illuminatus procedat ad sextum, qui est correctio operis. Prohibe ergo linguam tuam a malo (Psal. XXXIII), operare quod bonum est, et sensuales motus tuos continentiae frenis infrena, et sic erit pax in terra carnis tuae. Atque malos pro persona, quam habes, et te praesente, justitiam non sinas sepeliri.

Veni ad septimum gradum, qui est perseverantia bonitatis, et in hoc septimo vocabit te Dominus cum Moyse de medio caliginis (Exod. XXIV), et in ipsam divinitatis substantiam interiores oculos infiges. Perseverantiam autem faciunt exspectatio praemiorum, poenarum recordatio, primitiae spiritus et donum coeleste, de quibus loquitur Apostolus (Hebr. VI), quod nec expertus ignorat, nec inexpertus intelligit. Stultitia est enim illi (I Cor. II), et non potest intelligere, qui spiritualiter examinantur.

Audite et breviter quem oporteat ordinari ad dispensationem ministerii hujus; oportet enim non minus litteratum quam religiosum, ut zelum Dei habeat, et secundum scientiam, cum indiscreta religio magis obesse soleat quam prodesse. Litteratum autem ideo ut sciat quod injungat, cui parcat, quando parcere debeat, quam consolationem proferat de Scripturis. Religiosum vero, idcirco ut puras manus levet ad Deum et pro peccatoribus fiducialiter intercedat. Videat autem ne unquam de his quae sub signaculo confessionis accepit, aliquam faciat mentionem, vel alicui loquenti consentiat. Caveat etiam ne vilescat in conspectu ejus qui ei suam vilitatem ostendit, nec sit suspectus, nec de praeterita futuram vitam aestimet peccatoris.

Quod si fortuito de his quae in confessione suscepit causa coram eo fuerit ventilata, non tanquam conscius in partem declinet, sed quasi nescius judiciarium ordinem permittat excurrere. Habeat autem in voluntate compati et eum liberare, et nitatur aliquid detrahere severitati, imitans dulcedinem Domini mei, de quo dicit sanctus: «Quoniam fecisti judicium meum, et causam meam (Psal. II).» Sed, proh dolor! temporibus nostris per universum mundum pestilentialis morbus excrevit, ut praeferantur Ecclesiis quos nec scientia nec vita commendat, ceu duces caecorum, et praecipitati, et in praecipitium perducentes.

Now thus illuminated, let him proceed to the sixth, which is the correction of work. Therefore, prohibit your tongue from evil (Psalm 33), work what is good, and restrain your sensual movements with the reins of continence, and thus there will be peace in the land of your flesh. And do not allow justice to be buried by the bad, on account of the person you hold, and in your presence.

Come to the seventh degree, which is the perseverance of goodness, and in this seventh the Lord will call you with Moses out of the midst of the darkness (Exodus 24), and you will fix your inner eyes upon the very substance of the divinity. Moreover, expectation of rewards, remembrance of punishments, the firstfruits of the spirit, and the heavenly gift, of which the Apostle speaks (Hebrews 6), produce perseverance; which he who has experienced does not ignore, nor he who is inexperienced understand. For it is foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 2), and he who is examined spiritually cannot understand.

Hear also briefly who ought to be ordained to the dispensation of this ministry; for he ought to be no less learned than religious, so that he may have the zeal of God, and according to knowledge, since indiscreet religion is usually more harmful than profitable. Learned, moreover, for this reason: so that he may know what he should enjoin, whom he should spare, when he ought to spare, and what consolation he should bring forth from the Scriptures. Religious, indeed, for this reason: so that he may lift up pure hands to God and intercede faithfully for sinners. Let him see to it, however, that he never makes any mention of those things which he received under the seal of confession (signaculo confessionis), nor consents to anyone speaking of them. Let him also beware lest he become vile in the sight of him who showed him his own vileness, nor be suspicious, nor judge the future life of a sinner from the past.

But if by chance a cause should be aired before him concerning those things which he received in confession, let him not, as one who is conscious, decline to one side, but as if ignorant let him permit the judicial order to run its course. Moreover, let him have it in his will to suffer with and to free him, and let him strive to detract something from severity, imitating the sweetness of my Lord, of whom the saint says: "Since you have made my judgment and my cause (Psalm 9)." But, alas! in our times through the whole world a pestilential disease (pestilentialis morbus) has grown, so that those whom neither knowledge nor life commends are preferred to the churches, like leaders of the blind, both themselves precipitated and leading others into the precipice.

Audivimus de confitente, de confessionem suscipiente, audiamus nunc quae sunt quae impediant confessionem. Quantum colligere possum, quatuor praecipue occurrunt, pudor, timor, spes et desperatio. Nihil fortius ad expugnandum gratiam Dei quam timor humanus, quia, dum erubescimus confiteri quae commisimus, Deum minus quam homines reveremur. «Haec est confusio adducens peccatum (Eccli. IV).» Opponamus ergo ei considerationem rationis, reverentiam intuentis Dei, comparationem majoris confusionis. Ut enim confiteamur ratio monet, Deus cogit qui videt; et si confundimur hic dicere, quid erit in illa magna confusione, ubi omnia omnibus patebunt? Timor autem plerosque opprimit, ne gravi poenitentia percellantur et perferre non possint. Vere «qui timet pruinam, irruet super eum nix (Job VI).»

Hic considerandum quam gravis sit poena gehennae, quam longa, quam infructuosa. E contra autem poenitentia praesens, levis, brevis et fructuosa. Spes autem multos obruit, qui dum bona praesentia cupiunt, aperire conscientias suas nolunt, ne, si quales sunt hominibus appareant, ad nulla praesentis vitae bona conscendant. Quibus inculcandum est quia bona hujus saeculi parva sunt, incerta et momentanea, et illa illius vitae maxima, certissima et aeterna. Plurimos desperatio interficit qui hoc solum metuunt, ne possint continere: Verum namque est quia «peccator, cum venerit in profundum malorum, contemnit (Prov. XII).» Hanc obterere debemus vigore confessionis, gratia humilitatis et compassione illius cui aperimus conscientiam nostram.

Sciendum autem quia alia est confessio, quae peccatum plangit; alia, quae laudem canit. Bonum animae ornamentum confessio, quae et peccatorem purgat et justum reddit purgatiorem.

Sequitur: «Qui crediderit in illum non confundetur.» Credere Deo, est verbis ejus fidem adhibere. Credere Deum, est confiteri ubique Deum esse. Credere in Deum, est omnem spem suam in illum dirigere. Deum et Deo credunt daemones, sed in illum non credunt, in quem qui crediderit non confundetur, quia spem suam non ponunt in illum.

Ecce quantum potui, et si non quantum volui, de confessionis disserui sacramento. Sed quia sermonem in longum protraximus, finem loquendi pariter audiamus. Det nobis corde credere ad justitiam, ore confiteri ad salutem (Rom. XX), et in se credere, sponsus Ecclesiae, Filius Mariae, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen.

## DECEMBER.

We have heard about the one confessing and about the one receiving confession; let us now hear what things they are which hinder confession. As far as I can gather, four especially occur: shame, fear, hope, and despair. Nothing is stronger for attacking the grace of God than human fear, because, while we blush to confess what we have committed, we revere God less than men. "This is the confusion that brings sin (Sirach 4)." Let us therefore oppose to it the consideration of reason, the reverence of God who looks on, the comparison of a greater confusion. For reason advises that we confess, and God, who sees, compels; and if we are confounded to speak here, what will it be in that great confusion, where all things will be open to all? Fear, moreover, oppresses most people, lest they be struck by grave penance and be unable to bear it. Truly, "he who fears the frost, the snow shall fall upon him (Job 6)."

Here it must be considered how grave is the punishment of Gehenna, how long, how fruitless. On the contrary, however, present penance is light, brief, and fruitful. Hope, moreover, overwhelms many, who while they desire present goods, are unwilling to open their consciences, lest, if they appear as they are to men, they should ascend to no goods of the present life. To whom it must be inculcated that the goods of this world are small, uncertain, and momentary, and those of that life are greatest, most certain, and eternal. Despair kills very many who fear this alone, lest they not be able to contain themselves: For it is indeed true that "the sinner, when he has come into the depth of evils, treats them with contempt (Proverbs 12)." This we ought to crush with the vigor of confession, the grace of humility, and the compassion of him to whom we open our conscience.

Moreover, it should be known that there is one confession which bewails sin, and another which sings praise. Confession is a good ornament of the soul, which both purges the sinner and renders the just man more purged.

It follows: "He who believes in him shall not be confounded." To believe God is to give faith to his words. To believe God is to confess that God is everywhere. To believe in God is to direct all one's hope into him. The demons believe God and about God, but they do not believe in him, in whom he who believes shall not be confounded, because they do not place their hope in him.

Behold, as much as I could, if not as much as I wished, I have discoursed concerning the sacrament of confession. But because we have drawn out the sermon to a length, let us hear at the same time the end of the speaking. May the spouse of the Church, the Son of Mary, who is God blessed forever, grant us to believe in the heart unto justice, to confess with the mouth unto salvation (Romans 10), and to believe in him. Amen.

## DECEMBER.

VI. Sermo de S. Nicolao episcopo et confessore.
XXIV. Sermo in Vigilia Natalis Domini.
XXV. Sermo in Nativitate Domini. Sermo alius de eadem.
XXVI. Sermo de S. Stephano protomartyre.
XXVII. Sermo I de S. Joanne apostolo et evangelista. Sermo II de eodem.
XXX Sermo de S. Barbatiano presbytero et confessore.
XXXI. Sermo de S. Columba virg. et mart.

## Sermon LIX.

*DE S. NICOLAO EPISCOPO MYRENSI ET CONFESSORE. (VI DECEMB.)*

Nicolaus iste meus, imo et vester, electus ab utero, sanctus a puero, juvenum gloria, reverentia senum, sacerdotum honor, splendor pontificum conventum vestrum sua laetificat festivitate. Hic est Nicolaus, cujus miracula per totam mundi latitudinem diffunduntur, quem laudat orbis terrae et qui habitant in eo. Tot enim et tanta miracula cumulantur, ut omnes litteratorum argutiae vix ad scribendum sufficiant, nos ad legendum. Et licet scholarium numerus incude rhetorica sub Quintiliani, vel Ciceronis malleis tenuissimas orationum laminas extendat, superat tamen gloria confessoris vocem, mentem, linguam et conscientiam. Crebrescunt enim quotidie mirabilia, nec requiescit Spiritus Dei ad memoriam militis sui sua continuare miracula. Glorificatur in mari, laudatur in terra, in omnibus periculis invocatur. Denique «Qui descendunt mare in navibus facientes operationem in aquis multis, ipsi viderunt opera Domini, et mirabilia ejus in profundo (Psal CVI).» Ipsi viderunt opera Domini, et Nicolai per Deum miracula in profundo.

Nonne post memoriam virginis, tam dulcis pietas vel pia dulcedo in cordibus fidelium obversatur ut in die tribulationis Nicolai nomen teneatur in ore, requiescat in corde. Si coruscationes fulgurant et procellis detonantibus a supernis vindicta procedit, Nicolaus in patronum assumitur Nicolaus dulciter inclamatur. Si tempestas saeviens et crudelitas maris navigantibus mortem intentant. Nicolaus flebiliter exoratur, ut audiat; suppliciter invocatur, ut veniat; ut eruat, misericorditer acclamatur. Si pulsamur incommodis, vel offendiculis indolemus, statim sanctum nomen prosilit in os nostrum, Nicolaus ingeminatur, patrocinium quaeritur Nicolai.

6. Sermon on St. Nicholas, bishop and confessor.
24. Sermon on the Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord.
25. Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord. Another sermon on the same.
26. Sermon on St. Stephen the protomartyr.
27. First Sermon on St. John, apostle and evangelist. Second Sermon on the same.
30. Sermon on St. Barbatianus, priest and confessor.
31. Sermon on St. Columba, virgin and martyr.

## Sermon LIX.

*ON ST. NICHOLAS, BISHOP OF MYRA AND CONFESSOR. (DECEMBER 6)*

This Nicholas of mine, indeed and yours, chosen from the womb, holy from a boy, the glory of youths, the reverence of old men, the honor of priests, the splendor of pontiffs, gladdens your assembly with his festivity. This is Nicholas, whose miracles are spread through the whole breadth of the world, whom the orb of the earth and those who dwell in it praise. For so many and such great miracles are accumulated that all the cleverness of literary men would hardly suffice for writing them, nor ours for reading them. And although the number of scholars, on the rhetorical anvil (incude rhetorica) under the hammers of Quintilian or Cicero, might extend the thinnest plates of orations, yet the glory of the confessor surpasses voice, mind, tongue, and conscience. For his wonders increase daily, nor does the Spirit of God rest from continuing his miracles to the memory of his soldier. He is glorified on the sea, he is praised on land, he is invoked in all dangers. Finally, "those who go down to the sea in ships, doing business in many waters, they have seen the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep (Psalm 106)." They have seen the works of the Lord, and the miracles of Nicholas through God in the deep.

Is it not that after the memory of the Virgin, such sweet piety or pious sweetness is present in the hearts of the faithful that in the day of tribulation the name of Nicholas is held in the mouth and rests in the heart? If lightnings flash and from on high vengeance proceeds with thundering storms, Nicholas is taken as a patron, Nicholas is sweetly called upon. If a raging tempest and the cruelty of the sea threaten death to those sailing. Nicholas is tearfully implored that he may hear; he is humbly invoked that he may come; he is mercifully acclaimed that he may rescue. If we are struck by troubles or grieve over obstacles, immediately the holy name leaps into our mouth, Nicholas is redoubled, the patronage of Nicholas is sought.

Ne putetis autem me declamatorie loqui, vel venustate rhetorica verborum aggerare splendorem, cum totus mundus beneficia sentiat confessoris, nec sit qui se abscondat ab amore ejus. In testimonium sunt peregrinationes ad sanctum illius corpus a finibus terrae susceptae, ut videantur quae per eum fiunt mirabilia. Non solum autem Christianis, sed et paganis in tantam reverentiam sancti nominis advolavit auctoritas ut certatim confluant ad laudandum et glorificandum nomen sanctum ejus. Praecipue sacerdotum et clericorum turba tanta devotione circa cultum ejus afficitur ut in toto terrarum orbe quicunque, undecunque se contradant ad obsequendum tantae solemnitati. Laetantur pueri, juvenes gratulantur, ornantur virgines, senes exhilarantur et omnis aetas personanter alludit. Unusquisque autem habet materiam gaudiorum; ut laudent pueri puerum jejunantem, juvenes juvenem liberantem, virgines virginum infamiam redimentem, senes senis inopiam miserantem. Juvenes et virgines, senes cum junioribus laudant nomen Domini hujus (Psal. CXLVIII).

Sed nunc post actus ejus Graecorum linguis excellentibus insigniter diffamatos, quid audeat sermo pauperculus balbutire? Verumtamen ne videar excusatorias tergiversationes inducere, recurro ad evangelicam lectionem; et quod de communi accepi, profero in commune. Ait enim: «Homo quidam nobilis abiit in regionem longinquam, et ait servis suis: Negotiamini, dum venio (Luc. XIX).» Secure negotiabor, praecipiente Domino meo, non timebo Psalmistam dicentem: «Quia non cognovi negotiationem, introibo in potentias domini (Psal LXX).» Non enim parvum mihi fiduciae robur praestat, quod ille summus imperator factus est negotiator meus, et negotium meum sine otio egit, quandiu fuit in terris, et pretiosarum mercium sarcinulas portans ad Patrem, ipsi vultui Dei, et quid emit et quid redemit, et unde redemerit, ostendit. Tu ergo illo negotioso otiosus esse disponis? illo laborante, quiescere? Ipse venit negotiari in regionem longinquam, et tu ad regiones proximas ambulare contemnis? Aggredere et ingredere regionem dissimilitudinis, videlicet mundum istum, et vide quam frequentes ibi nundinae, quantae germinent et regerminent vanitates, prorsus dissimilitudinis quia regionem similitudinis, ubi ad similitudinem Dei facti nos fuimus, amisisse nos constat. Nunquid non magna dissimilitudo, de paradiso ad infernum, de angelo ad jumentum, ad diabolum de Deo? Vade ergo per forenses tumultus et hic decertantes circumspice. Quantum vero colligo, in tribus causis natat omnis voluntas. Alii divitiis, alii honoribus, alii gloriae innituntur.

Lest you think that I speak declamatorily, or aggregate the splendor of words with rhetorical beauty, since the whole world feels the benefits of the confessor, nor is there anyone who hides himself from his love. In testimony are the pilgrimages to his holy body undertaken from the ends of the earth, that the wonders which are done through him may be seen. Moreover, not only to Christians, but also to pagans, the authority of the holy name has flown with such reverence that they flock together in rivalry to praise and glorify his holy name. Especially the crowd of priests and clerics is affected with such devotion toward his cult that in the whole world whoever, from wherever, give themselves over to serve such great solemnity. Boys rejoice, youths congratulate him, virgins are adorned, old men are gladdened, and every age resonantly plays. Moreover, each one has matter for joys; so that boys may praise the boy fasting, youths the youth liberating, virgins the one redeeming the infamy of virgins, old men the one pitying the poverty of the old man. Youths and virgins, old men with the younger, praise the name of this Lord (Psalm 148).

But now after his acts, excellently spread by the distinguished tongues of the Greeks, what does a poor speech dare to stammer? Nevertheless, lest I seem to induce excusatory tergiversations, I return to the evangelical reading; and what I received from the common store, I bring forth into the common store. For he says: "A certain noble man went into a far country, and said to his servants: Trade until I come (Luke 19)." I will trade securely, as my Lord commands; I will not fear the Psalmist saying: "Because I have not known trading, I will enter into the powers of the Lord (Psalm 70)." For no small strength of confidence is afforded to me, that that supreme commander became my trader, and carried out my business without leisure, as long as he was on earth, and carrying the bundles of precious merchandise to the Father, he showed to the very face of God both what he bought and what he redeemed, and from where he redeemed it. Do you then, while he is busy, dispose yourself to be at leisure? while he is laboring, to rest? He himself came to trade in a far country, and do you despise walking to the neighboring regions? Advance and enter into the region of dissimilarity (regionem dissimilitudinis), namely this world, and see how frequent the markets are there, how many vanities sprout and sprout again, truly of dissimilarity because it is certain that we have lost the region of similarity, where we were made after the likeness of God. Is it not a great dissimilarity, from paradise to hell, from an angel to a beast, to the devil from God? Go therefore through the forensic tumults and look around at those contending here. Moreover, as far as I gather, all will swims in three causes. Some lean on riches, others on honors, others on glory.

Curris ad Indiam, Aethiopiam circuis, maria transis et alium orbem tibi aperis navigando, ut divitias congreges, fugis patriam, ignoras filios, divelleris ab uxore, et omnium necessitudinum oblitus quaeris ut acquiras, acquiris ut pereas, perdis ut doleas, thesaurizas et ignoras cui dictum: «Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde, ut quid diligitis vanitatem, et quaeritis mendacium?» (Psal. IV.) Et hoc quidem pro divitiis. Audi et breviter de honoribus: Ducem te constituerunt, et data est tibi facultas ut miser sis, et amplius non quiescas. Cumulatur materia sollicitudinum, et inter aerumnas cor ipsum exedentes, necesse est vultum induere gaudiorum. Nunquid in honore sine dolore, in praelatione sine tribulatione, in sublimitate sine vanitate esse quis potest? Miseri, juxta philosophum, mercedem miseriarum amamus, ipsas exsecramur. Regum nobis animos induimus, et quidquid vobis ex voluntate non respondet, statim evocat eam, nec communis recogitatur humanitas, et tamen est vermis arrodens, qui conscientiam jugiter torqueat: timor potentiae superioris.

Haec est justissima lex, ut sic vivas cum inferiori quemadmodum superiorem vis vivere tecum. Audi et de gloria. Si quaeris gloriam, omnibus invidiae semina praebuisti. Inflatus est, et ventilatorio spiritu plenus disrumperis, nec attendis quot te sequantur, sed quot praecedant. Conglomerantur omnes ad detrahendum tibi, ad maledicendum linguas acuunt, et argutissimus es si vel linguam, vel manum invidorum possis evadere. Ecce unde gloriosus esse volebas, inglorius esse convinceris. Nullum enim inexorabilius persequitur multitudo quam illum qui sibi multitudinis arrogat principatum. Junge his tribus potentiam et voluptatem, quae et ipsa tenui et perfusorio gaudio rapiuntur, et videbis quia copia pauper est, honor humilis, vilis gratia, potentia debilis, et laboriosa voluptas, ut, juxta Apostolum, omnem intellectum in Christi obsequium redigamus (II Cor. X). Relege maximum illum Latinorum philosophorum, et in illius verbis meam invenies esse sententiam. Contemne igitur haec omnia, quia omnia contemnenda, et de his omnibus fac sarcinam tuam, contemptum mundi.

Decursa vero hac regione, et quod pretiosius est inde sublato, transi ad secundam, quae est paradisus claustralis. Vere claustrum est paradisus. Hic prata virentia Scripturarum, praeterfluens lacrymarum undositas, quam de purissimis affectibus amor ille coelestis eliquat. Hic sunt arbores erectissimae choris sanctorum, nullaque est, quae non multa fructus gaudeat ubertate. Haec est illa sublimis mensa, in qua Deus est et cibans et cibus, munerans et munus, offerens et oblatum, conviva et convivium. Hic aggestae sunt Omnipotentis divitiae, hic refusa est gloria angelorum.

You run to India, you encircle Ethiopia, you cross the seas and open another world to yourself by sailing, that you may gather riches; you flee your fatherland, you ignore your children, you are torn away from your wife, and having forgotten all necessities, you seek that you may acquire, you acquire that you may perish, you lose that you may grieve, you treasure up and do not know for whom it is said: "Sons of men, how long with a heavy heart, why do you love vanity and seek a lie? (Psalm 4)" And this indeed for riches. Hear also briefly about honors: They have appointed you a leader, and power is given to you that you may be wretched, and rest no more. The matter of solicitudes is accumulated, and among the tribulations eating the very heart, it is necessary to put on a face of joys. Can anyone be in honor without pain, in prelacy without tribulation, in height without vanity? Wretches, according to the philosopher, we love the reward of miseries, and we execrate them. We put on the minds of kings, and whatever does not respond to you according to your will, immediately calls it forth, nor is common humanity reconsidered, and yet there is a gnawing worm which continually tortures the conscience: the fear of a superior power.

This is the most just law, that you live with an inferior as you wish a superior to live with you. Hear also about glory. If you seek glory, you have provided the seeds of envy to all. Inflated, and full of a winnowing spirit, you are burst asunder, nor do you attend how many follow you, but how many precede. All conglomerate to detract from you, they sharpen their tongues to curse you, and you are most clever if you can evade either the tongue or the hand of the envious. Behold, whence you wished to be glorious, you are convinced of being inglorious. For the multitude pursues no one more inexorable than him who arrogates to himself the leadership of the multitude. Join to these three power and pleasure, which themselves are snatched away with a thin and superficial joy, and you will see that abundance is poor, honor humble, grace vile, power weak, and pleasure laborious, so that, according to the Apostle, we may reduce every intellect to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10). Read again that greatest of Latin philosophers, and in his words you will find my opinion. Contemn therefore all these things, because all are to be contemned, and from all these things make your bundle: the contempt of the world.

This region having been traversed, and what is more precious taken away from it, pass to the second, which is the cloistered paradise (paradisus claustralis). Truly the cloister is a paradise. Here are the green meadows of the Scriptures, the overflowing abundance of tears, which that heavenly love distills from the purest affections. Here are trees most erect with the choirs of saints, and there is none which does not rejoice in a great fertility of fruit. This is that sublime table, at which God is both the feeder and the food, the rewarder and the reward, the offering and the oblation, the guest and the banquet. Here are gathered the riches of the Almighty, here is poured back the glory of the angels.

Putasne nullas hic esse nundinas, et otiari illos qui habitant unius moris in domo? (Psal. LXVII.) Videas hunc sacris lectionibus intendentem, illum incumbentem orationibus, hunc pro suis excessibus lacrymantem, illum in Dei laudibus exsultantem, hunc vigilantem, jejunantem, et illum officio pietatis sibi ad invicem invidere. Nocte consurgunt ad confitentendum Deo; vespere, mane et meridie narrant et annuntiant laudem ejus, et omnis illorum sedulitas in orbem divini rotatur obsequii. Curre ergo per omnes, curre per singulos, et de universis et singulis fac sarcinam tuam, formam vivendi.

Relicto ergo mundo et modo vivendi suscepto, transi ad tertiam, quae est regio expiationis. In hac regione benignus Pater examinat filios rubiginosos, sicut examinatur argentum; ducit per ignem et aquam, ut inducat in refrigerium (Psal. LXV). Trinae sunt distinctiones locorum, quos pro diversitate meritorum animae sortiuntur. Ad coelum namque statim evolant, qui domicilio corporis usi sunt, tanquam carcere, qui defaecatam puramque substantiam utriusque hominis servaverunt. Econtrario qui fecerunt usque ad mortem, quae digna sunt morte, locis gehennalibus sine misericordia deputantur. Qui vero neutrum sunt, sed sunt inter utrumque, qui mortalia quidem commiserunt, sed circa mortem poenituerunt, poenituentiam non explentes, indigni ut statim gaudeant, nec digni ut semper ardeant, loca purgatoria sortiuntur, in quibus flagellantur, sed non ad insipientiam sibi, ut extorti transferantur ad regnum. Pro his, qui in coelo sunt, non orandum, quia eos, non pro eis, orare debemus. Pro his, qui in inferno sunt, suspendendae sunt preces, quibus clausa est misericordiae janua et totius spes interclusa salutis. Pro illis tantum vigilandum est in orationibus, subveniendum sacrificio singulari, qui locis purgabilibus emundantur, ut benignus Pater poenitentiam eorum in satisfactionem, satisfactionem in glorificationem cito convertat. Curre iterum per istos intuitu pietatis, et fac sarcinam tuam, affectum compatiendi.

Quarta regio, est regio gehennalis, regio dura, regio extimescenda, terra afflictionis, terra oblivionis, terra miseriarum, terra tenebrarum, terra turbinis et caliginis, terra maledictionis et mortis, in qua nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat. Totus tremo atque horreo ad memoriam regionis istius, et concussa sunt omnia ossa mea. Illic est ignis, qui non succenditur, vermis qui non moritur (Isai LXVI), frigus horrendum. Ibi fetor intolerabilis exoritur, percutientes mallei resonant incessanter, obfusae tenebrae cumulatius indensantur. Illic confusio peccatorum, horribilis facies daemonum, inextricabilium vinculorum fertilis multitudo. Ibi fletus et stridor dentium (Matth. XIII; Luc XIII), planctus et gemitus, et alternantia mala impios sine pietate discerpunt.

Do you think there are no markets here, and that those who dwell of one manner in a house (Psalm 67) are at leisure? You may see this one intending upon sacred readings, that one leaning upon prayers, this one weeping for his excesses, that one exulting in the praises of God, this one watching, fasting, and that one envying each other in the office of piety. They rise at night to confess to God; in the evening, morning, and at noon they relate and announce his praise, and all their assiduity is rotated in the orb of divine service. Run therefore through all, run through each one, and from all and each make your bundle: the form of living.

Having therefore left the world and the manner of living taken up, pass to the third, which is the region of expiation (regio expiationis). In this region the benign Father examines his rusty sons, as silver is examined; he leads through fire and water, that he may lead into refreshment (Psalm 65). Three are the distinctions of places, which souls obtain according to the diversity of merits. For those fly immediately to heaven who have used the dwelling of the body as a prison, who have preserved the refined and pure substance of both the inner and outer man. On the contrary, those who have done even until death what is worthy of death, are assigned to gehennal places without mercy. But those who are neither, but are between both, who indeed committed mortal sins, but around death repented, not fulfilling penance, unworthy to rejoice immediately, nor worthy to burn forever, obtain purgatorial places, in which they are scourged, but not to their foolishness, so that having been extorted they may be transferred to the kingdom. For those who are in heaven, one must not pray, because we ought to pray to them, not for them. For those who are in hell, prayers are to be suspended, to whom the gate of mercy is closed and all hope of salvation shut out. For those only must we watch in prayers, and help by the singular sacrifice, who are cleansed in the purgatorial places, that the benign Father may quickly convert their penance into satisfaction, and satisfaction into glorification. Run again through these with the intuition of piety, and make your bundle: the affection of compassion.

The fourth region is the gehennal region (regio gehennalis), a hard region, a region to be greatly feared, a land of affliction, a land of oblivion, a land of miseries, a land of darkness, a land of whirlwind and of caliginy, a land of malediction and of death, in which no order, but everlasting horror inhabits. I tremble and shudder all over at the memory of this region, and all my bones are shaken. There is the fire which is not kindled, the worm which does not die (Isaiah 66), a horrendous cold. There an intolerable stench arises, the striking hammers resound incessantly, the spread darkness is more cumulatively thickened. There is the confusion of sinners, the horrible face of demons, the fertile multitude of inextricable chains. There is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13; Luke 13), wailing and groaning, and alternating evils tear the impious apart without piety.

Nihil sic valet ad exstirpandas voluptatum radices, quam istorum memoria et recordatio vulnerum Domini mei, qui stetit ante judicem, qui alapas accepit, qui flagellatus est, qui consputus, qui coronatus spinis, qui colaphis caesus, qui suspensus in ligno, cui pendenti insultatum est, qui mortuus in cruce, qui lancea percussus, qui sepultus, qui resurrexit, qui ascendit ad coelos, qui fecit nos regnum et sacerdotes Deo et Patri. Curre per has tumultuantes nundinas, ut vivens descendas in infernum, et fac sarcinam tuam, odium peccati.

Quinta regio est paradisus supercoelestis, regio beata et gloriosa, plena voluptatis et gloriae suavitatis et laetitiae, gratiae et benignitatis. Ibi requies a labore, jucunditas de novitate, de aeternitate securitas. Ibi est civitas Regis magni, cujus plateae constratae sunt auro purissimo, quae fecundata est in sapphiris, in qua jaspidis propugnacula praevirescunt, et per ordinem lapides insternuntur. Nam lapides pretiosi omnes muri ejus (Apoc. XXI). Illic omnes vivunt, nullus moritur; omnes exsultant in voce exsultationis. Intraverat David in sanctuarium ejus, et mente excesserat Deo, nec tamen aliquid aliud potuit asportare, nisi, quia «gloriosa dicta sunt de te civitas Dei (Psal. LXXXVI);» et illud: «Beati, qui habitant in domo tua, Domine, in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te (Psal. LXXXIII..» Nescio quid magnum promittitur, videre Deum et laudare. «Laetatus sum» et ego «in his, quae dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus (Psal. CXXI).» Jam stamus in atriis Hierusalem, jam e vestibulo magnae civitatis gaudia somniamus. Curre igitur et per regionem istam, et fac sarcinam, amorem Dei.

«Negotiamini ergo donec veniat homo ille nobilis, qui abiit in longinquam regionem accipere, sibi regnum et reverti (Luc. XIX).» Revertetur plane, et tunc cum usuris exiget pecuniam quam tradidit nobis. Nihil perdit, nihil obliviscitur, nihil impunitum relinquit. Supplicemus igitur confessori ut Redemptori nostro, amico suo, pro nobis hodie supplicare dignetur, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen.

## LX. HOMILIA IN VIGILIA NATALIS DOMINI. (XXIV DEC.)

Nothing is so valid for uprooting the roots of pleasures as the memory of these and the remembrance of the wounds of my Lord, who stood before the judge, who received blows, who was scourged, who was spat upon, who was crowned with thorns, who was beaten with fists, who was hung on the wood, to whom as he hung he was insulted, who died on the cross, who was struck with a lance, who was buried, who rose again, who ascended to heaven, who made us a kingdom and priests to God and the Father. Run through these tumultuous markets, so that while living you may descend into hell, and make your bundle: the hatred of sin.

The fifth region is the supercelestial paradise (paradisus supercoelestis), a blessed and glorious region, full of pleasure and glory, of sweetness and joy, of grace and benignity. There is rest from labor, pleasantness from novelty, security from eternity. There is the city of the great King, whose streets are paved with the purest gold, which is fertile in sapphires, in which bulwarks of jasper shine forth, and stones are laid in order. For all its walls are precious stones (Revelation 21). There all live, no one dies; all exult in the voice of exultation. David had entered into his sanctuary, and in mind had gone out to God, yet he could carry away nothing else except that "glorious things are said of you, city of God (Psalm 86)"; and that: "Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord, they will praise you forever and ever (Psalm 83)." I know not what great thing is promised, to see God and to praise him. "I rejoiced," and I too, "in these things which were said to me, we shall go into the house of the Lord (Psalm 121)." Already we stand in the courts of Jerusalem, already from the vestibule of the great city we dream of joys. Run therefore also through this region, and make your bundle: the love of God.

"Trade therefore until that noble man comes, who went into a far region to receive for himself a kingdom and to return (Luke 19)." He will plainly return, and then with interest he will exact the money which he delivered to us. He loses nothing, he forgets nothing, he leaves nothing unpunished. Let us therefore supplicate the confessor that he may deign to supplicate for us today to our Redeemer, his friend, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

## LX. HOMILY ON THE VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD. (DECEMBER 24)

Tandem de mari ad portum, de promisso ad praemium, de labore ad requiem, de desperatione ad spem, de via ad patriam pervenimus. Scripserat quidem nobis frequentibus epistolis «calamus scribae velociter scribentis (Psal. XLIV).» Exspecta, reexspecta; sed nos, quod subjungitur, dicere poteramus: «Modicum ibi, et modicum ibi (Isa. XXVIII).» Praecurrerant cursores promissione divites, sed exhibitione pauperrimi. Dicebat alius: «Viriliter age, et confortetur cor tuum, et sustine Dominum (Psal. XXVI);» alter vero: «Si moram fecerit, exspecta eum, quia veniens veniet (Habac. II).» Pari consilio exierant de sanctuario Dei, nihil secum, nisi promissionum multitudinem reportantes. Unde et citharista noster jam dormitaverat prae taedio, et in ipsum Deum tacitis obligationibus [allegationibus] totam culpam modis flebilibus intorquebat. «Tu vero, inquit, repulisti et despexisti, distulisti Christum tuum (Psal. LXXXVIII).» De flebili quoque ad intemperativum conversus est, exagitante impatientia, quae mater est impudentiae et frontositatis. «Qui sedes, inquit, super cherubim, manifestare (Psal. LXXIX).» Ut quid tandiu dominatrici sedens in cathedra, circumvolantibus et vallantibus angelis, non respicis super filios hominum, quos absorbuit et absorbuit iniquitas, per Adam quidem commissa, sed a te permissa. Memorare quae sit mea substantia, ad tuae substantiae similitudinem fabricata, quia etsi omnis homo vivens est vanitas, in imagine tamen tua pertransiens (Psal. XXXVIII), vanitas esse non potest. Nunquid ita vane constituisti omnes filios hominum, de quibus dicis: «Et deliciae meae cum filiis hominum (Prov. VIII),» ut eos verberet et diverberet arte malignissimus ille deceptor, qui decipere, nisi te permittente, non potuit? Inclina coelos tuos, et descende, et illos misericordes oculos miseris inflecte precantibus, nec saltem in perpetuum obliviscaris nos.

Haec quidem iste, sed gemitibus et aerumnis intortus tantae praesumptionis sententiam abjurabat. «Dixi, inquit: Custodiam vias meas, ut non delinquam in lingua mea (Psal. XXXVIII).» Verum ille vir nobilis, et profundi sermonis urbanitate praelucidus affectuosis excessibus incalescens: «Propter Sion, inquit, non tacebo, et propter Hierusalem non quiescam donec egrediatur ut splendor justus ejus (Isa. LXII).» Utinam, ait, disrumperes coelos, et descenderes! (Isa. LXIV) et alia multa, quae fastidiosa prolixitas vetat inserere.

At last from the sea to the port, from the promise to the reward, from labor to rest, from despair to hope, from the way to the fatherland we have arrived. The "pen of a scribe writing swiftly (Psalm 44)" had indeed written to us in frequent letters. Wait, re-wait; but we could say what is subjoined: "A little there, and a little there (Isaiah 28)." Runners rich in promise had run ahead, but most poor in exhibition. One was saying: "Act manfully, and let your heart be comforted, and sustain the Lord (Psalm 26)"; but another: "If he makes delay, wait for him, because coming he will come (Habakkuk 2)." With equal counsel they had gone out from the sanctuary of God, bringing back nothing with them except a multitude of promises. Whence also our harper had already slumbered through weariness, and in silent allegations against God himself he twisted the whole fault in mournful ways. "But you," he says, "have rejected and despised, you have put off your Christ (Psalm 88)." From the mournful also he turned to the intemperate, with impatience driving him, which is the mother of impudence and frontosity. "You who sit," he says, "above the cherubim, manifest yourself (Psalm 79)." Why sitting so long in the ruling chair, with angels flying around and walling you in, do you not look down upon the sons of men, whom iniquity has swallowed and swallowed up, committed indeed through Adam, but permitted by you? Remember what is my substance, fabricated after the likeness of your substance, because although every living man is vanity, yet passing in your image (Psalm 38), he cannot be vanity. Have you so vainly constituted all the sons of men, of whom you say: "And my delights are with the sons of men (Proverbs 8)," that that most malignant deceiver should beat and beat them again with art, who could not deceive except by your permitting? Bow down your heavens, and descend, and bend those merciful eyes upon the wretched supplicants, nor at least forget us forever.

This indeed he said, but twisted by groans and tribulations he abjured the sentence of such great presumption. "I said," he says: "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin in my tongue (Psalm 38)." But that noble man, and pre-eminent in the urbanity of profound speech, warming up in affectionate excesses: "For Zion's sake," he says, "I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her just splendor goes forth (Isaiah 62)." Would that, he said, you would break asunder the heavens, and descend! (Isaiah 64) and many other things, which fastidious prolixity forbids inserting.

Hic etiam morosioris gratiae longinquitate suspensus, et nimietate doloris excedens, impatienter oblatrat, dicens: «Ecce gentes, quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo: quasi nihilum, et inane reputatae sunt ei (Isa. XL).» Jeremias in vocem gratulabundae laudis adverbio demonstrante prorumpens: «Ecce, inquit, faciet Dominus novum super terram, et mulier circumdabit virum (Jer. XXXI).» Sed tamen repentinae subversionis lacrymis edocetur, ut prius lamentum suscipiens quam adventum, penitus conticescat. Danieli dicitur: «Visio est in dies, et in tempora longa (Dan. X).» Et Ezechiel tantis caliginibus involvitur ut vix dignosci possit unde veniat, aut quo vadat. Denique omnis ille prophetalis conventus longa tardantis gratiae morositate pertaesus, nunc rogando, nunc conquerendo, variat orationem, et plerumque sermonibus exorativis indignatorios intermiscet. Nos quoque satis, satisque eos audivimus, et nobis in fastidium releguntur. Jam fugiat Moyses (Exod. VI); impeditioris siquidem linguae factus est nobis: Isaiae labia immunda sunt (Isa. VI); Jeremias nescit loqui, quia puer est (Jer. I); Ezechiel polluto pane vescitur (Ezech. IV); Oseas fornicariam et adulteram ducit uxorem (Ose. I); Daniel per visionem graviter infirmatur (Dan. VIII). Omnes prophetae elingues sunt et muti. Jam laetari, et exsultare non possumus, nisi osculetur nos osculo oris sui; auditi et exauditi estis. Adest benignitas et humanitas Salvatoris nostri Dei (Tit. III), quae vel differri, vel auferri non patiatur amplius amorem languentium.

Quid enim audistis? «Sanctificamini, filii Israel, et estote parati, quia crastina die descendet Dominus.» Residuum diei hujus et super venturae noctis vix medianda progressio dirimunt nos a vultu gloriae, a puero Deo, a puerperio singulari. Currite, celeres horae, et rapidiori passu conficite metas vestras, ut liceat videre Filium Dei vagientem in cunis, et salvatrici nativitati qualiacunque obsequia praeparare. Credo vos esse filios Israel sanctificatos ab omni inquinamento carnis, et spiritus, paratos ad diei crastinae sacramenta, et sollicita devotione, et devota sollicitudine. Quid enim aliud his sacris diebus ejus adventui dedicatis egistis?

Vidi ego senes senectutis oblitos astare vigiliis sacris juvenili alacritate, et juvenes juventute sepulta senili gravitate reverentiae divinitatis assistere. Plena erant subsellia continentibus et concentu parili voces in sublimibus resultabant, ut felici invidia vos cernerem jubilare Deo in voce exsultationis. Psalteria erant prae manibus, psalmi in labiis, in corde devotio; solemnitatem animi indicabant hilaritas vultus, discursio corporis, operis sollicitudo.

Here also suspended by the distance of more lingering grace, and exceeding in the excess of grief, he impatiently barks out, saying: "Behold the nations are as if they are not, so they are before him: as nothing and emptiness they are reputed to him (Isaiah 40)." Jeremiah, breaking forth into a voice of congratulatory praise with a demonstrative adverb: "Behold," he says, "the Lord shall do a new thing upon the earth, and a woman shall encompass a man (Jeremiah 31)." But yet he is taught by the tears of sudden subversion, so that receiving lamentation before the advent, he becomes utterly silent. To Daniel it is said: "The vision is for days, and for long times (Daniel 10)." And Ezekiel is involved in such great darkness that it can hardly be discerned whence he comes, or where he goes. Finally, all that prophetic assembly, weary with the long lingering of delaying grace, now by asking, now by complaining, varies its prayer, and for the most part intermingles indignant words with exortative speeches. We too have heard them enough, and enough, and they are read again to us in weariness. Let Moses now flee (Exodus 6); for he has become to us of a more impeded tongue: the lips of Isaiah are unclean (Isaiah 6); Jeremiah does not know how to speak, because he is a boy (Jeremiah 1); Ezekiel eats polluted bread (Ezekiel 4); Hosea takes a wife of fornications and an adulteress (Hosea 1); Daniel is gravely weakened by a vision (Daniel 8). All the prophets are tongueless and mute. Already we cannot rejoice and exult, unless he kisses us with the kiss of his mouth; you have been heard and answered. The benignity and humanity of God our Savior is present (Titus 3), which would not suffer the love of the languishing to be put off or taken away any longer.

For what have you heard? "Be sanctified, sons of Israel, and be ready, because tomorrow the Lord will descend." The remainder of this day and the progression of the coming night, which can hardly be mediated, separate us from the face of glory, from the boy God, from the singular childbearing. Run, swift hours, and with more rapid pace complete your goals, that it may be allowed to see the Son of God crying in the cradle, and to prepare whatever services for the saving nativity. I believe you to be sons of Israel sanctified from every defilement of flesh and spirit, ready for the sacraments of tomorrow's day, both with solicitous devotion and with devoted solicitude. For what else have you done in these sacred days dedicated to his advent?

I have seen old men, forgetful of old age, stand at the sacred vigils with youthful alacrity, and youths, with youth buried, assist with the elderly gravity of reverence for the divinity. The benches were full of the continent, and with an equal harmony voices resounded in the heights, so that with happy envy I saw you jubilate to God in the voice of exultation. Psalteries were in your hands, psalms on your lips, devotion in your heart; hilarity of face, movement of body, and solicitude of work indicated the solemnity of the mind.

Inspexi sacerdotes vigilantibus oculis primos diei ortus subtiliter indagare, sacramentalibus indui vestimentis, introire ad altare Dei ad sacrificandum corpus et sanguinem Redemptoris. Vidi assistentium turbam, ministeriali devotione nunc flectere genua, nunc osculari manus, et ad imperantium nutum nutu citius obedire. Sed et pueros aspexi, qui nesciunt quid sit inter dexteram et sinistram, sibi ad invicem psalteria invidere et deportare ad lectulos suos, furari somnum ab oculis suis et in lectulo suo per noctes quaerere quem diligebat anima eorum. Quod licet contra consuetudinem praesumptum sit, non tamen contra devotionem.

Fateor, inter haec omnia cogitabam: Castra Dei sunt haec; «Non est hic aliud, nisi domus Dei et porta coeli (Gen. XXVIII).» Vellem, nollem, vestra devotione trahebar, et vobis negotiantibus, otiari non poteram. Sequebar vos, sed a longe, vel aberrans a via, vel claudicans a semitis meis, lugens et contristatus, quia non poteram aequare currentes. Novit ille unus, cum quo uno unum esse coepi in Domino, quam frequentibus querelis impleverim aures ejus, quod vos in meridie essetis cum sponso, et ego in vespertino frigore commorarer. Eia, fratres, si aliquis adhuc influus humor de flumine mortalitatis hujus vestras circumrorat affectiones, tergite, et tegite illum niveo confessionis amictu, et calceate vos in praeparatione Evangelii pacis (Ephes. VI), ut sitis de quibus dicit sanctus: «In flumine pertransibunt pede (Psal. LXV).» Quid autem post haec? «Ibi laetabimur in ipso.» De flumine hoc, imo de fluminibus istis Isaias propheta in nocturnis lectionibus largius disputavit. «Percutiet, inquit, Dominus fluvium Aegypti in septem rivis, ita ut transeant per eum calceati (Isa. XI).» Volo de fluvio et ruinis ejus paulisper confabulari vobiscum, quomodo et qualiter percutiantur, et quid sit transire per eum calceatos.

Per Aegyptum figuranter exprimi mundum istum, divinorum eloquiorum scrutatores affirmant, qui positus est in maligno, qui tenebris et confusionibus est repletus. Flumen fluxus humani generis est, qui de primis parentibus infelici vena prorumpens, impetuosum torrentem per totam mundi latitudinem instagnavit, qui in septem torrentibus derivatus, valles et campestria profunda voragine supersedit, ipsis quoque montium cacuminibus eamdem refusionem intentans, unde unus de altioribus clamat: «Torrentes iniquitatis conturbaverunt me (Psal. XVII);» et: «Intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam (Psal. LXVIII).»

I inspected the priests with watchful eyes subtly searching out the first risings of the day, being clothed in sacramental vestments, entering to the altar of God to sacrifice the body and blood of the Redeemer. I saw the crowd of assistants, with ministerial devotion now bending the knees, now kissing the hands, and at the nod of those commanding obeying more quickly than a nod. But I also beheld the boys, who do not know what is between their right and left hand, envying each other's psalteries and carrying them off to their little beds, stealing sleep from their eyes and in their bed through the nights seeking him whom their soul loved. Which although it may be presumed against custom, yet not against devotion.

I confess, among all these things I was thinking: these are the camps of God; "This is nothing else but the house of God and the gate of heaven (Gen. 28)." Whether I wished it or not, I was drawn by your devotion, and while you were busy, I could not be idle. I followed you, but from afar, either wandering from the way or limping from my paths, mourning and saddened, because I could not equal those who were running. He alone knows—with whom alone I began to be one in the Lord—with how frequent complaints I filled his ears, because you were with the bridegroom at midday, and I tarried in the evening cold. Come now, brothers, if any flowing moisture from the river of this mortality still bedews your affections, wipe it away, and cover it with the snowy garment of confession, and shoe yourselves in the preparation of the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6), so that you may be of those about whom the saint says: "They shall pass through the river on foot (Psalm 65)." But what after these things? "There we shall rejoice in him." Concerning this river, or rather concerning those rivers, the prophet Isaiah in the nightly readings disputed more largely. "The Lord," he says, "shall smite the river of Egypt in seven streams, so that they may pass through it in shoes (Isa. 11)." I wish to talk with you for a little while about the river and its ruins, how and in what manner they are smitten, and what it is to pass through it in shoes.

That by Egypt this world is figuratively expressed, the searchers of the divine oracles affirm, which is placed in the evil one, which is filled with darkness and confusions. The river is the flux of the human race, which breaking forth from our first parents from an unhappy vein, has flooded an impetuous torrent through the whole breadth of the world, which derived into seven torrents, has settled over the valleys and deep plains with a profound whirlpool, threatening that same flooding even to the very peaks of the mountains, whence one of the higher ones cries out: "The torrents of iniquity have troubled me (Psalm 17);" and: "The waters have entered even unto my soul (Psalm 68)."

Primus hujus fluminis rivus, est cogitatio mala, rivus exundans, et qui nullis obicibus repellatur. Habet frequentiam pluviarum, fenestras corporeorum sensuum, qui ei de mundanis cataractis mortiferos imbres infusius administrant. Occursat aspectui mentis quod vidit et audivit, quod odoravit et gustavit, quod palpavit et tetigit, et plerumque quod simplici oculo aspeximus, versipellis contortor ad offendiculum retorquet et scandalum. Fingit similitudines, imagines pingit, colores aptat, et in thalamo mentis universa convolvit, si forte consensum eliciat et inficiat affectum. Offert horribilia de divinitate, terribilia de fide, mirabilia de fidei institutione, et in alveolo mentis veneniferas ingerit potiones, quas vel in confessione evomere peccator oneratus exhorret. Venit in oratorium, dormitorium occupat, insidet refectorio, circuit claustrum, revisit officinas, nullam praetermittit artem nocendi, sed ubique suae calliditatis assignat argutias, et in choro quidem inter orandum et psallendum mentem pertrahit in diversa, praeteritorum rememoratione puritatem intellectus involvens.

In toro multiformes libidinis sensus involvit, insidians solitudini nostrae, et telis fortioribus oppugnans, utinam non expugnet, pungat, non vulneret! In refectorio autem gulam allicit ad videndum quae perferantur, et ingenti aviditate onerat distentum ventrem, ut majore opera ad egerendum egeat quam ad ingerendum. In claustro libros revellit a manibus, memoriam resecat Scripturarum, et nunc de illo ad istum cum signis et scurrilitate transvertit. Per officinarum multitudinem te facit excurrere et vagabundo se comitem facit, donec taciturnitatis ostium, aut aperiat, aut confringat. Quid plura? In choro devotionem, in toro castitatem, in refectorio parcitatem, in claustro lectionem, in officinis silentii virtutem virtutis inimicus exstirpat. Nec sufficit in vigilando subtilibus spiculis cordis terebrare muralia, sed dormiendo singulari se versat, et reversat astutia; quae melius vestrae conscientiae quam styli scientiae derelinquo.

Sed et ad altare Domini virtutum sequuntur vos spiritus isti, in ipsos mentis oculos involantes, et vix aliqua, vel nascentis Dei vel pendentis in cruce, possunt memoria deturbari. Magnus ille patriarcha vix volucres hujusmodi a suis sacrificiis abigebat. Nos quid sumus, qui fugare praesumimus? Quis in hoc rivo, vel mersum, vel submersum se esse negaverit? Videris quam turbidus torrens, et limosa regurgitans coenositate, qui vix, aut nunquam ad hoc ducitur ut penitus exsiccetur. Non puto quod ille, qui clausit coelum oratione (III Reg. XVII), clauserit animum a cogitatione, ut facilius sit coelum obserare quam animum.

The first stream of this river is evil thought, an overflowing stream, and one which is repelled by no obstacles. It has a frequency of rains, the windows of the bodily senses, which more pouringly administer deadly showers to it from the world's cataracts. There occurs to the gaze of the mind what it has seen and heard, what it has smelled and tasted, what it has felt and touched, and for the most part what we have beheld with a simple eye, the versatile twister wrests back into a stumbling block and a scandal. He feigns likenesses, paints images, fits colors, and involves all things in the chamber of the mind, if by chance he may elicit consent and infect the affection. He offers horrible things concerning the divinity, terrible things concerning the faith, marvelous things concerning the institution of the faith, and into the small vessel of the mind he injects poisonous potions, which the burdened sinner dreads to vomit out even in confession. He comes into the oratory, occupies the dormitory, sits in the refectory, goes around the cloister, revisits the workshops, omits no art of harming, but everywhere assigns the subtleties of his cunning, and in the choir indeed, between praying and singing the psalms, he draws the mind away into diverse things, involving the purity of the intellect with the remembrance of past things.

In the bed he involves multiform senses of lust, lying in wait for our solitude, and attacking with stronger weapons—would that he might not conquer, but prick, and not wound! In the refectory, moreover, he entices the throat to see what things are brought forth, and with great greed he burdens the distended belly, so that it needs greater labor to discharge than to ingest. In the cloister he plucks books from the hands, cuts back the memory of the Scriptures, and now turns from that one to this one with signs and scurrilousness. Through the multitude of workshops he makes you run out and makes himself a companion to the wanderer, until he either opens or breaks the door of silence. What more? In the choir he uproots devotion, in the bed chastity, in the refectory parsimony, in the cloister reading, in the workshops the virtue of silence, the enemy of virtue. Nor is it enough in waking to pierce the walls of the heart with subtle spears, but in sleeping he turns and returns himself with singular astuteness; which I leave better to your conscience than to the knowledge of my pen.

But even to the altar of the Lord of hosts these spirits follow you, flying into the very eyes of the mind, and they can hardly be driven from memory by any thought either of the God being born or of Him hanging on the cross. That great patriarch could hardly drive away birds of this sort from his sacrifices. What are we, who presume to put them to flight? Who in this stream will deny that he is either dipped or submerged? You see how turbulent a torrent it is, and regurgitating with muddy filth, which is hardly or never led to this, that it may be utterly dried up. I do not think that he who closed heaven by prayer (1 Kings 17), closed his mind from thought, so that it is easier to lock heaven than the mind.

Secundus rivus est locutio perversa. Linguam nullus hominum domare potest, ait apostolus: membrum inquietum, membrum mortiferum, facilis ad loquendum, ad obsequendum proclivior (Jacob. III). Et notandum quod nascitur alter ex altero, cum malae cogitationi pravae locutionis janua sit aperta. Et est verbum, aliud falsum, unde dicitur: «Perdes omnes qui loquuntur mendacium (Psal. V);» aliud vanum, de quo scriptum est: «Vana locuti sunt unusquisque ad proximum suum (Psal. XI);» aliud maledicum, de quo Apostolus scribit: «Neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt (I Cor. VI);» aliud impudicum, de quo idem: «Turpis sermo de ore vestro non procedat (Ephes. IV);» aliud excusatorium, unde Psalmista: «Non declines cor meum in verba malitiae, ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis (Psal. CXL):» aliud dolosum, de quo Propheta: «Disperdat Dominus universa labia dolosa (Psal. XI);» aliud otiosum, de quo idem Dominus: «De omni verbo otioso quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent rationem de eo in die judicii (Matth. XII):» et si quae alia sunt genera pestis hujus, quae nos brevi saltu transilire non possumus.

Tertius, est actio prava. Post cogitationem, et locutionem venitur ad opera, quando exhibemus membra nostra arma iniquitatis peccato, et contumeliis afficimus corpora nostra. Quid enim turpius quam membra Christi sanguine consecrata et consepulta ei in baptismate libidinosis ardoribus maculare, nec attendere reverentiam praesentis Dei, minantis poenam, gloriam promittentis. Absit ut aliquis vestrum huic idolo substernatur, ut filium Virginis in Veneris templo suscipiat, ut arcam Dei juxta Dagon collocet, ne nutritus in croceis stercora complectatur. Quid Petro cum mago? Quid Christo cum Antichristo? Quid virgini et libidini? Quid puritati et impuritati? Absit ut quisquam vestrum ambulet in passione desiderii, sicut et gentes, quae ignorant Deum, qui corpus Christi aut consecratis, aut Christi corpori ministratis, electi servire imperatori, ut cum imperatore sedeatis, cum sederit in sede majestatis suae. Qua fronte, quibus oculis videret nos, viveret nobiscum, qui tantis inter nos obscoenitatibus deserviret? Qua mente, qua conscientia accederet ad Sancta sanctorum, immolare Sanctum sanctorum, cujus fama contemptibilis, vita notabilis, sermo reprehensibilis haberetur?

The second stream is perverse speech. No man can tame the tongue, says the Apostle: an unquiet member, a deadly member, easy to speak, more prone to comply (James 3). And it is to be noted that one is born from the other, since the door of perverse speech is open to evil thought. And there is one word which is false, whence it is said: "Thou shalt destroy all them that speak a lie (Psalm 5);" another is vain, of which it is written: "Each one has spoken vain things to his neighbor (Psalm 11);" another is cursing, of which the Apostle writes: "Neither shall railers possess the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6);" another is impure, of which the same says: "Let no foul speech proceed out of your mouth (Eph. 4);" another is excusatory, whence the Psalmist: "Incline not my heart to words of malice, to make excuses in sins (Psalm 140);" another is deceitful, of which the Prophet: "May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips (Psalm 11);" another is idle, of which the same Lord: "Of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account of it in the day of judgment (Matt. 12);" and if there be any other kinds of this pestilence, which we cannot leap over with a short jump.

The third is evil action. After thought and speech, one comes to deeds, when we present our members as weapons of iniquity to sin, and affect our bodies with insults. For what is more base than to stain with lustful ardors the members of Christ, consecrated by His blood and buried together with Him in baptism, and not to heed the reverence of the present God, threatening punishment and promising glory. Far be it that any of you should be subjected to this idol, so as to receive the Son of the Virgin in the temple of Venus, so as to place the ark of God next to Dagon, lest he who was nourished in scarlet should embrace the dung. What has Peter to do with the magician? What has Christ to do with Antichrist? What has the virgin to do with lust? What has purity to do with impurity? Far be it that any of you should walk in the passion of desire, even as the Gentiles who know not God, you who either consecrate the body of Christ or minister to the body of Christ, chosen to serve the Emperor, that you may sit with the Emperor when He shall sit on the throne of His majesty. With what face, with what eyes would He see us, would He live with us, who would serve such great obscenities among us? With what mind, with what conscience would he approach the Holy of Holies to sacrifice the Holy of Holies, whose reputation would be held contemptible, his life notable, and his speech reprehensible?

Sed si forte, humanum loquor propter infirmitatem carnis nostrae, aliquis nostrum tale aliquid in cubiculo conscientiae complicavit, duplicet illud per confessionem et poenitentiam, et ego ei de misericordia nascentis pueri repromitto quia, si confessus fuerit et poenituerit, nascetur in eo lux mundi, ut dimotis fallacibus tenebris splendorem verae lucis accipiat. Quomodo enim miseris misericordia hac nocte negabitur, in qua misericorditer nascitur misericors et miserator Dominus? Adest Deus et homo, mater et virgo, caro et Verbum, lux et illuminans, bonus et bonitas, misericordia et veritas, fecunda virginitas, virginalis fecunditas, aeterna novitas, nova aeternitas, divina humanitas, humana divinitas, humilis sublimitas, et in his omnibus misericordia fabricatur. Cohibete igitur extollentiam ab oculis, loquacitatem a lingua, crudelitatem a manibus, voluptatem a lumbis, pedes ab itinere non trito, et venite et arguite eum, si non hac nocte disrumpit coelos, si non descendit ad vos, et projicit in profundum maris omnia peccata vestra. Quis enim est qui hujus tertii rivuli non sit mersus et remersus instantia?

Quartus rivus est defensio peccatorum. In veritate dico vobis quia nihil sic exasperat iram divinitatis quam iniquitatis defensio. Aequo enim certamine nos decertamus cum Domino, cum defendimus quod odit, cum nobis placet quod displicet illi. Magna quippe differentia est inter superbum et humilem peccatorem, cum illum despiciat, hunc respiciat: quia «humilia respicit, et alta a longe cognoscit (Psal. CXXXVII).» Quando sanari poterit qui medicum spernit, medicinam conculcat et infirmam substantiam contrariorum receptione succendit? Tu dicis malum bonum, amarum dulce, tenebras lucem, et in Creatorem refundis injurias, ut quod laudaverit tu vituperes, quod vituperaverit tu laudes. Non est hoc palpativa dissimulatione tacendum, cum viderim quosdam vestrum tantis impatientiae stimulis agitari ut ad primas correptionis voces non solum excusationem, sed defensionem exhibeant, et nisi disciplinaris vigor obviaverit, ad tumultus et jurgia prosilitur. Haec est impietas maxima in Deum (Job XXXI), delictum maximum, quae vir simplex et rectus, et puer Domini summa circomspectione devitat.

But if perhaps, I speak humanly because of the infirmity of our flesh, any of us has folded any such thing in the chamber of his conscience, let him double it through confession and penance, and I promise him from the mercy of the newborn boy that, if he shall have confessed and repented, the light of the world shall be born in him, so that with the deceptive darkness removed, he may receive the splendor of the true light. For how shall mercy be denied to the wretched on this night, in which the merciful and compassionate Lord is mercifully born? God and man is present, mother and virgin, flesh and Word, light and illuminating, good and goodness, mercy and truth, fruitful virginity, virginal fecundity, eternal novelty, new eternity, divine humanity, human divinity, humble sublimity, and in all these things mercy is fabricated. Restrain, therefore, haughtiness from the eyes, loquacity from the tongue, cruelty from the hands, pleasure from the loins, feet from the path not trodden, and come and rebuke Him, if on this night He does not break asunder the heavens, if He does not descend to you, and cast into the depth of the sea all your sins. For who is there who is not dipped and redipped by the urgency of this third stream?

The fourth stream is the defense of sins. In truth I say to you that nothing so exasperates the wrath of the divinity as the defense of iniquity. For we contend with the Lord in an equal contest when we defend what He hates, when what displelies Him pleases us. For there is a great difference between a proud and a humble sinner, since He despises the former and regards the latter: because "He regards the humble, and the high He knows from afar (Psalm 137)." When can he be healed who spurns the physician, tramples upon the medicine, and enflames his weak substance by the reception of contrary things? You call evil good, bitter sweet, darkness light, and you pour back insults upon the Creator, so that you may disparage what He has praised, and praise what He has disparaged. This must not be kept silent with a stroking dissimulation, since I have seen some of you agitated by such great stings of impatience that at the first words of correction they exhibit not only an excuse, but a defense, and unless disciplinary vigor meets it, it breaks forth into tumults and quarrels. This is the greatest impiety against God (Job 31), the greatest fault, which a simple and upright man, and a boy of the Lord, avoids with the utmost circumspection.

Elegantissimam super his comparationem inducit propheta, quam de sacrario sancti Spiritus asportavit: «Ibi, inquit, habuit foveam ericius (Isa. XXXIV).» Ericius si apprehendi se sentiat, vel contingi, ita confertissima spinositate densatus est ut undique compunctionibus et aculeis vestiatur; cum vero se solitudinem adeptum putat, caput aperit, exerit pedes et vivificatorios motus plana deambulatione demonstrat. Si quis supervenerit, statim celerrima velocitate caput cum pedibus ad interius absconditum reportatur, ut si illum tenere volueris, prius videas sanguinem tuum quam corpus suum. Sic et peccatoris caput cum pedibus, intentio cum actione, a pastorum sollicitudine prospectatur, et quod fere omnium peccantium vitium est, cum ab omnibus videatur, a nemine aestimat se videri. Si vitium resecare studeas, et intentionis ingressus cum actionibus egressibus, correctivis manibus deprehendere, statim Ciceronis eloquentia renovatur, excusatur et defenditur quod opponis, accusaris et offenderis qui proponis. Interrogat de loco, de tempore, quando factum fuerit, et novus dialecticus exerta lingua prorumpit, in medium parentes advocat, patrocinatores quaerit, gravari se judicat, indicat se recessurum malleque mori quam pati talia, et quae vidisti negans, et quae non vidit in te convicia retorquens. Sic spinam sentis et culpam perdis, odium incurris, nec corrigis, et quem totum tenere putabas, totum amittis. Vides quam multiplici cumulositate rivus iste omni homini et maxime nostro ordini se infundit.

Quintus est exsultatio in peccatis. O detestanda laetitia et in sempiterni doloris tristitiam demutanda, in peccatis sicut in virtutibus exsultare. Nonne latrocinantes et facinorosi quique cum votorum plenitudinem assequuntur, non se capiunt prae gaudio, ita etiam ut audeant ipsi divinitati gratias immutire? «Qui cum malefecerint, laetantur et exsultant in rebus pessimis (Prov. II). Cadent super eos carbones, et in ignem dejicientur (Psal. CXXXIX).» Sed et rivus iste quam undosa refluxione miseros animantes offundat, melius conscientia quam eloquentia comprehendit.

Sextus est alios docere ad malum. Haec doctrina de cathedra pestilentiae derivatur, quam detestatur et reprobat qui docet hominem scientiam (Psal. XCIII). O quam in vano accipit animam suam qui aliorum animas venatur ad mortem, qui trahit peccata sicut longam restem, qui miscet sanguinem sanguini, cui non sufficit ut intereat in saeculum saeculi, nisi et alios ad interitum pertrahat sempiternum! Scitis enim quia multa vitia tenerrimis aetatibus imprimuntur, quae postea in magno corpore vix mitigare, nedum exstirpare quisquam possit. Infelices magistri, qui hujusmodi plantaria plantaverunt, quae explantantur ab illa coelesti plantatione, quam plantavit Pater ille coelestis! Quis gloriabitur se hujus rivi torrentibus non fuisse vallatum?

The prophet brings in a most elegant comparison concerning these things, which he carried away from the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit: "There," he says, "the hedgehog had its den (Isa. 34)." The hedgehog, if it feels itself being seized or touched, is so thickened with very dense spininess that it is clothed on all sides with prickings and stings; but when it thinks it has obtained solitude, it opens its head, puts forth its feet, and demonstrates life-giving movements in a plain walk. If anyone should come upon it, immediately with the swiftest speed the head with the feet is reported back to its inner hiding place, so that if you wish to hold it, you see your blood before you see its body. Thus also the head of the sinner with the feet, the intention with the action, is looked upon by the solicitude of the pastors, and what is the vice of almost all those who sin, since it is seen by all, he thinks he is seen by no one. If you study to cut back the vice, and to catch the entrance of the intention with the exits of the actions with corrective hands, immediately Cicero's eloquence is renewed, and what you oppose is excused and defended, and you who propose it are accused and offended. He asks about the place, about the time, when it was done, and a new dialectician breaks forth with a thrust-out tongue, calls his parents into the middle, seeks patrons, judges himself to be burdened, indicates that he will depart and would rather die than suffer such things, and denying what you saw, and retorting upon you insults which he did not see. Thus you feel the spine and lose the fault, you incur hatred and do not correct, and him whom you thought you held entirely, you lose entirely. You see with what manifold abundance this stream pours itself into every man and especially into our order.

The fifth is exultation in sins. O detestable joy and to be changed into the sadness of everlasting grief, to exult in sins as if in virtues. Do not all robbers and criminals, when they attain the fullness of their desires, lose themselves for joy, so that they even dare to mutter thanks to the divinity itself? "Who, when they have done evil, rejoice and exult in the worst things (Prov. 2). Coals shall fall upon them, and they shall be cast into the fire (Psalm 139)." But how also this stream pours over wretched living beings with a billowy reflux, the conscience understands better than eloquence.

The sixth is to teach others to do evil. This doctrine is derived from the chair of pestilence, which He detests and reproves who teaches man knowledge (Psalm 93). O how in vain he receives his soul who hunts the souls of others unto death, who draws sins like a long rope, who mixes blood with blood, for whom it does not suffice that he perish for age upon age, unless he also draws others into everlasting destruction! For you know that many vices are imprinted upon the most tender ages, which afterwards in a great body one can hardly mitigate, let alone anyone be able to extirpate. Unhappy masters, who have planted nurseries of this sort, which are rooted out from that heavenly plantation, which that heavenly Father planted! Who shall glory that he has not been surrounded by the torrents of this stream?

Septimus est in his omnibus perseverare. Hic peccator submersus est, et absorptus, et clausit super eum puteus os suum. Cum enim non levat oculos ad coelum, nec recordatur judiciorum justorum, mortuus et sepultus est in sepulcro conscientiae suae. Tunc a mortuo, tanquam qui non est, perit confessio (Eccli. XVII). Tunc «peccator cum venerit in profundum malorum, contemnit (Prov. XVIII).» Hic est in extremo fluminum Aegypti. Hic multitudo miserationum Domini tollitur ab oculis ejus. O flumen malum, rivi pessimi, rivi exterminantes: hac nocte Dominus eos calceatus transivit, cum in virginali substantia puram carnem et omnium praetaxatione pestium immunem accepit, illo calceamento calceatus, quod in Idumaeam extendit (Psal. LIX), cujus corrigiam solvere non potuit magnus ille Baptista (Luc. III). Misit de summo Filium suum et accepit me in utero Virginis, et sic tandem assumpsit me de aquis multis, quas vobis breviter praelibavimus. «Libera me, inquit, ab his qui oderunt me, et de profundis aquarum (Psal. LXVIII).»

Percutiemus eos, si cogitemus pro peccato nostro, si prohibeamus linguam a dolo, si declinemus a malo et faciamus bonum si confiteamur adversum nos injustitiam nostram Domino, si dolor noster sit semper in conspectu nostro, si doceamus iniquos vias Domini, et semper laus Dei sit in ore nostro. Et, ut de arte sutoria nostris moribus aliquid consuamus, habeamus calceamenta densa et subtiliter consuta, quae possint aquas obviantes excludere. Faciamus carnem nostram firmam et confixam timore Domini, quae libidinis humorem excludat et excocta tribulationibus atque densata, fiat uter novus ad conservandum vinum novum, de quo dicitur: «Quia factus sum sicut uter in pruina (Psal. CXVIII).»

Sed jam corda, et corpora nostra ad suscipiendum Filium Virginis praeparata dimittamus in pace, et omnes in commune lumen ad revelationem gentium innocentibus brachiis amplectamur, qui est Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen.

Charitati vestrae, fratres charissimi, aedificationis verbum facere gestio, sed quia, ut nostis, nuper ad episcopatus apicem, Deo auctore, promotus sum, loqui ante prudentiam vestram, dum conscientia metuit, lingua etiam necdum assueta balbutit. Nunquid enim qui navim remigii imperitus ingreditur suscipere gubernaculum non veretur? Et qui rudis tiro militiam noviter intrat, praeferre vexillum principum non formidat? Sed ego, qui de propria infirmitate diffido, vestris orationibus adjuvandum me per Dei misericordiam credo. Alioquin quomodo nos penitus desperare de propria imperfectione possumus, qui nati Salvatoris infantiam celebramus? Qui enim per aetatum incrementa dignatus est crescere valet etiam nos de minimis ad majora provehere et teneram nostri sensus infantiam perfectionis suae gratia roborare. Qui nimirum idcirco parvus in nostris fieri dignatus est ut nos in suis magnos efficeret, idcirco nostram infirmitatem pertulit, ut nos suae virtutis plenitudine solidaret.

The seventh is to persevere in all these things. Here the sinner is submerged and absorbed, and the pit has closed its mouth over him. For when he does not lift his eyes to heaven, nor remembers the just judgments, he is dead and buried in the sepulcher of his conscience. Then confession perishes from the dead man, as from one who is not (Ecclus. 17). Then "the sinner, when he has come into the depth of evils, becomes contemptuous (Prov. 18)." This is in the extreme of the rivers of Egypt. Here the multitude of the mercies of the Lord is taken from his eyes. O evil river, worst streams, exterminating streams: on this night the Lord passed through them shod, when in the virginal substance He took pure flesh and immune by the pre-taxation of all pests, shod with that shoe which He extended into Idumea (Psalm 59), whose thong that great Baptist could not loose (Luke 3). He sent His Son from on high and received me in the womb of the Virgin, and thus at last He took me up from many waters, which we have briefly tasted before you. "Deliver me," he says, "from them that hate me, and from the depths of the waters (Psalm 68)."

We shall smite them, if we think of our sin, if we restrain our tongue from deceit, if we decline from evil and do good, if we confess our injustice against ourselves to the Lord, if our grief be always in our sight, if we teach the unjust the ways of the Lord, and the praise of God be always in our mouth. And, that we may sew something for our morals from the shoemaker's art, let us have shoes that are dense and subtly sewn, which can exclude the opposing waters. Let us make our flesh firm and fixed by the fear of the Lord, which may exclude the moisture of lust and, baked by tribulations and thickened, let it become a new wineskin for preserving the new wine, of which it is said: "Because I am become like a wineskin in the frost (Psalm 118)."

But now let us dismiss in peace our hearts and bodies prepared for receiving the Son of the Virgin, and let us all in common embrace with innocent arms the light for the revelation of the Gentiles, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

To your charity, dearest brothers, I desire to make a word of edification; but because, as you know, I was recently promoted by God's authority to the height of the episcopate, while my conscience fears, my tongue, not yet accustomed, also stammers as I speak before your prudence. For does not he who enters a ship, unskilled in rowing, fear to take the helm? And does not the raw recruit who newly enters military service dread to carry forward the standard of the princes? But I, who distrust my own weakness, believe that I am to be helped by your prayers through God's mercy. Otherwise, how can we utterly despair of our own imperfection, we who celebrate the infancy of the born Savior? For He who deigned to grow through the increments of ages is also able to promote us from the smallest things to the greater, and to strengthen the tender infancy of our sense by the grace of His perfection. He surely deigned for this reason to become small in our things, that He might make us great in His; for this reason He bore our weakness, that He might solidify us with the fullness of His virtue.

Non ergo timeamus defuturum nobis transitorium verbum, qui illius Verbi gloriam quaerimus, quod manet in aeternum, de quo videlicet in lectione sancti Evangelii modo, dum legeretur, audistis: «Quia in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I).» Sed hoc de illa nativitate dictum est quae ex Patre est, qua videlicet Deus apud Deum ante saecula exstitit et cuncta ex nihilo propria virtute creavit. Unde non immerito dictum est: «Quia omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil (Ibid.).» Sed qui secundum illam nativitatem omnia fecit, secundum istam quae hodierna est ipse fieri dignatus est. Quod idem beatus evangelista patenter innotuit, cum post nonnulla subjunxit: «Verbum, inquit, caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.» Ubi protinus additur: «Et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre (Ibid.).»

In utraque ergo natura idem est Dei Filius, nostra suscipiens et propria non amittens. Qui, dum in homine hominem renovat, in se incommutabilis perseverat. Deus enim, qui ut nos erigeret se misericorditer inclinavit, nos quidem in suam gloriam transtulit, sed nihilominus ipse in sua divinitate permansit. Nobis contulit, sibi nihil minuit. Ita magnus in forma Dei, sic brevis in forma servi, ut nec ista brevitate magnitudo illa minueretur, nec illa magnitudine ista brevitas premeretur. Nec enim quando membra humana suscepit, opera divina deseruit. Nam quod auditis, fratres mei, quia Verbum caro factum est, nequaquam debetis intelligere quod in carnem sit Dei natura mutata, sed quod a Verbo in unitate personae sit caro suscepta. Carnis autem nomine homo accipitur, cum quo intra Virginis viscera sancto Spiritu fecundata, tam inseparabiliter Dei Filius est unitus, ut qui erat sine tempore de essentia Patris genitus, ipse sit temporaliter de utero Virginis natus. Sed hoc Dominicae nativitatis ineffabile sacramentum, quae mens comprehendere, quae lingua valeat pleniter explicare? Non enim a propheta sine causa dictum est: «Generationem ejus quis enarrabit?» (Isa. LIII.)

Postpositis igitur his quae de sacratissima nativitate a Patribus nostris latius disputata sunt, libet, fratres charissimi, paulisper ad humilitatem Redemptoris nostri, locutionis articulum flectere, et quid pro nostra salute jam in ipsa sua nativitate pertuterit, communi vobiscum discussione pensare. Quis enim digne mirari valeat? Quis non obstupescat quod is, qui coeli immensitate non capitur, in angusto praesepio reclinatur? Qui electos suos stola immortalitatis induit, vilibus pannis contegi non contempsit. In stramine recubuit animalium qui cibus est angelorum.

Therefore, let us not fear that the transitory word will fail us, we who seek the glory of that Word which remains forever, concerning which, indeed, you just heard while the reading of the holy Gospel was being read: "Because in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1)." But this was said of that nativity which is from the Father, by which indeed God existed as God with God before the ages and created all things from nothing by His own power. Whence it was not without merit said: "Because all things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing (Ibid.)." But He who according to that nativity made all things, according to this which is of today deigned Himself to be made. Which the same blessed evangelist plainly made known, when after some things he subjoined: "The Word," he says, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Where it is immediately added: "And we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-begotten from the Father (Ibid.)."

In both natures, therefore, the Son of God is the same, receiving ours and not losing His own. Who, while He renews man in man, perseveres in Himself immutable. For God, who in order to raise us up mercifully inclined Himself, translated us indeed into His glory, but nonetheless He Himself remained in His divinity. He conferred upon us, and diminished nothing for Himself. So great in the form of God, so small in the form of a servant, that neither by this smallness was that greatness diminished, nor by that greatness was this smallness oppressed. For not even when He received human members did He desert divine works. For what you hear, my brothers, that the Word was made flesh, you ought by no means to understand that the nature of God was changed into flesh, but that flesh was received by the Word in the unity of person. By the name of flesh, moreover, man is accepted, with whom within the womb of the Virgin, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, the Son of God is so inseparably united, that He who was begotten without time from the essence of the Father, Himself was born temporally from the womb of the Virgin. But this ineffable sacrament of the Lord's Nativity, what mind can comprehend, what tongue may be able fully to explain? For it was not without cause said by the prophet: "Who shall declare His generation?" (Isa. 53).

Having set aside, therefore, those things which have been more broadly discussed by our Fathers concerning the most sacred nativity, it is pleasing, dearest brothers, to turn for a little while the point of our discourse to the humility of our Redeemer, and to weigh in common discussion with you what He bore for our salvation already in His very nativity. For who may be able worthily to wonder? Who would not be struck with awe that He, who is not contained by the immensity of heaven, is reclined in a narrow manger? He who clothes His elect with the stole of immortality, did not disdain to be covered with cheap rags. He lay down upon the straw of animals, He who is the food of angels.

Qui marium procellas mitigat, qui aquarum abundantiam fluminibus subministrat, raras de virgineo pectore guttas lactis exspectat. Exprimitur lac ex uberibus Virginis et in carnem vertitur Salvatoris. Felix ista puerpera, quae sic gaudet de fecunditate prolis, ut nequaquam doleat de amissione virginitatis; quae illum fovebat a quo fovebatur; illum in ulnis gestabat a quo totius mundi machina continetur. Stringitur a matre puerilibus fasciis infantulus qui cum Patre omnium rerum jura gubernat immensus.

O quanta tunc erant regum mundi turrita palatia, quanta miris lapidibus ornata triclinia! et tamen omnia illa contempsit, qui praesepium ad cunabula suae nativitatis elegit. Non lectos petiit auratis vestibus obsitos, non purpura, vel pictis tapetibus adornatos; sed in catabulo recubuit animalium, qui innumeris vallatur angelorum agminibus; dejici voluit ut nos ad summa proveheret; pauper in hoc mundo factus est, ut nos divitiarum suarum participes exhiberet.

Hanc Redemptoris nostri humilitatem, fratres charissimi, tota animi consideratione perpendite; hanc solerter habere curate, mundi gloriam spernite, pauperes esse cum Christo veras divitias deputate. Sacrificium Deo bonae voluntatis offerre satagite, si in conspectu ejus vultis veri divites apparere. Audistis enim quia hodie nato Domino sancti angeli cantaverunt: «Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II).» Hodie quippe pax Deo cum hominibus facta est, sed non cum hominibus multarum divitiarum, vel terrenae sapientiae, aut generosae nobilitatis, sed cum hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Gaudeamus itaque, dilectissimi, et totis in Domino visceribus delectemur, quia Christus pax nostra, qui fecit utraque unum (Ephes. II), idcirco hodie visitare dignatus est mundum ut homines bonae voluntatis perducat ad consortium deitatis. Qui videlicet utraque unum fecit, quia homines cum angelis in supernae Hierusalem socia cohabitatione conjunxit. Utraque unum fecit, quia ovem, quae perierat, ad gregem propriis humeris reportavit (Matth. XVIII), Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## ANONYMI CUJUSPIAM SERMO DE NATIVITATE SALVATORIS ET PRAECLARIS MIRACULIS IN EA FACTIS. (XXV DECEMB.)

He who mitigates the storms of the seas, who supplies the abundance of waters to the rivers, waits for rare drops of milk from a virginal breast. Milk is pressed from the breasts of the Virgin and is turned into the flesh of the Savior. Happy is that woman in childbirth, who so rejoices in the fruitfulness of her offspring, that she in no way grieves for the loss of her virginity; who cherished Him by whom she was cherished; who carried in her arms Him by whom the machine of the whole world is contained. The infant is bound by His mother with childish swaddling clothes, He who, measureless, governs the laws of all things with the Father.

O how great then were the turreted palaces of the kings of the world, how great the dining rooms adorned with wondrous stones! and yet He despised all those things, He who chose a manger for the cradle of His nativity. He did not seek beds covered with golden garments, nor adorned with purple or painted tapestries; but He lay in the stable of animals, He who is surrounded by innumerable companies of angels; He wished to be cast down so that He might advance us to the highest things; He was made poor in this world, so that He might show us as sharers of His riches.

This humility of our Redeemer, dearest brothers, weigh with the whole consideration of your mind; be careful to hold this skillfully, despise the glory of the world, and consider being poor with Christ to be true riches. Be eager to offer to God the sacrifice of a good will, if you wish to appear truly rich in His sight. For you have heard that when the Lord was born today the holy angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke 2)." Today indeed peace was made between God and men, but not with men of many riches, or of earthly wisdom, or of noble birth, but with men of good will.

Let us rejoice therefore, most beloved, and be delighted with our whole hearts in the Lord, because Christ our peace, who made both one (Eph. 2), therefore deigned to visit the world today so that He might lead men of good will to the fellowship of the deity. He, indeed, who made both one, because He joined men with angels in the shared cohabitation of the heavenly Jerusalem. He made both one, because He brought back the sheep which had perished to the flock on His own shoulders (Matt. 18), Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

## SERMON OF AN ANONYMOUS AUTHOR CONCERNING THE NATIVITY OF THE SAVIOR AND THE ILLUSTRIOUS MIRACLES PERFORMED THEREIN. (DECEMBER 25)

Non poterit explicari sermone quod mente concepi, stupor enim miraculorum opprimit me, et dum omnia replico, omnia complicantur: «Quis poterit cogitare diem adventus ejus?» (Malach. III.) Ideo fit elinguis lingua, memoria immemor, insensibilis sensus. Insueta nativitate relucent omnia, et omnia partui Virginis obsequuntur. Fiunt mirabilia in coelo sursum, et in terra deorsum, et universa in nascentis Dei obsequium juraverunt. Insigniuntur convexa coelorum stella lucentiori, et multo lumine loca flammantia prestringuntur. Diffunduntur per quadrifidum orbem radii rutilantiores, et pluralitatem stellariorum ignium novus ignis obtundit. Miratur orbis coelos novum peperisse splendorem, et inconvertibilem eorum statum ad signa et prodigia fuisse conversum. Vident Chaldaei in coelis, quod Balaam reliquit in scriptis: «Orietur inquit, stella ex Jacob, et consurget homo ex Israel, et erit omnis terra possessio ejus (Num. XXIV).» Nascitur stella in excelsis, et Deus in terris, cujus possessio a mari usque ad mare. Praeparant se reges Tharsis, ut cum novitate munerum videant novam matrem, filii novam nativitatem. Fons olei de terra erumpit. Templum Romae, quod vocabatur aeternum, corruit, omnibus impensis et Urbis et orbis mirabiliter consummatum. Cum enim Romani in victoriosae antiquitatis memoriam templum singulari schemate facere decrevissent, ab omni illa deorum, imo daemoniorum multitudine quaesierunt, usquequo durare posset tam excelientis operis operosa constructio. Responsum est: Donec Virgo pareret. Illi ad impossibilitatem oraculum retorquentes, templum aeternum solemnem illam machinam vocaverunt. Nocte autem ista, cum de virginali thalamo virgineus flos Mariae egressus est, ita cecidit, et confractum est illud murale et columnatum opus, ut vix appareant vestigia ruinarum.

O Bethleem! civitas Dei summi, et in te, et in suburbiis tuis visa sunt mirabilia hodie. Deus pendet ab uberibus, ponitur in praesepe, ligatur in cunis, pannis involvitur, et laxatis fasciolis, felices manus, et sancta brachiola per cunarum parvitatem expandit. Alludit virgini, matri arridet, et blandientes oculos ad Mariam intorquet. Stat perterrita tantis miraculis regina coelorum, confert in corde suo salutationem archangeli, conceptionem Dei, nativitatem pueri; et miratur quod ille, qui sic potuit ad nos venire, sic voluit subvenire.

That which I have conceived in my mind cannot be explained in speech, for the amazement of miracles overwhelms me, and while I unfold all things, all things are folded together: "Who shall be able to think of the day of His coming?" (Mal. 3.) Therefore the tongue becomes tongueless, the memory unmindful, the sense insensible. In the unusual nativity all things shine forth, and all things obey the birth of the Virgin. Wonders are done in heaven above, and on earth below, and all things have sworn obedience to the nascent God. The vaults of the heavens are marked by a brighter star, and the flaming places are bound by much light. Radii more glowing are spread through the fourfold world, and a new fire dulls the plurality of stellar fires. The world wonders that the heavens have brought forth a new splendor, and that their unchangeable state has been turned to signs and portents. The Chaldeans see in the heavens what Balaam left in his writings: "A star shall rise," he says, "from Jacob, and a man shall spring from Israel, and all the earth shall be his possession (Num. 24)." A star is born in the heights, and God on earth, whose possession is from sea to sea. The kings of Tarshish prepare themselves, so that with the novelty of gifts they may see the new mother, the sons the new nativity. A fountain of oil bursts forth from the earth. The temple at Rome, which was called eternal, fell, which had been wonderfully completed with all the expenses of both the City and the world. For when the Romans, in memory of victorious antiquity, had decreed to build a temple of singular design, they asked of all that multitude of gods, or rather demons, how long so excellent a work of laborious construction could last. The answer was: Until a Virgin should bring forth. They, twisting the oracle toward impossibility, called that solemn machine the eternal temple. But on this night, when the virginal flower of Mary went forth from the virginal chamber, it so fell, and that mural and columned work was so broken, that the tracks of its ruins scarcely appear.

O Bethlehem! city of the most high God, both in you and in your suburbs wonders have been seen today. God hangs from breasts, is placed in a manger, is bound in a cradle, is wrapped in rags, and with swaddling clothes loosened, He spreads His happy hands and holy little arms through the smallness of the cradle. He plays with the Virgin, smiles at His mother, and turns His coaxing eyes toward Mary. The queen of heaven stands terrified by such great miracles, she ponders in her heart the salutation of the archangel, the conception of God, the nativity of the child; and she wonders that He, who was so able to come to us, so willed to help us.

Adest et Joseph; sed ab utroque remotus, et in excessu mentis miratur, et mirari satis non potest, qualiter sit ad tantae dignationis admissus arcanum. Adest multitudo coelestis exercitus et vocibus gloriosis, Gloria in excelsis Deo auditur (Luc. II). Pastores veniunt, etinveniunt puerum et puellam. Procedit stella, reges accedunt, adorant filium, matrem venerantur, offerunt munera, deferunt majestati (Matth. II). Cruciatur Herodes, Hierosolyma turbatur, requiruntur Scribae, locus praedicitur; inducitur simulatio, simulator ad nihilum deducitur, deteguntur commenta fraudum. Magi per aliam viam revertuntur, pax inaudita a saeculo regnat, universus orbis ad censum describitur, rivus olei de terra persudat, et in divitem venam liquor sanctificatus ebullit.

Quid est hoc, nisi quia vera pax in terris apparuit, nisi quia ad supernum regnum cives ascribuntur, nisi quia fons misericordiae de Virgine emanat, oleum effusum nomen tuum? (Cant. I.) Spiritus sanctus Scripturae istius unus, et unicus fabricator, nonnullam suae pinguedinis dulcedinem sub hoc capitulo dereliquit. Sed vos nocturnis vigiliis ita defatigati estis, ut vix possitis somnum ab oculis removere. Evigilate tamen paulisper, et somni torporem excutite. Aderit ille, de cujus nativitate loquimur, ut illuminet oculos nostros, ne obdormiamus. Totus autem sententiae sensus ex illius arca mutuabitur, cujus consilium est quasi consilium Dei. Ipse ille est Dominus videlicet Claraevallensis, cujus religio et discretio, sapientia et eloquentia, vita et fama per totam Latinitatem non immerito decurrit; libenter enim illius sarcinas adoro. Sed ad propositum revertamur.

Benignus ille Spiritus, de cujus secretiori fonte canticorum flumen evadit, in his tribus verbis tria nobis requirenda reliquit, videlicet nomen sponsi, quare oleo comparetur, et quomodo effundatur, quia et nomen tacet, de comparatione nil loquitur, nihil dicit de effusione. Primum de nomine videamus. Multa, ut arbitror, vocabula sponsi per divinam Scripturam sparsa leguntur, sed in duobus verbis universa complector. Nullum profecto reperietis, quod non sonet aut majestatis potentiam, aut gratiam pietatis. Puer Domini, de quo frequentius facio mentionem, ad regis cubiculum introductus, duo quasi sublimiora de ipsius ore divinitatis audivit: «Potestas Dei est, inquit, et tibi, Domine, misericordia (Isa. LXI).» Sed et ipse Salvator propheticae veritati attestans, ait: «Vos vocatis me magister, et Domine, et bene dicitis. Sum etenim (Joan. XIII).» Dominus nomen est majestatis, pietatis magister. Si enim pium est praebere escam corpori, multo misericordius est escam animae impartiri, quod est proprie magistrorum, qui mentes indisciplinatas sub disciplinae rigore coercent.

Joseph is also present; but removed from both, and in an ecstasy of mind he wonders, and cannot wonder enough, how he was admitted to the secret of so great a condescension. The multitude of the heavenly host is present and with glorious voices "Glory to God in the highest" is heard (Luke 2). The shepherds come, and find the boy and the girl. The star goes forward, the kings approach, they adore the Son, they venerate the mother, they offer gifts, they pay homage to His majesty (Matt. 2). Herod is tortured, Jerusalem is troubled, the Scribes are sought out, the place is foretold; simulation is introduced, the simulator is reduced to nothing, the comments of frauds are uncovered. The Magi return by another way, peace unheard of for an age reigns, the whole world is described for the census, a stream of oil drips from the earth, and the sanctified liquor bubbles up in a rich vein.

What is this, unless because true peace has appeared on earth, unless because citizens are enrolled for the supernal kingdom, unless because the fountain of mercy flows from the Virgin, "oil poured out is your name" (Cant. 1)? The Holy Spirit, the one and unique fabricator of this Scripture, left some sweetness of His fatness under this chapter. But you are so exhausted by nocturnal vigils, that you can scarcely remove sleep from your eyes. Wake up, however, for a little while, and shake off the torpor of sleep. He will be present, of whose nativity we speak, that He may illuminate our eyes, lest we fall asleep. But the whole sense of the opinion will be borrowed from the chest of him whose counsel is as the counsel of God. He is that Lord, namely of Clairvaux, whose religion and discretion, wisdom and eloquence, life and fame run not unmeritedly through all Latinity; for I willingly adore his burdens. But let us return to the proposal.

That benign Spirit, from whose more secret fountain the river of songs flows out, left in these three words three things for us to seek: namely, the name of the bridegroom, why it is compared to oil, and how it is poured out; for it is silent about the name, says nothing about the comparison, and speaks nothing about the outpouring. First, let us look at the name. Many names of the bridegroom, as I think, are read scattered through the divine Scripture, but in two words I embrace them all. Truly you will find none that does not sound of either the power of majesty or the grace of piety. The boy of the Lord, of whom I more frequently make mention, introduced into the chamber of the king, heard as it were two more sublime things from the mouth of divinity itself: "Power is of God," it says, "and to You, Lord, is mercy" (Isa. 61). But the Savior Himself, attesting to the prophetic truth, says: "You call me teacher and Lord, and you say well; for so I am" (John 13). Lord is the name of majesty, teacher of piety. For if it is pious to provide food for the body, it is much more merciful to impart food for the soul, which is properly the work of teachers, who restrain undisciplined minds under the rigor of discipline.

Videamus quod horum nominum effundatur, utrum nomen potentiae in nomen gratiae, vel nomen pietatis in majestatis vocabulum. Absit, ut misericordia in potentia includatur, quia «miserationes ejus super omnia opera ejus (Psal. CXLIV).» Certum est ergo, quia potestas Dei in majorem hodie pietatem effusa est, cum coeli distillaverunt a facie Dei, et de virgineis membris vetustus dierum exoritur. Non est, qui se abscondat a calore isto; quia largior olei effusio a capite descendit in barbam, quae etiam extremam vestimenti fimbriam largius irroravit. Tanta est abundantia miserantis, ut non solum sub nomine effusionis, sed et exinanitionis censeatur: «Exinanivit semetipsum, «ait Apostolus,» formam servi» hodierna die «accipiens (Philip. II),» et cum tota multitudine miserationum suarum de thalamo prosiliit virginali; non enim habuit dulciorem modum ad redimendum nos abyssus illa consiliorum Dei, quia quidquid divinitatis in thesauro pietatis inventum est, totum in utero Virginis est aggestum.

Non me capio prae laetitia, quod illa majestas naturam suam exinaniens, in naturam meae carnis, et sanguinis superveniat, et me miserum in divitias gloriae suae non ad horam, sed in sempiternum includat. Fit frater meus, Dominus meus; timorem Domini fratris vincit affectus. Domine Jesu, libenter te audio regnantem in coelis, libentius nascentem in terris, libentissime crucem, clavos et lanceam sustinentem; haec siquidem effusio rapit affectum meum, et istorum memoria convalescit cor meum viventis, et vividae potionis asperitate purgatum. Vivens est iste sermo et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, pertingens ad divisionem animae, et spiritus, compagum quoque, ac medullarum scrutator (Hebr. IV).

Unus illorum, qui prophetalis chori aut magister, aut inter magistros est, sub senaria divinorum nominum partitione, de hac effusione mirabiliter quidem, sed subtiliter prophetavit: «Vocabitur, inquit, nomen ejus Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus, fortis, Pater futuri saeculi, Princeps pacis (Isa. IX).» Erat quidem admirabilis Dominus meus inter angelicos ordines, audiens hymnum gloriae suae, admirabilis illi mirabili creaturae, faciens mirabilia in coelo, et in terra, in mari, et in omnibus abyssis. Ego autem, in luto faecis, et miseriae obvolutus, miser et miserabilis omnem spem emergendi perdideram. Ille in gloria, ego in miseria; ille admirabilis, ego miserabilis. «Sanctum et terribile nomen ejus (Psal. CX),» quod vix audeat illa dignior nominare natura. Nomen istud clausum et integrum, quomodo capere poteram, quem vix angelicus oculus prospicere, nedum percipere potest.

Let us see which of these names is poured out: whether the name of power into the name of grace, or the name of piety into the name of majesty. Far be it that mercy should be included in power, because "His mercies are over all His works" (Ps. 144). It is certain, therefore, that the power of God has been poured out today into a greater piety, when the heavens distilled from the face of God, and from the virginal members the Ancient of Days arises. There is no one who may hide himself from this heat; because a more abundant outpouring of oil descends from the head into the beard, which also more largely bedewed the extreme hem of the garment. So great is the abundance of the Merciful One, that He is reckoned not only under the name of outpouring, but also of emptying: "He emptied Himself," says the Apostle, "taking the form of a servant" on this day (Phil. 2), and with the whole multitude of His mercies He leaped forth from the virginal chamber; for that abyss of the counsels of God had no sweeter way to redeem us, because whatever of divinity was found in the treasury of piety, the whole was gathered into the womb of the Virgin.

I do not contain myself for joy, that that majesty, emptying its own nature, should come over into the nature of my flesh and blood, and include me, a wretch, into the riches of His glory, not for an hour, but forever. He becomes my brother, my Lord; the affection of the brother overcomes the fear of the Lord. Lord Jesus, I willingly hear You reigning in the heavens, more willingly being born on earth, most willingly sustaining the cross, the nails, and the spear; for this outpouring ravishes my affection, and the memory of these things strengthens my heart, purged by the bitterness of a living and vivid potion. This word is living and effective, and sharper than any two-edged sword, reaching even to the division of soul and spirit, a discerner also of the joints and marrow (Heb. 4).

One of those who is either the master or among the masters of the prophetic choir, under the sixfold division of the divine names, prophesied about this outpouring wonderfully indeed, but subtly: "His name shall be called," he says, "Wonderful, Counselor, God, Strong, Father of the world to come, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9). My Lord was indeed wonderful among the angelic orders, hearing the hymn of His glory, wonderful to that wonderful creature, doing wonders in heaven and on earth, in the sea and in all the abysses. I, however, rolled in the mud of dregs and misery, a wretch and miserable, had lost all hope of emerging. He in glory, I in misery; He wonderful, I miserable. "Holy and terrible is His name" (Ps. 110), which that more worthy nature would scarcely dare to name. This name, closed and whole, how could I grasp, which the angelic eye can scarcely look upon, let alone perceive?

Sed vide effusionem. Ille, qui erat admirabilis agminibus angelorum, inclinat coelos, et fit consiliarius hominum. Majestativum nomen in pietativum effundatur; et qui mirabilis est in coelis, consulere venit in terris; abscondit purpuram sub miseriae vestimentis, et ad lutum ubi jacebam, inclinatus non mergitur. Is, audeo dicere, infixus in limo profundi, operi manuum suarum porrigit dexteram, de profundis aquarum extrahit, extractum abluit, ablutum induit, indutum reportat, reportatum confirmat. Porrigit dexteram cum nascitur, cum loquitur extrahit, abluit cum moritur, induit cum resurgit, cum ascendit reportat, confirmat cum spiritum emittit de coelis. Bonus quidem consiliarius, qui consilium, quod voce dederit et morte defendit. Erat enim docens, ait evangelista, sicut potestatem habens, non sicut eorum Scribae et Pharisaei (Matth. VII); Deus et Fortis; nomina sunt potestatis, sed Deus effundatur in Patrem futuri saeculi, fortis in principem pacis. Breviter curro, quia et fatigatis, et scientibus legem loquor.

Quid tibi, mussitabunde Lucifer, in tanta diffusione? Clausum est tibi totum itinerarium Dei, et malignans oculus tuus hic nimium caligavit. Sed et Dominus meus admirabilis fuit in nativitate, consiliarius in praedicatione, Deus in miraculorum coruscatione, fortis in passione, pater futuri saeculi in resurrectione, princeps pacis in illa aeterna beatitudine. Non terreamini novitate verborum, quia nihil novum introducitur. Sic et olim nomina commutata et effusa sunt, Abram in Abraham, Sarrai in Saram (Gen. XVII), et si quas alias mutationes in illa veteri officina vos legisse recolitis. Sed et ab ipsis pene mundi principiis, in arcano quodam Scripturarum loco, divini nominis effusionem invenisse me recolo. Loquitur Deus ad Moysen de liberatione Israelis, et post multam Dei et Moysi confabulationem, propheta subtiliter inquirit nomen ejus, et Lord dicit: «Ego sum qui sum: hoc mihi nomen in aeternum. Hoc dices filiis Israel: Qui est, misit me ad vos (Exod. III).» Perterritus Moyses inextricabilis auctoritate vocabuli, ac si diceret: Hoc excedit intellectum meum, non possum capere, nisi effundatur; audit a majestate: «Ego sum Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob.» Vides effusionem? Ecce Deus angelorum vocat se Deum hominum.

Curramus ergo fratres, in odorem unguentorum istorum. Curramus ad oleum de oliva speciosa in campis expressum, nulla infectum amurca, nulla substantiarum amaritudine, oleum quod exhilarat faciem hominis (Psal. CIII), quod sanat vulnera, dolorem tollit, reddit suavitatem. Nonne Samaritanus noster nobis a latrone pessimo vulneratis attulit oleum et vinum ad purgandum, et mitigandam vulneris magnitudinem? Sed multum olei, parum vini; multum misericordiae, justitiae parum. Sic quippe decebat miserantem, sic misero expediebat.

But see the outpouring. He who was wonderful to the hosts of angels, bows the heavens and becomes the counselor of men. The name of majesty is poured out into the name of piety; and He who is wonderful in the heavens, comes to counsel on earth; He hides the purple under the garments of misery, and bowed down to the mud where I was lying, He is not submerged. He, I dare say, fixed in the mire of the deep, stretches out His right hand to the work of His hands, extracts it from the depths of the waters, washes it when extracted, clothes it when washed, brings it back when clothed, confirms it when brought back. He stretches out His right hand when He is born, extracts when He speaks, washes when He dies, clothes when He rises, brings back when He ascends, confirms when He sends the Spirit from the heavens. A good counselor indeed, who defends the counsel which He gave by voice even by death. For He was teaching, says the Evangelist, as one having power, not as their Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 7); God and Strong; these are names of power, but God is poured out into the Father of the world to come, Strong into the Prince of Peace. I run briefly, because I speak both to those who are weary and to those who know the law.

What is it to you, muttering Lucifer, in such great outpouring? The whole itinerary of God is closed to you, and your malignant eye has grown too dim here. But my Lord was wonderful in His nativity, counselor in His preaching, God in the flashing of miracles, strong in His passion, father of the world to come in His resurrection, prince of peace in that eternal beatitude. Do not be terrified by the novelty of words, because nothing new is introduced. Thus also of old names were changed and poured out, Abram into Abraham, Sarai into Sarah (Gen. 17), and whatever other changes you remember reading in that old workshop. But even from the very principles of the world, in a certain secret place of the Scriptures, I remember having found the outpouring of the divine name. God speaks to Moses about the liberation of Israel, and after much conversation between God and Moses, the prophet subtly inquires His name, and the Lord says: "I am who I am: this is my name forever. This you shall say to the children of Israel: He who is, has sent me to you" (Exod. 3). Moses, terrified by the authority of the inextricable name, as if he were saying: This exceeds my intellect, I cannot grasp it unless it be poured out; hears from majesty: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Do you see the outpouring? Behold, the God of angels calls Himself the God of men.

Let us run therefore, brothers, into the odor of these ointments. Let us run to the oil pressed from the olive beautiful in the fields, infected by no dregs, by no bitterness of substances, the oil that gladdens the face of man (Ps. 103), which heals wounds, takes away pain, restores sweetness. Did not our Samaritan bring to us, wounded by the worst thief, oil and wine to purge and mitigate the magnitude of the wound? But much oil, little wine; much mercy, little justice. Thus indeed it befitted the Merciful One, thus it was expedient for the wretch.

«Non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, Domine ait Justus, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens (Psal. CXLII);» sed corona me in misericordia, et miserationibus (Psal. CII). Veniens quippe hodie, quinque vasa attulit olei, non nisi duo vini. Spiritus enim sapientiae et intellectus, consilii, scientiae et pietatis (Isa. XI), nonne dulcedinem sonat, misericordiam fragrat, eructat abundantiam suavitatis? Fortitudo et timor vinum sunt. Sed hoc vino potatus est potens ille, cum Christus in spiritu fortitudinis descendit ad inferos, non timidus, sed timendus.

Videamus nunc quare oleo comparetur oleum. Si vos melius non habetis, lucet, pascit et ungit. Idem facit Christi nomen, et per omnia consonat comparationi. Lucet praedicatum, pascit recogitatum, invocatum lenit et ungit. Vide quando praeclara luminaria lumen nominis hujus super eloquentiae candelabrum portaverunt, si non illuxerunt coruscationes Dei orbi terrae, si non in splendore fulguris commota est, et contremuit terra. «In nomine Jesu Christi surge, et ambula (Act. III),» dicit claudo princeps apostolorum. Nonne quasi fulgur exsilivit ab ore Petri, cum nominatum est nomen quod os Domini nominavit? «Et statim, inquit, consolidatae sunt bases ejus, et plantae.» Vocabulum Jesu, sicut Origenis lingua nobilior diffinivit, dulce et gloriosum, omni odoratu cultuque dignissimum, quod non prius ab hominibus decuit efferri in mundum, sed a quadam sublimiori excellentiorique natura. Omnes quippe prophetae nomen istud aut nescierunt, aut penitus tacuerunt, et reservata est praerogativae dignitas archangelo Gabrieli, qui sancto ore sanctissimae Virgini illud primum evolvit (Luc. I). Nonne Isaias in excessum mentis raptatus verbis archangelicis eisdem pene syllabis consentit usado ad sancti nominis novitatem? (Isa. VII.)

Pascit revera, nec est felicior pastio in loco pascuae, ubi nos Dominus collocavit (Psal. XXII). Quid aeque mentem cogitantis impinguat? Nomen Jesu mel in ore, in aure melos, in corde jubilus. Omnis cibus, qui non conditur hoc, infatuatus est. Scriptura, quae non fuerit interlita oleo tantae devotionis, aut insipida est, aut amara. Olim mihi Tullius dulcescebat, blandiebantur carmina poetarum philosophi verbis aureis insplendebant et sirenes usque in exitium dulces meum incantaverant intellectum. Lex, prophetae, Evangelium, Epistolae, et omnis gloria sententiarum Domini mei et servorum ejus aut parva videbantur, aut nulla. Nescio modo quid dulcius immurmurat filius Jesse, qui vario sermonum et sententiarum concentu omnes illos quos diligere consueveram ineloquentes reddit et mutos.

"Enter not into judgment with Your servant, Lord," says the Just One, "for in Your sight no living person shall be justified" (Ps. 142); but crown me in mercy and compassions (Ps. 102). Coming indeed today, He brought five vessels of oil, only two of wine. For the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel, of knowledge, and of piety (Isa. 11), does it not sound of sweetness, fragrance of mercy, belch forth abundance of sweetness? Fortitude and fear are wine. But with this wine that powerful one was drunk, when Christ in the spirit of fortitude descended to the lower regions, not timid, but to be feared.

Let us see now why oil is compared to oil. If you have nothing better: it lights, it feeds, and it anoints. The name of Christ does the same, and in all things it agrees with the comparison. Preached, it lights; meditated upon, it feeds; invoked, it soothes and anoints. See when those illustrious lights carried the light of this name upon the lampstand of eloquence, if the flashings of God did not illuminate the orb of the earth, if the earth was not moved and did not tremble in the splendor of the lightning. "In the name of Jesus Christ arise and walk" (Acts 3), says the prince of the apostles to the lame man. Did it not leap forth like lightning from the mouth of Peter, when the name was named which the mouth of the Lord named? "And immediately," it says, "his bases and soles were strengthened." The name of Jesus, as the nobler tongue of Origen defined it, sweet and glorious, most worthy of all scent and worship, which it did not befit to be brought into the world by men first, but by a certain more sublime and excellent nature. Indeed all the prophets either knew not this name or were entirely silent about it, and the dignity of the prerogative was reserved for the archangel Gabriel, who with a holy mouth first unfolded it to the most holy Virgin (Luke 1). Did not Isaiah, caught up in an ecstasy of mind, agree with those same archangelic words in almost the same syllables, even to the novelty of the holy name? (Isa. 7.)

It feeds indeed, nor is there a happier feeding in the place of pasture where the Lord has placed us (Ps. 22). What equally fattens the mind of the one thinking? The name of Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, jubilation in the heart. Every food that is not seasoned with this is tasteless. Scripture that has not been smeared with the oil of such great devotion is either insipid or bitter. Once Tully was sweet to me, the songs of poets coaxed me, philosophers shone with golden words, and sirens sang to my intellect until my ruin. The Law, the Prophets, the Gospel, the Epistles, and all the glory of the sentences of my Lord and His servants seemed either small or nothing. I know not how now the son of Jesse murmurs more sweetly, who by the varied harmony of speeches and sentences renders all those whom I was accustomed to love speechless and mute.

Lenit et ungit, quia nihil sic recreat in tribulatione. Denique et probare licet: «Invoca me, inquit, in die tribulationis; eruam te, et honorificabis me (Psal. XLIX).» Hoc est nomen, hoc est oleum, haec olei effusio. Amen dico vobis, non deficiet hic lecythus olei, nec minuetur donec pluviam voluntariam (III Reg. XVII), quae segregata est haereditati ejus diffusius instillet, donec faciat coelum novum et terram novam (Psal. LXVII), quia misericordia ejus ab aeterno, et usque in aeternum super timentes eum (Psal CII).

Sed jam surgamus et praeparemus nos ad solemnioris missae jubilationem, nec cordibus parcentes, nec vocibus ad honorem pueri qui natus est nobis qui est Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen.

## * SERMO LXII. DE S. STEPHANO PROTOMARTYRE. (XXVI DECEMB.)

Adhuc Filium Virginis habemus in manibus et obsecutoria definitione vagientis Dei honoramus infantiam. Ducit nos Virgo ad veneranda cunabula, et speciosa prae filiabus hominum ad speciosum forma prae filiis hominum (Psal. XLIV); benedicta inter mulieres ad benedictum inter homines nos conducit. Submurmurat nobis in aurem, ne forte domus exasperans audiat et concitetur, revelata esse velamina prophetarum, et completum consilium Dei. Videte miraculum matris Domini, quia creatura erat, et Creator creatur. Scintillat sidus, magus adorat, exsultat polus, tellus resultat; gloriantur angeli, pastores adgaudent; Virgo parit, nascitur Deus, et coelorum luminaria clariori lumine lumen exortum in tenebris prosequuntur. In istis bonis versamur. «Beatus vir, qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis (Psal. CXXVI).» Scio quia dulce vobis est: «In principio erat Verbum;» dulcius: «Verbum caro factum (Joan. I);» dulcissimum, Verbum in cruce suspensum. A tanto puerperio quis insanus oculos suos amovere, nedum avellere praesumat, nisi ipse jubeat qui dicit: «Averte oculos tuos a me, quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt?» (Cant. VI.)

Ecce dum osculatur nos osculo oris sui (Cant. I), dum tantis miraculis et stupidos nos facit et attentos, Stephanus plenus gratia, et fortitudine facit prodigia et signa magna in populo (Act. VI). Nunquid aequum est derelinquere regem, et ad militem oculos retorquere? Nequaquam, nisi imperaverit imperator. Surgit ipse rex filius regis, et lapidantium acies interrompens, triumphatorio certamini non sine dolore cordis assistit. Videt opprimi primum et primicerium purpuratae cohortis, et grandinaria lapidum densitate fontes sanguinis de corpore protomartyris ebullire.

It soothes and anoints, because nothing so recreates in tribulation. Finally, one may also prove it: "Invoke me," He says, "in the day of tribulation; I will deliver you, and you shall honor me" (Ps. 49). This is the name, this is the oil, this is the outpouring of oil. Amen I say to you, this jar of oil shall not fail, nor shall it be diminished until He may drop more diffusely the voluntary rain (1 Kings 17), which was set apart for His inheritance, until He makes a new heaven and a new earth (Ps. 67), because His mercy is from eternity and even unto eternity upon those who fear Him (Ps. 102).

But let us now rise and prepare ourselves for the jubilation of the more solemn mass, sparing neither hearts nor voices for the honor of the boy who is born for us, who is God blessed forever. Amen.

## * SERMON LXII. ON ST. STEPHEN THE PROTOMARTYR. (DECEMBER 26)

Still we have the Son of the Virgin in our hands and we honor the infancy of the crying God with an obedient definition. The Virgin leads us to the venerable cradle, and she, beautiful among the daughters of men, leads us to the one beautiful in form among the sons of men (Ps. 44); the blessed among women leads us to the blessed among men. She murmurs in our ear, lest perhaps the exasperating house should hear and be stirred up, that the veils of the prophets have been revealed, and the counsel of God completed. See the miracle of the mother of the Lord, because she was a creature, and the Creator is created. The star sparkles, the magus adores, the pole exults, the earth resounds; the angels glory, the shepherds rejoice; the Virgin brings forth, God is born, and the lights of the heavens follow with a brighter light the light arisen in darkness. We are occupied in these good things. "Blessed is the man who has fulfilled his desire from them" (Ps. 126). I know that it is sweet to you: "In the beginning was the Word;" sweeter: "the Word was made flesh" (John 1); sweetest, the Word hung on the cross. From such a childbearing, what insane person would presume to remove his eyes, let alone tear them away, unless He Himself commands who says: "Turn away your eyes from me, because they have made me flee?" (Cant. 6.)

Behold, while He kisses us with the kiss of His mouth (Cant. 1), while by so many miracles He makes us both stunned and attentive, Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, does great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6). Is it right to abandon the King and turn one's eyes back to the soldier? By no means, unless the Emperor has commanded it. The King Himself, the Son of the King, arises, and breaking through the lines of those stoning, He stands by the triumphal contest not without sorrow of heart. He sees the first and chief of the purple cohort being overwhelmed, and fountains of blood bubbling from the body of the protomartyr by the hailstorm-like density of stones.

Videt quia universa debacchatio redundat in ipsum, et ipsi soli improperia exprobrantium cumulantur. Ubi pietas et misericordia tua, Domine, si non compateris patienti? Ubi et aequitas et justitia, si non judicas, et vindicas de populo lapidante? Curramus ad spectaculum, ad quod currit, qui exsultat «ut gigas ad currendam viam (Psal. XVIII)», et videamus quibus armis armatus vexillifer martyrum in campum pugnaturus descendit, et ut diligentius elucescat singularis martyrii prima praerogativa; revocemus ad memoriam apostolicorum Actuum descriptionem, in quibus historicis et figuralibus dictis conversatio et passio belligeri militis continetur.

«Stephanus, inquiunt, plenus gratia et fortitudine, faciebat prodigia et signa magna in populo (Act. VI).» Non parvum latet hic mysterium, nec vilipendenda simplicioribus Scripturae manifesta positio. Ad Virginem quippe loquens archangelus verba de coelestibus scriniis sumpta, nec alterius nisi ipsius Dei Spiritu fabricata, nova salutatione perorat. Nulli dubium quin omnium verborum excedant altitudinem, utpote de melioribus disciplinis sancti Spiritus evoluta, quorum enuntiatione confoederandum erat illud unicum sacramentum Verbi et hominis divinitatis et carnis. «Ave,» inquit fortitudo Domini, «gratia plena (Luc. I).»

Quid autem de Stephano? «Stephanus plenus gratia et fortitudine.» Nonne Lucas eisdem pene litteris de utrisque loquitur? Sed licet longe excellentior modus in Virgine praedicetur, secundario tamen laudatur in martyre. Habet igitur gratiam Stephanus sublimiori genere quam reliqua martyrum multitudo, plenus gratia, refertus videlicet et cumulatus, quod raro in Scripturis canonicis subtilis inquisitor inveniet. Jungitur gratiae fortitudo, quia infuso Spiritu libertatis ignitus animus in lucem veritatis erumpit, nec patitur ullo pacto rigorem tristitiae, vel submitti aliquando, vel dimitti. Sic loricatus gratia et hasta fortitudinis sapienter infrendens faciebat prodigia et signa magna in populo. Ille potest signa et prodigia facere, in quo gratia et fortitudo sedem fortissimam statuerunt. Sic exit Stephanus ad homicidas, ad legis adulteros, ad crucifixores Filii Dei Patris; loquitur genti peccatrici in Aegypto, populo gravi iniquitate in deserto, semini nequam in terra promissionis, filiis sceleratis in morte Salvatoris (Isa. I). «Dura cervice, inquit, et incircumcisi corde, et auribus, vos semper Spiritui sancto restitistis,» etc.

He sees that the whole revelry overflows into Himself, and upon Him alone the reproaches of those upbraiding are piled. Where is Your piety and mercy, Lord, if You do not suffer with the one suffering? Where are both equity and justice, if You do not judge and avenge upon the stoning people? Let us run to the spectacle, to which he runs who exults "as a giant to run the way" (Ps. 18), and let us see with what arms the standard-bearer of the martyrs, about to fight, descends into the field, and so that the first prerogative of the singular martyrdom may shine forth more diligently; let us recall to memory the description of the apostolic Acts, in which the conduct and passion of the belligerent soldier is contained in historical and figurative words.

"Stephen," they say, "full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6). No small mystery lies hidden here, nor is the manifest position of the Scripture to be slighted by the simpler folk. For the archangel speaking to the Virgin, with words taken from the heavenly chests, and fabricated by no other than the Spirit of God Himself, concludes with a new salutation. There is no doubt that they exceed the height of all words, as being unfolded from the better disciplines of the Holy Spirit, by whose enunciation that unique sacrament of the Word and man, of divinity and flesh, was to be joined. "Hail," says the fortitude of the Lord, "full of grace" (Luke 1).

But what about Stephen? "Stephen, full of grace and fortitude." Does not Luke speak of both in almost the same letters? But although a far more excellent mode is preached in the Virgin, yet it is praised secondarily in the martyr. Stephen therefore has grace in a more sublime genus than the remaining multitude of martyrs, full of grace, filled namely and heaped up, which a subtle inquirer will rarely find in the canonical Scriptures. Fortitude is joined to grace, because the soul ignited by the infused Spirit of liberty breaks forth into the light of truth, nor does it suffer in any way the rigor of sadness, to be either submitted to or dismissed at any time. Thus breastplated with grace and wisely gnashing with the spear of fortitude, he did great wonders and signs among the people. He can do signs and wonders in whom grace and fortitude have established a most strong seat. Thus Stephen goes out to the homicides, to the adulterers of the law, to the crucifiers of the Son of God the Father; he speaks to the sinful nation in Egypt, to the people with heavy iniquity in the desert, to the wicked seed in the land of promise, to the criminal sons in the death of the Savior (Isa. 1). "Stiff-necked," he says, "and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you have always resisted the Holy Spirit," etc.

«Surrexerunt autem quidam de Synagoga» utique Satanae, undique conglobantur, vel ad convincendum, vel ad occidendum; faciunt parietem unum, impietatis squama squamae conjungitur, sibilant sibi serpentes ad invicem, et conveniunt in unum adversus Dominum et adversus servum ejus. Velit, nolit, cedit impietas pietati, veritati error, stultitia sapientiae, Spiritui sancto praesumptio, et vanitas spiritus humani. «Et non poterant, inquit, resistere sapientiae et spiritui, qui loquebatur.» Non dixit, Non volebant quod rationabilium est et perfectorum; sed, non poterant, ubi menti malae facultas tollitur, non voluntas mutatur.

«Redarguebantur ait, ab eo cum omni fiducia.» Fiducialiter agit, nec mutat, nec mutatur mens imperterrita, quae magis amat justitiam quam vitam, fidem quam sanguinem, mortem quam justitiae taciturnitatem. Concurrentes rapiunt eum, adducunt in concilium, et gaudent eum intra sua retiacula conclusisse: Sed «frustra jacitur refe ante oculos pennatorum (Prov. I).» Tunc vox liberior, et illorum cautibus sermo exacuitur veritatis, totumque martyrem rapit sibi Spiritus Dei, et ex ejus ore sonantiori organo modulatur. Apparet ei una facies Scripturarum, et Veteris Instrumenti dispendia in compendiosam redigit brevitatem. Replicat promissiones et beneficia Dei, murmurationes et maleficia populi, bona praestita, reddita mala, et ad extremum divini sanguinis exprobrat effusionem. Vocat refractarios Spiritui, dura cervice, incircumcisos corde et auribus, et sublimi voce homicidas et proditores appellat. Non veretur conventicula congregata de sanguinibus, et inter manus quaerentium animam ejus (Psal. XV), deliberatione justitiae cacumen veritatis ascendit. Dissecantur cordibus, et strident dentibus in eum, concipiunt dolorem, et prope est ut pariant iniquitatem (Ibid.).

Mirum, quia non revocantur insueti novitate miraculi quod luminosa protomartyris facies non refrenat insanos. «Videbant, inquit, faciem ejus tanquam vultum angeli stantis inter illos.» Quid est, Judaei? Lumine vultus Dei insignitur gloriosus levita, ut vibranti splendore Stephanus serenatur, reverberantur oculi vestri, et tamen invidiae magnitudo, visionis majestatem occludit. Respondeant mihi divinorum voluminum evolutores, ubi revolverint hominem in terris positum vultum angelicum induisse et cum in utrisque legibus, vel raro, vel nunquam invenerint, astupeant gloria triumphantis.

"But there arose some from the Synagogue," surely of Satan, they are gathered from all sides, either to convict or to kill; they make one wall, scale of impiety is joined to scale, serpents hiss to one another, and they come together into one against the Lord and against His servant. Whether it wills or not, impiety yields to piety, error to truth, folly to wisdom, presumption to the Holy Spirit, and the vanity of the human spirit. "And they could not," it says, "resist the wisdom and the spirit which spoke." He did not say, "They would not," which belongs to the rational and the perfect; but "they could not," where the ability is taken away from the evil mind, even if the will is not changed.

"They were refuted," it says, "by him with all confidence." He acts confidently, nor does the undaunted mind change or is it changed, which loves justice more than life, faith more than blood, death more than the silence of justice. Running together, they seize him, lead him into the council, and rejoice to have enclosed him within their nets: but "in vain is the net cast before the eyes of the winged ones" (Prov. 1). Then his voice is more free, and the speech of truth is sharpened by their rocks, and the Spirit of God snatches the whole martyr to Himself, and from his mouth he modulates with a louder organ. One face of the Scriptures appears to him, and he reduces the costs of the Old Instrument into a compendious brevity. He unfolds the promises and benefits of God, the murmurings and misdeeds of the people, the good things provided, the evil things returned, and at the last he upbraids the outpouring of divine blood. He calls those refractory to the Spirit stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears, and with a sublime voice he calls them homicides and traitors. He does not fear the conventicles gathered from bloods, and between the hands of those seeking his soul (Ps. 15), by the deliberation of justice he ascends the summit of truth. They are cut to the heart, and they gnash their teeth at him, they conceive sorrow, and they are near to bringing forth iniquity (Ibid.).

It is a wonder that the ones unaccustomed are not called back by the novelty of the miracle, that the luminous face of the protomartyr does not restrain the insane. "They saw," it says, "his face as the face of an angel standing among them." What is it, Jews? The glorious Levite is marked by the light of the face of God, so that Stephen is made serene by a vibrating splendor, your eyes are reverberated, and yet the magnitude of envy closes the majesty of the vision. Let the researchers of the divine volumes answer me, where they have found a man placed on earth to have put on an angelic face; and when they find it rarely or never in either law, let them be astounded by the glory of the triumphant one.

Sequitur: «Cum autem esset plenus Spiritu sancto, intendens in coelum vidit gloriam Dei.» Mirum dictu, et totius supergressio creaturae. Intendit in coelum, videt jam non coelum, sed coelos apertos, videt gloriam Dei, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtutis Dei. Movet me haec intentio, quae de cordis puritate refusa, vim facit coelis, et ad ipsius divinitatis consistorium penetrat et attingit. Coeli aperiuntur, gloria Dei videtur, Jesus conspicitur, stans non solum a dextris Dei, sed a dextris virtutis. Hanc intentionem fecerat abjectio mundi, contemptus sui, cordis munditia, dilectio Dei, amor proximi, veritatis defensio, desiderium Christi.

Retorquenda essent haec omnia ad communes flosculos mortalitatis, nisi esset excellentia martyris commendanda. Felices oculi, subtilis visus, visio gloriosa. Simulque signanter recollige positionem verborum. Plenus est Spiritu, et sic intendit in coelum quia qui Spiritu divinitatis afflatur, conculcatis terrestribus coelestibus inhiat et aeternis. Post haec aperiuntur coeli, nullaque praevalet obfirmatio, vel claustra, quae non transvolet, aut irrumpat mens illa summae menti affectanter inhaerens. Aperiuntur ergo coeli, et puto quod omnes coeli eorumque apertionem sequitur visio gloriae Dei, et videtur Dominus Jesus stans a dextris virtutis Dei. Ne Patre minor esse putetur, stat cum stante, cum bellante bellatur, qui lapidatur in lapidato.

Non mediocris stupor involvit me, utrum primitivus flos martyrum corporeis, an incorporeis oculis ista prospexerit. Grande quidem miraculum si mortali intuitu stellantibus se immersit arcanis, si mundi corde oculi tam solemnem inspexerint visionem. Quod si corporalibus, certum est hunc omne hominum genus disparilitate gloriae praevolasse, et pennis fidei, et virtutum, incorporea corporeis, et si non comprehendisse, apprehendisse tamen. Nihil audeo temere definire, vel ex abrupto praecipitare sententiam; cum finitivam super hujusmodi regulam me non legerim invenisse. Securius tamen sequor Apostolum, imo Spiritum Dei in Apostolo, qui cum summa verborum deliberatione magis securae ambiguitati quam periculosae definitioni, ista committit. «Sive, inquit, in corpore, sive extra corpus nescio, Deus scit (II Cor. XI).»

It follows: "But since he was full of the Holy Spirit, looking up to heaven he saw the glory of God." Wondrous to say, and a surpassing of the whole creature. He looks into heaven, he sees now not heaven, but the heavens opened, he sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the power of God. This intention moves me, which, poured back from the purity of heart, does violence to the heavens, and penetrates and reaches even to the consistory of divinity itself. The heavens are opened, the glory of God is seen, Jesus is beheld, standing not only at the right hand of God, but at the right hand of power. The rejection of the world, the contempt of himself, the cleanness of heart, the love of God, the love of neighbor, the defense of truth, the desire for Christ had made this intention.

All these things would have to be referred to the common little flowers of mortality, unless the excellence of the martyr were to be commended. Happy eyes, subtle sight, glorious vision. And at the same time significantly recall the position of the words. He is full of the Spirit, and thus he looks into heaven because he who is inspired by the Spirit of divinity, with earthly things trampled underfoot, gapes for heavenly and eternal things. After these the heavens are opened, and no obstidacy or bars prevail which that mind, affectingly clinging to the supreme mind, does not fly across or break into. The heavens are opened, therefore, and I think that all the heavens and their opening are followed by the vision of the glory of God, and the Lord Jesus is seen standing at the right hand of the power of God. Lest He be thought less than the Father, He stands with the one standing, He fights with the one fighting, He who is stoned in the one stoned.

No small amazement wraps me, whether the primitive flower of martyrs looked upon these things with bodily or incorporeal eyes. A great miracle indeed if with a mortal gaze he immersed himself in stellar secrets, if eyes clean of heart looked upon so solemn a vision. But if with bodily eyes, it is certain that he outflew all the race of men in disparity of glory, and by the wings of faith and virtues, apprehended if not comprehended the incorporeal by the corporeal. I dare to define nothing rashly, or to precipitate a sentence abruptly; since I have not read that I have found a definitive rule on this sort of thing. More safely, however, I follow the Apostle, or rather the Spirit of God in the Apostle, who with the greatest deliberation of words commits these things more to a safe ambiguity than to a dangerous definition. "Whether," he says, "in the body or out of the body I know not, God knows" (2 Cor. 12).

Exclamant statim clamore horribili, continent aures suas, et eas obstruunt veritati. Impetum fecerunt unanimiter in eum, facti amici in morte illius, et ejicientes eum extra civitatem, lapidabant. Ejicitur martyr extra civitatem sanguinum, in qua prius justitia habitaverat, nunc autem homicidae, de qua dicit sanctus: «Quoniam vidi iniquitatem, et contradictionem in civitate (Psal. XLV).» Haec est civitas, quam die ac nocte circumdat iniquitas, civitas castellum despective vocata, quod contra apostolos et apostolorum Dominum, durissimis infidelitatis vectibus est munitum (Matth. XXI). Extra portam civitatis hujus passus est Dominus, extra eam lapidatur servus exiens ad eum extra castra, et portans similitudinem improperii ejus. Deponuntur vestimenta martyris ad pedes persecutoris, qui ad tactum sacrarum vestium, et orationibus lapidandi fuerat convertendus: «Et lapidabant, inquit, Stephanum invocantem et dicentem: Domine Jesu, accipe spiritum meum (Act. VII).» Currunt illi ad lapides, et ille ad preces, lapides lapidem percutiunt, sed lapidem molliorem, de quo fluit oleum charitatis, et tinnitus redditur pietatis. Domine Jesu, inquit, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum, quia nesciunt quid faciunt. Rogat suscipi spiritum suum; spiritum utique, et spiritum illum, quem signanter quasi quoddam tertium Apostolus in homine praecipit conservari. «Ut integer, inquit, anima mea, et spiritus, et corpus in diem Domini sine querela servetur (II Thess. V).»

O quanta pietas, quantus affectus, et ardentissimae charitatis integritas. Recte martyrii florem iste sibi praevendicat, in quo similitudo Domini pendentis in cruce mirabilibus formulis est impressa. In ligno enim spinis, clavis, lancea affixus, et crucifixus, dissimulat illum unicum dolorem, et obliviscitur mortis vicinae, novum introducturus exemplum, aperit latitudinem charitatis, et apertiori campo terminos traditae legis amplificat, non jam solum amicus amicis, sed velint nolint, amicus pariter inimicis. «Pater, inquit, ignosce illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt (Luc. XXIII).» Non potuit esse inefficax oratio morientis, unde et inimicorum numerositas ad numerum amicorum transivit.

Vide quam recto cursu Stephanus, et si non aequat, sequitur tamen Redemptorem. Volat saxorum imber, et fortissimis invidorum manibus loca vulnerum duplicantur, sed patienter patitur coronatus noster, de corona nominis ad coronam regiminis transferendus. Nescit affectum carnis, et mortis horam ignorat; et vide quid deliberet faciendum. Positis autem genibus clamavit voce magna dicens: «Domine ne statuas illis hoc peccatum, quia nesciunt quid faciunt.» Clamat voce magna, quia magna utique charitate; positis genibus, quia vera, et humili simplicitate.

Immediately they exclaim with a horrible cry, they hold their ears, and block them to the truth. They made an onset with one mind upon him, having become friends in his death, and casting him out of the city, they stoned him. The martyr is cast out of the city of bloods, in which justice had previously dwelt, but now homicides, of which the holy one says: "Since I have seen iniquity and contradiction in the city" (Ps. 45). This is the city which iniquity surrounds day and night, the city contemptuously called a fortress, which against the apostles and the Lord of the apostles is fortified with the hardest bars of infidelity (Matt. 21). Outside the gate of this city the Lord suffered, outside it the servant is stoned going out to Him outside the camp, and bearing the likeness of His reproach. The garments of the martyr are laid at the feet of the persecutor, who by the touch of the sacred clothes and by the prayers of the one to be stoned was to be converted: "And they stoned," it says, "Stephen invoking and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7). They run to stones, and he to prayers; stones strike a stone, but a softer stone, from which flows the oil of charity, and the tinkling of piety is returned. Lord Jesus, he says, do not lay this sin to them, because they know not what they do. He asks that his spirit be received; his spirit indeed, and that spirit which the Apostle significatively commands to be preserved as a certain third thing in man. "That my soul, and spirit, and body may be preserved whole and without blame for the day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5).

O how great a piety, how great an affection, and the integrity of a most ardent charity. Rightly does that man claim for himself the flower of martyrdom, in whom the likeness of the Lord hanging on the cross is impressed with wondrous formulas. For fixed and crucified on the wood with thorns, nails, and spear, He dissimulates that unique sorrow, and forgets His near death, about to introduce a new example, He opens the breadth of charity, and in a more open field He amplifies the limits of the traditioned law, no longer a friend to friends only, but whether they will or not, a friend likewise to enemies. "Father," He says, "forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23). The prayer of the dying one could not be ineffective, whence even the multitude of enemies passed over to the number of friends.

See by how right a course Stephen, even if he does not equal, yet follows the Redeemer. A shower of stones flies, and by the most strong hands of the envious the places of wounds are doubled, but our crowned one patiently suffers, about to be transferred from the crown of name to the crown of government. He knows not the affection of the flesh, and he ignores the hour of death; and see what he deliberates to be done. But with knees placed he cried with a loud voice saying: "Lord, do not lay this sin to them, because they know not what they do." He cries with a loud voice, because with a great charity indeed; with knees placed, because with true and humble simplicity.

Pro se orans stat, et erigitur; pro lapidantibus flectit genua. Quis audivit unquam talem, et quis vidit huic similem? Plus dolet persequentium peccata quam sua vulnera; illorum iniquitatem quam suam mortem.

«Et cum hoc dixisset, obdormivit in Domino.» Felix somnus cum requie, requies cum voluptate, voluptas cum satietate, satietas cum securitate, securitas cum aeternitate. Obdormivit, inquit, in Domino, absorptus in claritatis abyssum, et inter Dei sui brachia requiescens. Sedebat a dextris Dei Dominus Jesus, sed primo martyri martyrum caput. Recolis quid illa Ecclesiae lingua, Augustinum loquor, de hoc martyre senserit, qui post mortem septem mortuos asserit.

Eia vos, qui levitico ordine praefulgetis, cantate huic canticum novum, et tantae festivitati festivis vocibus incumbite. Fortassis aderit canentibus, et suggeret de nobis Domino suo, judici nostro: Ne statuas illis aliquid ad peccatum, qui es Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen.

## Sermo LXIII.

*DE SANCTO JOANNE APOSTOLO ET EVANGELISTA. (XXVII DECEMB.)*

Hodie, dilectissimi, sanctae nobis laetitiae gaudia geminantur, quia recenti adhuc nativitate Dominica, B. Joannis occurrit solemnitas gloriosa. Hodie discipulus, quem diligebat Jesus, dilectoris sui amplexibus stringitur, societate perfruitur, et quod viderat, quod audierat, quod manibus attrectaverat de verbo vitae, tanto jam liquidus quanto sublimius contemplatur (I Joan. I). Hodie scilicet illa mirabilis aquila quam et olim Ezechiel eminere caeteris quatuor animalibus vidit (Ezech. I), et ipse Joannes suimet, ut ita loquar, propheta factus, volantem in mystica visione conspexit, ad unicam angelorum et hominum escam, pennis librata sublimium meritorum feliciter evolavit. Licet enim ubicunque fuerit corpus, illic necessario congregentur et aquilae (Luc. XVII); iste tamen tanto familiarius ad vitae pabulum, corruptionis vinculis jam solutus accedit, quanto et in carne adhuc positus in ipsum aeterni solis orbem, hoc est, in divinae substantiae claritatem, radios purificatae mentis infixit.

Praying for himself he stands and is upright; for those stoning he bends his knees. Who has ever heard such a thing, and who has seen one like this? He grieves more for the sins of the persecutors than for his own wounds; for their iniquity more than for his own death.

"And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord." A happy sleep with rest, rest with pleasure, pleasure with satiety, satiety with security, security with eternity. He fell asleep, it says, in the Lord, absorbed into the abyss of clarity, and resting between the arms of his God. The Lord Jesus was sitting at the right hand of God, but for the first martyr He was the head of martyrs. Do you recall what that tongue of the Church, I speak of Augustine, thought of this martyr, who asserts that after his death seven were raised from the dead?

Eia you, who shine forth in the levitical order, sing to this one a new song, and apply yourselves with festive voices to so great a festivity. Perhaps he will be present to those singing, and will suggest about us to his Lord, our judge: Do not lay anything to them for sin, You who are God blessed forever. Amen.

## Sermon LXIII.

*ON SAINT JOHN THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST. (DECEMBER 27)*

Today, most beloved, the joys of holy gladness are doubled for us, because while the Lord's Nativity is still fresh, the glorious solemnity of Blessed John occurs. Today the disciple whom Jesus loved is pressed in the embraces of his Lover, enjoys His society, and what he had seen, what he had heard, what he had touched with his hands concerning the Word of Life, he now contemplates as much more clearly as it is more sublime (1 John 1). Today namely that wondrous eagle, whom of old Ezekiel saw standing out from the other four animals (Ezek. 1), and John himself, having become, so to speak, a prophet of himself, beheld flying in mystical vision, happily outflew to the unique food of angels and men, poised on the wings of sublime merits. For although wherever the body shall be, there the eagles will necessarily be gathered (Luke 17); yet this one approaches the food of life as much more familiarly, now released from the bonds of corruption, as even while still placed in the flesh he fixed the rays of a purified mind into the orb of the eternal sun itself, that is, into the clarity of the divine substance.

O quam miranda super nos coelestis consilii dispensatio! O quam profundam divinae sapientiae est altitudo! Descendit Deus ad hominem, ut occultam hominibus patefaceret Deitatem. Ad humanae mortalitatis exire dignatus est publicum, ut nobis aeternitatis suae revelaret arcanum. Sed si mox, ut in evangelicae doctrinae coepit verba prorumpere, ac novae gratiae mysteria rudibus adhuc imperitorum cordibus aperire, statim divinitatis suae panderet sacramentum, cujus quaeso ferret auditus, cujus unquam caperet intellectus? Nam ut de divinitate nunc taceam, cum Dominus diceret: «Quia nisi manducaveritis carnem filii hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis: et, qui manducat me, ipse vivet propter me (Joan. VI);» protinus aspernati sunt verbum, et exhorruere dicentes: «Durus est hic sermo: quis potest eum audire?» Deinde Scriptura subjungit: «Ex hoc, inquit, multi discipulorum ejus abierunt retro, et jam cum illo non ambulabant (Ibid.)» videlicet non de turba; non quilibet imperiti, sed ipsi etiam discipuli nequierunt capere verbum mysterii. Quid ergo isti facerent ante solem, qui caecati sunt ad lucernam? Quomodo tonitrui sustineant sonitum, qui clangentis tubae pondus ferre nequeunt, imo qui suppressae ac temperatae humanae vocis exilitate surdescunt.

Propterea igitur Redemptor noster dilectum sibi speciali praerogativa discipulum, ad declarandam suae divinitatis essentiam quoddam quasi organum fecit, atque ut hic suppleret quod ad tempus ipse Dominus dispensative suppresserat, sibimet vicarium dereliquit. Quatenus expleto passionis, ac resurrectionis ascensionisque mysterio, post tredecim fere annorum lustra, cum jam videlicet homines liberiorem ad capessendam veritatem haberent mentis obtutum, hic coessentialis, et coaeterni Deo Verbi panderet sacramentum, dicens: «In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I).» Humanae quippe imbecillitatis ordo poscebat ut prius Christi humanitatis primordia cursum consummationemque pernosceret, miracula etiam, quae in hominem gessit, addisceret sicque paulatim ad comprehendendum divinitatis occultae mysterium suis vegetata provectibus aspiraret. Quapropter divini fuit causa consilii ut caeteri Evangelistae, qui in describenda Salvatoris humanitate versati sunt, longe praecederent; Joannes vero, cum homines tanquam primo lactantes firmiora jam in via veritatis vestigia figerent, eos ad condescendendam divinae scientiae gratiam promoveret.

O how wondrous a dispensation of heavenly counsel over us! O how profound is the height of divine wisdom! God descended to man, that He might lay open the hidden Deity to men. He deigned to go out into the public of human mortality, that He might reveal to us the secret of His eternity. But if, as soon as He began to break forth into the words of evangelical doctrine, and to open the mysteries of new grace to the still rude hearts of the unskilled, He had immediately opened the sacrament of His divinity, whose hearing I ask would have borne it, whose intellect would have ever grasped it? For to say nothing of divinity now, when the Lord said: "Unless you shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and drunk His blood, you shall not have life in you: and, he who eats me, the same shall live because of me" (John 6); immediately they slighted the word, and were horrified saying: "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" Then the Scripture subjoins: "From this time," it says, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (Ibid.) namely not from the crowd; not just any unskilled persons, but even the disciples themselves were unable to grasp the word of the mystery. What then would these do before the sun, who are blinded at a lamp? How would they sustain the sound of thunder, who are unable to bear the weight of a clanging trumpet, or rather who grow deaf at the thinness of a suppressed and tempered human voice.

Therefore, for this reason, our Redeemer made the disciple beloved to Him by a special prerogative a certain organ, as it were, for declaring the essence of His divinity, and that he might supply here what the Lord Himself had dispensatively suppressed for a time, He left him as a vicar for Himself. So that the mystery of the passion, and of the resurrection and ascension having been completed, after almost thirteen lustra of years, when namely men would have a freer gaze of mind for grasping the truth, he might open the sacrament of the coessential and coeternal Word to God, saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1). For the order of human weakness required that he should first thoroughly know the principles, course, and consummation of Christ's humanity, and learn also the miracles which He did in man, and thus gradually, refreshed by his advancements, aspire to comprehend the mystery of the hidden divinity. Wherefore it was the cause of the divine counsel that the other Evangelists, who were occupied in describing the Savior's humanity, should precede him by far; but John, when men as if first nursing should now fix firmer tracks in the way of truth, should promote them to condescending the grace of divine science.

Hanc denique supereminentem divinae scientiae celsitudinem tunc divinitus illustrata mente concepit, cum in sacrosancto mysticae coenae convivio supra pectus recubuit Redemptoris (Joan. XIII). Et quia in pectore Jesu sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi, ex illo coelesti gazophylacio summam traxit, unde nostrae paupertatis inopiam copiosa liberalitate ditavit. Ex illo, inquam, nobis aerario divitiarum copias attulit, et in communem totius mundi salutem bene prodigus erogavit, imo supra fontem perennis vitae recubuit, ut et ipse tunc semper manantia fluenta divinae doctrinae hauriret, et eadem nobis postmodum praefixo certi temporis articulo propinaret.

Magnus videlicet paradisi fluvius, qui ex principali sui fontis origine profluens ac uberiori coelestium charismatum inundatione procedens, squalentia deserta humanarum mentium irrigat, et ad proferenda bonorum operum tanquam novarum frugum germina uberrima fertilitate fecundat. Et non immerito tam profunda, tam supereminens revelatio deitatis Virgini debebatur ut qui carnis sibimet amputavit illecebras, felici commercio, pro carnali dulcedine, coelestium epularum divitiis frueretur. Ad tantum scilicet gratiae provectus est privilegium ut omnem transgrediens creaturam, illuc acie mentis attingeret, quo non propheta, non patriarcha, non denique quisquam ab ipso mundi primordio cognoscatur in carne positus aspirasse. Nec mirum si Redemptor noster beato Joanni vicem suam ad declarandum divinitatis suae mysterium delegavit, quem et ad custodiendam venerabilem matrem suam, perpetuam videlicet Virginem, quasi alterum filium sui loco supposuit: «Mulier, inquiens, ecce filius tuus;» ad discipulum autem: «Ecce mater tua (Joan. XIX).» Dignum quippe fuerat ut cui potissimum commisit coelestia committeret et terrena.

Et quia Mediator Dei et hominum ex duabus naturis, divina videlicet et humana consistit unus Emmanuel, aequum admodum visum fuit ut beatus Joannes utriusque naturae fidelis minister existeret, qui et divinitatis sacramenta conscriberet, et beatae Genitrici perpetuae custodiae ac sedulitatis suae ministerium exhiberet. Cujus utriusque, excellentissimi videlicet sacramenti, quodammodo ministrum se esse testatur, cum per omnem evangelici textus sui seriem, sic styli modum temperet et quadam vicissitudine mysticae varietatis alternat ut modo humana pronuntiet, modo divina revelet, modo quae humanitatis sunt historialiter inserat, modo quae sunt divinitatis quadam sublimium ac subtilium verborum majestate depromat. Tantaque locutionis arte verborum vim temperat ac librati moderaminis sobrietate dispensat ut nec divinitatis arcana vulgari, nec ea quae fidei nostrae necessaria sunt patiatur abscondi.

Finally, he conceived this supereminent height of divine knowledge with a mind then divinely enlightened, when he reclined upon the breast of the Redeemer at the most holy banquet of the mystical supper (John 13). And because in the breast of Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, from that heavenly treasury he drew the summit, wherewith he enriched the need of our poverty with copious liberality. From that treasury, I say, he brought to us the abundance of riches, and spent them right lavishly for the common salvation of the whole world; nay, he reclined upon the fountain of perennial life, that he himself might then draw the ever-flowing streams of divine doctrine, and afterwards offer the same to us at the appointed article of a certain time.

A great river of paradise indeed, which, flowing from the principal origin of its fountain and proceeding with a more abundant inundation of heavenly charisms, irrigates the squalid deserts of human minds, and fertilizes them with most abundant fertility to bring forth the seeds of good works as if of new fruits. And not undeservedly was so deep, so supereminent a revelation of the deity owed to the Virgin, so that he who cut off from himself the allurements of the flesh might, by a happy exchange, enjoy the riches of heavenly feasts instead of carnal sweetness. He was indeed advanced to such a privilege of grace that, transcending every creature, he might reach thither with the sharp sight of his mind, where no prophet, no patriarch, nor finally anyone from the very beginning of the world is known to have aspired while placed in the flesh. Nor is it a wonder if our Redeemer delegated to blessed John His own turn for declaring the mystery of His divinity, whom He also substituted in His own place as another son to guard His venerable mother, namely the perpetual Virgin, saying: "Woman, behold your son"; and to the disciple: "Behold your mother (John 19)." For it had been worthy that He should commit earthly things to him to whom He especially committed heavenly things.

And because the Mediator of God and men consists of two natures, namely divine and human, one Emmanuel, it seemed very right that blessed John should be a faithful minister of both natures, who should both write the sacraments of divinity and exhibit the ministry of his perpetual custody and diligence to the blessed Mother. He testifies that he is in a way a minister of each, namely of the most excellent sacrament, when through the entire series of his evangelical text he so tempers the mode of his style and alternates with a certain vicissitude of mystical variety that at one time he pronounces human things, at another reveals divine things, now inserting historically what belongs to humanity, now drawing out what belongs to divinity with a certain majesty of sublime and subtle words. And with such art of speech he tempers the force of his words and dispenses them with the sobriety of balanced moderation, so that he neither suffers the secrets of divinity to be made common, nor those things which are necessary for our faith to be hidden.

Proinde dum historiae verba contexit, velut per tenuissimas rimas divinitatis fulgorem ad oculos hominum coruscare permittit, sicque dum tenuissimo lucis aeternae radio, oculus mentis nostrae perstringitur, ad indagandum mox illud inaccessibile summae veritatis lumen perspicacius aperitur. Quia vero beatus Joannes alternato suae narrationis ordine, modo divinitatem Christi subtiliter intonat, modo quae humanitatis sunt plane quodammodo atque humiliter asseverat, sicut ipse in Evangelii sui principio coepit, ita seriatim usque ad finem hunc eumdem modum per omnem suae descriptionis articulum tenuit. Nam, sicut nostis, in capite sui libri deificum illud ac singulare ponit exordium: «In principio, inquiens, erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I).» Ecce aquila Dei ad coeli verticem sublimiter evolat, sed ad escam carnis necesse est ut repressis alis aliquando in imum submissa descendat. Unde et paulo post quid subdat, audite: «Et Verbum, inquit, caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis (Ibid.).»

Hanc itaque diversitatem humanitatis atque divinitatis unitae sibimet atque inconfusae sponsa de sponso dicit in Canticis: «Venter, inquit, ejus eburneus, distinctus sapphiris (Cant. V).» In membris nempe humani corporis vix aliquid ventre fragilius, sive tenerius invenitur, ideoque per ventrem recte fragilitas in Christo assumptae humanitatis accipitur; ebur autem os est elephantis, quod videlicet animal fertur esse castissimum frigidissimaeque naturae. Venter ergo sponsi eburneus est, quia suscepta Redemptoris humanitas ab omni peccatorum contagio casta prorsus et inviolata permansit. Siquidem peccatum non fecit, nec dolus inventus in ore ejus (I Petr. II). Sapphirus autem lapis est sereni coeli colorem habens; unde et in visione Domini dicitur: «Erat sub pedibus ejus quasi opus lapidis sapphirini, et quasi caelum, cum serenum est (Exod. XXIV).» Per sapphiros ergo opera divinitatis intelliguntur, quae in carne Dominus ostendebat. Venter ergo sponsi distinctus erat sapphiris, quia Christi humanitas divinis virtutibus refulgebat. Nec plenus sapphiris esse dicitur, sed distinctus, ita videlicet ut inter sapphiros candor eboris appareret quia sic Dominus ex parte hominis assumpti operabatur humana ut aliquando nihilominus ex parte deitatis ostenderet et divina. Nam esurire, sitire, flere, postremo crucifigi et mori humanitatis erant opera; miracula vero facere, et non solum alios, sed semetipsum a mortuis suscitare, evidentissima erant divinitatis indicia. Hoc itaque modo beatus Joannes quasi eburneum ventrem sponsi sapphiris distinguit, dum aliquando sacramenta divinitatis aperit, aliquando humanitatis infirma describit.

Hence, while he weaves the words of history, he permits the brightness of divinity to flash, as it were, through very thin chinks to the eyes of men, and thus, while the eye of our mind is touched by a very thin ray of eternal light, it is soon more piercingly opened to track down that inaccessible light of the highest truth. Because indeed blessed John, with the order of his narration alternated, now subtly intones the divinity of Christ, now in a way plainly and humbly asserts the things of His humanity, as he himself began in the beginning of his Gospel, so he held this same manner serially unto the end through every article of his description. For, as you know, at the head of his book he places that deific and singular exordium: "In the beginning, he says, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1)." Behold the eagle of God flies sublimely to the vertex of heaven, but for the food of the flesh it is necessary that with wings repressed it sometimes descend, humbled to the depth. Whence also hear what he subjoins a little later: "And the Word, he says, was made flesh, and dwelt among us (Ibid.)."

This diversity, therefore, of humanity and divinity united to each other and unconfused, the bride says of the groom in the Canticles: "His belly," she says, "is as ivory, set with sapphires (Cant. 5)." Indeed, in the members of the human body, scarcely anything is found more fragile or more tender than the belly, and therefore by the belly is rightly understood the fragility of the assumed humanity in Christ; but ivory is the bone of the elephant, which animal is said to be most chaste and of a very cold nature. The groom's belly, therefore, is as ivory, because the assumed humanity of the Redeemer remained entirely chaste and inviolate from all contagion of sins. For He committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth (1 Pet. 2). Moreover, the sapphire is a stone having the color of a serene sky; whence it is also said in the vision of the Lord: "There was under His feet as it were a work of sapphire stone, and as heaven, when it is serene (Exod. 24)." By the sapphires, therefore, are understood the works of divinity, which the Lord showed in the flesh. The groom's belly, then, was set with sapphires, because Christ's humanity shone with divine virtues. Nor is it said to be full of sapphires, but set with them, so that namely between the sapphires the whiteness of the ivory might appear, because thus the Lord worked human things from the part of the assumed man, so that He nevertheless sometimes showed also divine things from the part of the deity. For to hunger, to thirst, to weep, and finally to be crucified and to die, were works of humanity; but to work miracles, and to raise not only others but Himself from the dead, were most evident signs of divinity. In this manner, therefore, blessed John distinguishes the groom's ivory belly with sapphires, while he sometimes opens the sacraments of divinity, and sometimes describes the infirmities of humanity.

Quia igitur hic beatus Joannes de Deo mirabiliter atque incomparabiliter caeteris mortalibus loquitur, jure factum est ut non solum a Graecis, sed etiam a Latinis undique Theologus appelletur. Theotocos Maria, quia Deum veraciter genuit; Theologus Joannes, quia Dei Verbum ante saecula apud Patrem esse et Deum esse non solum inenarrabiliter vidit, sed et profunda sublimitate descripsit. Unde non immerito potest dicere cum Propheta: «Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum (Psal. XLIV).» Recte igitur virgo Virgini ad obsequium traditur et pro Domino servus vice filii subrogatur, ut virginalis pudicitiae splendor ex utraque persona sibimet invicem congruat, et floridus intimi candoris aspectus quod in se virere considerat hoc vernare et in altero deprehendat.

Libet hic, fratres charissimi, pulchram varietatem divinae dispositionis coram charitate vestra perpendere, et egregios duos Redemptoris nostri discipulos qualiter inter se quadam dignitatis similitudine congruant comparare? Petrum videlicet, et Joannem. Commisit namque Dominus Petro claves Ecclesiae (Matth. XVI); voluit et beato Joanni custodiam Mariae delegare (Joan. XVI). Utraque nimirum mater, mater Maria, mater Ecclesia. Sed Maria mater Christi, Ecclesia mater populi Christiani. De Maria Christus carnem suscepit, Ecclesiam vero de lateris sui carne produxit. Ex ista prodiit secundum carnem natus, illam protulit carne jam mortuus. Ex ista voluit nasci, pro illa dignatus est mori. Ex una semel natus est in persona sua, ex altera nascuntur quotidie membra sua. Traxit ex altera quod pro altera moreretur, ut quo utraque communiter salvaretur. Magna igitur et felix mater et beata virgo Maria, ex cujus visceribus caro Christi desumpta est, ex qua rursus per aquam et sanguinem profluxit Ecclesia. Hoc itaque modo et ex Maria prodiisse videtur Ecclesia. Utraque tamen casta, utraque munda, utraque perpetuae virginitatis cingulo praemunita.

Harum itaque duarum matrum, duarum perpetuo virginum, alteram Dominus Petro committere, alteram Joanni voluit commendare, ut perpenso diligenter utriusque pondere ministerii, excellentium meritorum dignitas in duobus coeli senatoribus videatur aequari. Dicit Dominus Petro: «Tibi dabo claves regni coelorum (Matth. XVI).» Nunquid et beata Virgo, fratres mei, coelum non fuit, in cujus utero virginali novem mensibus tota divinitatis plenitudo permansit? Ex ipsius quippe castis mundisque visceribus, Dei Verbum, per quod facta sunt omnia, immaculata se carne vestivit.

Because therefore this blessed John speaks of God wonderfully and incomparably beyond other mortals, it is by right that he is called "the Theologian" everywhere, not only by the Greeks but also by the Latins. Mary is Theotocos because she truly brought forth God; John is the Theologian because he not only saw ineffably that the Word of God was with the Father before the ages and was God, but also described it with profound sublimity. Whence he can not undeservedly say with the Prophet: "My heart hath uttered a good word (Ps. 44)." Rightly, therefore, is a virgin delivered to a virgin for service, and in the place of the Lord a servant is substituted as a son, so that the splendor of virginal chastity might agree between each person respectively, and the flowery aspect of inward whiteness might perceive that what it considers to flourish in itself, this also blooms in the other.

It is pleasant here, most beloved brothers, to weigh the beautiful variety of the divine disposition, and to compare how two distinguished disciples of our Redeemer agree with each other in a certain similarity of dignity? Peter, namely, and John. For the Lord committed the keys of the Church to Peter (Matt. 16); He willed also to delegate the custody of Mary to blessed John (John 19). Each indeed is a mother: Mother Mary, Mother Church. But Mary is the mother of Christ, the Church the mother of the Christian people. From Mary Christ received flesh; but He produced the Church from the flesh of His side. From the former He came forth born according to the flesh; the latter He brought forth when already dead in the flesh. From the former He willed to be born; for the latter He deigned to die. From the one He was born once in His person; from the other His members are born daily. He drew from the former what He would die for the latter, so that by this both should be saved in common. Great therefore and happy mother and blessed virgin Mary, from whose bowels the flesh of Christ was taken, from which again through water and blood flowed the Church. In this manner, therefore, the Church also seems to have come forth from Mary. Yet both are chaste, both pure, both fortified with the belt of perpetual virginity.

Of these two mothers, therefore, of these two perpetual virgins, the Lord willed to commit one to Peter and to commend the other to John, so that, the weight of each ministry being carefully weighed, the dignity of excellent merits in these two senators of heaven might be seen to be equaled. The Lord says to Peter: "To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16)." Was not also the blessed Virgin, my brothers, a heaven, in whose virginal womb the whole fullness of divinity remained for nine months? For from her chaste and pure bowels, the Word of God, through which all things were made, clothed itself with immaculate flesh.

In angusto scilicet latebat alvo conclusus, sed totius orbis jura regebat immensus. In brevissimo, inquam, virginalis uteri domicilio constitutus, et coeli gubernabat imperium, et terrenorum omnium non amiserat principatum. Non ergo praesumptive coelum dicitur venerabilis virgo Maria: atque ideo beatum Joannem Dominus quodammodo coeli clavicularium esse constituit, cum beatae Genitricis suae eum decrevit esse custodem.

Proinde ut beato Petro Joannes multipliciter comparetur, cum discipulos suos Redemptor noster inquireret qua circa se opinione homines ducerentur, illique protinus respondissent: alii Joannem Baptistam, alii autem Eliam, alii vero Jeremiam, aut unum ex prophetis (Matth. XVI). Donec ad Petrum ventum est, nutabat assertio nec ambiguitatis vinculum solvebatur. At ubi quid habeat discipulorum sensus exigitur, praecedit in veritatis confessione qui primus erat in apostolica dignitate, Petrus videlicet: «Tu es, inquiens, Christus Filius Dei vivi (Ibid.).» Inter nutantis adhuc fidei sinuosa volumina, inter procellosas ambiguitatum fluctuantium tempestates piscator iste veritatis anchoram fixit, et naviculam fidei in tutissimo tranquilli portus gremio collocavit.

Sed videamus utrum Joannes et huic operi aliquam cum B. Petro similitudinem teneat. Constantissimae itaque praedicationis arguitur, sicque a Domitiano tunc Caesare in exsilium destinatur. Protinus haeretici Marcion, Cerinthus, Ebion, caeterique quamplurimi, quos ipse convenienter Antichristos appellat, caulas ecclesiastici gregis irrumpunt, et veluti lupi graves super ovilia pastoris adminiculo destituta grassantur, Christum scilicet ante Mariam non fuisse dogmatizantes, et ita simplicem evangelicae fidei puritatem perfidiae suae squaloribus corrumpentes. Confunditur mundus, turbatur Ecclesia, vacillat fides, et velut inhorrescente tempestate perfidiae plurimi naufragantur. Quid plura? Tandem perempto Domitiano, duce divina gratia, rediit Joannes Ephesum, turbatamque gemit Ecclesiam. Sed quidquid invenit erroris turbine atque tempestate turbatum, solidius atque robustius ad pristinae fidei revocat fundamentum. Nam rogatus, ut ab historiographis traditur, a charitate fere totius universalis Ecclesiae, in illud tandem erupit divinae inspirationis elogium: «In principio, inquiens, erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I).» Hoc itaque signaculo veritatis et haereticorum tergiversationis metam fixit et catholicorum fidem perpetua ex tunc et deinceps certitudine roborabit.

In a narrow womb, indeed, He lay enclosed, yet immense He ruled the laws of the whole world. Placed in the very brief domicile of the virginal womb, He both governed the empire of heaven and had not lost the principality of all earthly things. Not presumptively, therefore, is the venerable Virgin Mary called a heaven; and therefore the Lord constituted blessed John to be in a way a key-bearer of heaven, when He decreed him to be the guardian of His blessed Mother.

Furthermore, that John may be compared to blessed Peter in many ways, when our Redeemer asked His disciples what opinion men held concerning Him, and they immediately replied: some John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets (Matt. 16). Until it came to Peter, the assertion wavered nor was the bond of ambiguity loosed. But when what the sense of the disciples held was demanded, he who was first in apostolic dignity preceded in the confession of truth, namely Peter, saying: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God (Ibid.)." Amidst the sinuous volumes of a faith still wavering, amidst the tempestuous storms of fluctuating ambiguities, this fisherman fixed the anchor of truth, and placed the ship of faith in the most safe bosom of a tranquil port.

But let us see whether John also holds any similarity with blessed Peter in this work. He is convicted of most constant preaching, and thus is destined for exile by Domitian, then Caesar. Forthwith the heretics Marcion, Cerinthus, Ebion, and many others, whom he appropriately calls Antichrists, break into the folds of the ecclesiastical flock, and like heavy wolves they raven over the sheepfolds destitute of the shepherd's aid, dogmatizing that Christ was not before Mary, and thus corrupting the simple purity of the evangelical faith with the squalor of their perfidy. The world is confounded, the Church is disturbed, faith wavers, and as if in a bristling tempest of perfidy very many are shipwrecked. What more? Finally, Domitian being slain, John returned to Ephesus by the guidance of divine grace, and groaned over the disturbed Church. But whatever he found disturbed by the whirlwind and tempest of error, he recalled more solidly and robustly to the foundation of the ancient faith. For being asked, as is handed down by historians, by the charity of almost the entire universal Church, he finally burst forth into that elogium of divine inspiration: "In the beginning," he said, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1)." By this seal of truth, therefore, he both fixed the goal of the heretics' tergiversation and will henceforth and thereafter strengthen the faith of Catholics with perpetual certainty.

Petrus igitur petra: «Tu es, inquit, Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam (Matth. XVI).» Petra quoque factus est et Joannes, supra cujus fidei fundamentum totius Ecclesiae structura consurgit, quam videlicet, sive haereticorum furor impingat, sive tentationum irruat impetus non evertit. Haec petra veri David implet fundam, qua Philisthaeum Goliath signanter in fronte percutiat (I Reg. XVII), ubi videlicet crucis vexillum profanus et impius non habebat. Haec siquidem petra omnes ecclesiasticae doctrinae adversarios destruxit, haec Judaicam perfidiam cum omni prorsus haeretica pravitate prostravit. Nec mirum si instar Petri et Joannes petra dicatur, cum haec ad Ezechielem Dominus dicat: «Ecce dedi faciem tuam valentiorem faciebus eorum et frontem tuam duriorem frontibus eorum, ut adamantem et ut silicem dedi faciem tuam (Ezech. III).»

Plane quod uterque discipulus protulit de sacramento Dominicae fidei, quanquam profundissimum sit atque omnino divinum, et utrumque pari modo vires humanae mentis excedat, nec videatur in excellentiae dignitate diversum quod eodem est Spiritu dictante prolatum, illud tamen beati Joannis singularitatis locum sibi vindicare conspicitur, quia neque ante illum, neque post illum hoc idem scripsisse aliquis invenitur. Nam illam B. Petri apostoli sententiam, et Martham sororem Lazari eisdem fere verbis legimus protulisse. Cui nimirum cum Salvator diceret: «Omnis qui vivit et credit in me non morietur in aeternum (Joan. XI);» atque subjungeret: «Credis hoc?» illico eodem Spiritu, quo et Petrus, inspirante respondit: «Ego credidi, inquit, quia tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi, qui in hunc mundum venisti (Ibid.).»

Quid autem mirum, si Joannem de divinitate loquentem, beato Petro praeferimus, cum illud Evangelii sui singulare principium ipsa etiam verba Dominica, si dici liceat, excedere videamus? Nec injuria fit Redemptori nostro, si dicatur ipse sublimius aliquid depromere per discipulum quam per semetipsum, et per illius linguam manifeste proferre quod per semetipsum liquido noluit aperire. Nam, ut et hic quaedam adhuc inter eosdem beatos apostolos comparatio videatur, hoc beato Joanni Dominus concessit in verbis, quod et Petro contulit in miraculis, videlicet ut et iste altiora proferret et ille majoribus virtutum prodigiis coruscaret. In apostolorum enim Actibus invenimus quia in plateis ejiciebant infirmos, et ponebant in lectulis et grabbatis, ut, veniente Petro, saltem umbra illius obumbraret quemquam illorum et liberarentur ab infirmitatibus suis (Act. V); quod tamen Dominum fecisse nusquam legimus ut per umbram videlicet sui corporis remedium sanitatis alicui attulerit.

Peter, therefore, is the rock (petra): "Thou art Peter," He said, "and upon this rock I will build my Church (Matt. 16)." John also was made a rock, upon the foundation of whose faith the structure of the whole Church rises, which namely, whether the fury of heretics strikes it, or the impetus of temptations rushes upon it, does not overturn it. This rock fills the sling of the true David, with which he may significantly strike the Philistine Goliath on the forehead (1 Kings 17), where namely the profane and impious man did not have the banner of the cross. For this rock destroyed all adversaries of ecclesiastical doctrine, this prostrated Jewish perfidy with all heretical depravity. Nor is it a wonder if after the manner of Peter, John also is called a rock, since the Lord said these things to Ezekiel: "Behold, I have made thy face stronger than their faces, and thy forehead harder than their foreheads; as an adamant and as a flint I have made thy face (Ezek. 3)."

Clearly, what each disciple brought forth concerning the sacrament of the Lord's faith, although it be most profound and entirely divine, and in like manner exceeds the strength of the human mind, nor does it seem diverse in the dignity of excellence because it was brought forth by the dictation of the same Spirit, nevertheless that sentence of blessed John is seen to claim a place of singularity for itself, because neither before him nor after him is anyone found to have written this same thing. For that sentence of the blessed apostle Peter, we read that Martha, the sister of Lazarus, also brought forth in almost the same words. To whom indeed when the Savior said: "Everyone who lives and believes in me shall not die for ever (John 11);" and subjoined: "Believest thou this?" immediately by the inspiration of the same Spirit as Peter, she replied: "I have believed," she said, "that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world (Ibid.)."

But what wonder if we prefer John speaking of divinity to blessed Peter, since we see that unique beginning of his Gospel even exceed, if it be permitted to say so, the very words of the Lord? Nor is an injury done to our Redeemer if it be said that He Himself drew out something more sublime through the disciple than through Himself, and through the latter's tongue manifestly brought forth what through Himself He did not wish to open clearly. For, that some comparison might still be seen here between the same blessed apostles, the Lord granted this to blessed John in words, which He also conferred upon Peter in miracles, namely that the former should bring forth more lofty things and the latter should flash with greater wonders of virtues. For in the Acts of the Apostles we find that they cast out the sick into the streets, and placed them in beds and couches, that, when Peter came, at least his shadow might overshadow any of them and they might be delivered from their infirmities (Acts 5); which, however, we nowhere read that the Lord did, that namely through the shadow of His body He brought the remedy of health to anyone.

Sed quod praedixit exhibuit, quod promisit implevit. Nam in ejusdem Joannis Evangelio dicit: «Amen, amen dico vobis, qui credit in me, opera, quae ego facio, et ipse faciet, et majora horum faciet, quia ego ad Patrem meum vado (Joan. XIV).» Enimvero ipse operabatur in Petro, ipse locutus est in Joanne. «Non enim, inquit, vos estis, qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri, qui loquitur in vobis (Matth. X).»

Merito nempe beatus Joannes et praecedentes omnes ac subsequentes divinorum scriptores voluminum, gloria singularis praecedit eloquii, quem non luxuria polluit, non libido corrupit, sed virginalis integritas perpetuae incorruptionis titulo decoravit. Qui nimirum nuptialis copulae thalamum deserens, omnem illecebrae carnalis ardorem in coelestium deliciarum transtulit voluptatem, arctissimeque se in sui Redemptoris ac dilectoris amore conjunxit, propter quem scilicet conjugalis tori foedera abdicavit. Unde divinitus illi concessum est ut tanta cor ejus etiam circa fratres charitatis gratia repleretur, ut sacrosanctum pectoris ejus templum velut caminus quidam divini videretur incendii. Quod profecto in quibuslibet Scripturis ejus patenter agnoscitur, in quibus utique per omnem fere paginam, quasi per quasdam rimas, charitatis vapores effundere, charitatis videtur ardoribus aestuare. Modo enim patres nominatim ad charitatem provocat, modo non filios, sed filiolos, quasi tenere diligens appellat. Modo propriis aetatum vocabulis infantes. modo juvenes, modo sigillatim admonet adolescentes. Modo etiam mulieribus epistolas destinat, easque ad cautelam fidei et studium sincerae dilectionis invitat.

Sic itaque inenarrabili charitatis ardore succensus, huc illucque se vertens, undique circumiens, ubique discurrens omnia ad salutem hominum genera concitat, omnia aetatum incrementa perlustrat, omnes humanae conditionis ordines oculo curiosae sollicitudinis investigat, et tanquam Argus universalis Ecclesiae factus, totius humani generis summam, ulnis paternae dilectionis, amplectitur atque ad Redemptoris sui consortium trahere unumquemque sigillatim admonendo conatur. Amor quippe Domini, quo eum prae cunctis mortalibus dilexit et hoc ei pondus fraternae dilectionis exhibuit, ut nimirum plus amaret qui plus amabatur, et qui primus erat in Redemptoris amore praecipuus in fraterna fieret charitate.

But what He foretold He exhibited, what He promised He fulfilled. For in the Gospel of the same John He says: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do, because I go to the Father (John 14)." For He Himself worked in Peter, He Himself spoke in John. "For it is not you," He says, "who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you (Matt. 10)."

By right, indeed, a singular glory of eloquence precedes blessed John and all preceding and following writers of divine volumes, whom luxury did not pollute, nor lust corrupt, but virginal integrity decorated with the title of perpetual incorruption. He indeed, deserting the chamber of nuptial union, transferred all the heat of carnal allurement into the pleasure of heavenly delights, and joined himself most closely in the love of his Redeemer and lover, for whose sake namely he abdicated the pacts of the conjugal bed. Whence it was divinely granted to him that his heart should be so filled with the grace of charity even toward his brothers, that the most holy temple of his breast seemed like a certain furnace of divine fire. Which indeed is patently recognized in any of his Scriptures, in which through almost every page, as if through certain chinks, he seems to pour out the vapors of charity, and to glow with the heats of charity. For now he provokes the fathers by name to charity, now he calls them not sons, but little children, as if loving them tenderly. Now by the proper names of their ages he admonishes infants, now young men, now adolescents individually. Now also he destines epistles to women, and invites them to the caution of faith and the study of sincere love.

Thus, kindled with an ineffable heat of charity, turning himself hither and thither, going round everywhere, running about everywhere, he incites all kinds of men to salvation, traverses all increments of ages, investigates all orders of human condition with the eye of curious solicitude, and having become as it were the Argus of the universal Church, he embraces the sum of the whole human race with the arms of paternal love, and endeavors to draw each one individually to the fellowship of his Redeemer by admonishing them. For the love of the Lord, with which He loved him above all mortals, also exhibited to him this weight of fraternal love, so that namely he who was more loved should love more, and he who was first in the love of the Redeemer should become preeminent in fraternal charity.

Quantum autem apud Dominum impetrandi locum, quam praecipuae familiaritatis Joannes obtinuerit privilegium, hinc manifestius colligere possumus; quod idem beatus evangelista testatur, quia in ipso vitalis coenae convivio Jesus turbatus est spiritu, et protestatus est, et dixit: «Amen, amen dico vobis, quia unus ex vobis tradet me.» Deinde sequitur: «Aspiciebantergo ad invicem discipuli haesitantes, de quo diceret.» Moxque subjungit: «Erat ergo recumbens unus ex discipulis ejus in sinu Jesu, quem diligebat Jesus.» «Innuit ergo huic Simon Petrus, et dicit ei: Quis est de quo dicit?» Atque ut historiae stylo non tenear, Joanni mox interroganti Dominus respondit: «Ille est, cui ego intinctum panem porrexero (Joan. XIII).»

O mirabilem atque incomparabilem virum, et omni Christianae devotionis praeconio praeferendum! Ecce verbum profertur in medium, et totus tacet, ac sub silentii censura reprimitur senatus apostolorum; tanta siquidem magistri praesidentis videbatur auctoritas, ut sub districta se compesceret beata discipulorum concio disciplina. Haesitant, ambigunt, atque inter se invicem oculorum nutibus quodammodo interrogantes aspiciunt; verumtamen lingua proferre quod gestiunt, vel Dominum consulente inquirere non praesumunt. Tacet Petrus, tacet coeli clavicularius. Tacet denique lingua, quae clavis facta coelorum, coelum simul et terram ligat et solvit. Tacet is, inquam, cui portae inferri non praevalent, qui ligandi animas atque solvendi obtinet principatum (Matth. XVI). Silet Andreas, qui ipsi fratri ad fontem vitae praevius fuit (Joan. I). Non loquitur Thomas, qui viam se nescire professus, eumdem esse viam, veritatem et vitam, ipso referente, cognovit (Joan. XIV). Non praesumit os aperire Philippus, qui dum Patrem sibi poposcit ostendi, profunda mysteria individuae Trinitatis audivit (Ibid.). Omnes tacent, omnes dubitant, et latenter inquirunt, non quidem prolatione verborum, sed tantum nutibus oculorum.

Sed cum res diu sub hac ambiguitate penderet, nec nodum dubietatis quispiam absolveret, tandem Joannis patrocinium quaeritur, et sic ad rei dubiae notitiam pervenitur. Ille nimirum, condiscipulorum in se persona suscepta, consultor accedit, qui de ampliori familiaritatis, atque dilectionis praerogativa confidit.

Unde considerandum est, fratres mei, quantae devotionis instantia beati Joannis flagitare debemus auxilium, quem sibimet interventorem, et ipsi apostoli quaesierunt. Quantum apud justum judicem pro peccatoribus poterit, qui et pro ipsis coelestis curiae senatoribus intervenit? Et qui advocatus factus est summis, quam humiliter implorandus est a minimis? Hanc nimirum hominis eminentiam, hanc meritorum sublimium celsitudinem angelus ille cognovit, qui se ab illo adorari prohibuit.

How great a place of obtaining requests before the Lord, how great a privilege of special familiarity John obtained, we can gather more manifestly from this: which the same blessed evangelist testifies, because in that very banquet of the vital supper (John 13) Jesus was troubled in spirit, and protested, and said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, that one of you shall betray me." Then follows: "The disciples therefore looked one upon another, doubting of whom He spoke." And soon he subjoins: "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: "Who is it of whom He speaketh?" And lest I be held by the style of history, to John who soon questioned him the Lord replied: "He it is to whom I shall reach the bread dipped (John 13)."

O wonderful and incomparable man, and to be preferred above every heraldry of Christian devotion! Behold, the word is brought forth into the midst, and all are silent, and the senate of the apostles is repressed under the censorship of silence; for so great appeared the authority of the presiding master, that the blessed assembly of the disciples restrained itself under strict discipline. They hesitate, they doubt, and as it were questioning among themselves they look with nods of the eyes; yet they do not presume to bring forth with the tongue what they desire, or to inquire by consulting the Lord. Peter is silent, the key-bearer of heaven is silent. That tongue finally is silent, which, having been made the key of the heavens, binds and looses both heaven and earth at once. He is silent, I say, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail, who obtains the principality of binding and loosing souls (Matt. 16). Andrew is still, who was the forerunner to his brother to the fountain of life (John 1). Thomas does not speak, who, having professed that he did not know the way, recognized that He was the way, the truth, and the life, as He Himself related (John 14). Philip does not presume to open his mouth, who while he asked for the Father to be shown to him, heard the profound mysteries of the individual Trinity (Ibid.). All are silent, all doubt, and they inquire secretly, not indeed by the prolation of words, but only by the nods of the eyes.

But when the matter hung long under this ambiguity, nor did anyone loose the knot of doubt, at length John's patronage is sought, and thus knowledge of the doubtful thing is reached. He indeed, having taken upon himself the person of his fellow-disciples, approaches as a consultant, who trusts in the greater prerogative of familiarity and love.

Whence it should be considered, my brothers, with what instance of devotion we ought to flagitate the help of blessed John, whom the apostles themselves sought as an intercessor for them. How much will he be able to do before the just judge for sinners, who also intervened for the senators of the heavenly court themselves? And he who was made an advocate for the highest, how humbly must he be implored by the least? That angel indeed in the Apocalypse (Apoc. 22) knew this eminence of the man, this height of sublime merits, who prohibited himself from being adored by him.

«Vide, inquit, ne feceris; conservus enim tuus sum, et fratrum tuorum habentium testimonium Jesu, Deum adora (Apoc. XXVIII).» Refugit obsequium ab illo suscipere, quem noverat apud communem judicem locum gratiae familiariter obtinere. Noluit adoratorem, quem decernebat aequalem. Fratrem recognovit, socium judicavit, subjectionis obedientiam non accepit. Quamvis enim in omnibus sanctis semper sit angelicae munditiae contubernalis, et cognata virginitas; beatus tamen Joannes tanto reliquos virgines superat, quanto virginitati beatae Mariae per sedulitatis ac perpetuae custodiae meritum appropinquat. A qua sola videlicet praeceditur, quia fecunditas virginalis, quae est in Maria, nuliis est omnino meritis comparanda, et non solum quia fecundata est, sed quia Deifica. Virginem enim parere, novum ac singulare est; Deum vero parere, ita omnem novitatem singularitatis exsuperat, ita omnia quae miranda sunt antecedit, atque incomparabiliter supereminet, ut nec mente concipi, nec lingua valeat aliquatenus explicari. Sed sicut venerandae matris Domini virginitas, beati Joannis virginitatem excedit, sic ipse pro glorioso ejus contubernio caeteros a mundi primordio virgines antecellit.

Huc accedit, quod ille recubitus in pectore Salvatoris, ille divinus ardor, quem ex arcana ejus inspiratione concepit, ita in ejus visceribus omnium libidinum fomenta decoxit ut corpus ejus, tanquam revera Spiritus sancti templum, a cunctis vernaret aestuantis luxuriae squaloribus defaecatum; nec ullum in eo locum vindicabat flamma libidinis, cujus templum gratia sancti Spiritus jugiter obumbrabat. Quocirca dignum fuit ut beatus Joannes apostolus archangelo Gabrieli ad custodiam matris Domini socius haberetur, quatenus ille coelestis olim paranymphus intactam Virginem invisibiliter custodiret, et iste forinsecus fragilitati femineae obedientiae suae ministerium exhiberet. Et congruum erat ut quae talem genuit, qui coeli simul et terrae Dominus esset, utriusque patriae cives in suo consortio haberet; ut in ore duorum, vel trium testium staret omne verbum (Matth. XVIII; II Cor. XIII). Quapropter beatus Joannes quanto familiarior cum matre Verbi conversatur, tanto et ipsi vicinior Verbo invenitur. Et quoniam non ab alio, sed ab ipsa Veritate Mariae dictus est filius: «Mulier, enim inquit, ecce filius tuus;» atque idipsum reiterando confirmat, ad discipulum dicens: «Ecce mater tua (Joan. XIX),» nemo jure videtur major meritis eo, qui speciali quadam gloria frater est Salvatoris.

"See," he said, "thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus, adore God." He refused to receive service from him whom he knew familiarly to obtain a place of grace before the common judge. He did not want an adorer whom he decreed to be an equal. He recognized a brother, judged him a companion, and did not receive the obedience of subjection. For although in all the saints there is always a cognate virginity and companion of angelic purity, nevertheless blessed John so far surpasses other virgins as he approaches the virginity of blessed Mary through the merit of his diligence and perpetual custody. By whom alone he is preceded, because the virginal fecundity which is in Mary is not to be compared to any merits at all, and not only because she is fecund, but because she is Deific. For a virgin to bring forth is a new and unique thing; but for her to bring forth God so transcends every novelty of singularity, so precedes all things that are to be wondered at, and so incomparably exceeds them, that it can neither be conceived by the mind nor in any way explained by the tongue. But just as the virginity of the venerable Mother of the Lord exceeds the virginity of blessed John, so he himself, because of his glorious companionship with her, excels all other virgins from the beginning of the world.

To this is added that reclining upon the breast of the Savior, that divine heat which he conceived from His secret inspiration, so consumed the fuel of all lusts in his bowels that his body, as if truly a temple of the Holy Spirit, bloomed, purified from all the squalors of glowing luxury; nor did the flame of lust claim any place in him, whose temple the grace of the Holy Spirit continually overshadowed. Wherefore it was fitting that the blessed apostle John should be had as a companion to the archangel Gabriel for the custody of the Mother of the Lord, so that the former heavenly best man should invisibly guard the intact Virgin, and the latter should externally exhibit the ministry of his obedience to her feminine fragility. And it was congruous that she who brought forth such a one, who was Lord of heaven and earth at once, should have citizens of both countries in her company; that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might stand (Matt. 18; 2 Cor. 13). Wherefore blessed John, as much as he is more familiarly conversant with the Mother of the Word, so much also is he found nearer to the Word Himself. And since he was called the son of Mary not by another but by the Truth Himself: "Woman, behold thy son;" and by reiterating confirms this same thing, saying to the disciple: "Behold thy mother (John 19)," no one by right seems greater in merits than he who by a certain special glory is the brother of the Savior.

Hujus igitur tam sublimis, tam pii, tam casti, tamque praecellentissimi Deo dilecti, fratres charissimi, laboremus praecepta servare; per hujus vestigia, in quantum possumus, duce divina gratia studeamus incedere. Quod si omnes cum Joanne virginitatem habere jam in carne non possumus, quia post naufragium secunda restat tabula, studeamus florere virtutibus, et sic virginitatis amissae dispendium optime compensabimus. Non igitur nobis avaritiae ardor incandeat; non iracundiae nos furor impellat. Non in nobis flamma libidinis aestuet; non turpis cogitatio pulchram animae nostrae coram Deo speciem foedet. Non nos terrenae facultatis abundantia in superbiam erigat; non tenacitas misericordiae viscera pauperibus claudat. Vigeat in nobis perpetua castitas, humilitas, patientia, sobrietas, justitia cum pietate, severitas cum mansuetudine.

Inter haec, fratres charissimi, caeterarumque dona virtutum, charitas, quae mater est omnium, in sacrario pectoris nostri semper teneat principatum; quia, sicut Joannes dicit, «Deus charitas est (I Joan. IV);» ut quia per charitatem Dei Filius descendit in Virginem, per eam nos exaltet ad paternae gloriae claritatem, qui vivit et regnat in Trinitate perfecta, unus et verus Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo LXIV.

*DE SANCTO JOANNE APOSTOLO ET EVANGELISTA. (XXVI. DECEMB.).*

Gaudemus, fratres charissimi, copiosum vestrae fraternitatis adesse conventum, quia dum nos ad hodiernam festivitatem, B. Joannis gloria provocat, etiam Spiritus sanctus, ut tam reverenter, tam pacifice, tam devote conveniatis, indubitanter inspirat. Dignum quippe est, ut qui a Christo prae cunctis mortalibus specialiter est dilectus, a Christi quoque dilectoribus permaxime diligatur, praesertim cum et ipse circa nos tantae charitatis exstiterit, ut divinitus sibi traditis sapientiae et scientiae clavibus, omnes sacramentorum coelestium thesauros expanderet, et aeternae vitae divitias, quas solus acceperat, nobiscum participando largiter ac fideliter erogaret. Quid enim divinae sapientiae quaeris, quod apud Joannem reperire non possis? Quae enim haeretica pravitas, quae Ariana perfidia, quae Judaeorum vesana calumnia, quae gentilium philosophorum versutia, quae denique schismaticorum abominanda scissura, beatis Joannis non est eloquio superata, ejusque doctrina evidenter attrita? Si quando enim ab inimicis veritatis objiciuntur nobis volumina quaestionum, illico Joannes accedit in medium, Joannes occurrit, Joannes silentium verbosis imponit.

Let us labor, therefore, most beloved brothers, to keep the precepts of one so sublime, so pious, so chaste, and so most excellently beloved by God; let us study to walk in his footsteps as much as we can, under the guidance of divine grace. For if all of us cannot now have virginity with John in the flesh, because after shipwreck a second plank remains, let us study to flourish in virtues, and thus we shall best compensate the loss of lost virginity. Let not the heat of avarice glow in us; let not the fury of anger impel us. Let not the flame of lust glow in us; let not an evil thought defile the beautiful appearance of our soul before God. Let not the abundance of earthly faculty lift us up in pride; let not tenacity close the bowels of mercy to the poor. Let perpetual chastity, humility, patience, sobriety, justice with piety, severity with mildness, flourish in us.

Among these gifts and the other virtues, most beloved brothers, charity, which is the mother of all, should always hold the primacy in the sanctuary of our breast; because, as John says, "God is charity (1 John 4);" so that because through charity the Son of God descended into the Virgin, through it He may exalt us to the brightness of paternal glory, He who lives and reigns in perfect Trinity, one and true God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Sermon LXIV.

*ON SAINT JOHN THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST. (DECEMBER 26).*

We rejoice, most beloved brothers, that a copious gathering of your fraternity is present, because while the glory of Blessed John provokes us to today's festivity, the Holy Spirit also undoubtedly inspires you to gather so reverently, so peacefully, and so devotedly. Indeed, it is worthy that he who was specially loved by Christ above all mortals should also be most greatly loved by those who love Christ, especially since he himself has stood with such charity toward us that, with the keys of wisdom and knowledge delivered to him from heaven, he expanded all the treasures of the heavenly sacraments, and by sharing with us the riches of eternal life which he alone had received, he generously and faithfully distributed them. For what of divine wisdom do you seek that you cannot find in John? For what heretical depravity, what Arian perfidy, what insane calumny of the Jews, what cunning of the Gentile philosophers, what finally abominable schism of the schismatics has not been overcome by the eloquence of Blessed John, and evidently crushed by his doctrine? For if ever volumes of questions are thrown at us by the enemies of truth, immediately John comes into the midst, John runs to meet them, John imposes silence on the wordy.

Quoties siquidem de vera humanitate, ac divinitate Christi certamen quaestionis oboritur, quae videlicet omnibus pacis inimicis communis est materia dimicandi, protinus ad Joannis Evangelium curritur, Joannis in pugna patrocinium quaeritur, et sic mox cuncta litigiosi certaminis jurgia conquiescunt.

Quid igitur necessarium in doctrinis, quod Joannis volumina sacrosancta non teneant? Quid in virtutibus, quid in meritis quo beatissimus incomparabiliter non excellat? Apostolus siquidem in Epistolis, evangelista in Evangelio, propheta in Apocalypsi. Propheta, inquam, et non qualiscunque, sed mirabilis atque ad similitudinem alterius Joannis, plusquam propheta. Nam quia prophetae officium est futura praedicere, non praesentia demonstrare, beatus Joannes Baptista idcirco caeteris prophetis enituit, quia Dominum digito, quem prophetabat, ostendit (Joan. I). Nunquid et iste Joannes plusquam propheta noster est, qui praeter omnium consuetudinem prophetarum, semetipsum conspexit in spiritu, et inter plurima revelationum coelestium sacramenta, dum aquilae volantis similitudinem vidit, semetipsum veraciter recognovit? Ezechiel autem eamdem aquilam spiritu revelante conspexit (Ezech. I), non quidem volantem, sed caeteris animalibus desuper eminentem. Cum quo videlicet propheta beatus Joannes considerato utriusque volumine, in multis non ambigitur concordare. Cum eo nimirum et librum, qui quasi mel, dulcis erat, in ore comedit, et sanctuarii loca describit (Apoc. X), atque in pluribus aliis propheta cum apostolo consonanter incedit.

O quam admirabilis est mutatio dexterae Excelsi! (Psal. LXXVI.) O quam terribilis Dominus in consiliis super filios hominum! (Psal. LXV.) Quis enim digne consideret, de quanta humilitate iste piscator ad quantae celsitudinis culmen meruerit sublimari? Enimvero qui olim vili navicula contentus, et retibus maris profunda simpliciter scrutabatur, nunc illustratae mentis radio secreta coelestia penetrat, mysteria intonat, divini consilii occulta hominibus revelat, prophetica depromit oracula, apostolica tradit hominibus documenta: imo in speculanda summae divinitatis essentia praecedit prophetas supergreditur patriarchas, apostolos superat. Postremo totius humanitatis transcendit ingenia, et illuc usque mentis aciem tendit, quo vix et angelica valet attingere creatura. O Dei plene gratia! «Pax enim Dei, sicut Apostolus, exsuperat omnem sensum (Philip. IV)» ut illud sponsae dicere non immerito videatur: «Introduxit me rex in cella vinaria, exsultabimus et laetabimur in te (Cant. I).»

Whenever a struggle of question arises concerning the true humanity and divinity of Christ, which is clearly a common matter of fighting for all enemies of peace, immediately one runs to John's Gospel, John's patronage is sought in the fight, and thus soon all the quarrels of the contentious struggle fall silent.

What, therefore, is necessary in doctrines that the sacrosanct volumes of John do not hold? What in virtues, what in merits in which the most blessed one does not incomparably excel? For he is an Apostle in his Epistles, an Evangelist in the Gospel, a prophet in the Apocalypse. A prophet, I say, and not just any kind, but a wonderful one and, in the likeness of the other John, more than a prophet. For because the office of a prophet is to predict future things, not to demonstrate present ones, Blessed John the Baptist therefore shone forth above other prophets because he showed with his finger the Lord whom he was prophesying (John 1). Is not this John also more than a prophet, who beyond the custom of all prophets, beheld himself in the spirit, and among many sacraments of heavenly revelations, while he saw the likeness of a flying eagle, he truly recognized himself? But Ezekiel beheld the same eagle by the revealing spirit (Ezek. 1), not indeed flying, but eminent above the other animals. With which prophet, clearly, Blessed John, having considered the volume of each, is not doubted to agree in many things. With him, doubtless, he also ate in his mouth the book which was sweet like honey, and describes the places of the sanctuary (Apoc. 10), and in many other things the prophet walks consonantly with the apostle.

O how admirable is the change of the right hand of the Most High! (Ps. 76.) O how terrible is the Lord in His counsels over the sons of men! (Ps. 65.) For who could worthily consider from how great humility this fisherman deserved to be sublimated to the summit of such height? Indeed, he who once was content with a vile little boat and simply searched the depths of the sea with nets, now penetrates heavenly secrets with the ray of an enlightened mind, thunders mysteries, reveals the hidden things of the divine counsel to men, brings forth prophetic oracles, and delivers apostolic teachings to men: indeed, in speculating on the essence of the supreme divinity, he precedes the prophets, surpasses the patriarchs, and overcomes the apostles. Finally, he transcends the wits of all humanity, and stretches the edge of his mind as far as an angelic creature can scarcely reach. O full of the grace of God! "For the peace of God," as the Apostle says, "surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4)," so that he may not undeservedly seem to say that of the spouse: "The king introduced me into the wine cellar; we will exult and rejoice in you (Cant. 1)."

Pensemus itaque, fratres, quantum ab eo, qui nunc est, homo iste tunc differebat, quando matre interveniente rogabat, ut ipsum cum fratre Domini, alterum a dextris, alterum sedere concederet a sinistris. Nam quantum ad verba, hoc petere visus est, ut ex eis unum Dominus cum dextris eligeret, alterum a sinistris cum peccatoribus reprobaret. Sed quia insipienter petiit, repulsam patiens, illico cum filiis, quod merebatur, audivit: «Nescitis, inquit, quid petatis. Potestis bibere calicem, quem ego bibiturus sum?» Respondentibus autem: «Possumus,» praesto subjungit: «Calicem quidem meum bibetis, sedere autem ad dexteram et ad sinistram non est meum dare vobis (Matth. XX).»

Ecce hic in verbis Dominicis patenter ostenditur, quia Joannes et martyr fuit, dum constat, quia Domini calicem biberit. Et revera martyr fuit, quia multa pro Domino persecutionum supplicia pertulit. Martyr itaque fuit, quia crucem Domini per sui corporis afflictionem, et proximorum errantium compassionem diu vivendo portavit: et quo caeteris apostolis in carne prolixius mansit; eo durioris martyrii tormenta sustinuit. Unde pie credendum est quod inter centum illa quadraginta quatuor millia virginum, qui habent nomen Agni, et nomen Patris ejus scriptum in frontibus suis, qui empti sunt de terra, et cantant canticum novum ante sedem Dei et Agni, hic B. Joannes egregius sit et insignis; atque cum his omnibus tanto propinquior Agnum quocunque ierit (Apoc. XIII) sequitur, quanto et eidem Agno dilectior ac familiarior exstitit, et insuper matri ejus, quae Virgo est virginum, perpetua filii subjectione conjunxit. Nam ex utriusque, matris videlicet, filiique consortio, Joannis virginitas excellenter enituit, et quousque humana possunt merita provehi, quasi meta virtutum factus indesinenter excrevit.

Neque enim illa verba, quae Salvator noster in cruce positus protulit, «Mulier, inquiens, ecce filius tuus,» ad discipulum autem: «Ecce mater tua (Joan. XIX),» sic simpliciter sunt accipienda ut humano tantum videantur more prolata, sed prorsus efficacia sunt, et divinis virtutibus fulta atque inevitabili Veritatis auctoritate subnixa. Illud enim unicum Patris Verbum, quod in cruce pendebat, substantivum, et consubstantiale Patri ac sempiternum est, atque idcirco verba quae locutus est, quia Spiritus et vita sunt, inaniter transire non potuerunt: «Coelum, inquit ipse pius Jesus, et terra transibunt, verba autem mea non transibunt (Matth. XXIV; Marc. XIII).» Sicut enim dixit matri: «Hic est filius tuus (Joan. XIX),» ita dixit discipulis: «Hoc est corpus meum (Matth. XXVI; Luc. XXII).» Et tantus fuit in illis verbis effectus ut illico panis ille quem dabat Dominicum fieret corpus.

Let us therefore consider, brothers, how much this man then differed from what he is now, when, with his mother intervening, he asked that the Lord grant that he with his brother should sit, one on the right and the other on the left. For as far as the words go, he seemed to ask this: that the Lord choose one from them on the right, and reprove the other on the left with the sinners. But because he asked foolishly, suffering a repulse, he immediately heard with his sons what he deserved: "You do not know," He said, "what you ask. Can you drink the cup which I am about to drink?" And to those responding, "We can," he promptly subjoins: "You shall indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to give to you (Matt. 20)."

Behold here in the words of the Lord it is clearly shown that John was also a martyr, since it is certain that he drank the cup of the Lord. And he was truly a martyr, because he endured many punishments of persecutions for the Lord. He was a martyr, therefore, because he carried the cross of the Lord through the affliction of his own body and the compassion for his straying neighbors by living for a long time: and as he remained in the flesh longer than the other apostles, so he sustained the torments of a harder martyrdom. Whence it is piously to be believed that among those one hundred forty-four thousand virgins who have the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads, who were bought from the earth and sing a new song before the throne of God and the Lamb, this Blessed John is distinguished and remarkable; and with all these he follows the Lamb wherever He goes (Apoc. 13) all the more closely as he stood more beloved and familiar to the same Lamb, and moreover joined himself to His mother, who is the Virgin of virgins, in perpetual subjection as a son. For from the consort of both, namely the mother and the Son, John's virginity shone forth excellently, and as far as human merits can be advanced, having become as it were the goal of virtues, he increased without ceasing.

Nor indeed are those words, which our Savior uttered while placed on the cross, saying, "Woman, behold your son," and to the disciple, "Behold your mother (John 19)," to be taken so simply as if they seemed uttered only in human fashion, but they are altogether effective, supported by divine virtues and sustained by the inevitable authority of Truth. For that unique Word of the Father, who was hanging on the cross, is substantive and consubstantial with the Father and everlasting, and therefore the words which He spoke, because they are Spirit and life, could not pass away in vain: "Heaven," said the pious Jesus Himself, "and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matt. 24; Mark 13)." For just as He said to the mother, "This is your son (John 19)," so He said to the disciples, "This is my body (Matt. 26; Luke 22)." And so great was the effect in those words that immediately that bread which He gave became the Lord's body.

Dixit enim, et omnia facta sunt; mandavit, et creata sunt (Psal. CXLVIII). Ex quadam itaque similitudine, si dicere audeamus, et B. Joannes non solum filii potitus est nomine, sed propter verba illa Dominica, quoddam majus necessitudinis sacramentum apud beatam Virginem meruit obtinere.

Consideremus itaque, dilectissimi, quantae gloriae magnus vir iste credendus est, qui per quoddam adoptionis arcanae mysterium et filius Virginis et frater est Salvatoris. Hinc est quod mentem ejus omnipotens Deus ad tantum puritatis ac mysticae revelationis culmen evexit ut ei non modo statum Ecclesiae praesentis ostenderet, sed etiam quid deinceps futurum esset usque in perpetuum revelaret. Unde et illam nobilem suam scripsit Apocalypsim, quae nimirum tantis cognoscitur redundare mysteriis ut tot videatur habere sacramenta quot verba, imo in verbis singulis multiplices lateant intellectus.

Quae profecto cum septem Asiae Ecclesiis mittitur, omni universali Ecclesiae, quae sub septiformi Spiritus sancti regitur magisterio, destinatur. Unde consequens est ut omnes Ecclesiae per orbem terrarum circumquaque diffusae non dubitent B. Joannem communem se habere doctorem. Quibus videlicet tanquam egregius quidam regalis imperii nuntius, ab Jesu Christo, qui est testis fidelis, primogenitus vivorum et mortuorum, et princeps regum terrae coelitus destinatus, gratiam simul et pacem ab eo qui est, et qui erat, et qui venturus est, attulit et multa secreti coelestis mysteria patefecit.

Jam vero illa beatae migrationis ejus novitas mirabilis quem non moveat? Quis felicissimae consummationis gloriam non obstupescat? Quia enim mirabiliter vixit, mirabiliter obiit; et quia non communem cum hominibus vitam duxit, non communi hominum morte transivit. Nam, ut historiae continent, quadratam in Ecclesia fieri foveam jussit, moxque in eam descendens extensis manibus post prolixa fusae orationis verba migravit. Mox autem tanta super eum lux coelitus est emissa ut nullus eam ferret affectus. Postmodum vero inventa est fovea nihil aliud in se continens, nisi manna, quod videlicet, sicut dicitur, usque hodie scaturire non desinit.

Sic nimirum, sic dilectum auctori vitae discipulum transire de saeculo dignum fuit, ut tam fieret a dolore mortis extraneus quam a corruptione carnis fuerat alienus. In sepultura in crucis modum jacere voluit, quia crucem jugiter vivendo portavit, et sicut Petrus Magistrum secutus est, a persecutoribus crucifixus, ita quodammodo et Joannes in ecclesiastica pace sepultus.

For He spoke, and all things were made; He commanded, and they were created (Ps. 148). From a certain likeness, therefore, if we may dare to say so, Blessed John not only obtained the name of son, but on account of those words of the Lord, he deserved to obtain a certain greater sacrament of necessity with the Blessed Virgin.

Let us therefore consider, most beloved, of how great glory this great man is to be believed, who through a certain mystery of hidden adoption is both the son of the Virgin and the brother of the Savior. Hence it is that almighty God raised his mind to such a peak of purity and mystical revelation that He showed him not only the state of the present Church, but also revealed what would follow henceforth for ever. Whence he also wrote that noble Apocalypse of his, which indeed is known to overflow with such great mysteries that it seems to have as many sacraments as words; indeed, multiple understandings lie hidden in individual words.

Which truly is sent to the seven Churches of Asia, and is destined for the whole universal Church, which is ruled under the sevenfold magisterium of the Holy Spirit. Whence it follows that all Churches throughout the whole world diffused all around do not doubt that they have Blessed John as a common teacher. To whom, clearly, as a certain distinguished messenger of the royal empire, destined from heaven by Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the living and the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, he brought grace and peace together from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and laid open many mysteries of the heavenly secret.

Now truly, whom would that marvelous novelty of his blessed migration not move? Who would not be struck with awe at the glory of his most happy consummation? For because he lived wonderfully, he died wonderfully; and because he did not lead a common life with men, he did not pass away by the common death of men. For, as the histories contain, he commanded a square pit to be made in the Church, and soon descending into it with extended hands, after the words of a long prayer had been poured out, he migrated. But soon so great a light was emitted over him from heaven that no sense could bear it. Afterward, truly, the pit was found containing nothing else in itself but manna, which clearly, as it is said, does not cease to spring forth even unto this day.

Thus indeed, thus it was worthy for the disciple beloved by the Author of life to pass from the world, so that he might become as foreign to the pain of death as he had been alien to the corruption of the flesh. In burial he wished to lie in the manner of a cross, because he carried the cross continually by living, and just as Peter followed the Master, being crucified by persecutors, so in a certain way John was buried in ecclesiastical peace.

Sed Dominus inter eos fore diversitatem docuit, cum dixit Petro: «Sic eum volo manere donec veniam. Quid ad te? Tu me sequere (Joan. XXI).» Qui enim Petrum voluit secum in crucis patibulo triumphare, ipse decrevit Joannem in ecclesiastica pace quiescere, quatenus et ille subeundi martyrii caeteris praeberet exemplum, et iste erecta supra fundamentum fidei Ecclesiae fabrica quietus migraret ad coelum; ille secuturis martyribus esset constantiae forma, iste noviter in fide plantatis esset morum atque virtutum spiritualium disciplina.

«Sic eum volo manere donec veniam.» Veniam, inquit, ut eum vinculo carnis absolvam. Veniam, ut eum ad gloriae meae consortium transferam. Veniam, ut laboribus ejus dignae remunerationis praemium reddam. Ad hujus denique promissionis effectum clarum dedit indicium, cum in ejus obitu radiantem fecit enitescere lucem, per quam videlicet liquido patuit ipsum coelitus advenisse lucis auctorem. Affuit itaque Dominus promissionis suae non immemor, qui et animam ejus in illa supernae Hierusalem quiete susciperet et sacratissimum corpus in ea, quae ipse novit, secreti recessus arcana transferret. Nam et de B. Enoch legitur quia ambulaverit cum Deo, et non inveniebatur, quia transtulit illum Deus (Gen. V).

Jam vero illud quis digne miretur quod in sepulcro ejus manna reperitur et in terrae specu panis coeli non semel, sed quotidie nascitur? De manna quippe, salvo altiori mysterio, scriptum est: «Panem de coelo dedisti eis, Domine, habentem omne delectamentum (Sap. XVI).» Veniant igitur omnes nationes gentium, et obstupescant miraculum omnibus ubique saeculis inauditum. Veniant, inquam, et admirantes aspiciant quia in sepulcro, quod procul dubio domus est vermium, panis nascitur angelorum, adeo ut cum Propheta in magni muneris admiratione pronuntiet quod Israelitico populo manna Deus concessit in cibum, dicens: «Panem coeli dedit eis; panem angelorum manducavit homo (Psal. LXXVII);» quod illis tunc mittebatur e coelo, nunc scaturire conspicitur e sepulcro. Si enim magnum in terra miraculum manna non esset, nequaquam Moysi Dominus servari per saecula illud praecepisset: «Imple, inquit, Gomor ex eo, et custodiatur in futuras retro generationes, ut noverint panem quo alui eos in solitudine, quando eduxi eos de terra Aegypti (Exod. XVI).» Ecce quid meretur pudicitia virginalis. Ecce quantae magnitudinis est inviolatae carnis integritas. Videte, fratres mei, considerate, perpendite, quid deliciarum incorruptio carnis habeat in coelo, si cibum coeli germinat in sepulcro. Quantis illic honoribus sublimatur beata virginitas, ubi nimirum sola est gloria, si et in loco fetoris atque putredinis tam mirabiliter est gloriosa.

But the Lord taught that there would be a diversity between them, when He said to Peter: "So I will him to remain until I come. What is that to you? You follow me (John 21)." For He who wished Peter to triumph with Him on the gibbet of the cross, Himself decreed that John should rest in ecclesiastical peace, so that both the former might provide an example of undergoing martyrdom to the others, and the latter might migrate quietly to heaven, the building of the Church having been raised upon the foundation of faith; the former would be a form of constancy for the martyrs to follow, and the latter would be a discipline of morals and spiritual virtues for those newly planted in the faith.

"So I will him to remain until I come." I will come, He says, to absolve him from the bond of the flesh. I will come, to transfer him to the consort of my glory. I will come, to return the reward of worthy remuneration for his labors. Finally, He gave a clear sign for the effect of this promise, when at his death He caused a radiant light to shine forth, through which it clearly appeared that the Author of light Himself had arrived from heaven. The Lord was present, therefore, not unmindful of His promise, both to receive his soul in that quiet of the supernal Jerusalem and to transfer his most sacred body into the hidden recesses of the secret, which He Himself knows. For it is also read of Blessed Enoch that he walked with God, and was not found, because God translated him (Gen. 5).

Now truly, who could worthily wonder at that, that in his tomb manna is found, and in a pit of the earth the bread of heaven is born not once, but daily? For concerning manna, saving a deeper mystery, it is written: "You gave them bread from heaven, O Lord, having every delight (Wis. 16)." Let all the nations of the Gentiles come, therefore, and be struck with awe at a miracle unheard of in all ages everywhere. Let them come, I say, and admiring let them behold that in a tomb, which is without doubt a house of worms, the bread of angels is born, so that as the Prophet pronounces in admiration of a great gift that God granted manna as food to the Israelite people, saying: "He gave them the bread of heaven; man ate the bread of angels (Ps. 77);" what was then sent to them from heaven, is now seen to spring forth from a tomb. For if manna were not a great miracle on earth, by no means would the Lord have commanded it to be preserved through the ages by Moses: "Fill," He said, "an omer with it, and let it be kept for future generations to come, that they may know the bread with which I fed them in the solitude, when I led them out of the land of Egypt (Exod. 16)." Behold what virginal modesty deserves. Behold of how great magnitude is the integrity of inviolate flesh. See, my brothers, consider, weigh, what delights the incorruption of the flesh has in heaven, if it germinates the food of heaven in a tomb. With how great honors is blessed virginity sublimated there, where indeed there is glory alone, if even in a place of stench and putrefaction it is so wonderfully glorious.

Unde et si non audeamus pleniter definire, pium tamen est arbitrari ut sicut de beata Dei Genitrice creditur, ita etiam B. Joannes jam resurrexisse probabiliter asseratur, quatenus sicut in virginea fuerunt integritate participes, ita nihilominus et in anticipata resurrectione merito videantur aequales; nec sit in resurrectione diversitas quibus tanta fuerat unanimitas conversationis in vita. Si enim beatissimi virgines isti, Joannes videlicet et Maria, nullatenus surrexissent, cur in eorum tumulis sepulta cadavera non jacerent, cum scilicet BB. Petri et Pauli caeterorumque apostolorum et martyrum corpora suis quaeque noscantur mausoleis tumulata? Nam quod vere B. Joannes obierit ac procul dubio mortis jura persolverit, nullo modo melius quam per ejus verba valet probari. Cum enim exisset sermo inter fratres, quod discipulus ille non moritur, cur ipse vera dicentibus obviasset, dicens: «Et non dixit Jesus: Non moritur (Joan. XXI).» Frustra nimirum hic moram texere ac verba multiplicare videretur, si dum illi vera dicerent: «Non moritur;» iste protinus obstitisset, dicens: «Non dixit Jesus: Non moritur,» ac per hoc veritati quodammodo contradiceret, etsi verba referentibus contrairet. Sed, dum se non moriturum Salvatorem dixisse negavit, moriturum se indubitanter asseruit.

Porro autem sive resurrexisset, sive non resurrexisset, quod in sepulcro sanctum corpus ejus ulterius non apparuit divinae sine dubio virtutis operatio fuit. Scriptum est in Deuteronomio: «Mortuus est Moyses famulus Domini in terra Moab jubente Domino, et sepelivit eum in valle terrae Moab contra Phogor, et non cognovit homo sepulcrum ejus usque in praesentem diem (Deut. XXXIV).» Renovatum est itaque illud de corpore Moysi nunc etiam in Joanne miraculum; et qui legislatorem tunc dignatus est nullis scientibus sepelire, ipse etiam corpus evangelistae sui secreto quodam mysterio voluit sepulturae subducere. Uterque scilicet lux mundi, uterque mandatorum coelestium bajulus, uterque divini consilii revelator. Nec immerito in dignitate suis delata cadaveribus congruunt qui et in sublimibus vitae suae meritis, diversis licet temporibus, concorditer claruerunt.

Verum si res diligenti consideratione perpenditur, ut cum beati Moysi pace loquar, Joannes potior invenitur. Ille siquidem minister exstitit legis, hic praedicator exstitit gratiae. Ille praecepta tradidit quibus peccata punirentur, iste poenitentiae baptismum contulit, quo omnia crimina delerentur. Ille annuntiator est umbrae, hic minister est veritatis. Ille dixit Domino: «Si inveni gratiam in conspectu tuo, ostende mihi faciem tuam, ut sciam te;» sed protinus audivit: «Non poteris videre faciem meam; non enim videbit me homo, et vivet (Exod. XXXIII);»

Whence even if we do not dare fully to define it, it is yet pious to think that just as it is believed of the Blessed Mother of God, so also Blessed John may probably be asserted to have already risen, so that as they were participants in virginal integrity, so nevertheless they may deservedly seem equal in anticipated resurrection; nor let there be a diversity in resurrection for those for whom there was such unanimity of conduct in life. For if those most blessed virgins, namely John and Mary, had by no means risen, why would their buried corpses not lie in their tombs, when clearly the bodies of Blessed Peter and Paul and the other apostles and martyrs are known to be entombed each in their own mausoleums? For that Blessed John truly died and without doubt paid the laws of death, can be proved by no means better than through his own words. For when the word had gone out among the brothers that that disciple would not die, why would he himself have met those telling the truth, saying: "And Jesus did not say: He does not die (John 21)." Indeed, he would seem to weave a delay here and multiply words in vain, if while they said the truth: "He does not die;" he had immediately resisted, saying: "Jesus did not say: He does not die," and by this he would in a certain way contradict the truth, even if he were to go against those reporting the words. But, while he denied that the Savior had said he would not die, he indubitably asserted that he would die.

Furthermore, whether he had risen or had not risen, that his holy body no longer appeared in the tomb was without doubt an operation of divine virtue. It is written in Deuteronomy: "Moses the servant of the Lord died in the land of Moab at the command of the Lord, and He buried him in the valley of the land of Moab over against Beth-peor, and no man knew his tomb until this present day (Deut. 34)." That miracle concerning the body of Moses is therefore renewed now also in John; and He who then deigned to bury the lawgiver with no one knowing, Himself also wished to withdraw the body of His evangelist from burial by a certain secret mystery. Each is clearly a light of the world, each a bearer of heavenly commands, each a revealer of the divine counsel. Nor undeservedly do they agree in the dignity deferred to their corpses, who also shone concordantly in the sublime merits of their lives, although at different times.

But if the matter is weighed with diligent consideration, to speak with the peace of Blessed Moses, John is found to be more powerful. For the former stood as a minister of the law, the latter as a preacher of grace. The former delivered precepts by which sins were punished, the latter conferred the baptism of penance by which all crimes were deleted. The former is the announcer of the shadow, the latter the minister of the truth. The former said to the Lord: "If I have found grace in your sight, show me your face, that I may know you;" but he immediately heard: "You will not be able to see my face; for no man shall see me and live (Exod. 33);"

iste vero Deum incarnatum non solum vidit et audivit, sed etiam manibus contrectavit, sicut ipse testatur, dicens: «Quod fuit, inquit, ab initio, quod vidimus, quod audivimus, quod oculis nostris perspeximus, et manus nostrae contrectaverunt de verbo vitae, et vidimus et testamur, et annuntiamus vobis vitam aeternam quae erat apud Patrem, et apparuit nobis (Joan. I).» Et non solum Deum hominem factum oculis carnalibus vidit, sed et ipsum Verbum, quod erat apud Patrem, per quod facta sunt omnia (Joan. I), illustrata divinitus mente conspexit.

Atque ut adhuc comparatio producatur, Moyses tabernaculo praeerat quod nubes operiebat, ita ut aliquando nec ipse Moyses posset intrare, sicut in Exodo legitur: «Quia operuit nubes tabernaculum testimonii, et gloria Domini implevit illud (Exod. XL),» nec poterat Moyses ingredi tectum foederis, nube operiente omnia, Joannes vero melioris tabernaculi custos factus, B. Mariae minister exstitit, quam non videlicet corporea hujus aeris nubes obtexit, sed Spiritus sanctus invisibiliter obumbravit. Et gloria Domini, hoc est Filius Dei, qui hoc tabernaculum, non mox discessurus, sed veram carnem suscepturus implevit, non mansit sub aereae caligine nubis, sed potius in lumine solis, sicut per Prophetam dicitur: «In sole posuit tabernaculum suum (Psal. XVIII).» Per illum manna datum est tunc Israelitico populo; ecce quanto gloriosius habet iste manna etiam in sepulcro. Et quid plura? Ille faciem suam obnubuit, ne videatur a populo (Exod. XXXIV): iste etiam divinitatis revelat essentiam, ut Deus ab omnibus agnoscatur (Joan. I). Atque ut idem repetam, ille splendorem sui vultus obtexit, ne ab illa plebe conspiceretur; iste Dei Verbum, quod est imago Patris, splendor gloriae et figura substantiae ejus (Hebr. I), perspicue revelavit, ut a nobis agnosceretur.

Postremo Dei Filium, quem iste prae manibus habuit, cum quo diutissime conversatus est, a quo unice et specialiter dilectus, ille quidem obnixe ac desiderabiliter petiit, dicens: «Obsecro, Domine, mitte quem missurus es (Exod. IV);» sed impetrare non valuit. Verumtamen dum magnis summisque apud Deum meritis ambo claruissent, uno uterque spiritu plenus fuit, uno uterque Redemptoris desiderio concorditer aestuabat. Nec nos alterum alteri praeferre praesumimus, si diversitatem pro sui cujusque dignitate pensamus. Duorum quippe viatorum nulla oculorum vivacitate disparium qui orto sole graditur clarius quaelibet opposita conspicit quam is qui antelucanus exsurgit. Et ditior est, qui autumnalem fructuum maturitatem capit, eo qui vernae propaginis arbusta plantavit. Convenienter igitur factum est ut sicut Moysi, ita et Joannis glebam omnipotens Deus absconderet et in duobus mirabilibus veris unum miraculum exhiberet.

while the latter not only saw and heard the incarnate God, but even touched Him with his hands, as he himself testifies, saying: "What was," he said, "from the beginning, what we have seen, what we have heard, what we have beheld with our eyes, and our hands have handled of the word of life, and we have seen and testify, and we announce to you the eternal life which was with the Father, and appeared to us (1 John 1)." And not only did he see the God made man with carnal eyes, but he also beheld the Word itself, which was with the Father, through which all things were made (John 1), with his mind divinely enlightened.

And that the comparison may still be produced, Moses presided over the tabernacle which the cloud covered, so that sometimes not even Moses himself could enter, as is read in Exodus: "Because the cloud covered the tabernacle of the testimony, and the glory of the Lord filled it (Exod. 40)," nor could Moses enter the roof of the covenant, the cloud covering all things; John truly, having been made the guardian of a better tabernacle, stood as the minister of Blessed Mary, whom no corporeal cloud of this air indeed covered, but the Holy Spirit overshadowed invisibly. And the glory of the Lord, that is the Son of God, who filled this tabernacle, not about to depart soon, but about to receive true flesh, remained not under the darkness of an aerial cloud, but rather in the light of the sun, as is said through the Prophet: "In the sun He placed His tabernacle (Ps. 18)." Through the former, manna was then given to the Israelite people; behold how much more gloriously this man has manna even in his tomb. And what more? The former veiled his face, lest he be seen by the people (Exod. 34): the latter also reveals the essence of the divinity, that God may be recognized by all (John 1). And to repeat the same, the former covered the splendor of his countenance, lest he be beheld by that people; the latter clearly revealed the Word of God, which is the image of the Father, the splendor of glory and the figure of His substance (Heb. 1), that He might be recognized by us.

Finally, the Son of God, whom the latter had in his hands, with whom he conversed for a very long time, by whom he was uniquely and specially loved, the former indeed earnestly and desirably asked for, saying: "I beseech you, Lord, send whom you are about to send (Exod. 4);" but he was not able to obtain it. Nevertheless, while both shone with great and supreme merits before God, both were full of the same spirit, both concordantly burned with the desire for the Redeemer. Nor do we presume to prefer one to the other, if we weigh the diversity for the dignity of each. For of two travelers unequal in no vivacity of eyes, he who walks when the sun has risen beholds any opposing things more clearly than he who rises before dawn. And he is richer who catches the autumnal maturity of fruits than he who planted the saplings of the spring offspring. It was fittingly done, therefore, that just as He hid the remains of Moses, so also almighty God hid those of John, and in two true wonders exhibited one miracle.

Et notandum quam affectuose, quam pie, quam paterne, quam amabiliter Salvator: «Sic, inquit, eum volo manere donec veniam (Joan. XXI).» Veniam, inquit, non mittam. Non mittam videlicet supernam aliquam virtutem, non angelicam potestatem, quae hujus ministerii mihi fungatur officio, quae obedientiae hujus exsequatur effectum. Ipse per memetipsum veniam, ipse egredientem ejus animam in gloriae meae claritate suscipiam, quam et in carne manentem divinitus illustrabam. Quantae igitur reverentiae habendus est hominibus beatus iste Joannes, quem ipse auctor vitae honoravit in carne viventem, honoravit et de saeculo recedentem: «Nimis enim honorati sunt amici tui Deus (Psal. CXXXVIII).» Honoravit siquidem eum in vita, cum de sacrosancto pectore suo sibi reclinatorium fecit. Honoravit rursus in morte, cum ad suscipiendam felicem meritis animam dignatus est advenire. Nec mirum si diversis eum honoribus cumulavit, quem et in consortium sibimet adoptivae fraternitatis ascivit.

Dictus est etiam frater Domini B. Jacobus; sed ille frater ex natura, iste frater ex gratia; ille ex cognatione, iste ex praecipua dilectione; ille per lineam maternae consanguinitatis, iste per vinculum paternae charitatis: «Si quis, inquit, diligit me, sermonem meum servabit, et Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus (Joan. XIV).» Et quid amplius dicam? Frater Domini fuit ille carnalis, iste spiritualis. Sed quantum cognatio spiritualis carnalem necessitudinem probatur excedere, in ipsius Domini verbis possumus luce clarius invenire. Ait enim: Spiritus est qui vivificat, nam caro non prodest quidquam.

Jacobum itaque, ut frater esset Domini, natura carnalis instituit; Joannes vero tanto nobilius frater est, quanto et ipsius naturae Dominus, eum in affinitatem sibi spiritualis adoptionem assumpsit. Quanquam et ipse Jacobus idcirco beatus sit, quia ejusdem spiritualis cum Domino participium tenet. Alioquin, nisi Domino per spiritum jungeretur, per illud terrenae consanguinitatis vinculum a Domino nullatenus salvaretur. Sed tanto excellentius Joannes, quanto et ante crucem constitutus audivit: «Ecce Mater tua (Joan. XIX).» Merito ergo quo eum caeteris plus dilexit, sublimius eum caeteris honoravit. Et nos, fratres charissimi, pro modulo nostro dignis eum studeamus efferre praeconiis, dignis semper veneremur obsequiis.

And it is to be noted how affectionately, how piously, how paternally, how amiably the Savior said: "So," He said, "I will him to remain until I come (John 21)." I will come, He said, I will not send. I will not send, that is, some supernal power, nor any angelic power, to perform this office of ministry for me, or to carry out the effect of this obedience. I myself shall come through my very self; I myself shall receive his departing soul into the brightness of my glory, which I also used to enlighten divinely while he remained in the flesh. With how much reverence, therefore, is this Blessed John to be held by men, whom the very author of life honored while he lived in the flesh, and honored also as he departed from the world: "For your friends, O God, are exceedingly honored (Ps. 138)." For He honored him in life, when He made for him a place of reclining from His own sacrosanct breast. He honored him again in death, when He deigned to arrive to receive his soul, happy in merits. Nor is it a wonder if He heaped various honors upon him, whom He also called into the fellowship of an adoptive brotherhood with Himself.

Blessed James was also called the brother of the Lord; but he was a brother by nature, this one a brother by grace; the former by kinship, this one by special love; the former through the line of maternal consanguinity, this one through the bond of paternal charity: "If anyone," He said, "loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him (John 14)." And what more shall I say? That one was the carnal brother of the Lord, this one the spiritual. But how much spiritual kinship is proved to exceed carnal necessity, we can find more clearly than light in the words of the Lord himself. For He says: It is the Spirit who gives life, for the flesh profits nothing.

Maternal nature, therefore, ordained James to be the brother of the Lord; John, however, is a brother so much more nobly, as the Lord of nature himself assumed him into affinity with himself by spiritual adoption. Although James himself is also blessed for this reason, that he holds a participation of the same spiritual life with the Lord. Otherwise, unless he were joined to the Lord through the spirit, he would in no way be saved by the Lord through that bond of earthly consanguinity. But John so much more excellently, as even placed before the cross he heard: "Behold your Mother (John 19)." Justly, therefore, in that He loved him more than the others, He honored him more sublimely than the others. And let us, dearest brothers, according to our small measure, strive to extol him with worthy praises, and always venerate him with worthy services.

Notandum tamen, quia nunquam tam digne, tam reverenter beatos apostolos colimus, quam cum apostolica praecepta servamus, cum eos in via Dei praecedentes semper attendimus, cum eorum vestigia sequimur, cum eorum angustam et arctam semitam sine offensione tenemus. Enimvero in baptismo apostolorum ducatum secuti sumus, quia per eosdem fidem sanctae Trinitatis inter ipsa regenerationis nostrae rudimenta didicimus. Sub cujus videlicet figurae mysterio, sacerdotes Israeliticae plebis olim transeundo Jordanem praecedebant, et populus sequebatur. Sed non sufficere illis visum est, si sacerdotum tantummodo vestigia in transitu sequerentur, nisi et duodecim lapides de Jordanis alveo tollerent, atque in Galgalis pro testimonio ponerent. «Elige, inquit Dominus ad Josue, duodecim viros, singulos per singulas tribus, et praecipe eis ut tollant de medio alvei Jordanis, ubi fixerunt sacerdotes pedes, duodecim lapides durissimos, quos ponetis in loco castrorum, ubi fixeritis hac nocte tentoria (Josue IV).»

Ut autem non omnia, licet plena mysteriis, verba discutiam, quid per hoc factum nobis innuitur, nisi ut postquam mystici Jordanis fluenta transimus, postquam de lavacri salutaris fonte consurgimus, durissimos duodecim lapides, id est, firmissima apostolorum exempla ad imitationem nobis proponere studeamus? Lapides quippe, ubi sacerdotes pedes fixerant, in loco castrorum ponimus; si in procinctu spiritualis militiae positi, apostolorum vestigia constanter et firmiter teneamus. Nam juxta Salomonis sententiam: «Qui mollis et dissolutus est in opere suo, frater est sua opera dissipantis (Prov. XVIII);» nimirum qui in moribus suis molles ac fluidi sunt, more aquae praecipiter ad ima defluunt; qui vero constantes ac firmi, in arcem quotidie virtutis excrescunt. Quod nimirum et illud ejusdem historiae significare perpenditur: nam, transeunte eodem populo, aquae superiores ad instar montis intumescunt, inferiores vero in mare mortuum delabuntur (Jos. III); quia profecto ex eis qui baptizantur, alii in accepta coelestis gratiae dulcedine perseverant, alii in peccatorum amaritudinem defluere, reprobe vivendo, non cessant, et velut in maris mortui salsuginem corruunt, dum sapiendo terrena, per pravae vitae declivia ad mortem tendunt.

Nos autem non sic, dilectissimi, non sic, sed ad veram sapientiam animum transferentes, sic per Dei misericordiam in virtutum studeamus alto proficere, ut in vitiorum pudeat voraginem declinare.

It is to be noted, however, that we never worship the blessed apostles as worthily or as reverently as when we keep the apostolic precepts, when we always look to them as they precede us in the way of God, when we follow their footsteps, and when we hold their narrow and straight path without offense. Indeed, in baptism we followed the leadership of the apostles, because through them we learned the faith of the Holy Trinity among the very rudiments of our regeneration. Under the mystery of which figure, the priests of the Israelite people once preceded them in crossing the Jordan, and the people followed. But it did not seem sufficient to them if they followed only the footsteps of the priests in the crossing, unless they also took twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan and placed them in Gilgal for a testimony. "Choose," the Lord said to Joshua, "twelve men, one from each tribe, and command them to take from the middle of the bed of the Jordan, where the priests fixed their feet, twelve very hard stones, which you shall place in the location of the camp, where you shall pitch your tents tonight (Joshua 4)."

But that I may not discuss all the words, although full of mysteries, what is indicated to us by this deed, except that after we cross the currents of the mystic Jordan, after we rise from the fount of the salutary washing, we should strive to set before ourselves for imitation the twelve very hard stones, that is, the most firm examples of the apostles? Indeed, we place the stones where the priests had fixed their feet in the place of the camp, if, placed in the preparation for battle of spiritual warfare, we hold the footsteps of the apostles constantly and firmly. For according to the sentence of Solomon: "He who is soft and dissolved in his work, is the brother of him that wastes his own works (Prov. 18);" clearly those who are soft and fluid in their morals, after the manner of water fall headlong to the bottom; but those who are constant and firm, grow daily into the citadel of virtue. Which surely is also weighed to be signified by that same history: for, as that same people crossed, the upper waters swelled into the likeness of a mountain, but the lower ones fell away into the Dead Sea (Josh. 3); because indeed of those who are baptized, some persevere in the accepted sweetness of heavenly grace, others cease not to flow away into the bitterness of sins by living reprobatly, and fall as it were into the saltiness of the Dead Sea, while by savoring earthly things, they tend toward death through the slopes of a perverse life.

But we not so, most beloved, not so, but transferring our mind to true wisdom, let us so strive by the mercy of God to profit in the depth of the study of virtues, that it may shame us to decline into the abyss of vices.

Sic perseveremus semper ad superna properare, quo tendimus, ut divini amoris dulcedinem in nostris jugiter mentibus conservemus: illius itaque sapientiae laboremus participes fieri, qua beatus Joannes per amplioris gratiae cumulum meruit incomparabiliter illustrari; cujus nimirum splendore concepto, coelum velut aquila penetrat, ita ut creata cuncta transgrediens, ad ipsum rerum omnium verticem mentis contemplatione pertingat.

Nostis, fratres mei, quia in mundi nascentis origine, tertio die germinaverit terra, quarto coeli facta sunt luminaria, quinto volatilia sunt creata (Gen. I). Quare autem in creandis rebus hic ordo cucurrit, nisi ut nos instruemur quia prius necesse est ut mens nostra virentium virtutum opera germinet, quatenus sic mereatur coelestis gratiam luminis, ac postremo evolare valeat ad contemplandam speciem veritatis? Germinemus itaque, fratres, ut illuminemur, quatenus illuminati, virtutum pennis ad coelestia sublevemur. Non nos mundi hujus dulcedo falsa demulceat, non carnalis illecebrae voluptas luxuriosa resolvat. Nusquam certe praeceptum in Veteris Testamenti caeremoniis invenitur, ut mel sacrificiis misceatur. Per quod intelligitur, quia his, qui Deo vitae suae sacrificium offerunt, nullam Deus carnalem vult inesse dulcedinem, nihil in eis vivere, quod ad carnalem pertineat voluptatem; oleum autem frequenter immittitur, ut omnis nostrae operationis oblatio hilariter offeratur: «Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus (II Cor. IX).» In omnibus etiam sal jubetur admisceri, ut omne boni operis sacrificium, rationis, discretionis, ac coelestis sapientiae sale sit conditum.

Hoc autem divinae sapientiae sate, ita omnis beati Joannis doctrina videtur respersa, ut merito dicatur os Dei, lingua Spiritus sancti, cedrus paradisi, lux Ecclesiae, decus orbis, praeco coeli, lumen mundi, sidus hominum, specimen angelorum, lapis vivus, speculum lucis, logotheta divinitatis, forma fidei, columna coeli, architectus veri tabernaculi, quod fixit Deus, et non homo. Nam et cherubim jure perhibetur, qui scientiae plenitudinem ex ipso Redemptoris pectore percepisse cognoscitur.

Verumtamen cum nos quantumlibet efferre contendimus, celsitudinis ejus merita non aequamus; quia qui divinae laudis praeconia meruit, ad ejus digne collaudanda merita humanae linguae fragilitas non assurgit. Ipse quippe ejus est laus, qui illi et olim pretium, et nunc factus est praemium.

Let us so persevere always in hastening toward supernal things, whither we tend, that we may continually preserve the sweetness of divine love in our minds: let us labor, therefore, to become participants of that wisdom by which Blessed John deserved to be incomparably enlightened through the abundance of more ample grace; having conceived the splendor of which, he penetrates the heaven like an eagle, so that, transcending all created things, he reaches to the very summit of all things by the contemplation of his mind.

You know, my brothers, that in the origin of the world's birth, on the third day the earth brought forth sprouts, on the fourth the lights of heaven were made, on the fifth the winged creatures were created (Gen. 1). But why did this order run in the creating of things, except that we might be instructed that it is first necessary that our mind bring forth the works of greening virtues, so that it may thus deserve the grace of heavenly light, and finally be able to fly away to contemplate the appearance of truth? Let us sprout, therefore, brothers, that we may be enlightened, so that having been enlightened, we may be raised to heavenly things by the wings of virtues. Let not the false sweetness of this world soothe us, let not the luxurious pleasure of carnal allure dissolve us. Nowhere surely is the precept found in the ceremonies of the Old Testament that honey should be mixed with sacrifices. By which it is understood, that in those who offer to God the sacrifice of their life, God wishes no carnal sweetness to be present, nothing to live in them which pertains to carnal pleasure; but oil is frequently put in, that every offering of our operation may be offered cheerfully: "For God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9)." In all things also salt is commanded to be mixed in, that every sacrifice of a good work may be seasoned with the salt of reason, of discretion, and of heavenly wisdom.

Moreover, with this salt of divine wisdom, all the doctrine of Blessed John is seen to be sprinkled, so that he is worthily called the mouth of God, the tongue of the Holy Spirit, the cedar of paradise, the light of the Church, the ornament of the world, the herald of heaven, the light of the world, the star of men, the specimen of angels, a living stone, the mirror of light, the logothete of divinity, the form of faith, the pillar of heaven, the architect of the true tabernacle, which God fixed, and not man. For he is also justly presented as a cherub, who is known to have perceived the fullness of knowledge from the very breast of the Redeemer.

Nevertheless, although we strive as much as possible to extol him, we do not equal the merits of his height; because the fragility of the human tongue does not rise to worthily praise the merits of him who deserved the praises of divine commendation. For he himself is his praise, who was once his price, and now has been made his reward.

Per hujus ergo vestigia, dilectissimi, ad Redemptorem nostrum pleno cordis amore tendamus, hujus doctrinam velut coruscam in tenebris lampadem nostris semper gressibus praeferamus. Pudeat jam terrenis incumbere, qui per spei desiderium ad coelestem coepimus gloriam festinare. Qui ad coelestium nuptiarum delicias properat, terrenae voluptatis coeno volutari erubescat: qui titulis angelicae dignitatis ornari sperat in patria dignitatis locum in exsilio non requirat. Incassum porro terrena lucra congerimus, qui divitias immortales in regni coelestis aerario possidemus. Quem igitur pondus terrenae corruptionis aggravat, rerum extrinsecus affluentium copia non extollat. Qui ad hoc constitutus est, ut totis viribus jugiter cum adversario dimicet, torporis hunc et negligentiae dissolutio non enervet. Sic, sic per divinae pietatis auxilium, et florentes virtutibus, et vitiis repudium dantes, si hic eum sequimur, qui nobis iter crucis ostendit, illuc perveniemus ad eum, qui, calcato mortis imperio, coelum cum triumphali gloria penetravit, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo LXV.

*DE SANCTO BARBATIANO PRESBYTERO ET CONFESSORE. (XXXI DECEMB.)*

Nuper celebravimus, fratres charissimi, ineffabilem Redemptoris nostri nativitatem, nunc geminato solemnitatis gaudio venerabilem colimus beatissimi sacerdotis ejus assumptionem. In illa festivitate Salvator noster, obumbrata majestatis suae specie, descendit in mundum; in ista gloriosissimus ejus famulus, deposito corruptibilis carnis pondere, liber ascendit. In illa Unigenitus Dei Filius humanitatis nostrae formam pro nostra salute suscepit; in ista beatus confessor ejus ad angelicae beatitudinis speciem felici morte pervenit. In illa solemnitate Redemptor noster trophaeo carnis indutus, ad debellandas aereas potestates in mundum praeliaturus accessit; in ista vero egregius miles ejus, triumphato mundi principe, coeleste palatium victor intravit. Idcirco quippe Deus descendit, ut homo ascenderet; idcirco humiliari dignatus est, ut hominem exaltaret.

In nativitate Dominica vox angelica sonuit: «Gloria in excelsis Deo; et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II);» hodie dilecto suo suavissima vox divinae majestatis intonuit, dicens: «Euge, serve bone et fidelis, quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, supra multa te constituam, intra in gaudium Domini tui (Matth. XXV).» In illa festivitate Dominus exivit de utero Virginis, in ista venerabilis ejus famulus egressus est de ergastulo carnis. In illa Christus pro nobis est pannis involutus, in ista sacerdos ejus stola est ab eo immortalitatis indutus.

By his footsteps, therefore, most beloved, let us tend toward our Redeemer with full love of heart, let us always prefer his doctrine before our steps like a shining lamp in the darkness. Let it shame us now to lean upon earthly things, we who have begun through the desire of hope to hasten toward heavenly glory. He who hastens to the delights of heavenly nuptials, let him blush to wallow in the mire of earthly pleasure: he who hopes to be adorned with the titles of angelic dignity in the homeland, let him not seek a place of dignity in exile. Moreover, in vain we gather earthly gains, we who possess immortal riches in the treasury of the heavenly kingdom. Him, therefore, whom the weight of earthly corruption aggravates, let the abundance of things flowing from without not extol. He who has been ordained to this, that he may continually fight with all his strength with the adversary, let the dissolution of torpor and negligence not enervate him. So, so by the help of divine piety, both flourishing in virtues and giving a repudiation to vices, if we follow him here, who showed us the way of the cross, we shall arrive there to him, who, having trampled the empire of death, penetrated the heaven with triumphal glory, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon LXV.

*ON SAINT BARBATIANUS, PRESBYTER AND CONFESSOR. (DECEMBER 31)*

Recently, most beloved brothers, we celebrated the ineffable nativity of our Redeemer; now with doubled joy of solemnity we worship the venerable assumption of his most blessed priest. In that festivity our Savior, the appearance of his majesty having been overshadowed, descended into the world; in this one his most glorious servant, the weight of corruptible flesh having been laid aside, ascended free. In that one the Only-begotten Son of God received the form of our humanity for our salvation; in this one his blessed confessor reached the appearance of angelic beatitude by a happy death. In that solemnity our Redeemer, clothed in the trophy of the flesh, approached to fight in the world to overcome the aerial powers; in this one truly his distinguished soldier, the prince of the world having been triumphed over, entered the heavenly palace as a victor. For God descended for this reason, that man might ascend; for this reason He deigned to be humbled, that He might exalt man.

At the Nativity of the Lord the angelic voice sounded: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke 2);" today to his beloved the sweetest voice of divine majesty thundered, saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because you have been faithful over a few things, I will appoint you over many things, enter into the joy of your Lord (Matt. 25)." In that festivity the Lord went out from the womb of the Virgin, in this one his venerable servant went out from the prison of the flesh. In that one Christ was wrapped in swaddling clothes for us, in this one his priest was clothed by Him in the stole of immortality.

Ille angustias intrare non dedignatus est uteri, ut istius animam latitudo susciperet coeli. Ille descendit carne velatus, ut iste ascenderet stola gloriae decoratus.

Considerate, fratres charissimi, quantus vir iste fuerit, quam pleniter illum, ut revera sacratissimum templum, Spiritus sanctus inhabitaverit, qui et in pace sanctae Ecclesiae tot miraculis coruscavit. In initio quippe nascentis Ecclesiae illi etiam miracula faciebant, qui facere signa digni non fuerant: et sine virtutibus morum plerique excellebant virtute signorum. Unde et ipsa Veritas dicit: «Multi dicent mihi illa die: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus? nonne in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis: Quia non novi vos; discedite a me, operarii iniquitatis (Matth. VII).» Ut enim ad fidem cresceret sancta Ecclesia, miraculis fuerat nutrienda; quia et nos cum arbusta plantamus, tandiu eis aquam fundimus, quousque ea in terra convaluisse videmus: at si semel radicem fixerint, irrigatio cessabit. Hinc est enim quod Paulus dicit: «Linguae in signum sunt non fidelibus, sed infidelibus (I Cor. XIV).

Sed cum ista dicimus, quaestionem nobis oriri non sine aliqua difficultate videmus. Si enim signa propter infideles data esse dicuntur, quid est hoc, quod Redemptor noster in patria sua propter incredulitatem hominum vix paucas virtutes facere potuisse perhibetur? Sicut enim Marcus evangelista testatur: «Multi audientes admirabantur in doctrina ejus, dicentes: Unde huic haec omnia? Et quae est sapientia, quae data est illi, et virtutes tales, quae per manus ejus efficiuntur? Nonne hic est fabri filius et Mariae; frater Jacobi, et Josephi, et Judae, et Simonis? Nonne et sorores ejus nobiscum sunt? Et scandalizabantur in illo.» Unde et paulo post subditur: «Et non poterat ibi virtutem ullam facere, nisi quod paucos infirmos impositis manibus curavit; et mirabatur propter incredulitatem illorum (Matth. XIII).» Quid est hoc, fratres, quia Paulus affirmat signa pro infidelibus data, Marcus asserit propter infideles fuisse subtracta? (Marc. VI.) Nunquid contrarias inter se invicem proferre sententias possunt, qui unc Spiritu pleni sunt?

Sed notandum est, quia in ipsis infidelibus erat quidam diversitatis modus. Par quidem error fuerat omnium non credentium, sed magna diversitas meritorum. Aliud est enim si sola quis fallatur ignorantia, aliud si adjuncta quoque erret malitia. Ignorantia Paulus peccaverat, qui dicebat: «Qui prius fui blasphemus, et persecutor, et injuriosus; sed ideo misericordiam consecutus sum, quia ignorans feci (I Tim. I).» Per malitiam Judas peccavit, et ideo nequaquam venire ad indulgentiam meruit.

The former disdained not to enter the narrows of the womb, that the breadth of heaven might receive the soul of the latter. The former descended veiled in flesh, that the latter might ascend decorated with the stole of glory.

Consider, most beloved brothers, how great this man was, how fully the Holy Spirit inhabited him as truly a most sacred temple, who even in the peace of the holy Church flashed with so many miracles. For in the beginning of the nascent Church those also used to perform miracles, who had not been worthy to perform signs: and many without the virtues of morals excelled in the virtue of signs. Whence Truth itself says: "Many will say to me on that day: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? did we not perform many virtues in your name? And then I will confess to them: That I knew you not; depart from me, workers of iniquity (Matt. 7)." For that the holy Church might grow to the faith, it had to be nourished by miracles; because we also when we plant saplings, we pour water on them for so long, until we see them have grown strong in the earth: but if they once fix their root, the irrigation will cease. This is hence why Paul says: "Tongues are for a sign not to believers, but to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14)."

But when we say these things, we see a question arise for us not without some difficulty. For if signs are said to have been given because of unbelievers, what is this, that our Redeemer is presented as having been able to perform scarcely any virtues in his own country because of the incredulity of men? For as Mark the evangelist testifies: "Many hearing were astonished at his doctrine, saying: From whence has this man all these things? And what is the wisdom that is given to him, and such virtues, which are performed through his hands? Is not this the son of the carpenter and of Mary; the brother of James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? Are not also his sisters with us? And they were scandalized in him." Whence also a little after it is added: "And he could not perform any virtue there, except that he cured a few sick ones by laying his hands on them; and he wondered because of their incredulity (Matt. 13)." What is this, brothers, that Paul affirms signs were given for unbelievers, while Mark asserts they were withdrawn because of unbelievers? (Mark 6.) Can they proffer sentences contrary to each other, who are full of one Spirit?

But it is to be noted, that in those unbelievers themselves there was a certain mode of diversity. Indeed, the error of all who did not believe was equal, but there was a great diversity of merits. For it is one thing if someone be deceived by ignorance alone, another if malice be also added. Paul had sinned by ignorance, who said: "I who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but therefore I obtained mercy, because I did it being ignorant (1 Tim. 1)." Judas sinned through malice, and therefore he by no means deserved to come to indulgence.

Pro illis ergo infidelibus signa data sunt, quos divina providentia misericorditer salvare decreverat. Propter illos vero subtracta sunt, quos ab electorum sorte, exigentibus eorum peccatis, districtae severitatis justitia repellebat. Christianis autem temporibus cum jam pene totus ubique terrarum orbis in catholica fide persisteret, et pacem sanctae Ecclesiae vix ulla persecutorum saevitia perturbaret, cur beatissimus confessor Christi Barbatianus tot miraculorum virtutibus claruit, nisi quia ante divinae majestatis oculos excellentium meritorum virtutibus fulsit? Erat enim, sicut de Joanne dicitur, lucerna ardens et lucens (Joan. V), ardens videlicet per amorem cordis, lucens splendore eximiae conversationis. Sed tunc lucerna sub modio occultari voluerat, cum, sicut in sanctissimae vitae ejus narratur historia, latens in cellula manifestari principibus devitabat, Nolebat mundi regibus innotescere, ut Regi regum potuisset familiarius adhaerere: recusabat ab hominibus temporalem suscipere gloriam, ut cum angelis acquirere mereretur aeternam. Ad hoc quippe pertinet, quod his, quibus sanitatem restituere cupiebat, saepe superponendum quid, velut emplastrum: saepe comedendum aliquid, quasi medicinale antidotum conferebat; eo nimirum, ut opinor, studio, ut dum herbarum virtus, vel medicinalium specierum potentia creditur, nequaquam sanctitatis suae viribus restituta sanitas ascribatur; et dum ab eo medicina suscipitur, magis medicus quam sanctus esse videatur. Sed dic, mihi, o bone medice, unde confectionem tam efficacis, tam subitae virtutis nostris finibus attulisti, ut non triduo, non biduo, non vel unius momenti spatio exspectatur, sed mox ut adhibita fuerit, statim omnis languor, omne vulnus pristinae saluti restituatur? Epithema siquidem curari non potest, nisi tandiu tumori adjaceat superpositum, donec vel vigorem suum per occultos meatus in corporis interiora transfundat, vel humorem pestiferum virtutis suae potentia ad exteriora trajiciat. Antidotum vero, quod ore perficitur, necesse est ut eatenus moras faciat, quousque per venas et poros occulta viscerum funditus penetret, et vel corrupta solidet, vel tumefacta noxiis humoribus purget. Tua vero mirabilis medicina non moras innectit, non quae a medicis custoditur, dietae discretionem quaerit, sed mox ut summotenus tangitur, salus integerrima reparatur. Solve ergo, Pater, solve, obsecro ligaturam, et tam incomparabilis medicinae nobis trade notitiam.

Videamus et nos inaestimabiles pigmentorum tuorum species, odoremus jucundissimas fragrantium aromatum suavitates. Eia, fratres, audite, libellus sacratissimae ejus vitae coram cunctis aperiat quas aromatum species ejus in se medicina contineat historia, videlicet saluberrima. Illa confectio quibus aromatibus constet.

For those unbelievers, therefore, signs were given, whom divine providence had mercifully decreed to save. But because of those they were withdrawn, whom the justice of strict severity repelled from the lot of the elect, as their sins required. Moreover, in Christian times when now almost the whole world everywhere persisted in the Catholic faith, and scarcely any savagery of persecutors disturbed the peace of the holy Church, why did the most blessed confessor of Christ Barbatianus shine with the virtues of so many miracles, except because he shone with the virtues of excellent merits before the eyes of the divine majesty? For he was, as is said of John, a burning and a shining lamp (John 5), burning clearly through the love of his heart, shining with the splendor of his distinguished conduct. But then he had wished the lamp to be hidden under a bushel, when, as is told in the history of his most holy life, hiding in his cell he avoided being made manifest to princes. He did not wish to become known to the kings of the world, that he might be able to adhere more familiarly to the King of kings: he refused to receive temporal glory from men, that he might deserve to acquire the eternal with the angels. To this surely pertains the fact that to those whom he desired to restore to health, he often bestowed something to be placed over them, like a plaster: often something to be eaten, like a medicinal antidote; with this study surely, as I think, that while the virtue of herbs, or the power of medicinal species is believed, the restored health should in no way be ascribed to the powers of his sanctity; and while the medicine is received from him, he might seem more a physician than a saint. But tell me, O good physician, whence did you bring the confection of so efficacious, so sudden a virtue to our borders, that it is not expected for three days, nor two days, nor even for the space of one moment, but as soon as it has been applied, immediately every languor, every wound is restored to its pristine health? For an epithem cannot be cured, unless it lies over the tumor as long as it is placed there, until it either transfuses its vigor through hidden channels into the interior parts of the body, or throws out the pestiferous humor to the exterior parts by the power of its virtue. But an antidote, which is performed by the mouth, must necessarily make delays for so long, until its hidden force penetrates fundamentally through the veins and pores into the viscera, and either solidifies the corrupt parts or purges those swollen with noxious humors. Your wondrous medicine, however, weaves no delays, does not seek the discretion of diet which is guarded by physicians, but as soon as it is touched to the furthest degree, the most integral health is repaired. Loosen therefore, Father, loosen, I beseech you, the binding, and hand over to us the knowledge of such incomparable medicine.

Let us also see the inestimable species of your pigments, let us smell the most pleasant sweetness of your fragrant aromas. Come, brothers, hear; let the book of his most sacred life open before all which species of aromas his medicinal history, truly most salutary, contains in itself. Of what aromas that confection consists.

Dicit enim inter caetera, quia cujusdam Juliani filium guttur gravabat miserabiliter tumidum, qui cum beato viro delatus fuisset, et cum pater pro filio lacrymabiliter postularet, venerabilis vir quamdam confectionem, de pane videlicet, et cera, et oleo faciens, super ejus vulnera posuit, et, facto crucis signaculo, statim in ipsius ore puncto omnem pestem de ejus gutture mirabiliter effugavit.

Audistis, fratres charissimi, quae pigmentorum genera egregius noster medicus habuit, qui mortale vulnus tanta velocitate sanavit? Panem, ceram et oleum, quae sustentandae vitae habebant usum, in medicinalis curae transtulit instrumentum; et unde vitam alebat suam, inde mortem repulit alienam; speciebus videlicet utens domesticis, aestimationem pretii minuit peregrinis. Aliquando aegrotanti citri peciam, aliquando caricam porrigebat; et hujusmodi curationis genere illos ad perfectae valetudinis robur, expulsa omni languoris molestia, revocabat, ea, nisi fallor, intentione, ut quia uterque hic fructus in Romanis finibus apud quosdam rarior cernitur, medicinale aliquid fuisse credatur; et dum reparata salus medicinae tribuitur, in aestimatione hominum sanctitatis ejus opinio minuatur.

Quid ergo nos miseri dicturi, quid facturi in districto examine tremendi judicis sumus, qui et virtutes non habemus, et tamen de meritorum excellentia ante humanos oculos superbimus? qui sanctitatem habere ante interni arbitri oculos nullo desiderio quaerimus, et sanctitatis nomen apud humana judicia nobis fallaciter usurpare gaudemus? Quantos enim hodie cernimus, qui si de virtutibus admirabilis hujus viri, vel ultimam particulam attingere potuissent, ad coelum se in superbiae cornibus exaltarent, qui saepe forte aliquid de virtutibus faciunt, sed per hoc non coelum, sed terram petunt. Affectantes nimirum laudes hominum, in semetipsis dissipant fructum laborum; cumque se ostendere alienis oculis appetunt, ante divinae majestatis intuitum damnant omne quod agunt. Saepe etiam sacrae legis eruditione et alios instruunt, omne quod sentiunt testimoniis accingunt, nec tamen per hoc vitam audientium, sed proprios favores quaerunt; quia nec proferre alia cupiunt, nisi quae auditorum corda ad repetendas laudes excutiunt, non autem ad lacrymas tendunt.

For it says among other things, that a certain Julian's son's throat was miserably swollen, who when he had been brought to the blessed man, and when the father was tearfully asking for his son, the venerable man making a certain confection, of bread indeed, and wax, and oil, placed it over his wounds, and, the sign of the cross having been made, immediately in the point of his mouth miraculously drove all the pest from his throat.

You have heard, most beloved brothers, what kinds of pigments our distinguished physician had, who healed a mortal wound with such speed? Bread, wax, and oil, which had the use of sustaining life, he transferred into the instrument of medicinal cure; and whence he nourished his own life, from thence he repelled the death of another; using indeed domestic species, he diminished the estimation of price for foreign ones. Sometimes he reached out a piece of citron to a sick person, sometimes a dried fig; and by this kind of curation he recalled them to the strength of perfect health, all the molestation of languor having been expelled, with this intention, if I am not mistaken, that because each of these fruits is seen more rarely among some in the Roman borders, it might be believed to have been something medicinal; and while the repaired health is attributed to the medicine, the opinion of his sanctity might be diminished in the estimation of men.

What therefore are we miserable ones about to say, what are we to do in the strict examination of the tremendous judge, we who both have no virtues, and yet are proud before human eyes concerning the excellence of our merits? we who seek with no desire to have sanctity before the eyes of the internal arbiter, and rejoice to falsely usurp the name of sanctity among human judgments? For how many do we see today, who if they could have touched even the last particle of the virtues of this admirable man, would exalt themselves in the horns of pride to heaven, who often perhaps do something of virtues, but through this seek not heaven, but earth. Affecting surely the praises of men, they dissipate the fruit of their labors in themselves; and when they desire to show themselves to the eyes of others, they damn all that they do before the intuition of the divine majesty. Often also they instruct others with the erudition of the sacred law, and gird all that they feel with testimonies, yet they seek not through this the life of their hearers, but their own favors; because they desire to proffer no other things except those which shake the hearts of the hearers to repeat praises, but not to tend toward tears.

Mens quippe exterioribus occupata, igne divini amoris non calet, et idcirco ad supernorum desiderium inflammare auditores suos nequeunt verba quae frigido corde proferuntur. Neque enim res quae et in semetipsa non arserit, aliud accendit. Unde fit plerumque ut hypocritarum dicta, et audientes non erudiant, et eosdem ipsos qui proferunt elatos laudibus deteriores reddant. Attestante etenim Paulo, «Scientia inflat, charitas aedificat (I Cor. VIII).» Cum ergo charitas auditores aedificando non erigit, scientia proferentes inflando pervertit.

Plerumque etiam hypocritae, fratres mei, mira se abstinentia affligunt, omne robur corporis atterunt, et quasi carnis vitam funditus in carne viventes exstinguunt, sicque per abstinentiam morti appropriant, ut pene quotidie morientes vivant, sed ad hoc humanos oculos quaerunt, admirationis gloriam expetunt: Veritate attestante, quae ait: «Exterminant enim facies suas, ut appareant hominibus jejunantes (Matth. VI).» Nam ora pallescunt, corpus debilitate quatitur, pectus interrumpentibus suspiriis urgetur; sed inter haec ab ore proximorum sermo admirationis quaeritur, nihilque pro tanto labore aliud, nisi aestimatio humana, cogitatur.

Perpendite, dilectissimi fratres mei, quam miserabilis vecordiae est laboriose agere, et ab ore hominum laudes inhiare; forti opere praeceptis coelestibus inservire, sed terrenae retributionis praemium quaerere. Sicut enim beatus ait Gregorius, qui pro virtute quam agit, humanum favorem desiderat, rem magni meriti vili pretio venalem portat. Unde coeli regnum mereri potuit, inde nummum transitorii favoris quaerit. Intus ergo, fratres mei, intus servanda sunt bona, quae agimus, si ab interno judice vicem recipere nostri operis exspectamus. Hinc est enim quod in Evangelio Veritas dicit: «Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua, ut sit eleemosyna tua in abscondito, et Pater tuus, qui videt in abscondito, reddet tibi (Matth. VI).» Hinc est, quod de electorum Ecclesia per Psalmistam dicitur: «Omnis gloria ejus filiae regis ab intus (Psal. XLIV).» Filia quippe regum est sancta Ecclesia, quae in bono est opere spiritualium principum praedicatione generata, quae dum se in virtutibus sanctae conversationis exercet, quia per hoc soli Deo placere studet, non foris gloriam, sed intus habet. Hinc Paulus ait: «Gloria nostra haec est, testimonium conscientiae nostrae (II Cor. I).» Gloriam suam Apostolus testimonium conscientiae memorat, quia favores oris alieni non appetens vitae suae gaudia extra semetipsum ponere ignorabat.

For the mind occupied with exterior things does not glow with the fire of divine love, and therefore words which are proffered from a cold heart cannot inflame their hearers toward the desire of supernal things. For nor does a thing which has not burned in itself kindle another. Whence it happens frequently that the sayings of hypocrites neither instruct their hearers, and render those same ones who proffer them, elated with praises, worse. For as Paul attests, "Knowledge puffs up, charity builds up (1 Cor. 8)." When therefore charity does not erect the hearers by building them up, knowledge perverts those proffering it by puffing them up.

Frequently also hypocrites, my brothers, afflict themselves with wondrous abstinence, wear away all the strength of their body, and as it were fundamentally extinguish the life of the flesh while living in the flesh, and so through abstinence appropriate themselves to death, that living they die almost daily, but for this they seek human eyes, they expect the glory of admiration: Truth attesting, which says: "For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast (Matt. 6)." For their mouths grow pale, their body is shaken with debility, their breast is urged with interrupting sighs; but among these the word of admiration is sought from the mouth of their neighbors, and nothing else is thought of for so great a labor except human estimation.

Consider, my most beloved brothers, how miserable a folly it is to act laboriously and to gape for praises from the mouth of men; to serve the heavenly precepts with strong work, but to seek the reward of earthly retribution. For as the blessed Gregory says, he who desires human favor for the virtue he performs, carries a thing of great merit for sale at a vile price. Whence he could have merited the kingdom of heaven, from thence he seeks a coin of transitory favor. Therefore inside, my brothers, the good things we do are to be kept inside, if we expect to receive the reward of our work from the internal judge. For hence it is that the Truth says in the Gospel: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee (Matt. 6)." Hence it is, that it is said concerning the Church of the elect through the Psalmist: "All the glory of the king's daughter is from within (Psalm 44)." For the daughter of kings is the holy Church, which was generated in good work by the preaching of spiritual princes, which while it exercises itself in the virtues of holy conduct, because through this it studies to please God alone, has glory not without, but within. Hence Paul says: "Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience (2 Cor. 1)." The Apostle mentions his glory as the testimony of conscience, because not seeking the favors of another's mouth, he knew not how to place the joys of his life outside himself.

Occultanda sunt ergo, fratres charissimi, bona quae agimus, ne haec in hujus vitae itinere incaute portantes, latrocinantium spirituum incursione perdamus. Ecce enim hic beatissimus vir Barbatianus, cujus hodie nobis festivus natalis illuxit, non humanae laudis gloriam petiit, non favores hominum affectavit; non ostensis tot miraculis apparere ipse mirabilis voluit, non de collatis tot in languidos beneficiis humanae retributionis praemium exspectavit; quin etiam medicinalis exercitii praetendebat speciem, ut clarissimum virtutis suae potuisset obfuscare nitorem. Et velut magnum coeli astrum nubem virtutibus suis curabat opponere, ut dum minus ad exteriora radios suae lucis expanderet, quasi undique in semetipso collectus, in conspectu aeterni solis plenius eluceret.

Libet autem, dilectissimi, pulchrum divinae dispensationis ordinem studiose perpendere, videlicet qualiter omnipotens Deus ad illuminandam noctem vitae praesentis stellas suas in coeli faciem mittere, et per eas totius mundi decernat caliginem illustrare; ut dum fulgentia astra radiare per coeli climata cernimus, inoffenso pede operis iter nostrae noctis ambulemus. Sicut enim matutinus lucifer solem praecedens ab Orientali prius plaga consurgit, deinde meridiani climatis superiora conscendit: ad extremum quoque pronus in occiduum axem vergit; sic nimirum, sic beatissimus confessor Christi Barbatianus, de Antiochenis finibus, unde oriundus fuerat, exiit, et Romam pertransiens, multa eam miraculorum luce perfudit: postremo Ravennam usque perveniens, Christum, qui est sol justitiae, plurimis hominum mentibus introduxit: Antiochiae scilicet splendore sui ortus emicuit, Romae plurimos signorum igniculos sparsit, urbem vero Ravennam velut occasu sacratissimi sui obitus illustravit. Ita videlicet meritis sanctissimi hujus viri, velut novi splendore luciferi, in tribus suis praecipuis regionibus totus rutilat mundus, dum in alia mundi plaga ejus cernitur ortus, in alia quodammodo videtur ascensus, in tertia celebratur occasus. Et, sicut de compatriota ejus beatissimo Apollinari in alio sermone jam diximus, quam recte sibi luciferi nomen congruit, qui Romam ingressus, primum virtutis suae miraculum de lumine fecit. Regina enim Galla Placidia, ut audistis, suppliciter ejus flagitabat auxilium pro quadam sua pedissequa, quae intolerabilibus cruciabatur doloribus oculorum; qui mox pallio suo ejus oculos tangi praecepit, et sic ab ea protinus omnem pestiferae aegritudinis molestiam effugavit.

Quapropter cum dignitatem tuam, felicissima urbs Ravenna, subtili meditatione considero, largissimis te misericordiae divinae beneficiis ditatam esse perpendo. Video enim quia ex ipso originali fonte Christianae religionis, perpetuae meruisti poculum haurire salutis. In Antiochia namque, sicut in Actibus apostolorum legitur, primum Christiani discipuli sunt vocati (Act. XI).

The good things we do are therefore to be hidden, most beloved brothers, lest carrying these incautiously on the journey of this life, we lose them by the incursion of robbing spirits. For behold here this most blessed man Barbatianus, whose festive birthday has shone upon us today, did not seek the glory of human praise, nor affect the favors of men; he did not wish to appear wondrous himself by showing so many miracles, nor did he expect the reward of human retribution for so many benefits conferred upon the weak; but even he pretended the appearance of medicinal exercise, so that he could have obscured the most bright splendor of his virtue. And like a great star of heaven he took care to oppose a cloud to his virtues, so that while he expanded the rays of his light less to exterior things, as if collected in himself from all sides, he might shine more fully in the sight of the eternal sun.

It is pleasing, most beloved, to consider studiously the beautiful order of divine dispensation, namely how almighty God decides to send his stars into the face of heaven to illuminate the night of this present life, and through them to illustrate the darkness of the whole world; so that while we see the shining stars radiating through the climates of heaven, we may walk the journey of our night with an unoffended foot of work. For just as the morning star (lucifer) preceding the sun rises first from the Eastern region, then ascends the higher parts of the meridian climate: at last also prone it turns toward the western axis; so indeed, so the most blessed confessor of Christ Barbatianus, went out from the borders of Antioch, whence he had originated, and passing through Rome, drenched it with much light of miracles: finally arriving at Ravenna, he introduced Christ, who is the sun of justice, to very many minds of men: namely he shone at Antioch with the splendor of his birth, at Rome he scattered very many little fires of signs, but he illustrated the city of Ravenna as if by the sunset of his most sacred death. Thus indeed by the merits of this most holy man, as if by the splendor of a new morning star, the whole world glows red in three of its chief regions, while in one region of the world his rising is seen, in another in some way his ascent is seen, in the third his sunset is celebrated. And, as we have already said in another sermon concerning his compatriot the most blessed Apollinaris, how rightly the name of the morning star (lucifer) agrees with him, who having entered Rome, made the first miracle of his virtue from light. For Queen Galla Placidia, as you have heard, suppliantly flagged his help for a certain attendant of hers, who was tortured with intolerable pains of the eyes; who soon commanded her eyes to be touched with his pallium, and thus immediately drove away from her all the molestation of the pestiferous sickness.

Wherefore when I consider your dignity, most happy city of Ravenna, with subtle meditation, I perceive that you have been enriched with the most lavish benefits of divine mercy. For I see that from the very original fountain of the Christian religion, you have merited to drink the cup of perpetual salvation. For in Antioch, as is read in the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11).

Ex ipso igitur sanctae Ecclesiae fundamento quadratos lapides suscepisti, super quos velut firmissimas bases erecta, immobili es fidei et sanctitatis soliditate fundata. Inde enim habes Apollinarem apostolicum martyrem, inde etiam Barbatianum egregium confessorem, qui velut duae excellentissimae cedri paradisi, sic te ramis suae protectionis obumbrant, ut si sub eis humiliter manere volueris, omnem a te turbinem adversariae tempestatis expellant. Et ut eis deesse nil valeat quod ad cumulum tuae felicitatis attineat, mox ut de Antiochenis finibus exeunt, Romae, quae absque dubio caput est et principalis sedes totius sanctae Ecclesiae, commorantur; nimirum ut in schola Petri primitus discant, quod te postmodum de doctrina veritatis erudiant; et de purissimo fonte abundanter bibant, quod in te salutaris doctrinae magisterio velut eructando transfundant. Tanquam enim iterum Paulus, iterum Apollo, quos ille in fide plantavit, iste largissimo miraculorum et praedicationis imbre rigavit. Sed quia neque qui plantat, ex se est aliquid, neque qui rigat, nos etiam apostolica sequentes verba dicamus: «Deus autem incrementum dedit.»

Hos igitur tam praeclaros coelestis curiae senatores, fratres charissimi, perfecto cordis amore diligite, horum imitari exempla tota animi devotione curate: nam si vultis esse quod sunt, necesse est etiam vos facere quod fecerunt. Per angustam ergo et asperam laboris viam, dilectissimi, in hoc saeculo cum sanctis incedite, ut postmodum valeatis ad eorum gaudii latitudinem pervenire. Qui enim dicit se in Christo manere, debet sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare (I Joan. II). Procul dubio autem a vestigiis Christi exorbitat, qui angustam fugiens, latitudinis viam calcat. Iste namque beatissimus vir, cujus hodierna solemnia frequentare gaudemus, non terrenos honores voluit, non fallaces divitias congregavit, non mundi gloriam petiit, non transitoriae possessionis praedia dilatavit, propinquos sprevit, patriam dereliquit, semetipsum quoque pro amore Christi funditus abnegavit. Nemo ergo dicat quod illi solummodo coelestibus digni praemiis habeantur qui persecutorum gladiis pro Christi nomine feriuntur. Conclusit Deus omnem nostrae tergiversationis aditum, obstruxit omne excusationis humanae confugium. Ecce jam non valeamus cum beato Apollinare pro Deo mortem subire, possumus saltem cum beato Barbatiano vitam Deo placentem ducere. Magnum quippe est mori pro Christo, sed non est inferius vivere Christo. Utrumque enim in statera Paulus aequa lance pendebat, cum diceret: «Nemo enim nostrum sibi vivit, et nemo sibi moritur; sive enim vivimus, Domino vivimus; sive morimur, Domino morimur. Sive ergo vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus (Rom. XIV).» Quisquis igitur amat martyrium exhibeat se martyrio dignum, et martyrii consequetur procul dubio praemium.

From that very foundation of the holy Church, therefore, you received squared stones, upon which, erected as if upon the firmest bases, you are founded with an immovable solidity of faith and sanctity. For from thence you have Apollinaris, the apostolic martyr, and from thence also Barbatianus, the distinguished confessor, who like two most excellent cedars of paradise, so overshadow you with the branches of their protection, that if you wish to remain humbly under them, they expel from you every whirlwind of the adversary's tempest. And so that nothing might be lacking to them which pertains to the heap of your happiness, as soon as they go out from the borders of Antioch, they dwell in Rome, which without doubt is the head and principal seat of the whole holy Church; surely that they might first learn in the school of Peter what they might afterwards instruct you concerning the doctrine of truth; and that they might drink abundantly from the most pure fountain what they might transfund into you by the mastership of salutary doctrine, as if by eructing. For as if another Paul, another Apollos, whom that one planted in the faith, this one watered with a most lavish rain of miracles and preaching. But because neither is he who plants anything of himself, nor he who waters, let us also say, following the apostolic words: "But God gave the increase."

Therefore love these so bright senators of the heavenly court, most beloved brothers, with perfect love of heart, and take care to imitate their examples with all devotion of soul: for if you wish to be what they are, it is necessary that you also do what they did. Walk therefore through the narrow and rough way of labor, most beloved, in this world with the saints, that afterwards you may be able to arrive at the latitude of their joy. For he who says he abides in Christ, ought himself also to walk even as he walked (1 John 2). But without doubt he wanders from the footsteps of Christ, who fleeing the narrow way, treads the way of latitude. For this most blessed man, whose solemnities of today we rejoice to frequent, did not wish for earthly honors, did not gather deceitful riches, did not seek the glory of the world, did not dilate the estates of transitory possession; he spurned relatives, he left his country, he also utterly denied himself for the love of Christ. Therefore let no one say that those alone are held worthy of heavenly rewards who are struck by the swords of persecutors for the name of Christ. God has closed every entrance of our tergiversation, he has obstructed every refuge of human excuse. Behold, if we are not now able to undergo death for God with the blessed Apollinaris, we can at least lead a life pleasing to God with the blessed Barbatianus. For it is a great thing to die for Christ, but it is not inferior to live for Christ. For Paul weighed both in a scale with an equal balance, when he said: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's (Rom. 14)." Whoever therefore loves martyrdom, let him show himself worthy of martyrdom, and he will without doubt obtain the reward of martyrdom.

Non potest sanguinem fundere; potest semetipsum poenitentiae telo percutere et in cordis contritione mactare. Praeparetur ad feriendum jugulus, non deerit remunerator, etiamsi defuerit gladius. Deest carnifex qui cervicem exterius feriat; adest judex qui bonae voluntatis praemium reddat. Studeamus igitur, dilectissimi, cum beatissimo confessore Christi Barbatiano saeculi blandimenta despicere, rerum temporalium affluentiam devitare, carnis incentiva reprimere, crucem post Christum etiam in pace ecclesiastica bajulare, quatenus qui nunc ejus imitabilem sequimur vitam cum ipso postmodum desiderabilem perducamur ad gloriam, praestante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et gloriatur per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo LXVI.

*DE SANCTA COLUMBA VIRGINE ET MARTYRE (XXX DEC.).*

Dum recentem, imo praesentem adhuc, Virginis partum colimus, dilectissimi, ecce novus virginis triumphus occurrit, qui solemnem nobis laetitiam germinat atque ut iterum gaudeamus invitat, Apostolo nos excitante, qui ait: «Gaudete in Domino semper; iterum dico: Gaudete (Philip. IV).» Virgineo partui victoria virginalis inseritur et erectis adhuc fidelium animis rediviva gaudia reparantur. Nuper de Virgine Dominus humiliter prodiit, hodie per virginem mirabiliter triumphavit. Tunc coeli Conditor ad nos, inviolata uteri virginalis integritate, descendit; hodie inconcussa virginis fide victoriae titulos ad coelum cum gloria reportavit, dicens illi quam soliis coelestibus inferebat: «Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, et veni (Cant. II).» Tunc Dei Genitrix Christum custodiebat in praesepio vagientem, hodie B. Columba reperit eum in paternae majestatis solio coruscantem. Tunc ad Virginis partum exsultavere pastores, nunc ad conspectum virginis confusi sunt imperatores. Unus est enim, sicut beata Mater ejus ait, qui et «deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles (Luc. II).» Nam, sicut in descripta beatae Columbae reperitur historia, imperator Aurelianus, ut eam posset a coelestis Sponsi fide convellere, conatus est eam filio suo matrimonii vinculo copulare. Sed virgo prudens aliena prorsus a fatuitate vecordiae constanter tenuit regulam disciplinae, ad Salvatoris nostri protinus recurrit exemplum, quod tanquam impenetrabilem clypeum fervida bellatrix arripuit, et venenata in se spicula dirigentem divini Verbi Siromaste perfodit.

He cannot shed blood; he can strike himself with the weapon of penance and sacrifice himself in the contrition of the heart. Let the throat be prepared for the striking; the rewarder will not be lacking, even if the sword should be lacking. The executioner who strikes the neck from without is lacking; the judge is present who renders the reward of good will. Let us study therefore, most beloved, with the most blessed confessor of Christ Barbatianus to despise the blandishments of the world, to avoid the abundance of temporal things, to repress the incentives of the flesh, to carry the cross after Christ even in ecclesiastical peace, so that we who now follow his imitable life may afterwards be led with him to the desirable glory, by the grant of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and is glorified through infinite ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon LXVI.

*ON SAINT COLUMBA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR (DEC. 30).*

While we still cultivate the recent, nay the present birth of the Virgin, most beloved, behold a new triumph of a virgin occurs, which germinates solemn joy for us and invites us to rejoice again, the Apostle exciting us, who says: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say: Rejoice (Phil. 4)." A virginal victory is inserted into the virginal birth, and redivivus joys are repaired in the still erect souls of the faithful. Lately the Lord humbly proceeded from the Virgin, today he miraculously triumphed through a virgin. Then the Founder of the heavens descended to us, the integrity of the virginal womb being inviolate; today with the unshaken faith of a virgin he reported titles of victory to heaven with glory, saying to her whom he was bringing into the heavenly thrones: "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come (Cant. 2)." Then the Mother of God was keeping Christ wailing in the manger, today Blessed Columba finds him flashing on the throne of paternal majesty. Then at the birth of the Virgin the shepherds exulted, now at the sight of the virgin the emperors are confounded. For there is one, as his blessed Mother says, who both "hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble (Luke 2)." For, as is found in the described history of blessed Columba, the emperor Aurelian, that he might be able to tear her away from the faith of the heavenly Spouse, tried to couple her to his son with the bond of marriage. But the prudent virgin, utterly alien to the folly of madness, constantly held the rule of discipline, immediately recurred to the example of our Savior, which as an impenetrable shield the fervent warrior snatched up, and pierced the one directing poisoned darts against her with the *siromastes* of the divine Word.

Hoc, inquit, antiquus hostis usus est argumento, cum Domino meo Jesu Christo ostendit omnia regna mundi, dicens: «Haec omnia tibi dabo, si procidens adoraveris me (Matth. III).» Quid est hoc, fratres mei, quia imperator iste tam potens, tam sublimis tamque terribilis fragilem puellam suis legibus nulla potuit ratione subigere, et modo promittendo regnum, modo intentando supplicium, nullatenus a suo valuit proposito dimovere? Sceptrum porrigit, dedignatur; vibrat gladium, non terretur. Sic artifex et cruenta crudelitas cunctos malitiae suae nervos exercet; sic blandis dura permiscet. Acutiora quippe sunt auri tela quam ferri, et validius mentem frangit honoris ambitio quam tormentum. Omnium itaque genera movet armorum ut turris Christi quatiat fundamentum; sic columna Dei perseverat immobilis et armatum regem inermis puella contemnit.

Dedignatur esse nurus imperatoris, non refugit cruenti subire cruciamenta tortoris. Quid est, inquam, quod fragilis sexus infirmitas a tanta telorum grandine non concutitur? Modo blanditiis delinita non flectitur, modo intonantium minarum impetita stridoribus non movetur. Quid est hoc, nisi quia ille nostrae carnis infirma susceperat qui debilibus et infirmis robur suae fortitudinis administrat? Ad hoc enim Dei virtus exinanita est ut infirma nostra firmaret. Ad hoc Dei sublimitas inclinata est ut dejectos erigeret. Ad hoc vita mori dignata est ut mortis imperium destruens, ad vitam mortuos revocaret. Quod nimirum etiam in ipso generis humani declaratur exordio. Scriptum est enim: «Quia immisit Dominus soporem in Adam; cumque obdormisset, tulit unam de costis ejus, et replevit carnem pro ea, et reaedificavit costam, quam tulerat Dominus de Adam in mulierem (Gen. II).» Super quo cum loqueretur Apostolus, dicens: «Relinquet homo patrem et matrem suam, et adhaerebit uxori suae, et erunt duo in carne una;» praesto subjunxit: «Sacramentum hoc magnum est. Ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia (Ephes. V).» Et vere magnae virtutis indicium, mirandae profunditatis est sacramentum. Per Adam siquidem Christus, per Evam designatur Ecclesia. Quid est autem quod prius Adam Dominus soporavit, deinde costam ex ejus latere, unde mulier formaretur, eduxit, nisi quia prius redemptor in morte dormivit sicque de latere ejus in Ecclesiae sacramentum sanguis et aqua profluxit? Translata est Eva de viri latere dormientis; exivit Ecclesia de latere Salvatoris in cruce pendentis.

This, she said, the ancient enemy used as an argument, when he showed to my Lord Jesus Christ all the kingdoms of the world, saying: "All these things will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me (Matt. 3)." What is this, my brothers, that this emperor, so powerful, so sublime, and so terrible, could by no reason subject a fragile girl to his laws, and now by promising a kingdom, now by threatening punishment, was in no way able to move her from her purpose? He reaches out the scepter, she disdains it; he brandishes the sword, she is not terrified. Thus the craftsman and bloody cruelty exercises all the nerves of its malice; thus it mixes hard things with bland ones. For sharper indeed are the darts of gold than of iron, and ambition for honor breaks the mind more strongly than torment. And so he moves kinds of all arms that he might shake the foundation of the tower of Christ; thus the column of God remains immovable and the unarmed girl contemns the armed king.

She disdains to be the daughter-in-law of the emperor, she does not refuse to undergo the tortures of a bloody torturer. What is it, I say, that the infirmity of the fragile sex is not shaken by so great a hail of darts? Now soothed by blandishments she is not bent, now attacked by the stridors of thundering threats she is not moved. What is this, unless because he had received the infirmities of our flesh who administers the strength of his fortitude to the weak and infirm? For to this the power of God was emptied (exinanita) that he might strengthen our weak things. To this the sublimity of God was inclined that he might erect the dejected. To this life deigned to die that, destroying the empire of death, he might recall the dead to life. Which surely is declared even in the very origin of the human race. For it is written: "Because the Lord sent a deep sleep into Adam; and when he had fallen asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it, and the Lord rebuilt the rib, which he had taken from Adam, into a woman (Gen. 2)." Over which when the Apostle spoke, saying: "A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh;" he immediately subjoined: "This is a great sacrament. But I speak in Christ and in the Church (Ephes. 5)." And truly it is an indication of great virtue, a sacrament of wondrous depth. For through Adam is designated Christ, through Eve the Church. But what is it that the Lord first put Adam to sleep, then led out a rib from his side, whence the woman might be formed, unless because first the Redeemer slept in death and thus from his side flowed blood and water into the sacrament of the Church? Eve was translated from the side of the sleeping man; the Church went out from the side of the Savior hanging on the cross.

Sed quid est quod omnipotens Conditor cum mulierem de viro, id est, fragilem sexum de fortiori propagare disponeret, non viri carnem, sed os potius ad faciendam feminam sibi voluit materiam exhibere? Potuit enim Deus homini carnem detrahere, unde femina formaretur, et hoc certe congruentius videretur. Sciebat enim sexus debilior quid nimirum consequentius de carnis infirmitate quam ex ossis procederet fortitudine, et ut magis stupeas divini operis sacramentum, non pro osse os reddidit, sed carne potius quod in viri corpore vacabat implevit? Unde Scriptura cum dixit: «Tulit unam de costis ejus;» mox addidit: «Et replevit carnem pro ea (Gen. II).» Poterat nempe ad mulierem plasmandam carnem viro detrahere, poterat osse ossis dispendium in mutilato corpore restaurare, sed os tulit et carnem reddidit, sicque fragilem de virtute formavit. Debilis itaque factus est Adam, ut fortis fieret Eva. Infirmatus est Christus, ut roboraretur Ecclesia. Illius enim infirmitas nostra est fortitudo, et ad hoc ille nostram pertulit infirmitatem, ut ad suam nos statueret fortitudinem. «Quod infirmum est Dei, ait Apostolus, fortius est hominibus (I Cor. I).» Et alibi: «Nam etsi crucifixus est Christus ex infirmitate, sed vivit ex virtute Dei. Nam etsi nos infirmi sumus in illo, sed vivimus cum eo ex virtute Dei (II Cor. XIII).» Enimvero saeculi hujus homines, qui bellorum ambiunt virtute clarescere, qui per ora vulgi suas optant victorias celebrari, cum ingressuri sunt praelium in corpore suo, quod infirmum est et molle subjiciunt, quod durum est atque ad penetrandum difficile superponunt. Loricis quippe se ferreis induunt, carnem, quae facile cedit ictui, custodire contendunt, ut illud durum ac forte quod foris est defendat molle quod intus est.

Redemptor noster, cum hujus mundi campum pugnaturus ingreditur, cum ad debellandas aeris hujus nequitias fortis praeliator armatur, quia novum debebat instruere praelium, novum induit genus armorum, videlicet ut quod infirmum est superponeret, et quod robustum est occultaret, loricam siquidem imbecillae carnis induit et insuperabilem divinitatis fortitudinem occultavit. Sic sic per carnem diabolus a secundo homine perdidit qui per carnem dudum primum hominem superavit, eademque sibi nunc ruinae facta est causa quae victoriae fuerat de primo parente materia.

But what is it that the almighty Founder, when he disposed to propagate the fragile sex from the man, that is, from the stronger, wished to exhibit to himself not the flesh of the man, but rather a bone as material for making the woman? For God could have drawn flesh from the man, whence the woman might be formed, and this certainly would seem more congruent. For the weaker sex knew what indeed proceeded more consequently from the infirmity of the flesh than from the fortitude of the bone; and that you may more marvel at the sacrament of the divine work, he did not render bone for bone, but rather filled with flesh what was vacant in the man's body? Whence the Scripture when it said: "He took one of his ribs;" soon added: "And he filled up flesh for it (Gen. 2)." Surely he could have drawn flesh from the man to fashion the woman, he could have restored the loss of a bone with a bone in the mutilated body, but he took a bone and rendered flesh, and thus he formed the fragile from virtue. Weak therefore was Adam made, that Eve might become strong. Christ was weakened, that the Church might be strengthened. For his infirmity is our fortitude, and to this he bore our infirmity, that he might establish us at his fortitude. "What is the weak thing of God, says the Apostle, is stronger than men (1 Cor. 1)." And elsewhere: "For although Christ was crucified from infirmity, yet he liveth from the power of God. For although we are weak in him, yet we live with him from the power of God (2 Cor. 13)." Indeed the men of this world, who ambiently desire to become bright with the virtue of wars, who wish their victories to be celebrated through the mouths of the common people, when they are about to enter battle, subject in their body what is weak and soft, and place over it what is hard and difficult to penetrate. Surely they clothe themselves with iron breastplates (loricis), they contend to guard the flesh, which easily yields to a blow, so that that hard and strong thing which is without may defend the soft thing which is within.

Our Redeemer, when he enters the field of this world about to fight, when as a strong warrior he is armed to defeat the wickednesses of this air, because he ought to instruct a new battle, he put on a new kind of arms, namely that he might superpose what is infirm, and hide what is robust; he put on the breastplate (loricam) indeed of weak flesh and hid the insuperable fortitude of divinity. So, so through the flesh the devil lost from the second man he who through the flesh long ago overcame the first man, and the same was now made the cause of ruin to him which had been the material of victory over the first parent.

Hoc per allegoriae mysterium res illa praemonuit quod David a facie regis Saul fugiens in praesentia Achis regis Geth se furere simulavit. Dicit enim Scriptura quia «defluebant salivae ejus in barbam (I Reg. XXI).» Sane quia barba viri est proprium, quid est per mysticum intellectum, nisi virtutis indicium? Quid ergo per salivas, quae nimirum fluxae sunt et fluxae, nisi carnis infirmitas? Quid vero per barbam, nisi divinitatis innuitur fortitudo? Barba ergo salivis defluentibus operitur, quia fragili carnis velamine divinitatis virtus induitur. Sed quod David dispensationis agebat industria, hoc a nescientibus putabatur insania. Unde Achis servis suis ait: «Vidistis hominem insanum, quare adduxistis eum ad me? An desunt nobis furiosi, quod introduxistis istum ut fureret me praesente?» (Ibid.) Nonne etiam vero David, Redemptori nostro, simile quid accidit, ut insanus ab insanientibus putaretur et miracula per daemones agere a daemoniacis diceretur? Hinc est, quod Marcus evangelista dicit: «Et cum vidissent sui, exierunt tenere eum. Dicebant enim: Quoniam in furorem versus est (Marc. III).» Quibus verbis protinus addidit: «Et Scribae, qui ab Hierosolymis descenderant, dicebant: Quoniam Beelzebub habet, et quia in principe daemoniorum ejicit daemonia (Ibid.).» Porro autem, quia salivae frequenter ex infantium ore decurrunt, nonne velut infantilia videbantur verba, cum diceret: «Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis. Quod audientes discipuli, dicebant: Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest eum audire?» (Joan. VI.) Et sicut ut evangelista refert, «jam non cum illo ambulabant.» Sed istae salivae barbam David tegebant, quia sub his infantilibus verbis virtus divina latebat.

Factus est ergo Redemptor noster infirmus, ut nos fortes efficeret; visus est stultus, ut ad veram nos sapientiam revocaret. Unde dicit Apostolus: «Quia quod stultum est Dei, sapientia est hominibus.» Et paulo superius: «Quia non agnovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes (I Cor. I).» Nec indignum super Domino Salvatore nostro infirmitatem, vel stultitiam dici, cum etiam per leprosum, tum etiam per serpentem non dedignatus sit mystice figurari. Unde est quod, Scriptura testante, dixit Deus Moysi: «Mitte manum in sinum tuum. Qui cum misisset in sinum, protulit leprosam instar nivis. Retrahe, ait, manum in sinum tuum. Retraxit, et protulit iterum, et erat similis carni reliquae (Exod. IV).» Quid hoc loco per manum Moysi designatur nisi Filius Dei? Unde dicitur in Psalmo: «Fiat manus tua ut salvet me (Psal. CXVIII).» Ac si diceret: Fiat ille, per quem facta sunt omnia, ut, dum ille creatur, a reatus sui contagio liberetur.

That thing premonished through the mystery of allegory that which David, fleeing from the face of King Saul, feigned himself to be mad in the presence of Achish, the king of Gath. For the Scripture says that "his salivae flowed down into his beard (1 Sam. 21)." Surely because the beard is proper to a man, what is it through mystic intellect unless the indication of virtue? What therefore through the salivae, which indeed are fluid and flux, unless the infirmity of the flesh? What truly through the beard, unless the fortitude of divinity is hinted at? The beard therefore is covered by the flowing salivae, because the virtue of divinity is clothed with the fragile veil of the flesh. But what David was doing by the industry of dispensation, this was thought to be insanity by those who knew not. Whence Achish said to his servants: "You have seen a madman, why have you brought him to me? Do we lack madmen, that you have introduced this one to be mad in my presence? (Ibid.)" Did not something similar happen even to the true David, our Redeemer, that he was thought to be insane by the insane and was said by the demoniacs to perform miracles through demons? Hence it is, that Mark the evangelist says: "And when his own had seen, they went out to lay hold on him. For they said: That he is become mad (Mark 3)." To which words he soon added: "And the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said: That he hath Beelzebub, and that by the prince of devils he casteth out devils (Ibid.)" Furthermore, because salivae frequently run out from the mouth of infants, did not his words seem like infantile things when he said: "Unless you shall eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. Which the disciples hearing, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? (John 6)." And as the evangelist reports, "they walked no more with him." But those salivae were covering the beard of David, because under these infantile words divine virtue was lying hid.

Our Redeemer was therefore made infirm, that he might make us strong; he was seen as a fool, that he might recall us to true wisdom. Whence the Apostle says: "Because the foolish thing of God is wisdom to men." And a little above: "Because the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1)." Nor is it unworthy for infirmity or foolishness to be said concerning the Lord our Savior, since he did not disdain to be mystically figured even through a leper, and also through a serpent. Whence it is that, Scripture attesting, God said to Moses: "Put thy hand into thy bosom. Who when he had put it into his bosom, brought it forth leprous as snow. Draw back, he said, thy hand into thy bosom. He drew it back, and brought it forth again, and it was like the rest of the flesh (Exod. 4)." What is designated in this place by the hand of Moses unless the Son of God? Whence it is said in the Psalm: "Let thy hand be made to save me (Psalm 118)." As if he should say: Let him be made, through whom all things were made, that, while he is created, he may be freed from the contagion of his guilt.

Haec manus in sinu Patris est, sicut Joannes Baptista dicit: «Filius, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse narravit (Joan. II).» Sed manus haec cum de sinu prolata est, hoc est, cum per mysterium incarnationis apparuit, peccatorem eum, et tanquam sceleris lepra perfusum, is unde processerat populus aestimavit. Unde dicit Isaias: «Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum, et percussum a Deo et humiliatum (Isai. LIII).» Sed manus haec cum in sinum rediit, lepram prorsus amisit; quia Redemptor noster postquam ad Patrem calcato mortis imperio rediit, jam in fine saeculi non peccator homo, sed vere Deus et homo Judaeis omnibus apparebit. Scriptum quippe est: «Quia si fuerit numerum filiorum Israel sicut arena maris, reliquiae salvae erunt. (Rom. IX).»

Per serpentem quoque figuratus est, cum ad eumdem Moysen Dominus ait: «Quid est quod tenes in manu tua? Respondit: Virgam. Ait: Projice eam in terram. Projecit, et versa est in colubrum, ita ut fugeret Moyses. Dixitque Dominus: Extende manum tuam, et apprehende caudam ejus. Extendit, et tenuit, versaque est in virgam (Exod. IV).» Quid per Moysen, nisi Judaicus populus? Et quid per virgam, nisi potestas Divinitatis? Et quid per serpentem, nisi mortalitas nostri Redemptoris exprimitur? Quia enim per serpentem mors, recte mortalitas in serpente, vel certe, cum scriptum sit: «Estote prudentes sicut serpentes (Matth. X);» quia ipsa summa prudentia, id est, Dei sapientia, incarnari dignata est, recte ejus mortalitas in serpente figuratur. Unde et in Evangelio de passione sua loquitur, dicens: «Sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in deserto, ita exaltari oportet filium hominis (Joan. III).»

Moyses ergo virgam tenuit, quia Judaicus populus ante Redemptoris adventum in divina potestate confisus est: sed virgam in terram projecit, quia idem populus per patriarchas ac prophetas Deum incarnandum esse nuntiavit. Virga vero in colubrum vertitur, quia Redemptor noster Deus in se permanens, mortalis inter homines factus est. Sed Moyses colubrum conspiciens pertimuit et fugit, quia Judaicus populus dum Redemptorem humani generis mortalem vidit, dum crederet, quasi formidolosus expavit. Cui jubetur ut colubrum cauda teneat, quia perfidus ille populus, qui modo credere recusat, in extrema parte Dominici corporis, id est, posteriori tempore sanctae Ecclesiae, videlicet in fine mundi, sese ad fidem recolligit. Et colubrum cauda tenet, quia eum, quem mortalem ante despexerat, Redemptorem suum in ultima jam parte Ecclesiae confitetur.

This hand is in the bosom of the Father, as John the Baptist says: "The Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1)." But this hand when it was brought forth from the bosom, that is, when it appeared through the mystery of the incarnation, the people from whom it proceeded estimated him a sinner, and as if drenched with the leprosy of crime. Whence Isaiah says: "And we thought him as a leper, and smitten by God and humbled (Isaiah 53)." But this hand when it returned into the bosom, utterly lost the leprosy; because our Redeemer after he returned to the Father, the empire of death having been trodden under foot, will now at the end of the world appear to all the Jews not as a sinful man, but truly as God and man. For it is written: "For if the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved (Rom. 9)."

He was also figured through a serpent, when the Lord said to the same Moses: "What is that which thou holdest in thy hand? He answered: A rod. He said: Cast it down upon the ground. He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent, so that Moses fled. And the Lord said: Extend thy hand, and take it by the tail. He extended it, and took it, and it was turned into a rod (Exod. 4)." What by Moses, unless the Jewish people? And what by the rod, unless the power of the Divinity? And what by the serpent, unless the mortality of our Redeemer is expressed? For because through the serpent death, rightly mortality in the serpent, or surely, since it is written: "Be ye wise as serpents (Matt. 10);" because that same highest prudence, that is, the wisdom of God, deigned to be incarnated, rightly his mortality is figured in the serpent. Whence also in the Gospel he speaks concerning his passion, saying: "As Moses exalted the serpent in the desert, so must the son of man be exalted (John 3)."

Moses therefore held the rod, because the Jewish people before the coming of the Redeemer trusted in the divine power: but he cast the rod on the ground, because the same people through the patriarchs and prophets announced that God was to be incarnated. The rod truly is turned into a serpent, because our Redeemer, God remaining in himself, was made mortal among men. But Moses beholding the serpent was very afraid and fled, because the Jewish people while it saw the Redeemer of the human race mortal, while it would believe, was terrified as if fearful. To whom it is commanded that he hold the serpent by the tail, because that perfidious people, which now refuses to believe, in the extreme part of the Lord's body, that is, in the latter time of the holy Church, namely at the end of the world, recollects itself to the faith. And it holds the serpent by the tail, because him, whom it had before despised as mortal, it confesses as its Redeemer in the last part already of the Church.

Sed mox serpens in virgam redit, quia statim ut Judaicus populus in Redemptorem nostrum crediderit, idem Redemptor ad judicium in potestate suae divinitatis apparebit, ut ei jam serpens virga sit, quia is qui in terra homo despectus est, de coelo veniens, super angelos videbitur Deus. Sicut ergo Dominus, et sine lepra leprosus, et sine veneno serpens per mysterium dicitur; ita nihilominus, et sine fatuitate stultus, et sine imbecillitate perhibetur infirmus. Qui nimirum sic se nostrae infirmitati componit atque contemperat ut et cum dimicantibus certet, et cum patientibus simul supplicia toleret.

Quid ergo mirum si beata Columba, dum tribunalibus rabidi persecutoris assisteret, et fortis erat in suppliciis, et sapiens in responsis; si, dum illa torquebatur, per eam alius loquebatur? Illa nimirum linguam movebat, sed alius verba formabat. «Non enim, inquit, vos estis qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri, qui loquitur in vobis (Matth. X).» Illius erat exponere corpus ad poenam, alteri competebat virtutis ac patientiae ministrare constantiam. Assistebat quidem tribunalibus regis, torquebatur manibus subjecta carnificis, sed deridebat utrumque et judicante sublimior et puniente robustior. Unde sponsus in Canticis, velut ad eam sermonem specialiter dirigit, cum ait: «Quam pulchra es et decora, charissima, in deliciis! Statura tua assimilata est palmae (Cant. VII).» Mens quippe sancta charissima in deliciis dicitur, quia dum persecutionibus attrita foris affligitur, piis aestuans desideriis suavitatis intimae dulcedine recreatur. Cujus statura palmae similis dicitur, quia sicut non vitiorum titillantium flatibus, ita nec persecutionum quarumlibet terroribus inclinatur. Dumque eam persequentium rabies velut impactis minarum arietibus pulsat, illa fundamento invictae fidei constanter innixa, revera stans et supereminens insuperabilis perseverat. Nequaquam illis similis, cujus per prophetam de malignis spiritibus dicitur: «Quia humiliaverunt te et dixerunt animae tuae: Incurvare, ut transeamus (Isai. LI);» sed illud potius servans quod filiis Israel Dominus ait: «Ego sum, inquit, Dominus Deus, qui eripui vos de ergastulo Aegyptiorum, ut incederetis recti (Exod. VI).»

But soon the serpent returns into a rod, because immediately as the Jewish people shall have believed in our Redeemer, the same Redeemer will appear for judgment in the power of his divinity, so that to it now the serpent may be a rod, because he who on earth was a despised man, coming from heaven, will be seen as God above the angels. Just as therefore the Lord is said through mystery to be a leper without leprosy and a serpent without venom; so nonetheless, he is perhibited as a fool without folly and infirm without imbecility. Who indeed so composes and contemperates himself to our infirmity that he both strives with those who fight and at the same time tolerates punishments with those who suffer.

What wonder therefore if Blessed Columba, while she stood before the tribunals of the rabid persecutor, was both strong in punishments and wise in responses; if, while she was being tortured, another was speaking through her? She indeed was moving her tongue, but another was forming the words. "For it is not you, he said, who speak, but the Spirit of your Father, who speaketh in you (Matt. 10)." It was hers to expose the body to punishment, it belonged to the other to minister the constancy of virtue and patience. She stood indeed before the tribunals of the king, she was tortured subjected to the hands of the executioner, but she derided both, more sublime than the one judging and more robust than the one punishing. Whence the bridegroom in the Canticles, as if directing his speech specially to her, when he says: "How beautiful art thou and how comely, my dearest, in delights! Thy stature is like to a palm tree (Cant. 7)." For the holy mind is called most dear in delights, because while worn out it is afflicted without by persecutions, seething with pious desires it is recreated with the sweetness of inward pleasantness. Whose stature is said to be like a palm tree, because as it is not inclined by the blasts of titillating vices, so neither by the terrors of any persecutions whatsoever. And while the madness of those persecuting her beats her as if by the impacted rams of threats, she constantly leaning upon the foundation of unconquered faith, truly standing and supereminent perseveres insuperable. In no way like those, of whom it is said through the prophet concerning the malignant spirits: "Because they have humbled thee and have said to thy soul: Bow down, that we may pass over (Isaiah 51);" but rather observing that which the Lord said to the children of Israel: "I am, he said, the Lord God, who brought you out from the prison (*ergastulo*) of the Egyptians, that you might walk upright (Exod. 6)."

Et quoniam palma solet manum ornare victricem, recte sancta et insuperabilis anima palmae esse similis perhibetur, quia per omnem sui certaminis cursum peractae victoriae praemium meditatur. Atque idcirco floccipendit omne quod in infimis tolerat, qui erecta velut palma, id quod in coelestibus aspicit, firmiter sperat. Huc accedit, quia cum coeli Dominum eamdem passionis viam percurrisse commemorat, jam se, quae pulvis et cinis est, sui Salvatoris imitari vestigia vehementer exsultat. Unde et eidem sponsae sponsus ait: «Comae capitis tui ut purpura regis juncta canalibus (Cant. VII).» Sicut per caput intelligimus mentem, ita per comas capitis non inconvenienter accipimus cogitationes. Sicut enim capilli de vertice prodeunt, ita cogitationes ex mente procedunt. Purpureus vero color, quia sanguinis habet speciem, quid per mysterium, nisi Dominicam innuit passionem? Quid vero canales, nisi sanctorum mentes? Sicut enim in canalibus conchiliorum sanguis effunditur, ut in purpureum colorem lana vertatur: sic in sanctorum mentibus Dominicae passionis cruor meditatione recolitur; et ita quodammodo pia quaelibet anima sanguine tingitur, ut aeterni Regis purpuram imitetur. Hoc nimirum modo efficimur Salvatori nostro conformes, ut simus etiam merito postmodum cohaeredes.

Coma ergo capitis beatae martyris Columbae, ut purpura erat regis juncta canalibus, quia constituta in passione proprii corporis, recolebat assidue supplicium Redemptoris, ne videlicet in sua passione succumberet, dum remuneratorem suum per eamdem viam se praecessisse pensaret. Passio quippe Domini quasi vicaria quaedam nobis mensa proposita est, ut quique ad eam invitati discumbimus, nos etiam similia praeparemus. Ad quam nos sponsus invitat in Canticis: «Comedite, inquit, amici mei, et bibite, et inebriamini, charissimi (Cant. V).» Et in Proverbiis Salomonis: «Si sederis, inquit, coenare ad mensam potentis, considerans intellige quae apponuntur tibi, et sic mitte manum tuam, sciens quoniam talia oportet te praeparare (Prov. I).»

Quaenam est illa mensa potentis, nisi unde sumitur corpus et sanguis ejus, qui suam pro nobis animam posuit? Et quid est ad eam sedere, nisi humiliter ac reverenter accedere? Ubi quae nobis apponuntur considerantes, intelligimus si digne tanti muneris gratiam cogitamus. Et tunc ita manum mittimus ut sciamus quia talia nos expediat praeparare, cum prudenter intelligimus quia sicut Christus pro nobis mori dignatus est, ita nos pro illo, si detur occasio, debemus animas ponere. «Quid enim, ait Psalmista, retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam (Psal. CXV).»

And since a palm is wont to adorn a victorious hand, rightly a holy and insuperable soul is perhibited to be like a palm tree, because through every course of its contest it meditates upon the reward of the victory performed. And for that reason he counts as nothing all that he tolerates in the lowest things, who erected like a palm, firmly hopes for that which he beholds in the heavenly things. To this is added, because when he commemorates that the Lord of heaven has run through the same way of passion, he already greatly exults, who is dust and ashes, to imitate the footsteps of his Savior. Whence also the bridegroom says to the same bride: "The hair of thy head is like the king's purple joined to the channels (Cant. 7)." As by the head we understand the mind, so by the hair of the head we not inconveniently receive thoughts. For just as hairs come forth from the vertex, so thoughts proceed from the mind. But the purple color, because it has the appearance of blood, what does it hint through mystery unless the Lord's passion? But what do the channels signify unless the minds of the saints? For as in the channels of shellfishes blood is poured out, that the wool may be turned into a purple color: so in the minds of the saints the blood of the Lord's passion is recollected by meditation; and thus in some way any pious soul is dyed with blood, that it may imitate the purple of the eternal King. In this way indeed we are made conformable to our Savior, that we may also merit to be co-heirs afterwards.

The hair therefore of the head of the blessed martyr Columba was like the king's purple joined to the channels, because established in the passion of her own body, she recollected assidue the punishment of the Redeemer, lest namely she should succumb in her own passion, while she thought that her rewarder had preceded her through the same way. For the passion of the Lord is proposed to us as if a certain vicarious table, that whoever of us invited to it sit down, we also may prepare similar things. To which the bridegroom invites us in the Canticles: "Eat, he says, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved (Cant. 5)." And in the Proverbs of Solomon: "If thou shalt sit, he says, to dine at the table of a powerful one, considerately understand what things are set before thee, and so put thy hand, knowing that it behooves thee to prepare such things (Prov. 23)."

Which is that table of the powerful one, unless whence is taken the body and blood of him who laid down his life for us? And what is it to sit at it, unless to approach humbly and reverently? Where considering those things which are set before us, we understand if we think worthily of the grace of so great a gift. And then we so put our hand that we may know that it is expedient for us to prepare such things, when we prudently understand that as Christ deigned to die for us, so we for him, if occasion be given, ought to lay down our lives. "For what, says the Psalmist, shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me? I will take the cup of salvation (Psalm 115)."

Hinc est etiam quod dilectae suae sponsus in Canticis cum praemisisset: «Sub arbore malo suscitavi te,» consequenter adjunxit: «Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum (Cant. VIII).» Ac si dicerat: Quia ego te intantum dilexi ut per mortem crucis te mortuam suscitarem; tu etiam me alterutrum [alterum tantum] dilige, meque in tuis non modo cogitationibus, sed et operibus, velut integri atque perfecti amoris signaculum pone. Nam per arborem malum Dominicam crucem debemus accipere, cui videlicet arbori ipsum alibi Christum comparat, dicens: «Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic dilectus meus inter filios (Cant. I).»

Arbor ergo mali crux est Christi, per quam suscipata est anima, mortis scilicet aeternae vinculis absoluta. «Pone me, inquit, ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum (Cant. VIII).» Quid per cor, nisi cogitationes: quid per brachium, nisi operis debemus intelligere fortitudinem? Christum ergo tanquam signaculum in corde nostro debemus imprimere, ut nulla hoc valeat hostilis irruptio violare. Christum etiam operibus nostris debemus insculpere, ut per omne quod agimus, Crucifixi praeceptoris discipulo demonstremus. Hoc signaculum exteriori quoque vitae suae signanter impressum Apostolus ostendebat, cum diceret: «Ego stigmata Jesu in corpore meo porto (Gal. VI).» Et iterum: «Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes (II Cor. IV).»

Plane si nos Salvator noster hoc charactere sculptos esse perpendit, et ipse nos grata vice sibimet signaculum ponit. Sicut duci Judaeae Zorobabel per Aggaeum prophetam pollicitus est, dicens: «In illa die suscipiam te, Zorobabel, fili Salathiel, serve meus, et ponam te sicut signaculum in conspectu meo (Agg. II).» Quod si nos ejus, quod absit, obliviscimur, necesse est ut et ipsi ab eo consequenter oblivioni tradamur: Sicut de impio rege Dominus: «Si fuerit, inquit, Jechonias annulus dexter in manu mea, inde evellam eum (Jer. XXII).» Hoc plane signaculum beata Christi sponsa Columba intus et extrinsecus sibi signanter impresserat, cum non eam regales thalami ad lenocinia fluxa resolvere, non honoris ambitio provocare, non minarum intonantium furor innectere, non eam certe a sui cursus impetu quamlibet dura et exquisita poterat tormentorum genera retardare. Hoc signaculo praemunitum Regis aeterni sacrarium nulla potuit acies hostilis irrumpere, nulla fraudum subrepentium valuerunt molimina violare.

Armis igitur accincta virtutum gloriosa martyr et virgo, per ferrum, per ignes, per immane supplicium properavit ad regna coelorum. Ubi nunc inter virginum choros canticum novum modulando conjubilat, et victoriae palmam beatis manibus portat. Ubi castis sponsi sui, quem dilexerat, ulnis astringitur, stola decoris induitur, corona gloriae feliciter adornatur.

Hence it is also that the bridegroom in the Canticles to his beloved, when he had premissed: "Under the apple tree I raised thee up," consequently subjoined: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm (Cant. 8)." As if he should say: Because I have loved thee so much that through the death of the cross I raised thee up being dead; do thou also love me in return, and put me in thy not only thoughts, but also works, as a seal of integral and perfect love. For by the apple tree we ought to receive the Lord's cross, to which tree indeed he elsewhere compares Christ himself, saying: "As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons (Cant. 2)."

The apple tree is therefore the cross of Christ, through which the soul is raised, being namely loosed from the bonds of eternal death. "Put me," he says, "as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm (Cant. 8)." What should we understand by the heart, if not thoughts; what by the arm, if not the strength of work? We ought therefore to imprint Christ like a seal in our heart, so that no hostile irruption may prevail to violate this. We ought also to engrave Christ in our works, so that through all that we do, we may demonstrate ourselves to be the disciple of the Crucified teacher. The Apostle showed this seal to be significantly imprinted also upon his exterior life, when he said: "I bear the marks (stigmata) of Jesus in my body (Gal. 6)." And again: "Always carrying about the mortification of Jesus in our body (2 Cor. 4)."

Clearly, if our Savior considers us to be engraved with this character, he himself also places us as a seal for himself in a grateful turn. As he promised to Zerubbabel, the leader of Judea, through the prophet Haggai, saying: "In that day I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant, and I will place thee as a seal in my sight (Hag. 2)." But if we forget him, which God forbid, it is necessary that we ourselves consequently be delivered to oblivion by him: as the Lord says of the impious king: "If Jeconiah," he says, "were a signet ring on my right hand, thence would I pluck him away (Jer. 22)." The blessed bride of Christ, Columba, had clearly imprinted this seal significantly upon herself within and without, since royal chambers could not resolve her to fluid allurements, nor the ambition of honor provoke her, nor the fury of thundering threats entwine her, nor certainly could any kind of hard and exquisite torments retard her from the impetus of her course. No hostile battle line could break into the sanctuary of the eternal King, fortified by this seal; no efforts of creeping frauds prevailed to violate it.

Girded therefore with the arms of virtues, the glorious martyr and virgin hastened through iron, through fires, through immense punishment to the heavenly kingdoms. Where now among the choirs of virgins she joins in jubilation by modulating a new song, and carries the palm of victory in her blessed hands. Where she is held fast in the chaste arms of her bridegroom, whom she had loved, is clothed with a stole of beauty, and is happily adorned with a crown of glory.

Nunc itaque velut sidus aureum inter ignitos supernae Hierusalem lapides emicat, et in illius obtutibus semper festiva coruscat, qui vitae fons, et lucis origo cunctos sibimet assistentes radiis inoccidui splendoris illustrat, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

SERMONES EXTRAVAGANTES DE SANCTIS. Sermo I. In Natali sanctarum virginum. Sermo II. De eisdem. Sermo I. De dedicatione ecclesiae. Sermo II De eadem Sermo III. De eadem. Sermo IV. De eadem.

## Sermo LXVII.

*IN NATALI VIRGINUM.*

Inter cuncta sanctorum gesta, fratres charissimi, nihil est quod plus quam sacrarum victoria virginum pia corda, vel ad amorem Conditoris accendere, vel ad fortiter agendum valeat uberius excitare. Quis enim, audito nomine virginis, non protinus in memoriam revocet humanae salutis exordium, ac singularem illum non recolat intemeratae Virginis partum. Huc accedit quia cum fragilis sexus certaminis sui victoriam obtinuisse cognoscitur, audientis animus ad certandi laborem avidius inflammatur.

Hoc itaque modo virgineus adhuc germinat partus, adhuc virginalis illa fecunditas coelestium segetum fructus accumulat, cum mulieris infirmitas non modo sexum superat, sed et mundi hujus principem insuperabili mentis magnanimitate triumphat. Ad hoc namque Dei Filius vernanting vulvae flore conceptus est, ut fermentum vetus in azymum verteret, et per carnem, quae victa fuerat, humano generi victoriam repararet. Loricam quippe sibi de nostra fragilitate composuit, in qua exsultans ut gigas, et potens ac fortis in praelio, potestates aereas debellavit. Sic itaque de infirmitate constantia, de captivitate victoria, de ruina est ascensio procurata. Hinc siquidem factum est ut antiquus hostis, qui sibi provenisse victoriam per unius feminae vecordiam applaudebat; per multas se jam devictum atque confusum feminas erubescat. Juxta prophetae quippe vocem: «Computruit jugum a facie olei (Isai. X).» Quia mox, ut gratia sancti Spiritus mentibus humanis influxit, homo protinus et jugo pristinae servitutis absolvitur et novae libertatis titulo decoratur. Unde est illud in Canticis: «Oleum effusum nomen tuum (Cant. I).»

Now therefore, like a golden star, she shines among the fiery stones of the supernal Jerusalem, and always sparkles festive in the gaze of him who, being the fountain of life and the origin of light, illustrates all those assisting him with the rays of unsetting splendor, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

EXTRAVAGANT SERMONS ON THE SAINTS. Sermo I. On the Birthday of the holy virgins. Sermo II. On the same. Sermo I. On the dedication of a church. Sermo II. On the same. Sermo III. On the same. Sermo IV. On the same.

## Sermon LXVII.

*ON THE BIRTHDAY OF VIRGINS.*

Among all the deeds of the saints, dearly beloved brethren, there is nothing that is more able either to kindle pious hearts to the love of the Creator, or more abundantly to excite them to act strongly, than the victory of the holy virgins. For who, having heard the name of a virgin, does not immediately recall to memory the beginning of human salvation, and does not recollect that singular birth of the untainted Virgin. To this is added that when the fragile sex is known to have obtained the victory of its contest, the mind of the hearer is more greedily inflamed to the labor of contending.

In this way therefore a virginal birth still buds, still that virginal fecundity accumulates the fruits of heavenly harvests, when the infirmity of a woman not only overcomes the sex, but also triumphs over the prince of this world with an insuperable magnanimity of mind. For to this end the Son of God was conceived from the flower of a budding womb, that he might turn the old leaven into the unleavened, and through the flesh, which had been conquered, might repair victory for the human race. Indeed he composed for himself a breastplate from our fragility, in which exulting as a giant, and powerful and strong in battle, he fought down the aerial powers. Thus therefore from infirmity was constancy, from captivity victory, from ruin was ascension procured. Hence indeed it was brought about that the ancient enemy, who was applauding that victory had come to him through the folly of one woman; may now blush to see himself conquered and confounded through many women. According indeed to the voice of the prophet: "The yoke shall rot before the face of the oil (Isa. 10)." Because as soon as the grace of the Holy Spirit flowed into human minds, man is immediately both absolved from the yoke of the former servitude and is adorned with the title of a new liberty. Whence is that in the Canticles: "Thy name is as oil poured out (Cant. 1)."

Chrisma Graece, Latine dicitur unctio. A chrismate ergo Christus, et a Christo dicitur Christianus. Per oleum autem Spiritus sanctus solet intelligi, sicut per Psalmistam Salvatori nostro dicitur: «Unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, oleo laetitiae prae consortibus tuis (Psal. XLIV).» Oleum ergo effusum est nomen Christi, quia in tot Spiritus sancti gratia propagatur, quot sunt qui Christi vocabulum veraciter sortiuntur.

Sed movere potest cur Joannes Baptista perhibeat quia «non ad mensuram dat Deus spiritum (Joan. XIII);» cum Paulus econtrario dicat: «Unicuique nostrum data est gratia secundum mensuram donationis Christi (Ephes. IV).» Quomodo ergo non ad mensuram, et quomodo secundum mensuram? (Coloss. II.) Sed quod Joannes asserit non ad mensuram spiritum dari, de Redemptore nostro procul dubio debet intelligi; in quo videlicet habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter. Quod patenter agnoscitur, si ipsa textus evangelici series attenditur. Nam cum praemisisset: «Non ad mensuram dat Deus Spiritum;» protinus intulit: «Pater diligit Filium, et omnia dedit in manu ejus (Joan. I).» Unde et alibi dicit: «Nos de plenitudine ejus accepimus.» Concordat ergo cum Psalmista Joannes, quia huic iste mensuram tollit, quem ille unctum prae consortibus asserit.

Quod autem Apostolus mensuram ponit, hoc de quibusque fidelibus vult intelligi. Juxta mensuram namque spiritus inest cuique mensura virtutis, atque constantiae, ut vel vitiis attentantibus in pace resistat, vel in certamine constitutus insuperabiliter tormenta percurrat. Samson quippe donec septem crines habuit, insuperabilis fuit (Judic. XVI), et qui septiformis habet gratiae Spiritum, invictum se praebet ingruente quorumlibet tempestate bellorum.

Hinc est, quod haec sacratissima virgo, cujus gloriosum recolimus hodierna solemnitate triumphum, facilius potuit mori, quam ab eo, quod semel conceperat, sancto potuerit proposito revocari. Erat enim templum Dei, aula regis aeterni, sanctuarium Spiritus sancti. Virile quippe robur enitebat in femineo pectore, quod non blandiloquis persuasionibus flecti, non minarum asperitate terreri, non denique poenarum quarumlibet potuit generibus superari. Erat enim nobilis, et inflexibilis animus, ideo vinci nescius, quia et fidei flagrabat ardore succensus, et ideo tanquam in excelsi montis erat vertice constitutus. Subesse sibi judicabat judicem in cathedra pestilentiae praesidentem, horrebat blandum, subsannabat iratum, tantique apud eam erat, si minax, ac terribilis frenderet, si certe plagas ac vulnera exquisitae necis infligeret, quanti si gemmarum, sive vibrantium metallorum pondus offerret. Hinc est, quod sponsus ait in Canticis: «Surge, aquilo, et veni, auster, perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius (Cant. IV).»

In Greek it is called chrism, in Latin unction. From chrism therefore Christ is named, and from Christ one is called a Christian. But through oil the Holy Spirit is wont to be understood, as is said through the Psalmist to our Savior: "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (Psalm 44)." Oil poured out therefore is the name of Christ, because in so many is the grace of the Holy Spirit propagated, as there are those who truly sort the name of Christ.

But it can move one why John the Baptist should perhibit that "God giveth not the spirit by measure (John 3);" while Paul on the contrary says: "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Ephes. 4)." How therefore not by measure, and how according to measure? (Coloss. 2.) But what John asserts, that the spirit is given not by measure, ought without doubt to be understood of our Redeemer; in whom namely dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally. Which is patently recognized if the series of the evangelical text itself is attended to. For when he had premissed: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure;" he immediately brought in: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand (John 3)." Whence also elsewhere he says: "Of his fullness we have all received." John therefore agrees with the Psalmist, because to this one he takes away the measure, whom that one asserts to be anointed above his fellows.

But that the Apostle places a measure, this he wishes to be understood of each of the faithful. For according to the measure of the spirit there is in each a measure of virtue and of constancy, that he may either resist vices when they attempt in peace, or being established in a contest may insuperably run through torments. For Samson, as long as he had seven locks, was insuperable (Judg. 16), and he who has the Spirit of sevenfold grace, shows himself invincible when the tempest of any wars whatsoever rushes in.

Hence it is, that this most sacred virgin, whose glorious triumph we recall in today's solemnity, could more easily die than be recalled from that holy purpose which she had once conceived. For she was the temple of God, the court of the eternal King, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, a virile strength shone in her feminine breast, which could not be bent by smooth-talking persuasions, nor terrified by the asperity of threats, nor finally overcome by any kinds of punishments. For hers was a noble and inflexible mind, and therefore unknowing how to be conquered, because it also glowed kindled with the fervor of faith, and therefore was established as if on the summit of a high mountain. She judged the judge presiding in the chair of pestilence to be beneath her; she abhorred him when smooth, she mocked him when angry; and it was of as much value to her if he, menacing and terrible, should gnash his teeth, or certainly if he should inflict blows and wounds of an exquisite death, as if he were offering a weight of gems or of vibrating metals. Hence it is that the bridegroom says in the Canticles: "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let its aromatics flow (Cant. 4)."

Quid per aquilonem, qui nimirum ventus est frigidus, nisi persecutionis asperitas? Quid per austri teporem, nisi male blandientium remissio designatur? Sed inter utriusque persecutionis genera, inter utraque maligni spiritus argumenta, ecclesiastici horti fluere jubentur aromata; quia fortis animus inter haec certamina deprehensus, aperit quidquid virium, quidquid fidei, quidquid invictae fortitudinis eatenus occultavit, et velut aromata foras profluunt, ad humanam notitiam virtutes prodeunt, ac piae opinionis odores longe lateque diffundunt.

Haec itaque venerabilis virgo emisit aromata in campo certaminis, quae prius in sui cordis tegebantur arcanis, attrita praelo persecutionis, aspersit odorem aromatis. Pugnabat enim in ea David velut in arce Sion contra faciem Damasci; vel potius ut in sexu fragili ipse parvulus, ac despectus uno contra magnum Goliath lapide dimicabat (1 Reg. XVII), de quo etiam in libro Regum velut in magnae laudis praeconio dicitur: «David sedens in cathedra sapientissimus princeps inter tres (2 Reg. XXIII).» Ipse quasi tenerrimus ligni vermiculus, qui octingentos interfecit impetu uno. Quid est, quod David, tam novae, tam inauditae praeconio laudis attollitur? Quis est iste tam humilis, tamque sublimis? Quis, inquam, est iste David ita debilis atque despectus, ut vermiculi speciem gerat? Ita fortis ac validus, ut uno impetu octingentos homines interficiat? In palea nempe litterae videtur esse ridiculum, si non in medulla spiritus lateat sacramentum.

Quis ergo vermiculus iste, nisi ille qui per eumdem David canit in Psalmo: «Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo? (Psal. XXI.)» Sicut enim vermis ex sola ligni materia gignitur, ita Christum absque virili semine de solo virginali utero genitum fides catholica confitetur. Sed quamvis vermis sit tener et debilis, ligni vero duritia fortis ac solida; vermis tamen lignum vertit in cariem, et cavernosum reddit, et cavum. Ita Redemptor noster verus utique manu fortis atque desiderabilis, qui semetipsum exinanivit, qui non habens speciem neque decorem, invalidus ac despectus apparuit: humanum genus unde ortus est, paulatim a suo rigore mollivit, magnumque sibimet in electis suis habitationis spatium procuravit. Hic itaque David sedet in cathedra, quia in paternae majestatis gloria constitutus, omnia judicat, cui Pater ait: «Sede a dextris meis.» Sapientissimus est, quia ipsa Patris Sapientia est.

Sed quomodo David dicitur princeps inter tres, cum ille non inter alios quemlibet principatum, sed super omnes potius regalis sceptri teneret imperium? (Psal. CIX) laus enim ista depreciat, non exaltat; deprimit, non attollit; cum ille non tam tribus interesset, quam omnibus superesset. Sed cum ab illo David videatur sententia ista dissidere, est cui valeat aptissime convenire. Beatus enim, ac singularis ille homo, qui mystice dictus est vermis, mox ut a Verbo in unitate personae suscipitur, in sancta Trinitate non inaequaliter principatur.

What is meant by the north wind, which indeed is a cold wind, unless the asperity of persecution? What by the warmth of the south wind, unless the remission of those who smoothly flatter? But among both kinds of persecution, among both arguments of the malignant spirit, the aromatics of the ecclesiastical garden are commanded to flow; because a strong mind caught among these contests opens whatever of strength, whatever of faith, whatever of insuperable fortitude it has hitherto hidden, and like aromatics they flow forth, virtues come forth to human notice, and spread the odors of a pious reputation far and wide.

This venerable virgin, therefore, sent forth aromatics in the field of contest, which previously were hidden in the secrets of her heart; crushed by the press of persecution, she scattered the odor of aromatic. For David was fighting in her as if in the stronghold of Zion against the face of Damascus; or rather, as in a fragile sex, he himself, small and despised, was fighting against the great Goliath with one stone (1 Sam. 17), of whom also in the book of Kings it is said as if in a heraldry of great praise: "David sitting in the chair, a most wise prince among three (2 Sam. 23)." He himself is like a most tender little worm of the wood, who killed eight hundred in one impetus. Why is it that David is raised up with a heraldry of such new, such unheard-of praise? Who is this one so humble and so sublime? Who, I say, is this David so weak and despised that he bears the appearance of a little worm? So strong and valid that in one impetus he kills eight hundred men? In the chaff of the letter it indeed seems ridiculous, if the sacrament did not lie hidden in the marrow of the spirit.

Who therefore is this little worm, except he who through the same David sings in the Psalm: "But I am a worm, and no man (Psalm 21)?" For just as a worm is begotten from the matter of wood alone, so the Catholic faith confesses Christ to have been begotten without virile seed from the virginal womb alone. But although the worm be tender and weak, and the hardness of the wood be strong and solid; yet the worm turns the wood into decay, and renders it cavernous and hollow. So our Redeemer, truly strong in hand and desirable, who emptied himself, who having no form nor comeliness, appeared invalid and despised: gradually softened from its rigor the human race whence he arose, and procured for himself a great space of habitation in his elect. This David therefore sits in the chair, because established in the glory of the Father's majesty, he judges all things, to whom the Father says: "Sit at my right hand." He is most wise, because he is the very Wisdom of the Father.

But how is David called a prince among three, when he held the empire of the royal scepter not among any others, but rather over all? (Psalm 109.) For that praise depreciates, it does not exalt; it depresses, it does not raise; since he was not so much among three as he was over all. But while this sentence seems to disagree with that David, it is to him whom it can most aptly agree. For that blessed and singular man, who is mystically called a worm, as soon as he is received by the Word in unity of person, reigns not unequally in the Holy Trinity.

Princeps est ergo inter tres, quia unitus est Verbo, quae una est in sancta Trinitate persona. Hic octingentos interfecit impetu uno. Octonarius numerus ad resurrectionem, centenarius pertinet ad perfectionem. David ergo uno impetu octingentos interfecit, quia Salvator noster omnes qui vel perfectionem fidei appetunt, vel resurrectionis gloriam concupiscunt, gladio sui spiritus interfecit, dum eos per incarnationis ac crucis suae mysterium ab amore mundi hujus mortuos reddidit; et hoc uno operatus est impetu, id est, uno suae incarnationis adventu. Semel enim pro peccatis nostris mortuus est, jam ultra non moritur (Rom. VI). An non ejus adventus jure vocatur impetus, de quo Salomon ait: «Ecce iste saliens in montibus, transiliens colles (Cant. II).» Et David: «Exsultavit, inquit, ut gigas ad currendam viam (Psal. XVIII).» Qui enim currit procul dubio impetum facit. Nam et Verbum Dei tanquam rivus aquarum viventium cum impetu venit, et sicut torrens cuncta doctrinarum ardentium inquinamenta subvertit. Unde et in Canticis canticorum dicitur: «Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium, quae fluunt impetu de Libano (Cant. IV).» Hinc et Psalmista: «Fluminis impetus laetificat civitatem Dei (Psal. XLV).»

Huic ergo regi tam humili, tamque sublimi, tam infirmo, sed ita fortissimo gratias referamus, qui idcirco fieri dignatus est vermis in ligno, ut nos constitueret cives in coelo. Ideo vetustum humani generis inimicum in se permisit insurgere, ut ex eo postmodum non modo per viros, sed etiam per feminas triumpharet, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo LXVIII.

*II. IN NATALI VIRGINUM.*

Hodie, fratres charissimi, virginale nobis decus illuxit, quod nostrae memoriae divinae virtutis victoriam renovavit. Porro quanto fragilior sexus, quanto infirmius vasculum quod reportat ex hoste triumphum, tanto majori diabolus opprobrio confusionis induitur, tanto mirabilior Deus in suis sanctis agnoscitur, tanto etiam rex martyrum Christus in propugnatricibus suis jucundius delectatur.

He is therefore a prince among three, because he is united to the Word, which is one person in the Holy Trinity. This one killed eight hundred in one impetus. The number eight pertains to the resurrection, the number hundred to perfection. David therefore killed eight hundred in one impetus, because our Savior killed with the sword of his spirit all who either seek the perfection of faith or desire the glory of the resurrection, while through the mystery of his incarnation and cross he rendered them dead to the love of this world; and this he worked in one impetus, that is, in one advent of his incarnation. For once he died for our sins, he dies no more (Rom. 6). Or is his advent not rightly called an impetus, of which Solomon says: "Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills (Cant. 2)?" And David: "He hath rejoiced," he says, "as a giant to run the way (Psalm 18)." For he who runs undoubtedly makes an impetus. For also the Word of God, as a river of living waters, came with impetus, and like a torrent subverts all the pollutions of burning doctrines. Whence also in the Song of Songs it is said: "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, which flow with impetus from Lebanon (Cant. 4)." Hence also the Psalmist: "The impetus of the river maketh glad the city of God (Psalm 45)."

To this king therefore, so humble and so sublime, so weak but thus most strong, let us return thanks, who for that reason deigned to become a worm on the wood, that he might establish us as citizens in heaven. Therefore he permitted the ancient enemy of the human race to rise up against him, that through him he might afterwards triumph not only through men, but also through women, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

## Sermon LXVIII.

### *II. ON THE BIRTHDAY OF VIRGINS.*

Today, dearly beloved brethren, a virginal beauty has shone upon us, which has renewed in our memory the victory of divine virtue. Furthermore, the more fragile the sex, the weaker the vessel which carries the triumph from the enemy, with so much greater reproach of confusion is the devil clothed, so much more wonderful is God recognized in his saints, so much more joyfully also is Christ the king of martyrs delighted in his female defenders.

Hinc est etiam, quod Salvator noster in hujus mundi campum potestates aereas debellaturus adveniens, non elegit rhetores et philosophos, sed simplices ac litteralis industriae prorsus ignaros; ut in utroque sexu verum sit, quod Apostolus ait: «Quia non multi sapientes secundum carnem, non multi potentes, non multi nobiles, sed quae stulta sunt hujus mundi, elegit Deus ut confundat fortia: et ignobilia mundi et contemptibilia elegit Deus, et quae non sunt, ut ea quae sunt destrueret, ut non glorietur omnis caro in conspectu ejus (II Cor. I).» Talibus enim omnipotens Deus uberiorem saepe praedicationis gratiam tribuit, atque per eos versuta mundanae sapientiae argumenta convincit. Hinc est quod sponsus ad sponsam dicit in Canticis: «Umbilicus tuus crater tornatilis, nunquam indigens poculis (Cant. VII).» Umbilicus autem fragilissima pars corporis est. Quid ergo per Ecclesiae designatur umbiculum, nisi coetus infirmorum atque debilium? Quid vero per craterem, nisi praedicatorum intelligimus ordinem: qui nimirum mentibus auditorum coelestis doctrinae vina propinant, easque poculis sanctae praedicationis inebriant?

Umbilicus ergo Ecclesiae, crateri merito comparatur, quia plerumque debilis et infirmus quilibet vas doctrinae coelestis efficitur. Qui non indiget poculis, quia coelestis eloquii non desinit irriguus esse fluentis. Unde bene crater hic tornatilis dicitur, torno siquidem quis facilius operatur. Expeditius enim saepe atque inoffense in sancta praedicatione discurrunt, qui praedicationis gratiam non suo studio, sed divinitus acceperunt. Hanc praedicationis gratiam viris simplicibus, sive sanctis mulieribus tribuendam illa Samson victoria figuravit, qua videlicet mandibulam asini fervefactus arripiens, mille Philisthinorum viros occidit (Judic. XV). Quid enim per mandibulam asini, quod utique simplex est animal, nisi imperita simplicium hominum ora signantur? Samson itaque, non cum armis, non cum diversis telorum generibus, sed cum mandibula asini mille viros occidit; quia Redemptor noster, quem ille signabat, cum imperitis et rudibus perfectum infidelium numerum a vita veteris erroris exstinxit.

Quid autem mirum si sanctos praedicatores per asini maxillam sacrum designet eloquium, cum et ipsum praedicationis verbum per hordeum quandoque denuntiet, quod est utique pabulum jumentorum. Quod certe non modo per evangelicos quinque panes agnoscitur, sed per hoc etiam quod in libro Judicum reperitur. Nam cum Gedeon auscultationis gratia ad castra Madian, Domino praecipiente, dirigitur, Madianita quispiam alter ad alterum vidisse se somnium profitetur [confitetur]. «Videbatur, inquit, mihi quasi subcinericius panis ex hordeo volvi, et in castra Madian descendere (Judic. VII).»

Hence it is also, that our Savior coming into the field of this world to fight down the aerial powers, chose not rhetoricians and philosophers, but the simple and those altogether ignorant of literary industry; so that in both sexes it may be true what the Apostle says: "Because not many wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many noble, but the foolish things of this world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong: and the base things of the world and the contemptible things hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might destroy those that are, that no flesh should glory in his sight (2 Cor. 1)." For to such ones almighty God often gives a more abundant grace of preaching, and through them convinces the crafty arguments of worldly wisdom. Hence it is that the bridegroom says to the bride in the Canticles: "Thy navel is like a turned bowl, never wanting cups (Cant. 7)." But the navel is the most fragile part of the body. What therefore is designated by the navel of the Church, unless the assembly of the infirm and weak? But what by the bowl, unless we understand the order of preachers: who indeed proffer the wines of heavenly doctrine to the minds of the hearers, and inebriate them with the cups of holy preaching?

The navel of the Church, therefore, is rightly compared to a bowl, because frequently anyone weak and infirm is made a vessel of heavenly doctrine. Which does not want for cups, because it does not cease to be watered by the streams of heavenly eloquence. Whence well is this bowl said to be turned, since one works more easily with a lathe. For they often run through holy preaching more expeditiously and without offense, who have received the grace of preaching not by their own study, but divinely. That victory of Samson figured this grace of preaching to be given to simple men, or to holy women, by which namely seizing a warm jawbone of an ass, he killed a thousand men of the Philistines (Judg. 15). For what is signified by the jawbone of an ass, which indeed is a simple animal, unless the unskilful mouths of simple men? Samson therefore, not with arms, not with various kinds of missiles, but with the jawbone of an ass killed a thousand men; because our Redeemer, whom he signified, with the unskilful and rude extinguished the perfect number of infidels from the life of the old error.

But what wonder if sacred eloquence should designate holy preachers through the jawbone of an ass, when it also denounces the very word of preaching through barley at times, which is indeed the fodder of beasts of burden. Which certainly is recognized not only through the five evangelical loaves, but also through this which is found in the book of Judges. For when Gideon is directed, by the Lord's command, to the camp of Midian for the sake of eavesdropping, one Midianite professes to another that he had seen a dream. "It seemed, he says, to me as if a barley bread baked under ashes was rolled, and descended into the camp of Midian (Judg. 7)."

Cumque pervenisset ad tabernaculum, percussit illud, atque subvertit, et terrae funditus coaequavit. Respondit auditor: «Non est hoc aliud, nisi gladius Gedeonis filii Joas Israelitae: tradidit enim Dominus in manu ejus Madian, et omnia castra ejus.» Per Gedeon, qui non circuitus; sed circumiens in utero dicitur, ille merito designatur, qui dum virginali clauderetur in alvo totam mundi machinam suo circumdabat, ac disponebat imperio. Per Madian autem, qui de judicio interpretatur, populus infidelis accipitur, de quo Dominus ait: «Qui non credit, jam judicatus est (Joan. III).»

Porro autem usque ad Salvatoris adventum, more hordei sub paleis litterarum, et legis praecepta et prophetarum tegebantur oracula; sed postquam ille veniens, panes hordeaceos fregit, deditque discipulis, ut turbis apponerent: cujus etiam operis expositio est, quod evangelista dicit: «Quoniam aperuit illis sensum, ut intelligerent Scripturas (Luc. XXIV);» jam ex hordeo, quod brutis videbatur animalibus congruere, panem facere dignatus est animarum. Sicut enim hordeum inter molam utramque conteritur, ut a farinae farragine cantabrum secernatur; ita velut inter duos, legis scilicet et Evangelii, lapides sanctae Ecclesiae doctrina commolitur, ut litterae superficies a medullis spiritus discernatur. Sed ut in his verbis non diutius immoremur, haec hordei farina, sacri baptismatis aqua conspersa conflata, et sancti Spiritus igne pereocta, fit panis, qui videlicet Madian castra subvertit, quia cunctas infidelium machinas destruit. Hic panis, juxta veri illius interpretis conjecturam, Gedeonis est gladius; quia, sicut Apostolus ait: «Gladius Spiritus, est Verbum Dei (Ephes. VI).»

Hoc sancti Spiritus gladio rex exercituum Christus suos armat milites, hoc etiam suas praecingit ac roborat bellatrices. Ex utroque siquidem sexu militiae suae cuneos instruit, aciesque componit, quia viros ac feminas ad procinctum beati certaminis indifferenter admittit. Et quanquam mirabilis sit Deus in viris, mirabilius tamen et gloriosius triumphat in feminis. Huic porro militiae Judith erat ascripta, quae dum deauratos atque gemmatos Holofernis thalamos respuit, ebrium luxuriosi principis caput proprio ipsius pugione truncavit (Judith. XIII). Hujus militiae consors erat Esther, quae dum feroces Assueri regis animos artificibus delinivit alloquiis, et Mardochaeum ab imminentis sententia mortis eripuit et in caput Aman, qui necis hujus auctor exstiterat, dignae damnationis argumenta retorsit (Esther. VIII). Hanc gaudebat bajulare militiam Debora, quae dum Israeliticam plebem propheticis gubernaret oraculis, in praelium quoque velut quaedam Dei Bellona congrediens copiosum Jabin regis exercitum perdidit et populum Dei durissimae jugo servitutis absolvit (Judic. IV).

And when it had come to the tabernacle, it struck it, and subverted it, and leveled it utterly to the ground. The hearer responded: "This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash the Israelite: for the Lord hath delivered into his hand Midian, and all his camp." By Gideon, who is said not to be a circuiter, but a circum-goer in the womb, he is rightly designated, who while he was enclosed in the virginal womb was encompassing the whole machine of the world, and was disposing it by his empire. But by Midian, which is interpreted as from judgment, the infidel people are received, of whom the Lord says: "He that believeth not, is already judged (John 3)."

Furthermore, until the advent of the Savior, after the manner of barley under the chaff of the letters, both the precepts of the law and the oracles of the prophets were hidden; but after he coming, broke the barley loaves, and gave them to the disciples, that they might set them before the crowds: of which work also the exposition is what the Evangelist says: "Because he opened their sense, that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke 24);" already from barley, which seemed to agree with brute animals, he deigned to make the bread of souls. For just as barley is crushed between both millstones, that the bran may be separated from the mixture of flour; so as if between two stones, namely of the Law and the Gospel, the doctrine of the holy Church is ground together, that the surface of the letter may be discerned from the marrows of the spirit. But that we may not dwell longer in these words, this barley flour, sprinkled with the water of sacred baptism, mixed, and thoroughly cooked by the fire of the Holy Spirit, becomes bread, which namely subverts the camp of Midian, because it destroys all the machines of infidels. This bread, according to the conjecture of that true interpreter, is the sword of Gideon; because, as the Apostle says: "The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Ephes. 6)."

With this sword of the Holy Spirit, Christ the king of armies arms his soldiers, with this he also ungirds and strengthens his female warriors. From both sexes indeed he instructs the wedges of his warfare, and composes the battle lines, because he admits men and women indifferently to the preparation of the blessed contest. And although God be wonderful in men, yet more wonderfully and gloriously does he triumph in women. To this warfare furthermore Judith was ascribed, who while she rejected the gilded and gemmed chambers of Holofernes, cut off the drunk head of the luxurious prince with his own dagger (Judith 13). Of this warfare Esther was a consort, who while she soothed the fierce minds of King Ahasuerus with skillful speeches, both rescued Mordecai from the sentence of imminent death and retorted upon the head of Haman, who had existed as the author of this death, the arguments of worthy damnation (Esther 8). Deborah rejoiced to carry this warfare, who while she governed the Israelite people with prophetic oracles, also engaging in battle like a certain Bellona of God, destroyed the copious army of King Jabin and absolved the people of God from the yoke of most hard servitude (Judg. 4).

Huic militiae deserviunt Jahel uxor Haber, cum Sisaram fugientem intra tabernaculum quidem blande suscepit, sed cerebrum ejus clavo tabernaculi per tempus utrumque transfixit (Ibid.).

Hujus certe militiae particeps fuit insignis illa bellatrix, scilicet beata Felicitas, quae dum septem sibi filios in agone praemisit, salvo sibi et sui certaminis praemio, septemplici in sobole martyrio triumphavit. Hanc quoque militiam strenue bajulavit et haec virgo clarissima, cujus hodie votiva festivitas colitur. Quae videlicet duplicis pugnae victoriam tenuit, dum et titillantia carnis incentiva perdomuit, et illata sibi horrifica poenarum tormenta calcavit. O quantis ista cumulabitur praemiis in retributione justorum! quanta, judicante Christo, ditabitur gloria, quae tanto crucis Christi fuit pondere praegravata! Nam juxta Veritatis vocem, «semen, quod in terram cecidit, aliud trigesimum, aliud sexagesimum, aliud centesimum attulit fructum (Matth. XIII).»

Cum ergo, sicut authentici doctores exponunt, virginitati fructus centuplus debeatur, quantis haec beata virgo accumulabitur donis, quam insignis gratiae decorabitur infulis, quae postquam centenos fructus de virginitate messuerat, etiam martyrii coronam cum tanta gloria reportabat? Nam cum esset in certamine constituta, lorica fidei praemunita et armis invictae patientiae ac geminae charitatis accincta, duplicibus diversorum hostium agminibus cingebatur. Intus contra seditiosos pugnabat cives, foris adversus persecutorum ac fidei resistentium acies dimicabat. Pro duobus castris stabat una bellatrix. Hinc pudicitiae clausulam; illinc impresso Sponsi sui charactere, fidei signaculum defendebat. Sic docta manus ad praelium, circumacto virtutis undique clypeo, modo lita veneno tela luxuriae, modo imminente perfidia jaculorum ingruentium grandinem propellebat.

Dicebat ergo agonotheta Dei: «Nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae Hierusalem, sicut tabernacula Cedar, sicut pellis Salomonis (Cant. I).» Cedar interpretatur tenebrae, ii sunt infideles lucem fidei non habentes. «Nigra sum,» inquit, propter persecutionis aestum, propter adversa, quae patior a filiis tenebrarum. Sed intrinsecus formosa sum, quia «concupivit rex speciem meam, et omnis gloria mea ab intus.» Formosa sum, inquam, sicut pellis, hoc est, sicut tabernaculum Salomonis.

Jael the wife of Heber serves this warfare, when she indeed blandly received Sisera fleeing within the tabernacle, but transfixed his brain with a nail of the tabernacle through both temples (ibid.).

Of this warfare certainly that distinguished female warrior was a participant, namely blessed Felicity, who while she sent seven sons before her into the contest, saving for herself also the reward of her own contest, triumphed in a sevenfold martyrdom in her offspring. This warfare also this most bright virgin, whose votive festivity is celebrated today, strenuously carried. Who namely held the victory of a double fight, while she both tamed the titillating incentives of the flesh, and trampled the horrific torments of punishments brought upon her. O with how great rewards will she be accumulated in the retribution of the just! with how much glory will she be enriched, Christ judging, who was weighed down by so great a weight of the cross of Christ! For according to the voice of Truth, "the seed which fell into the earth, one brought forth thirty-fold, another sixty-fold, another a hundred-fold fruit (Matt. 13)."

Since therefore, as authentic doctors expound, a hundred-fold fruit is owed to virginity, with how great gifts will this blessed virgin be accumulated, with the infulae of how distinguished a grace will she be adorned, who after she had harvested a hundred-fold fruits from virginity, also reported the crown of martyrdom with so much glory? For when she was established in the contest, fortified by the breastplate of faith and girded with the arms of invincible patience and twofold charity, she was surrounded by double columns of diverse enemies. Within she fought against seditious citizens, without she contended against the battle lines of persecutors and those resisting the faith. For two camps stood one female warrior. Here she defended the enclosure of modesty; there, with the character of her Bridegroom imprinted, the seal of faith. Thus a hand taught for battle, the shield of virtue being moved around on all sides, now repelled the poison-smeared weapons of luxury, now the hail of rushing javelins from imminent perfidy.

Therefore the judge of the contest of God said: "I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the skin of Solomon (Cant. 1)." Kedar is interpreted as darkness; these are the infidels not having the light of faith. "I am black," she says, on account of the heat of persecution, on account of the adversities which I suffer from the sons of darkness. But within I am beautiful, because "the king hath desired my beauty, and all my glory is from within." I am beautiful, I say, like a skin, that is, like the tabernacle of Solomon.

Sicut enim tabernaculum ex mortuorum fit pellibus animalium, ita duntaxat illi sunt habitaculum Dei, qui Christo commortui, vitiis quoque carnisque concupiscentiis sunt exstincti. Nec enim potuisset haec virgo mori pro Domino, nisi mortua fuisset primitus mundo. «Nolite, inquit, me considerare, quod fusca sim quia decoloravit me sol (Cant. I).»

O filiae Hierusalem, id est, o fideles animae, in illa am coelesti gloria per desiderium constitutae, nolite me considerare, quod fusca sim, id est, nolite desperare, vel nimis expavescere, quod me tribulationes opprimunt, quod persecutiones afficiunt, quod in hoc tempestatis procellarumque naufragio intumescentes me fluctus illidunt, quia decoloravit me sol, quoniam super me persecutionis aestus incanduit, decoremque meae venustatis ac pulchritudinis offuscavit. Ac si dicat: Nolite tam ea, quibus extrinsecus affligor, attendere, quam vernantem interioris venustatis species cogitare. Tale est et quod Apostolus dicit: «Nolite deficere in tribulationibus meis pro vobis, quae est gloria vestra (Ephes. III); non enim condignae sunt passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quae revelabitur in nobis (Rom. VIII).» Hanc autem interiorem pulchritudinem exterioremque nigredinem breviter Jeremias comprehendit, dicens: «Candidiores Nazaraei ejus nive, nitidiores lacte, rubicundiores ebore antiquo, sapphiro pulchriores (Thren. IV).» Ecce pulchritudo, sed audi nigredinem; nam illico sequitur: «Denigrata est super carbones facies eorum, et non sunt cogniti in plateis. Adhaesit cutis eorum ossibus, aruit, et facta est quasi lignum (Ibid.).» Sed aspicimus exteriorem nigredinem, aperiat ipsa unde sit interior pulchritudo: «Indica mihi, inquit, quem diligit anima mea, ubi pascas, ubi cubes, in meridie (Cant. I).» Ac si dicat: O Sponse coelestis, quem anima mea inenarrabiliter diligit, in quo per desiderium jugiter requiescit, quem ulnis intimae dilectionis amplectitur, in quo totis visceribus delectatur, dic mihi ubi pascas, hoc est, tu qui pastor bonus es, ubi oves tuas pascere facias, ipse etiam ubi cubes, id est, ubi requiescas in aestu persecutionis et fervore tentationis nostrae; ubi scilicet, nisi in his qui furenti vesaniae cedere nesciunt, et crassantis malitiae conatibus enerviter non succumbunt.

Inde ergo formosam se sponsa ista dicebat, quia ille in ipso persecutionis articulo in ea delectabiliter quiescebat, qui serenitate vultus sui cuncta clarificat. Unde et sponsus ad eam: «Tota, inquit, pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te (Cant. IV).» Tota pulchra intrinsecus et extrinsecus, foris in perfectione clari operis, intrinsecus in munditia purissimae cogitationis. Et illa quid sponso? «Dilectus meus, inquit, candidus, et rubicundus, et totus desiderabilis (Cant. V).» Dilectus candidus est virginitate, rubicundus in passione.

For as a tabernacle is made from the skins of dead animals, so only those are the habitation of God who, being dead together with Christ, are also extinct to the vices and concupiscences of the flesh. For neither could this virgin have died for the Lord, unless she had first been dead to the world. "Consider me not," she says, "that I am brown because the sun hath altered my color (Cant. 1)."

O daughters of Jerusalem, that is, O faithful souls, established in that heavenly glory through desire, do not consider me that I am brown, that is, do not despair, or be too much terrified, because tribulations oppress me, because persecutions affect me, because in this shipwreck of tempest and storms the swelling waves strike me, because the sun has altered my color, since the heat of persecution has glowed white upon me, and has darkened the beauty of my comeliness and loveliness. As if she should say: Do not so much attend to those things by which I am afflicted from without, as consider the budding species of interior comeliness. Such is also what the Apostle says: "Do not faint in my tribulations for you, which is your glory (Ephes. 3); for the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8)." But this interior beauty and exterior blackness Jeremiah briefly comprehends, saying: "Her Nazarites were whiter than snow, purer than milk, ruddier than old ivory, more beautiful than sapphire (Lam. 4)." Behold the beauty, but hear the blackness; for immediately there follows: "Their face is made blacker than coals, and they are not known in the streets. Their skin hath cleaved to their bones, it is withered, and is become like wood (ibid.)." But we behold the exterior blackness, let her open whence the interior beauty may be: "Show me, she says, him whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou liest in the midday (Cant. 1)." As if she should say: O heavenly Bridegroom, whom my soul ineffably loveth, in whom through desire it continually rests, whom it embraces with the arms of intimate love, in whom it is delighted with all its bowels, tell me where thou feedest, that is, thou who art the good shepherd, where thou makest thy sheep to feed, also where thou thyself liest, that is, where thou restest in the heat of persecution and the fervor of our temptation; where namely, except in those who know not how to yield to the raging madness, and do not succumbing enervatedly to the attempts of thick-coming malice.

Thence therefore this bride was saying that she was beautiful, because he in that very point of persecution was resting delightfully in her, who by the serenity of his countenance clarifies all things. Whence also the bridegroom to her: "Thou art all fair, he says, O my love, and there is no spot in thee (Cant. 4)." All fair within and without, without in the perfection of a bright work, within in the purity of a most pure thought. And she what to the bridegroom? "My beloved, she says, is white and ruddy, and altogether desirable (Cant. 5)." The beloved is white in virginity, ruddy in passion.

«Lavit enim nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo (Apoc. I).» Totus autem desiderabilis est, quia desiderabilis est in singulari nativitate, in vivifica morte, in gloriosa resurrectione, in triumphali ascensione. Desiderabilis est, dum loquitur, dum mirabilia operatur. Et o quam praeclarum ac dulce commercium ubi mutua invicem praedicatione laudatur Sponsus et sponsa, Creator et creatura! Sic impletur quod per Psalmistam dicitur: «Jucundum sit ei eloquium meum, ego vero delectabor in Domino (Psal. CIII).»

Et revera haec est illa humani generis pars, virginalis scilicet chorus, in qua Deus omnipotens propensius ac specialius delectatur. Nam esto ut omnes a Domino discipuli diligantur, sicut a Patre diligitur, ipso perhibente, ait: «Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos (Joan. XV).» Esto quod Petrus claves acceperit regni coelorum. Esto quod in coelis ac terris, ligandi solvendique sortitus sit principatum (Matth. XVI), verumtamen Joannes, quoniam virgo est, ipse est discipulus quem diligebat Jesus (Joan. XIII). Hinc est et quod in Apocalypsi Joannes dicit: «Quia nemo poterat dicere canticum, nisi illa centum quadraginta quatuor millia, qui empti sunt de terra; hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati, virgines enim sunt, hi sequuntur Agnum quocunque ierit (Apoc. XIV).» Sed hunc Agnum, ut multae valeant virgines, qua graditur, sequi, ipse dat in servanda virginitate constantiam, in superanda tentatione victoriam, in praemii retributione coronam. Ipse dicit: «Ego sum lilium convallium (Cant. II).» Lilium plane propter niveum candorem mundissimae castitatis. Lilium non montium, sed convallium, quia pias eligit mentes humilium non scopulos inhabitat superborum.

Hunc Agnum, dilectissimi, sequamur in via, quam in hac vita positus tenuit, ut et sequi mereamur in gloria, ad quam devicta morte conscendit. Consideremus diligenter ubi sint ejus impressa vestigia, nec declinemus a semita gradientis, si volumus consortes esse regnantis. Dux itineris nostri crucis exstitit bajulus, felle cibatus est. Qui ergo ducis hujus vexillum sequi desiderat, carnalis dulcedinis mella contemnat. «Non enim, juxta Pauli vocem, possumus hic gaudere de saeculo, et illic regnare cum Christo.» Hinc est, quod per mandatum legis, omne sacrificium sale conspergitur, mel autem, sive fermentum adoleri in sacrificio funditus prohibetur. Unde Dominus ad Moysen in Levitico: «Omnis, inquit, oblation, quae offertur Domino, absque fermento fiet, nec quidquam fermenti ac mellis adolebitur in sacrificio Domini (Levit. II).» Quisquis enim vel rapinam in opus pietatis impendere, vel vanae gloriae causa bonum videtur aliquid exercere, hic non azymam sinceritatis et veritatis, sed fermentum malitiae atque nequitiae (I Cor. V) conatur offerre.

"For he hath washed us from our sins in his blood (Apoc. 1)." But he is altogether desirable, because he is desirable in his singular birth, in his life-giving death, in his glorious resurrection, in his triumphal ascension. He is desirable while he speaks, while he works wonders. And O how distinguished and sweet a commerce where by mutual preaching in turn the Bridegroom and bride, the Creator and the creature are praised! Thus is fulfilled what is said through the Psalmist: "Let my speech be pleasant to him, but I will be delighted in the Lord (Psalm 103)."

And in truth this is that part of the human race, namely the virginal choir, in which almighty God is more readily and specially delighted. For let it be that all the disciples are loved by the Lord, as he is loved by the Father, he himself perhibiting, says: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you (John 15)." Let it be that Peter received the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Let it be that in heaven and earth, he sorted the primacy of binding and loosing (Matt. 16), yet John, because he is a virgin, he is the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13). Hence it is also that in the Apocalypse John says: "Because no one could say the song, except those hundred and forty-four thousand, who were bought from the earth; these are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins, these follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (Apoc. 14)." But that many virgins may be able to follow this Lamb where he walks, he himself gives constancy in preserving virginity, victory in overcoming temptation, a crown in the retribution of the reward. He himself says: "I am the lily of the valleys (Cant. 2)." A lily clearly on account of the snowy whiteness of most pure chastity. A lily not of the mountains, but of the valleys, because he chooses the pious minds of the humble, he does not inhabit the rocks of the proud.

This Lamb, most beloved, let us follow in the way, which being placed in this life he held, that we may also merit to follow in glory, to which having conquered death he ascended. Let us consider diligently where his footsteps are imprinted, nor let us decline from the path of him walking, if we wish to be consorts of him reigning. The leader of our journey stood as the carrier of the cross, he was fed with gall. He therefore who desires to follow the standard of this leader, let him despise the honey of carnal sweetness. "For we cannot, according to the voice of Paul, rejoice here of the world, and there reign with Christ." Hence it is, that by the command of the law, every sacrifice is sprinkled with salt, but honey, or leaven, is utterly prohibited to be burnt in sacrifice. Whence the Lord to Moses in Leviticus: "Every oblation, he says, which is offered to the Lord, shall be made without leaven, nor shall any leaven or honey be burnt in the sacrifice of the Lord (Levit. 2)." For whoever seems to expend either rapine in a work of piety, or to exercise anything good for the sake of vain glory, this one attempts to offer not the unleavened of sincerity and truth, but the leaven of malice and wickedness (1 Cor. 5).

Mellis quoque sacrificium Dominus non approbat, quia luxuriae voluptatem omnemque carnalis illecebrae dulcedinem damnat. Sal autem omnibus praecipitur oblationibus adhiberi, ut quidquid Domino super aram devoti cordis offerimus, rationis semper atque intelligentiae sapore condire studeamus. Ait enim: «Quidquid obtuleris sacrificii, sale condies, nec auferes sal foederis Dei tui de sacrificio tuo.» Et ut quod dicebat altius inculcaret, et ne mens nostra fortassis aliquando insulsa desiperet, adhuc ingeminans, dicit: «In omni oblatione tua offeres sal (Col. IV).» Hoc plane istud est sal, de quo Apostolus ait: «In sapientia ambulate ad eos, qui foris sunt, tempus redimentes. Sermo vester semper in gratia sale sit conditus, ut sciatis, quomodo oporteat vos unicuique respondere (Ibid.).» De hoc sale et Dominus ait: «Si sal infatuatum fuerit, in quo condietur? (Matth. V.)» Non ergo sal simus infatuatum, ne, quod absit, cum fatuis virginibus adveniens coelestis ille nos Sponsus inveniat, et pulsantibus ac gementibus nuptialis convivii januam claudat, sed hujusmodi sal esse per divinam gratiam studeamus, quod nos esse vult, qui discipulis suis dicit: «Vos estis sal terrae (Ibid.),» quatenus tenebrarum opera relinquentes, et nunc elaboremus ut filii lucis ambulare, et postmodum inter sapientes virgines, accensis lampadibus, advenienti Judici mereamur occurrere, qui cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## * SERMO LXIX. I. IN DEDICATIONE ECCLESIAE.

Post crucem, post virginem, post angelos, quid est majus in terris, quid in coelis sublimius? Illa utique quam acceptavit Altissimus, quae vulneravit cor Sponsi sui, cui Sponsus idem in Canticis dicit: «Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa, in uno crine colli tui, et in uno oculorum tuorum (Cant. IV).» Quam speciosa sponsa ista, quae in uno capillulo et ocelluli scintillatione vulnerat coelorum Regem, angelorum Dominum, Filium Dei Patris. De illa nobis est sermo, licet non sit sermo in lingua nostra. Haec est illa, quae posita est in superbiam saeculorum, cujus gloria a mari usque ad mare, cui reges et principes famulantur, quam circumvolat coelestium legionum multitudo, in qua fons sapientiae repositus est, «hortus conclusus, fons signatus.»

The Lord also does not approve the sacrifice of honey, because he damns the pleasure of luxury and all the sweetness of carnal allurement. But salt is commanded to be applied to all oblations, that whatever we offer to the Lord upon the altar of a devoted heart, we may always study to season with the flavor of reason and intelligence. For he says: "Whatever thou shalt offer of sacrifice, thou shalt season with salt, nor shalt thou take away the salt of the covenant of thy God from thy sacrifice." And that he might inculcate more deeply what he was saying, and lest our mind should perhaps at some time foolishly become unsavory, still redoubling, he says: "In every oblation of thine thou shalt offer salt (Col. 4)." This clearly is that salt of which the Apostle says: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (ibid.)." Of this salt also the Lord says: "If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? (Matt. 5.)" Let us not therefore be unsavory salt, lest, which God forbid, arriving he should find us with the foolish virgins, and should close the door of the nuptial feast to us knocking and groaning, but let us study through divine grace to be salt of this kind, which he wants us to be, who says to his disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth (ibid.)," so that relinquishing the works of darkness, we may now labor to walk as sons of light, and afterwards among the wise virgins, with lamps kindled, we may merit to meet the arriving Judge, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns through all ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon LXIX.

### *I. ON THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.*

After the cross, after the virgin, after the angels, what is greater on earth, what more sublime in the heavens? She surely whom the Most High accepted, who wounded the heart of her Bridegroom, to whom the same Bridegroom says in the Canticles: "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my bride, in one lock of thy neck, and in one of thine eyes (Cant. 4)." How beautiful is this bride, who in one little hair and the sparkle of a little eye wounds the King of heavens, the Lord of angels, the Son of God the Father. Of her we speak, although the speech be not in our tongue. This is she who is placed for the pride of ages, whose glory is from sea even unto sea, whom kings and princes serve, whom a multitude of heavenly legions flies around, in whom the fountain of wisdom is laid up, "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed."

Hortus ubi clara rosaria pulchriori colore refulgurant, et felices virgae florum et fructuum gloria cumulantur; hortus, quem ventorum non tangit alternitas, ubi mollioris aurae gratia frequenter aspirat et vernans amoenitas allicit intuentes; conclusus, non murali machina, nec coementatorum lapidum glutinosa tenacitate, sed angelica statione vallatus; fons, de quo fontes Israel derivantur, qui irrigat universam superficiem terrae, et inebrians, et emundans; signatus, sigillo utique totius Trinitatis, quod ille malignans effractarius non dico confringere, sed nec contingere audeat. In hac mortua germina regerminant et aridiora signa facile revirescunt.

In hac congeritur multiplex varietas sacramentorum, et contegitur antiquitas misericordiarum Domini Dei nostri. Et ut breviter intelligentiolae nostrae propalemus indaginem, duodecim sacramenta sunt in Ecclesia, quae unius fidei pietas contegit, circa quorum instantiam reflectitur Christianae religionis auctoritas.

Primum est baptismatis sacramentum (vide Scholia ad calcem sermonis). Hoc pretiosius est cunctis opibus, et omnia, quae desiderantur, huic non valent comparari. Quis enim cogitatione cordis, vel volubilitate sermonis impleat, quanta sint in aquarum substantia sacramenta completa? Antequam mundus parturiretur et ex informi materia multiformium specierum diversitas exsiliret, Spiritus Dei in aurigae modum ferebatur super aquas (Gen. I), et elementum hoc figurali praemulcebat obsequio. Coelum ipsum ex aquis compactum Hebraeorum tradit auctoritas, et per aquas universalis illa purgatio celebratur. Patriarchae ad aquas fiunt uxorii, et per aquas terribile Judaeorum murmur exstinguitur.

Omnis illa series Veteris Instrumenti diligentius introspecta, majorem sacramentorum altitudinem in aquarum materia consignavit. Salvator ipse legem sequens, itinerarii sui principium aquis indixit, cum in flumine sublimis illa potestas ab illo magno homine voluit baptizari (Matth. III). Primum miraculum ex aquis fecit (Joan. II). Samaritanae juxta puteum aquarum fontem aquae salientis in vitam aeternam repromittit (Joan. IV). Denique qui ab aquis coeperat finivit in aquis. Vulnerato enim latere Crucifixi, manavit aqua (Joan. XIX), quae terrarum orbem purgatorio lavamine candidavit. Ad extremum inclusiva sententia chorum apostolicum imbuens: «Euntes, inquit, baptizate omnes gentes in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti (Marc. XVI).» Nonne igitur liquido colligis quia legis utriusque sublimitas vim rerum sacramentalium in hujus elementi liquore refudit? Non te moveat paucitas exemplorum, cum plurima prae manibus haberentur, nisi prolixitatem evitasset oratio.

A garden where bright rose-bushes flash with a more beautiful color, and happy rods are accumulated with the glory of flowers and fruits; a garden which the alternation of winds does not touch, where the grace of a softer breeze frequently breathes and a budding loveliness allures those beholding; enclosed, not by a machine of walls, nor by the glutinous tenacity of the stones of cementers, but walled by an angelic station; a fountain, from which the fountains of Israel are derived, which waters the universal surface of the earth, both inebriating and cleansing; sealed, clearly with the seal of the whole Trinity, which that malignant burglar would not dare, I do not say to break, but not even to touch. In her dead buds regerminate and drier signs easily turn green again.

In her is gathered a manifold variety of sacraments, and the antiquity of the mercies of the Lord our God is covered. And that we may briefly disclose the search of our little intelligence, there are twelve sacraments in the Church, which the piety of one faith covers, around whose instance the authority of the Christian religion is reflected.

The first is the sacrament of baptism (see the Scholia at the foot of the sermon). This is more precious than all riches, and all things which are desired are not able to be compared to this. For who may fulfill by thought of heart, or by volubility of speech, how great sacraments are completed in the substance of waters? Before the world was being travailed with and from unformed matter the diversity of multiform species should leap forth, the Spirit of God was borne in the manner of a charioteer over the waters (Gen. 1), and was pre-soothing this element with a figural obsequiousness. The heaven itself compact from waters the authority of the Hebrews delivers, and through waters that universal purgation is celebrated. The patriarchs become uxorious at the waters, and through waters the terrible murmur of the Jews is extinguished.

All that series of the Old Instrument more diligently introspected, has consigned a greater height of sacraments in the matter of waters. The Savior himself following the law, announced the beginning of his itinerary to the waters, when in the river that sublime power willed to be baptized by that great man (Matt. 3). The first miracle he made from waters (John 2). To the Samaritan woman by the well of waters he repromises a fountain of water leaping into eternal life (John 4). Finally he who from waters had begun, ended in waters. For from the wounded side of the Crucified, there flowed water (John 19), which whitened the orb of the lands with a purgatorial washing. At the last an inclusive sentence imbuing the apostolic choir: "Go, he says, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mark 16)." Do you not therefore clearly gather that the sublimity of both laws has refounded the force of sacramental things in the liquor of this element? Let the paucity of examples not move you, when very many were at hand, had the speech not avoided prolixity.

Secundum est sacramentum confirmationis. In baptismate Spiritus datur ad veniam, hic ad pugnam; ibi mundamur ab iniquitatibus, hic virtutibus praemunimur. Nonne in superliminari fronte domus nostrae terrestris consecrata manus sacri Chrismatis imprimit unctionem? Nec quilibet tanti mysterii legitur exsecutor, sed solus episcopus, super cujus caput fusum est unctionis oleum, et cujus ditioni sacerdotalis subditur multitudo. Baptismi gratiam omni homini, vel omni sexui tradidit auctoritas antiquorum; confirmationis autem insigne, sola pontificalis persona suae vindicat dignitati. Inde est quod decretales paginae, et sanctorum Patrum instituta decernunt, non esse differendam post baptismum sacramenti hujus virtutem, ne nos inermes inveniat fraudulentus ille contortor, a quo nemo unquam nocendi inducias extorsit. Delibuti igitur utriusque roris unguento, illo sanati, confortati isto, securius descendamus ad singulare certamen? Nec nos deterreant arma Goliae, vel magnitudo moveat staturalis, quia nobiscum magnus est Dominus Deus noster, et magna virtus ejus (Psal. CXLVI), apprehendens arma et scutum, ut exsurgat in adjutorium nobis (Psal. XXXIV).

Tertium est unctio infirmorum. Infirmantibus nobis, et usque ad mortem mortali peccatorum febre languentibus, Spiritus pietatis assistit, et recordatus est quoniam pulvis sumus. Ait enim divus Jacobus: «Infirmatur quis in vobis? Inducat presbyteros Ecclesiae, et orent super eum, ungentes eum oleo in nomine Domini, et oratio fidei salvabit infirmum, et alleviabit eum Dominus; et si in peccatis est, dimittentur ei (Jac. V).» Solemnis unctio, liquor excellens, quo sanitas redditur, peccatum dimittitur, immittitur timor Domini. Videsne qualiter sacerdotalis manus infirmantis corpus alleviet, et illecebrosam sensuum motionem sacratissima mitiget unctione? Unde et sancti Patres hanc unctionem sacramentum esse sanxerunt.

Quartum est consecratio pontificis. Haec quanto sublimior, tanto dignior approbatur. Cum enim canonicis sanctionibus eligitur persona, quae tantae dignitatis debeat subire fastigium, clarior pontifex cum caeteris pontificibus evocatur. Praeparatur Ecclesia, patrem susceptura de filio. Ungitur illius caput oleo laetitiae prae consortibus suis, in illius figuram, qui thalamo virginali spirituali balsamo profusius irroratus, oleum benedictionis super filios hominum distillavit. Liniuntur et manus, ut quidquid benedixerint benedicatur et acceptum sit divinae majestatis aspectui.

The second is the sacrament of confirmation. In baptism the Spirit is given for pardon, here for battle; there we are cleansed from iniquities, here we are pre-fortified with virtues. Does not the consecrated hand imprint the unction of sacred Chrism on the lintel of the forehead of our terrestrial house? Nor is any one whatsoever read as the executor of so great a mystery, but the bishop alone, upon whose head the oil of unction is poured, and to whose dominion the priestly multitude is subjected. The authority of the ancients delivered the grace of baptism to every man, or every sex; but only the pontifical person vindicates the ensign of confirmation to his own dignity. Thence it is that the decretal pages, and the institutes of the holy Fathers decree, that the virtue of this sacrament is not to be deferred after baptism, lest that fraudulent distorter should find us unarmed, from whom no one ever extorted a truce of harming. Being therefore anointed with the ointment of both dews, healed by that, comforted by this, let us descend more securely to the singular contest. Nor let the arms of Goliath deter us, or his statural magnitude move us, because great with us is the Lord our God, and great is his virtue (Psalm 146), apprehending arms and shield, that he may rise up for our help (Psalm 34).

The third is the unction of the sick. To us weakening, and even unto death languishing with the mortal fever of sins, the Spirit of piety assists, and has remembered that we are dust. For the divine James says: "Is any among you sick? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall alleviate him; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him (James 5)." A solemn unction, an excellent liquor, by which health is restored, sin is forgiven, the fear of the Lord is sent in. Do you see how the priestly hand alleviates the body of the weakening one, and the most sacred unction mitigates the alluring motion of the senses? Whence also the holy Fathers have sanctioned this unction to be a sacrament.

The fourth is the consecration of a pontiff. This, as it is more sublime, so it is approved as more worthy. For when by canonical sanctions a person is chosen, who ought to undergo the summit of so great a dignity, a brighter pontiff is called forth with the other pontiffs. The Church is prepared, about to receive a father from a son. His head is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, in the figure of him who, in the virginal chamber being more profusely bedewed with spiritual balsam, distilled the oil of blessing upon the sons of men. The hands also are smeared, so that whatever they shall have blessed may be blessed and may be acceptable to the sight of the divine majesty.

Ponitur et evangelica pagina super caput ipsius recumbentis, ut et verbo vitae suam sentiat excedere rationem, et oculi ejus deficiant in eloquium Domini. Imponitur cidaris capiti consecrato, et aurea lamina frontis gloria praesignitur, in qua contexitur nomen divinitatis. Traditur annulus secretorum in manu ejus, ut dicat cum Propheta: «In corde meo abscondi eloquia tua, ut non peccem tibi (Psal. CXVIII).» Calceantur et pedes in praeparatione Evangelii pacis (Ephes. VI), ut sit de quibus dicitur: «Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem (Isai. LII).» Accipit et baculum pastoralem, ut ex ipsa virgae qualitate signetur qualiter mansuetos colligat, corripiat inquietos. Sic sic solemni vestimentorum glorificatione praefulgidus, et ad altare Dei familiarius intrans et exiens, iram judicis in misericordiam patris felici commutatione devolvit. Hic habet gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI). Hic potest tradere Satanae in interitum carnis (I Cor. V).

Quintum est inunctio regis. Sublimis sta delibutio, quia sublimem efficit potestatem. Cum enim tantae nobilitatis sanguis, vel genere, vel electione consecratur in regem, religio cum nobilitate totis regni viribus convocatur. Astat hinc primatum, metropolitanorum et episcoporum gloriosa societas, illinc ducum, comitum, castellanorum non spernenda nobilitas. Procedit medius homo, super homines regnaturus, constipatus agmine personali. Ducitur denique ad aram excelsi Principis, principium regni sortiturus ab illo per quem reges regnant (Prov. VIII). Prius autem quam imperatoriis cultibus vestiatur, requiritur super eo cleri voluntas et populi, et manu propria jurat libertatem Ecclesiarum. Ex tunc exuitur vestimentis suis et oleo sanctificationis aspergitur, ut typico rore perfusus, coelestis unguenti plenitudine glorietur. Induitur denique purpura, quod est regiae majestatis insigne, gestans regni sceptrum in manibus ad regendum populum sanctum Dei. Ponitur et corona aurea super caput ejus expressa signo sanctitatis, gloria honoris et ope fortitudinis (Eccli. XLV). Praefertur et gladius in oculis ejus, ut cognoscat quia vindex est irae Dei, in hoc ipsum constitutus. Tantis igitur ac talibus mysteriis initiatus, reportatur ad palatium, a die illa et deinceps timendus pariter et amandus. Felix autem, si gladium regni cum gladio jungat sacerdotii, ut gladius sacerdotis mitiget gladium regis, et gladius regis gladium acuat sacerdotis. Isti sunt duo gladii, de quibus in Domini passione legitur: «Ecce gladii duo hic; et respondetur a Domino: Sufficit (Luc. XXI).»

The evangelical page is also placed upon his head as he reclines, that he may both feel his own reason to be exceeded by the word of life, and his eyes may fail for the speech of the Lord. The miter (cidaris) is placed on the consecrated head, and the glory of the forehead is pre-signified by a golden plate, in which the name of the divinity is woven. The ring of secrets is delivered into his hand, so that he may say with the Prophet: "In my heart have I hidden thy speeches, that I may not sin against thee (Psalm 118)." The feet are also shod in the preparation of the Gospel of peace (Ephes. 6), that he may be of those of whom it is said: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach peace (Isa. 52)." He also receives the pastoral staff, so that from the very quality of the rod it may be signified how he may collect the mild, and correct the unquiet. So, so pre-flashing with the solemn glorification of vestments, and entering and going out more familiarly to the altar of God, he devolves the wrath of the judge into the mercy of the father by a happy commutation. This one has the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Ephes. 6). This one can deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. 5).

The fifth is the anointing of a king. This is a sublime besmearing, because it makes a sublime power. For when the blood of such great nobility, either by lineage or by election, is consecrated as king, religion with nobility is called together with all the forces of the kingdom. There stands on one side the glorious society of primates, metropolitans, and bishops; on the other, the not-to-be-despised nobility of dukes, counts, and castellans. The man proceeds in the midst, about to reign over men, surrounded by a personal troop. He is led finally to the altar of the sublime Prince, about to obtain the beginning of his reign from Him through whom kings reign (Prov. 8). But before he is clothed with the imperial ornaments, the will of the clergy and the people is required concerning him, and with his own hand he swears to the liberty of the Churches. From then on he is divested of his garments and is sprinkled with the oil of sanctification, so that, bedewed with the typical dew, he may glory in the fullness of the heavenly ointment. He is finally clothed with purple, which is the ensign of royal majesty, bearing the scepter of the kingdom in his hands to rule the holy people of God. A golden crown is also placed upon his head, expressed with the sign of holiness, the glory of honor, and the help of fortitude (Ecclus. 45). The sword is also carried before his eyes, so that he may know that he is the avenger of the wrath of God, appointed for this very thing. Having been initiated, therefore, by so many and such great mysteries, he is carried back to the palace, from that day and thereafter to be feared and loved alike. Happy is he, however, if he joins the sword of the kingdom with the sword of the priesthood, so that the sword of the priest may mitigate the sword of the king, and the sword of the king may whet the sword of the priest. These are the two swords of which one reads in the passion of the Lord: "Behold, here are two swords; and it is answered by the Lord: It is enough (Luke 22)."

Tunc enim regnum provehitur, sacerdotium dilatatur, honoratur utrumque, cum a Domino praetaxata felici confoederatione junguntur.

Sextum est sacramentum dedicationis ecclesiae. Dici vix potest quanta sit in hoc loco sacramentorum varietas et institutionum alternatio. Primum enim ecclesia intus et deforis dealbatur, cruces duodecim in interiore circuitu ecclesiae imprimuntur, cerei totidem accenduntur, emundatur ecclesia, pontifex ecclesiam exterius circuit cum aqua benedicta, et in superliminari portae tertio virga pastorali percutiens, dicit: «Attollite portas vestras, et elevamini, portae aeternales, et introibit Rex gloriae;» illis deintus respondentibus: «Quis est iste Rex gloriae?» (Psal. XXIII.) Tunc benedicit aquam sale, cinere, vino hyssopoque conspersam, alphabetum ex transverso quadrangula ratione conscribit, altare septies ex eadem aqua respergit, cruces chrismate, altare vero mistura chrismatis, oleique perungit, ad quatuor altaris cornua incensum incendit, altare tersum novis velaminibus operit, aliaque multa, quae sermonis brevitas non permittit inserere. Post haec omni vestimentorum gloria cumulatus ingreditur ad altare, sacrificium singulare celebraturus, et sic sanctificationi finem impositurus. Quis hujus abyssi caliginem sermonis claritate possit illuminare? Attigissemus tamen quantulumcunque, nisi nostris temporibus quidam, qui Carnotensi praesedit ecclesiae, vivacissimo mentis igne lucidius omnia declarasset. Ad illum igitur plenissimum fontem sitientem mittimus, ubi plenissimam hauriat veritatem. Notandum tamen quia praecedentia sacramenta sine visibili unctione non fiunt, cum subsequentia nihil hujusmodi merito continere legantur.

Septimum est sacramentum confessionis. Confessionis bonum quantum, vel quale sit, non est nostrae tenuitatis laudibus efferendum, cum praeclara Patrum ingenia multis eam insignierint documentis. Haec est via communis ad Deum, fons tam justis quam peccatoribus patens, qui criminum abundantiam abundantiori liquore detergit. Primam reddit innocentiae stolam, et fugitivum filium in paternos reducit amplexus (Luc. XV). Ex hoc fonte felices apostoli lacrymae profluxerunt; in hoc peccatricis feminae daemonia sunt submersa (Luc. VII); per hunc adulter, et homicida David (II Reg. XI) spiritu principali legitur confirmatus (Psal. L); in hoc felix ille volutatus est latro, qui brevi ponte crucis de patibulo ad regnum de supplicio in paradisum translatus est (Luc. XXIII), consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa (Sap. IV).

For then the kingdom is promoted, the priesthood is dilated, both are honored, when they are joined by the happy confederation pre-taxed by the Lord.

The sixth is the sacrament of the dedication of a church. It can hardly be said how great a variety of sacraments and alternation of institutes there is in this place. For first the church is whitened inside and out, twelve crosses are imprinted in the interior circuit of the church, as many wax tapers are lit, the church is cleansed, the pontiff goes around the church on the outside with holy water, and striking the lintel of the door thrice with the pastoral staff, he says: "Lift up your gates, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in;" those within answering: "Who is this King of glory?" (Psalm 23.) Then he blesses water sprinkled with salt, ash, wine, and hyssop, he writes out the alphabet transversely in a quadrangular manner, he sprinkles the altar seven times with the same water, he anoints the crosses with chrism, and the altar indeed with a mixture of chrism and oil, he burns incense at the four corners of the altar, he covers the wiped altar with new veils, and many other things which the brevity of the speech does not permit to insert. After these things, heaped with all the glory of vestments, he enters to the altar, about to celebrate the singular sacrifice, and thus about to put an end to the sanctification. Who could illuminate the darkness of this abyss with the clarity of speech? Yet we would have touched it ever so little, unless in our times a certain one, who presided over the church of Chartres, had declared all things more lucidly with a most vivid fire of the mind. To that most full fountain, therefore, we send the thirsty one, where he may draw the most full truth. It is to be noted, however, that the preceding sacraments are not done without visible unction, while the subsequent ones are read to contain nothing of this kind by merit.

The seventh is the sacrament of confession. How great or of what kind the good of confession may be, is not to be extolled by the praises of our thinness, since the preeminent geniuses of the Fathers have distinguished it with many documents. This is the common way to God, a fountain open to the just as well as to sinners, which wipes away the abundance of crimes with a more abundant liquor. It restores the first robe of innocence, and reduces the fugitive son into the paternal embraces (Luke 15). From this fountain the happy tears of the apostle flowed forth; in this the demons of the sinful woman were submerged (Luke 7); through this the adulterer and homicide David (2 Kings 11) is read to have been confirmed by the principal spirit (Psalm 50); in this that happy robber wallowed, who by a short bridge of the cross was translated from the gallows to the kingdom, from punishment into paradise (Luke 23), consummated in a short time, he fulfilled many times (Wisd. 4).

In hac virtute caligant oculi plurimorum, qui vel discretione privati, vel assentatione seducti, aut nesciunt quid injungant, vel, si sciunt, privatam gratiam praeferunt veritati. Verum non suscepimus hic aperire quid sentiamus ex ea, sed sermoni proprio proprietatem illius reservamus. Hoc tamen lectori taediosum non sit intelligere, quia confitens pastori suo, puritatem cordis, veritatem oris, macerationem carnis debeat exhibere. Ille vero cui confitetur, poenitentiam dignam, orationem continuam, taciturnitatem perpetuam confitenti suo curet administrare.

Octavum est canonicorum. Isti sunt in Ecclesiae solio sublimati, qui in episcopali sede veste candida refulgentes, innocentiam cordium colore vestium repromittunt. Ii de communi, et in commune viventes, vel vivere debentes perpetua, si peccaverint, sunt poenitenta castigandi; habitus enim eorum non poenitentiae, sed innocentiae esse monstratur. Videant ipsi amici Sponsi quid respondeant ante faciem Sponsi, qui judicat orbem terrae in aequitate, cum de sponsa coeperit exigere rationem. Nolumus invehi super illos, sed hoc solum caveant, ne de patrimonio Crucifixi lautioribus epulis infundantur, vel vestimentis ornentur nitidioribus, ne audiant a propheta: «Non compatiebantur super contritione Joseph (Amos. VI).»

Nonum est monachorum. Hi sunt qui a forensium causarum tumultibus elongati ludificatorias incantationes daemonum patienter eludunt. In Scripturis assidui, in obedientia praecipui, fervidi charitate, beatae urbis gaudia e vestibulo contemplantur. Circumspiciant tamen semetipsos, ne in amplioris coronae, vel laxioris calceamenti vilitate confidant, cum homo videat in facie, Deus autem in corde.

Decimum est eremitarum, qui per cavernas montium et vallium concava latitantes, angelicis sociati spiritibus, in divitias gloriae contemplativis oculis rapiuntur, et in carne carnis obliti naturam suam indefessa meditatione fatigant.

Undecimum est sanctimonalium. Istae sexum et saeculum ausu validiore vincentes, spectabilem victoriam ab hostis antiqui feritate reportant. Gloriosa res, ubi tenera membra longiori martyrio confringuntur, et illius enervant fortitudinem qui similitudinem Altissimi concupivit. Ad hujus spectaculum pugnae cito convertitur ille misericors intuitus, et tali potissimum victoria delectatur.

In this virtue the eyes of very many grow dark, who either deprived of discretion or seduced by flattery, either do not know what they should enjoin, or, if they know, they prefer private grace to the truth. Truly we have not undertaken here to open what we feel from it, but we reserve its property for our own speech. Let it not be tedious, however, for the reader to understand this, that he who confesses to his pastor ought to exhibit purity of heart, truth of mouth, and maceration of the flesh. But he to whom he confesses should care to administer to his confessor a worthy penance, continuous prayer, and perpetual taciturnity.

The eighth is that of the canons. These are those sublimated on the throne of the Church, who, refulgent in white garments in the episcopal see, repromise the innocence of hearts by the color of their clothes. These, living from common and in common, or owing to live, are to be corrected by perpetual penance if they shall have sinned; for their habit is shown to be not of penance, but of innocence. Let the friends of the Bridegroom themselves see what they should answer before the face of the Bridegroom, who judges the orb of the earth in equity, when He shall have begun to require an account of the bride. We do not wish to be carried against them, but let them beware of this alone, lest they be poured in with more sumptuous feasts from the patrimony of the Crucified, or be adorned with more neat garments, lest they hear from the prophet: "They were not compassionate over the contrition of Joseph (Amos 6)."

The ninth is that of the monks. These are they who, elongated from the tumults of forensic causes, patiently elude the delusive incantations of demons. Assiduous in the Scriptures, principal in obedience, fervid in charity, they contemplate the joys of the blessed city from the vestibule. Let them look around themselves, however, lest they trust in the vileness of a larger tonsure or a looser shoe, since man sees in the face, but God in the heart.

The tenth is that of the hermits, who, lurking through the caverns of mountains and the hollows of valleys, associated with angelic spirits, are snatched with contemplative eyes into the riches of glory, and in the flesh forgetting the flesh, they fatigue their nature with untiring meditation.

The eleventh is that of the nuns. These, conquering sex and the world with a stronger daring, report a spectacular victory from the ferocity of the ancient enemy. A glorious thing, where tender members are broken by a longer martyrdom, and they enervate the fortitude of him who coveted the likeness of the Most High. To the spectacle of this fight that merciful intuition is quickly converted, and is delighted by such a victory most of all.

Duodecimum est nuptiarum sacramentum. Hoc magnum est, ait Apostolus (Ephes. V); et Dominus in Evangelio: «Propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae, et erunt duo in carne una (Marc. X).» Quid enim magis unum quam illi, quibus est una caro, una mensa, unus torus, haereditas una? «Honorabile conjugium, dicit Vas electionis, torus immaculatus (Hebr. XIII).» Hoc destruuntur incestuosa conjugia, et legitimorum haeredum digna progenies propagatur. Haec sunt duodecim sacramenta, quae (nisi fallor) illae duodecim cruces significant, quas in circuitu ecclesiae videmus impressas. Sed jam dimittendus est stylus, quia et ingenii paupertas, et infirmitas carnis, quae solito durius inundavit, vetant me aliquid longius scriptitare. Si convalere potuero, exsequar quod coepi, ad honorem illius qui est benedictus in saecula. Amen.

## Sermo LXX.

*II. IN DEDICATIONE ECCLESIAE.*

«Immola Deo sacrificium laudis, et redde Altissimo vota tua (Psal. XLIX).» Tria sunt principalia et perfecta sacrificia, quae reddere tenemur Domino. Sacrificium piae contritionis, sacrificium justae operationis, sacrificium laudis vel jubilationis. Horum duo in praesenti sunt necessaria, tertium hic inchoat, et in futuro consummabitur. De primo dicitur: «Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus (Psal. L).» De secundo: «Sacrificate sacrificium justitiae (Psal. IV);» et alibi: «Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiae (Psal. L).» De tertio: «Beatus populus qui scit jubilationem (Psal. LXXXVIII).» Item: «Sacrificium laudis honorificabit me (Psal. XLIX).» Primum sacrificium placat Deum, secundum delectat, tertium honorat. Non curat Deus de his sacrificiis, nisi medullata sint et saginata. Unde ait psalmographus: «Sicut adipe et pinguedine repleatur anima mea (Psal. LXII).»

In lege omnis adeps offerri jubetur, et holocaustum pingue laudatur. Caro enim macra, et sine pinguedine, neque quando comeditur praestat saporem, neque quando assatur reddit odorem. Haec autem pinguedo non corporis, sed spiritus; non carnis, sed mentis intelligi debet. Pinguedo animae virtutes sunt. Hae suaviter redolent, hae in Dei sacrificio Domino placent, et sine his nullum sacrificium est acceptabile. Hoc adipe pingues erant illi de quibus dicitur: «Manducaverunt et adoraverunt omnes pingues terrae (Psal. XXI).» Itemque tres pueri in Daniele: «Sicut in holocausto arietum, et taurorum, et sicut in millibus agnorum pinguium, sic fiat sacrificium nostrum (Dan. III).» Ut ergo placeant haec sacrificia nostra Deo, pinguia sint, et medullata.

The twelfth is the sacrament of marriage. This is great, says the Apostle (Ephes. 5); and the Lord in the Gospel: "For this a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh (Mark 10)." For what is more one than they who have one flesh, one table, one bed, one inheritance? "Honorable is marriage, says the Vessel of election, the bed undefiled (Hebr. 13)." By this incestuous marriages are destroyed, and a worthy progeny of legitimate heirs is propagated. These are the twelve sacraments, which (unless I am mistaken) those twelve crosses signify, which we see imprinted in the circuit of the church. But already the stylus must be dismissed, because both the poverty of genius and the infirmity of the flesh, which has overflowed more harshly than usual, forbid me to write anything longer. If I shall be able to recover, I will pursue what I have begun, to the honor of Him who is blessed forever. Amen.

## Sermon LXX.

*II. ON THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.*

"Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise, and render thy vows to the Most High (Psalm 49)." There are three principal and perfect sacrifices, which we are bound to render to the Lord. The sacrifice of pious contrition, the sacrifice of just operation, the sacrifice of praise or jubilation. Two of these are necessary in the present, the third begins here, and will be consummated in the future. Of the first it is said: "A sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit (Psalm 50)." Of the second: "Sacrifice the sacrifice of justice (Psalm 4);" and elsewhere: "Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of justice (Psalm 50)." Of the third: "Blessed is the people that knoweth jubilation (Psalm 88)." Likewise: "The sacrifice of praise shall honor me (Psalm 49)." The first sacrifice placates God, the second delights Him, the third honors Him. God does not care for these sacrifices unless they are marrowy and fattened. Whence the psalmist says: "As with marrow and fatness let my soul be filled (Psalm 62)."

In the law all fat is commanded to be offered, and a fat holocaust is praised. For lean flesh, and without fatness, neither when it is eaten does it provide flavor, nor when it is roasted does it return odor. But this fatness ought to be understood not of the body, but of the spirit; not of the flesh, but of the mind. The fatness of the soul are virtues. These smell sweetly, these in the sacrifice of God please the Lord, and without these no sacrifice is acceptable. With this fat were they fat of whom it is said: "All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and adored (Psalm 21)." And likewise the three boys in Daniel: "As in a holocaust of rams and bulls, and as in thousands of fat lambs, so let our sacrifice be made (Dan. 3)." That therefore these sacrifices of ours may please God, let them be fat and marrowy.

Sacrificium piae contritionis exigit butyrum humilitatis, quae in tribus consistit; scilicet, ut considerat homo quam imperfectum sit quod habet, et hoc respectu superiorum; unde illud: «Ut sciam quid desit mihi (Psal. XXXVIII).» Deinde, ut consideret quia nil habet proprium; unde Apostolus: «Quid habes quod non accepisti?» (I Cor. IV.) Consideret etiam, quod nil habet in hac vita quod perdere non possit, juxta illud: «Memento unde excideris, et prima opera fac (Apoc. II).» Sacrificium justae operationis exigit oleum discretionis. Sacrificium laudis requirit balsamum devotionis.

Habent autem haec sacrificia opposita sibi vitia quasi ex latere venientia. Sacrificio contritionis opponitur absinthium indignationis; sacrificio justae operationis, acetum confusionis; sacrificio laudis, venenum adulationis, sive detractionis. Offeramus igitur, dilectissimi, Domino piam contritionem in amaritudine interiori, et poenitentia exteriori; ut «sobrie, juste ac pie vivamus in hoc saeculo (Tit. II).» Sobrie nobis, juste proximo, pie Deo. Sobrie in duobus, in cavenda voluptate, et curis hujus vitae; juste in duobus, ut nemini noceamus, et cunctis prodesse studeamus, juxta illud: «Declina a malo, et fac bonum (Psal. LVI);» pie in duobus, ut scilicet in praesenti vivat justus ex fide, et in futuro aeternam exspectet beatitudinem. Unde Apostolus: «Ex parte cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus, cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est (I Cor. XIII).» Offeramus dignam laudem in confessione oris, et devotione cordis. Pia quippe cordis contritio nascitur ex recordatione peccatorum, et timore futuri judicii; justa operatio, ex amore virtutis, et fiducia spei, laus et jubilatio ex affectu charitatis et recordatione beneficiorum Dei.

Sunt autem tres recordationes peccati, prima afficiens et delectans, quae mala est; secunda exasperans et pungitans, quae utilis est; tertia gloriosa, quae perfectorum est. Afficiens est, qua afficitur homo recogitans ad ollas carnium Aegyptiorum, quam deliciose et suaviter vixerit (Exod. XVI); et quam arduum sit iter, quod aggressurus est. Recogitatio pungitans est, quod reminiscitur quam sordide et flagitiose vixerit, non ut ad priora redeat, sed ut digne defleat, et coram se ea statuat, unde David: «Peccatum meum coram me est semper (Psal. L).»

The sacrifice of pious contrition requires the butter of humility, which consists in three things; namely, that a man consider how imperfect is that which he has, and this in respect to superiors; whence that: "That I may know what is wanting to me (Psalm 38)." Then, that he consider that he has nothing of his own; whence the Apostle: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. 4.) Let him consider also, that he has nothing in this life which he cannot lose, according to that: "Remember whence thou hast fallen, and do the first works (Apoc. 2)." The sacrifice of just operation requires the oil of discretion. The sacrifice of praise requires the balsam of devotion.

But these sacrifices have vices opposite to them, coming as if from the side. To the sacrifice of contrition is opposed the wormwood of indignation; to the sacrifice of just operation, the vinegar of confusion; to the sacrifice of praise, the poison of flattery or of detraction. Let us offer therefore, most dearly beloved, to the Lord a pious contrition in interior bitterness and exterior penance; so that "we may live soberly, justly and piously in this world (Tit. 2)." Soberly to ourselves, justly to our neighbor, piously to God. Soberly in two things: in avoiding pleasure and the cares of this life; justly in two things: so that we may harm no one, and may study to benefit all, according to that: "Decline from evil, and do good (Psalm 56);" piously in two things: so that namely in the present the just man may live by faith, and in the future may expect eternal beatitude. Whence the Apostle: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect shall have come, that which is in part shall be evacuated (1 Cor. 13)." Let us offer worthy praise in the confession of the mouth and the devotion of the heart. For pious contrition of heart is born from the recollection of sins and the fear of the future judgment; just operation, from the love of virtue and the confidence of hope; praise and jubilation from the affection of charity and the recollection of the benefits of God.

But there are three recollections of sin: the first affecting and delighting, which is bad; the second exasperating and pricking, which is useful; the third glorious, which is of the perfect. The affecting one is that by which a man is affected thinking back to the flesh-pots of the Egyptians, how deliciously and sweetly he lived (Exod. 16); and how arduous is the way which he is about to enter upon. The pricking recollection is that he remembers how sordidly and flagitiously he lived, not so that he may return to the prior things, but that he may worthily bewail them and set them before himself, whence David: "My sin is before me always (Psalm 50)."

Tertia recordatio, quae dicitur gloriosa, est quando homo remeditans quis fuerit, et qua gratia de lacu miseriae et de luto faecis liberatus sit, gratias agit, dicens: «Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam (Psal. CXIII).» Et cum Israelitis de Aegyptia servitute liberatus, gratulabunde decantat, dicens: «Cantemus Domino, gloriose enim honorificatus est, equum et ascensorem dejecit in mare (Exod. XV);» et cum Zacharia: «Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, quia visitavit, et fecit redemptionem plebis suae (Luc. I).» Haec sunt, quae Deo offerre debemus.

Tenemur etiam ei reddere, quae fecimus vota, juxta Prophetae admirationem: «Venite, et reddite Domino Deo vestro.» Qui non reddit quod vovet, quasi Deum provocat, et irridet. Reddendum est votum integrum, et perfectum, quia aliter non satisfaceret Deo, qui votum nostrum tanquam proprium exigit debitum. Unde et in lege dicitur, quod bovem, et ovem, aure et cauda amputatis, voluntarie offerre possumus (Levit. XXII, 23). Votum autem ex is solvi non potest, quibus aliquid perfectionis deest.

«Fecit, inquit, Deus duo magna luminaria (Gen. I).» Verum quidem est quod Deus in mundi creatione coelum clarum solis et lunae distinxit ornatu, ut alterum diei, alterum noctis vicissitudinem gubernaret. Porro si interius perscrutemur, inveniemus nobis allegoriae respondere secretum. Ecclesia enim mundi figuram gerit, quia sicut mundus ex quatuor clementis subsistit, ita Ecclesia ex quaternaria doctrina Evangelii coalescit. Habet autem Ecclesia suum diem, habet et lunam in nocte. Dies Ecclesiae est tempus pacis; nox Ecclesiae est tempestas persecutionis. Sol vero in Ecclesiae die, est sapientia; luna autem in Ecclesiae nocte, est patientia. His luminibus Deus Ecclesiam suam pinxit, quatenus et in pace non sit improvida et in bello non inveniatur mollis et fracta. Per sapientiam Ecclesia se protegit in pace a daemonibus, per patientiam se tuetur in bello a persecutoribus. Non claudicat Ecclesia, non est inermis, argumenta divina sapienter eludit, tormenta hominum sustinet patienter.

Recta prorsus comparatio est solis ad sapientiam, lunae ad patientiam, quia sicut sol lunae, ita sapientia praepollet patientiae. Sapientia itaque sol, quia illuminat; patientia luna, quia confortat. His geminis brachiis Ecclesia pugnat, altero prosternens daemones, altero vincens homines. Fecit itaque Deus haec duo magna luminaria, quibus ornatur Ecclesia, quibus quasi duobus oculis munitur Christi columba.

The third recollection, which is called glorious, is when a man, remeditating who he was, and by what grace he was liberated from the lake of misery and from the mud of dregs, gives thanks, saying: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory (Psalm 113)." And with the Israelites liberated from Egyptian servitude, he decants congratulatingly, saying: "Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously honored, the horse and the rider he has cast into the sea (Exod. 15);" and with Zacharias: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he has visited and made redemption for his people (Luke 1)." These are what we ought to offer to God.

We are also bound to render to Him the vows which we have made, according to the admiration of the Prophet: "Come, and render to the Lord your God." He who does not render what he vows, as it were provokes and mocks God. The vow is to be rendered whole and perfect, because otherwise it would not satisfy God, who requires our vow as his own due. Whence also in the law it is said, that an ox and a sheep, with ear and tail amputated, we can voluntarily offer (Levit. 22:23). But a vow cannot be paid from those things in which something of perfection is wanting.

"God made," he says, "two great luminaries (Gen. 1)." It is indeed true that God in the creation of the world distinguished the clear heaven with the ornament of the sun and the moon, so that the one should govern the vicissitude of the day, the other of the night. Furthermore, if we search more interiorly, we shall find the secret of allegory to respond to us. For the Church bears the figure of the world, because just as the world subsists from four elements, so the Church coalesces from the quaternary doctrine of the Gospel. Moreover, the Church has its own day, and it has the moon in the night. The day of the Church is the time of peace; the night of the Church is the tempest of persecution. But the sun in the day of the Church is wisdom; and the moon in the night of the Church is patience. With these lights God painted his Church, so that in peace it may not be improvident and in war it may not be found soft and broken. Through wisdom the Church protects itself in peace from demons, through patience it defends itself in war from persecutors. The Church does not limp, it is not unarmed; it wisely eludes divine arguments, and patiently sustains the torments of men.

The comparison of the sun to wisdom and the moon to patience is altogether right, because just as the sun prevails over the moon, so wisdom prevails over patience. Wisdom is therefore the sun, because it illuminates; patience the moon, because it comforts. With these twin arms the Church fights, with the one prostrating demons, with the other conquering men. God therefore made these two great luminaries, with which the Church is adorned, with which as with two eyes the dove of Christ is fortified.

Dissolutis nebulis allegoriae, hunc etiam rivulum Scripturae ad irrigandos mores nostros possumus trahere. Nam sicut Deus in hoc mundo duo magna luminaria fecit, ita etiam in homine duo magna luminaria ordinavit. Ne sibi videatur durum, quod dicimus; homo enim alter est mundus, unde ipsa Graeca lingua vocatur, μικρόκοσμος, id est, minor mundus, quia ad similitudinem majoris mundi est factus. Nam sicut Deus majori mundo praesidet, ita quod ubique est totus; sic anima corpori dominatur, ita quod ubique tota est in corpore.

Homo itaque habet diem, habet et noctem; habet solem in die, habet lunam in nocte. Dies hominis est vita justitiae, nox hominis est vita nequitiae. Sol autem in vita justitiae est charitas quae praeest vitae justitiae; luna vero in vita peccatoris, est poenitentia. O quam clarus sol est charitas, cujus quindecim radios enumerat filius solis Paulus apostolus, in Epistola ad Corinthios, ubi ait: «Charitas non aemulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur!» (I Cor. XIII.) O quam clarum poenitentiae jubar! noctem peccati removet quod conscientiae nubilum tergit.

Lunae hujus, scilicet poenitentiae, quatuor sunt radii: cognitio peccati, dolor pro peccatis, confessio peccati, fructus eleemosynae. Prius oportet cognoscere peccatum, sed non sufficit; oportet dolere pro peccato; addenda est etiam confessio, quia frustra dolet qui non confitetur; his vero adjungendus est fructus eleemosynae, qui est pretium peccati. Unde propheta de impio dicit: «Non credat frustra errore deceptus, quod aliquo pretio redimendus sit (Job XV).» Pretium certe peccati est eleemosyna. Sed qui semper eleemosynam erogat et semper peccat frustra credit quod eleemosyna ei proficiat. Interpretandum est igitur eleemosynae vocabulum. El, Hebraice, Deus, moys, Aegyptiaca lingua dicitur aqua, inde eleemosyna, id est, aqua Dei. E contrario videre possumus quod peccatum est ignis diaboli. Igitur contra ignem diaboli opponatur aqua Dei. Perpende, Christiane, dignitatem tuam, et redemptionem culpae tuae. Noli belluina mente contemnere. Deus eleemosynam fecit tibi, corpus proprium morti tradendo, tu eleemosynam fac illi, buccellam panis porrigendo pauperi. Esto prius in te misericors, deinde in proximum clementiae rivum effunde, ut sic pariter cum proximo ad fontem misericordiae valeas pervenire, Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## Sermo LXXII.

*IV. IN DEDICATIONE ECCLESIAE.*

. . . . . vere est mons fortitudinis, innuitur salutare vexillum, id est crux, quae immortali memoria viret semper, floret atque fructificat in mentibus electorum.

The clouds of allegory having been dissolved, we can also draw this rivulet of Scripture to irrigate our morals. For just as God made two great luminaries in this world, so also in man he ordained two great luminaries. Let it not seem harsh to anyone, what we say; for man is another world, whence in the Greek tongue itself he is called microcosmos, that is, a minor world, because he was made to the likeness of the major world. For just as God presides over the major world, so that he is everywhere whole; so the soul dominates the body, so that it is everywhere whole in the body.

Man therefore has a day, he has also a night; he has a sun in the day, he has a moon in the night. The day of man is the life of justice, the night of man is the life of iniquity. But the sun in the life of justice is charity which presides over the life of justice; and the moon in the life of a sinner is penitence. O how clear a sun is charity, whose fifteen rays the son of the sun, Paul the apostle, enumerates in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says: "Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up!" (1 Cor. 13.) O how clear the beam of penitence! it removes the night of sin because it wipes away the cloud of conscience.

Of this moon, namely penitence, there are four rays: knowledge of sin, sorrow for sins, confession of sin, and the fruit of almsgiving. First it behooves to know the sin, but it is not sufficient; it behooves to sorrow for the sin; confession is also to be added, because he sorrows in vain who does not confess; but to these is to be joined the fruit of almsgiving, which is the price of sin. Whence the prophet says of the impious: "Let him not believe, deceived in vain by error, that he is to be redeemed by any price (Job 15)." Almsgiving is certainly the price of sin. But he who always gives alms and always sins believes in vain that almsgiving profits him. The word almsgiving (eleemosyna) is therefore to be interpreted. El, in Hebrew, is God, moys in the Egyptian tongue is called water, whence eleemosyna, that is, the water of God. On the contrary we can see that sin is the fire of the devil. Therefore let the water of God be opposed against the fire of the devil. Weigh, O Christian, thy dignity, and the redemption of thy fault. Do not contemn with a beastly mind. God made alms to thee, by delivering his own body to death; do thou make alms to him, by reaching out a morsel of bread to the poor. Be first merciful in thyself, then pour out the rivulet of clemency upon thy neighbor, so that thus together with thy neighbor thou mayest be able to arrive at the fountain of mercy, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns God through all ages of ages. Amen.

## Sermon LXXII.

### *IV. ON THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.*

. . . . . truly is the mountain of fortitude, the salutary standard is hinted at, that is the cross, which always flourishes with immortal memory, blooms and bears fruit in the minds of the elect.

Per hoc autem quod in sacris altaribus Dominico corpori sanctorum reliquiae sociantur, unitum Redemptori suo sanctae Ecclesiae corpus ostenditur, et quasi sponsus cum sponsa in sancti altaris thalamo collocatur. Et quia in Apocalypsi, sub altari Dei visae sanctorum martyrum animae referuntur (Apoc. VI), aptissime congruit, ut etiam apud nos sub arae visibilis mensa eorum patrocinia recondantur.

Praeterea sicut in sepulcro Redemptoris myrrha et aloe missa sunt (Joan. XIX), ita et hic thus apponitur, per quod ejusdem Domini mortificatio figuratur, sicut ipse dicit: «Quotiescunque manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis, donec veniat (I Cor. XI).» Dignum est ergo ut in altari, super quod corpus Dominicum jugiter immolatur, mors ejus etiam per rerum invisibilium aenigmata nuntietur.

Parietibus quoque basilicae per circuitum duodecim de sancto chrismate signa crucis imprimimus totidemque candelas affigimus, ut eam sancti Spiritus unguedine delibutam et apostolorum doctrinis divinitus illustratam his signis invisibilibus ostendamus.

Sunt etiam alia nonnulla, fratres mei, quae in ecclesiarum consecrationibus certi causa mysterii rationabiliter adhibemus, sicut est vinum, hyssopum, sal, cineres, pulveres, fragmen rubei lapidis. Quae videlicet omnia idcirco per ordinem vobis exponere, cur adhibeantur, omittimus, ne charitatem vestram prolixis sermonibus oneremus. Quae tamen breviter perstringendo transcurrimus, ut tenuem saltem uberius intelligendi lineam producamus. Porro sicut aqua Vetus Testamentum, sic et vinum significat Evangelium, quod Dominus tunc expressit, cum aquam in vinum in nuptiali constitutus solemnitate mutavit (Joan. II).

Et sicut liquores illi simul in consecratione miscentur Ecclesiae, sic procul dubio dignum est ut utraque lex jugiter nostro versetur in corde. Sal etiam simul immittitur, ut insipidus veteris legis sapor evangelicae intelligentiae sale conditus esse doceatur. Unde cum cives Jericho aquas illius terrae conquererentur amaras, ait Eliseus: «Afferte mihi vas novum, et mittite in illud sal. Qui cum attulissent, egressus ad fontes aquarum, misit in eum sal, et ait: Haec dicit Dominus: Sanavi aquas has, et non erit in eis ultra mors, neque sterilitas. Sanatae ergo sunt aquae usque ad diem hanc, juxta verbum Elisei, quod locutus est (IV Reg. II).» Per quod designatur, quod amara veteris legis aqua per spiritualem Evangelii intellectum erat in dulcedinem convertenda.

But by this, that in the sacred altars the relics of the saints are associated with the Lord's body, the body of the holy Church is shown united to its Redeemer, and as if a bridegroom with a bride is placed in the bridal chamber of the holy altar. And because in the Apocalypse, the souls of the holy martyrs are reported seen under the altar of God (Apoc. 6), it fits most aptly, that among us also their patronages be recondited under the table of the visible altar.

Besides, just as in the sepulcher of the Redeemer myrrh and aloes were sent (John 19), so also here incense is applied, by which the mortification of the same Lord is figured, as he himself says: "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall announce the death of the Lord, until he come (1 Cor. 11)." It is worthy therefore that in the altar, upon which the Lord's body is continually immolated, his death also be announced through the enigmas of invisible things.

On the walls also of the basilica we imprint twelve signs of the cross with holy chrism in the circuit and we affix as many candles, so that we may show it besmeared with the ointment of the Holy Spirit and divinely illustrated by the doctrines of the apostles by these invisible signs.

There are also some other things, my brothers, which we reasonably apply in the consecrations of churches for the sake of a certain mystery, such as is wine, hyssop, salt, ashes, powders, a fragment of red stone. All of which indeed we omit to expose to you in order, why they are applied, lest we burden your charity with prolix speeches. Which things, however, we run through by briefly touching upon them, that we may produce at least a thin line of fuller understanding. Furthermore, just as water signifies the Old Testament, so also wine signifies the Gospel, which the Lord then expressed, when being constituted in the nuptial solemnity he changed water into wine (John 2).

And just as those liquors are mixed together in the consecration of the Church, so without doubt it is worthy that both laws be continually turned in our heart. Salt also is sent in together, so that the insipid flavor of the old law may be taught to be seasoned with the salt of evangelical intelligence. Whence when the citizens of Jericho complained of the bitter waters of that land, Elisha said: "Bring me a new vessel, and put salt into it. Who when they had brought it, having gone out to the fountains of the waters, he sent salt into it, and said: Thus saith the Lord: I have healed these waters, and there shall be in them no more death, nor sterility. The waters therefore were healed even to this day, according to the word of Elisha, which he spoke (4 Kings 2)." By which it is designated, that the bitter water of the old law was to be converted into sweetness through the spiritual intellect of the Gospel.

Hyssopus autem, qui pectoris arcana purificat, fidem designat, de qua nimirum dicit Apostolus: «Fide purificans corda eorum (Act. XV).» In cinere vero significatur humilitas, per quam scilicet Abraham Deo colloquens, ait: «Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Gen. XVIII).» Per speciem vero rubei fragminis, fervor innuitur charitatis. Hinc est quod Adam dicitur terra rubra, videlicet ut in vocabulo primi hominis homo discat quatenus, quia terra est, humiliter vivat; et quia ruber dicitur, a fervore charitatis geminae non tepescat. Quae scilicet omnia idcirco in dedicatione Ecclesiae visibiliter admiscentur, ut nos eorum mysticum intellectum in mente nostra recondere doceamur. Et quia nos utique sumus Ecclesia, per visibiles species atque corporeas mystice designatur quae spiritualium virtutum nobis inesse debeant sacramenta. Haec interim vos nosse sufficiat, ut per haec quae dicimus valeatis et illa conjicere quae tacemus.

Videtis praeterea, dilectissimi, quia basilica ista constat lapidibus et caemento, quod si parietis machina in alta se subrigens solis lapidibus coacervatur, et calcis ac sabuli glutine non obstringitur, ad violentiae cujuslibet impetum quidquid constructum est necesse est subruatur. Quid est aliud templum Dei, nisi populus Dei? Lapides nisi homines? Quid caementum, nisi tenax coagulum charitatis? Unde dicit Apostolus: «Charitatem habentes, quod est vinculum perfectionis (Gol. III).» Sicut ergo muralis machina sine caemento constructa perflantibus ventis evertitur, ita boni operis aedificium ad quemlibet tentationis impetum cito collabitur, si paternae charitatis coagulo non tenetur.

Ut ergo, dilectissimi, sancti operis nostri structura permaneat, Spiritus Dei vos in fraternae charitatis compage connectat. Non enim omnes, qui Christianum videntur habere vocabulum, pervenire merentur ad Christum; neque omnes qui habent Ecclesiae societatem, ad ecclesiastici corporis pertinent veraciter unitatem. Tabernaculum nempe foederis, quod Christi tunc praefigurabat Ecclesiam, Bezeleel filius Uri de tribu Juda, et Ooliab filius Achisamech de tribu Dan, pariter construxerunt (Exod. XXXI). Sed cuncti liquido novimus quia de tribu Juda natus est Christus, de tribu vero Dan nasciturus est Antichristus. Sic ex utriusque nunc membris universalis constat Ecclesia, sed sola charitate discernitur, qui scilicet ad Christum, qui ad Antichristum merito pertinere credatur. Unde et Bezeleel dicitur in umbra Dei, quia quisquis Christum veraciter sequitur, umbra sancti Spiritus, ex quo ille in Virginis utero conceptus est, ab aestu desideriorum carnalium temperatur.

But hyssop, which purifies the secrets of the breast, designates faith, of which indeed the Apostle says: "Purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15)." In the ash indeed is signified humility, through which namely Abraham speaking to God, says: "I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes (Gen. 18)." But by the species of the red fragment, the fervor of charity is hinted at. Hence it is that Adam is called red earth, namely that in the name of the first man a man may learn that, because he is earth, he may live humbly; and because he is called red, he may not grow lukewarm from the fervor of twin charity. All of which things indeed are visibly mixed in the dedication of the Church, so that we may be taught to recondite their mystic intellect in our mind. And because we indeed are the Church, through visible and corporeal species it is mystically designated what sacraments of spiritual virtues ought to be in us. Let it suffice for you to know these things meanwhile, so that through these things which we say you may be able to guess also those which we keep silent.

You see besides, most dearly beloved, that this basilica consists of stones and cement, which if the machine of the wall rising on high is heaped up from stones alone, and is not constrained by the glue of lime and sand, whatever has been constructed must necessarily be undermined at the impetus of any violence. What else is the temple of God, but the people of God? Stones but men? What cement, but the tenacious coagulum of charity? Whence the Apostle says: "Having charity, which is the bond of perfection (Col. 3)." As therefore a mural machine constructed without cement is overturned by blowing winds, so the edifice of a good work quickly collapses at any impetus of temptation, if it is not held by the coagulum of paternal charity.

That therefore, most dearly beloved, the structure of our holy work may remain, let the Spirit of God connect you in the joint of fraternal charity. For not all who seem to have the name Christian deserve to arrive at Christ; nor do all who have the society of the Church truly pertain to the unity of the ecclesiastical body. For the tabernacle of the covenant, which then prefigured the Church of Christ, Bezeleel the son of Uri of the tribe of Judah, and Ooliab the son of Achisamech of the tribe of Dan, constructed together (Exod. 31). But we all clearly know that from the tribe of Judah Christ was born, but from the tribe of Dan Antichrist is to be born. Thus the universal Church now consists from the members of both, but it is discerned by charity alone, who namely is believed to pertain by merit to Christ, who to Antichrist. Whence also Bezeleel is said in the shadow of God, because whoever truly follows Christ is tempered from the heat of carnal desires by the shadow of the Holy Spirit, from whom he was conceived in the Virgin's womb.

Ooliab interpretatur protectio mea pater, quoniam Antichristus cum suis utique membris patrum suorum, hoc est veterum Judaeorum, se testimonio protegit, dum legalia mandata juxta litteram servat, et ea secundum illorum traditionem carnaliter observanda mendaciter dogmatizat.

Ecce, dilectissimi, tabernaculum Dei nunc communis frequentiae societate construimus, et templum Dei corporali frequentia sufficienter implemus, imo et ipsi templum Dei per novae regenerationis gratiam effecti sumus. «Templum enim Dei sanctum est, dicit Apostolus, quod estis vos, et Spiritus Dei habitat in vobis.» Ubi terribile est, quod praesto subjungitur: «Si quis templum Dei violaverit, disperdet illum Deus (I Cor. III).» Templum sane, id est materialis quaelibet ac terrena basilica, aliquando pulvere, vel levi quacunque sorde polluitur; aliquando per effusionem sanguinis, vel certe per admissum aliquod grave facinus violatur; sed cum solus se nimius pulvis exaggerat, vel tenuis quaedam pollutio pavimenti munditiam foedat, levi ramusculo, quod injectum est, scopitur, et sic ad priorem munditiam, quod foedatum est, revocatur. At si vel homicidii, vel gravissimi, quod absit, sceleris contaminatione respergitur, denuo per summi sacerdotis officium necesse est instauretur. Nos certe in die sacri baptismatis per sanctificationem Spiritus Dei templum sumus effecti; quod si vel otiosi sermonis, vel exigui cujusquam reatus attaminatione contingimur, facile est ut levis poenitentiae satisfactione purgemur. At si gravis culpae lepram nos incurrisse contigerit, adeunda est protinus mater Ecclesia, supplicandus est pontifex, ut animae nostrae templum, quod violatum atque destructum immani scelere cernitur, per sacerdotalis auctoritatis officium ac satisfactionis dignae remedium noviter instauretur.

Nec dubium quin illa templi spiritualis instauratio, quae per visibilis sacerdotis exhibetur officium, per divinae virtutis atque potentiae intrinsecus impleatur effectum; et Christus Jesus, qui verus Rex est et Sacerdos, quod collapsum in homine vel destructum maligni spiritus arte considerat, per plenioris gratiae largitatem in melius renovat et reformat. Quod etiam templi Hierusalem instauratio tunc illa signaverat, quae per Zorobabel filium Salathiel, ducem videlicet Juda, Jesum (Josue) filium Josedech sacerdotem magnum, facta fuisse legitur sub Dario rege Persarum (I Esdr. III). Sicut enim tunc Nabuchonosor rex Babylonis templum Hierusalem populum captivando destruxerat, sic nequitiae spiritus, qui possessor est intimae confusionis, humanam animam a sua saepe libertate captivat, et sic templum Dei perversa concupiscentiae sorde contaminat.

Ooliab is interpreted my father's protection, because Antichrist with his own members indeed protects himself by the testimony of his fathers, that is of the ancient Jews, while he keeps the legal mandates according to the letter, and mendaciously dogmatizes that they are to be observed carnally according to their tradition.

Behold, most dearly beloved, we now construct the tabernacle of God by the society of common frequency, and we sufficiently fill the temple of God with corporeal frequency, nay and we ourselves have been made the temple of God through the grace of the new regeneration. "For the temple of God is holy, says the Apostle, which you are, and the Spirit of God dwells in you." Where it is terrible, what is immediately subjoined: "If any man violate the temple of God, God shall destroy him (1 Cor. 3)." A temple indeed, that is any material and earthly basilica, is sometimes polluted by dust, or by any light sordes; sometimes it is violated through the effusion of blood, or certainly through some grave crime committed; but when only too much dust exaggerates itself, or some thin pollution fouls the cleanness of the pavement, it is swept by a light twig which has been cast in, and thus that which was fouled is recalled to the prior cleanness. But if it is besprinkled by the contamination either of homicide, or of a most grave crime, which heaven forbid, it must necessarily be restored again through the office of the high priest. We certainly on the day of holy baptism through the sanctification of the Spirit were made the temple of God; but if we are touched by the contamination either of an idle speech, or of any small guilt, it is easy that we be purged by the satisfaction of a light penance. But if it shall have happened that we have incurred the leprosy of a grave fault, mother Church is immediately to be approached, the pontiff is to be supplicated, so that the temple of our soul, which is discerned violated and destroyed by a huge crime, be newly restored through the office of priestly authority and the remedy of worthy satisfaction.

Nor is there any doubt that that restoration of the spiritual temple, which is exhibited through the office of the visible priest, is filled within by the effect of divine virtue and power; and Christ Jesus, who is the true King and Priest, that which he considers collapsed or destroyed in man by the art of the malignant spirit, he renovates and reforms into better through the largess of fuller grace. Which also the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem had then signified, which is read to have been made under Darius king of the Persians through Zerubbabel the son of Salathiel, the leader namely of Judah, and Jesus (Joshua) the son of Jozadak the high priest (1 Esdr. 3). For just as then Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had destroyed the temple of Jerusalem by captivating the people, so the spirit of iniquity, who is the possessor of intimate confusion, often captivates the human soul from its own liberty, and thus contaminates the temple of God with the perverse sordes of concupiscence.

Et sicut per Zorobabel atque Jesum, regiam videlicet sacerdotalemque personam, tunc instauratum est templum, sic hominis anima furore antiqui hostis impellente collapsa, et per ejus astutiam turpiter violata, ex virtute Redemptoris nostri, qui ex utraque stirpe descendit, erigitur, et non solum in id quod fuerat, sed et in amplioris gratiae plenitudinem reformatur. Unde et per Aggaeum prophetam de lapideo illo templo dictum est: «Magna erit gloria domus istius novissimae plus quam primae; et in loco isto dabo pacem, dicit Dominus Deus exercituum (Agg. II).» Tunc sacerdos ille pontificum, et Rex regum templum suum perpetuo possessurus ingreditur, et illud non solum a perpetrati sceleris contaminatione purificat, sed etiam gloria continuae deinceps inhabitationis illustrat. Sicut per eumdem prophetam dicitur: «Et veniet Desideratus cunctis gentibus; et implebo domum istam gloria, dicit Dominus exercituum (Ibid.).»

Hortamur itaque, dilectissimi, et sanctae devotionis vestrae prudentiam salubriter admonemus, ut si templum pectoris vestri cognoscitis, vel antiqui hostis arte corruptum, vel etiam perpetrati gravissima cujusquam sceleris attaminatione pollutum, illum adite pontificem, qui restaurationis et totius humanae salutis principaliter obtinet potestatem; de mentis vestrae cubiculo pravae concupiscentiae sordes abjicite, furoris et iracundiae stimulos per patientiae mansuetudinem mitigate, petulantis luxuriae virus expellite, supernae contemplationis intuitu vanarum cogitationum caliginem dimovete; sicque procul abjectis omnium sordibus vitiorum, succedant spiritualium ornamenta virtutum, quibus suaviter delectatus omnipotens Deus, illud in vobis construat domicilium, in quo sit ipse summitas simul et fundamentum. Summitas quidem, sicut scriptum est: «Lapidem, quem reprobaverunt aedificantes, hic factus est in caput anguli (Psal. CXVII).» Fundamentum vero, sicut dicitur; «Fundamentum autem nemo potest ponere, praeter id quod positum est, Christum Jesum (I Cor. III).»

Non ergo sit mens vestra, dilectissimi, apotheca mercium, non cupiditatis aerarium, non area bellatorum. Quidquid enim sedulo versas in conscientia, hoc idem et ipse es in aestimatione divina. Omne siquidem nostrum, sive boni, sive mali desiderium coram divino conspectu in nostra cernitur mente depictum. Porro si in te flamma libidinis aestuat, mens tua domus est fornicationis, non domus orationis; si fomes inest livoris et odii; non domicilium pacis, sed campus videtur esse certaminis. Sit ergo mens nostra non obscenae luxuriae clibanus, non passionum sentina carnalium, non denique volutabrum vitiorum, sed sit cum Dei omnipotentis auxilio spiritualium aula virtutum, quam ipse supernus dignetur habitator invisere atque in templo dicati sibi pectoris habitare, sicut per prophetam promittit, dicens: «Inambulabo in illis, et inhabitabo et ero illorum Deus (II Cor. VI),» qui vivit et regnat in Trinitate perfecta unus et verus Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

And just as through Zerubbabel and Jesus, the royal namely and priestly person, the temple was then restored, so the soul of man, having collapsed by the impelling fury of the ancient enemy, and being foully violated through his astuteness, is erected from the virtue of our Redeemer, who descended from both lineages, and is reformed not only into that which it had been, but also into the fullness of more ample grace. Whence also through Haggai the prophet it was said of that stone temple: "Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first; and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord God of hosts (Hag. 2)." Then that priest of pontiffs, and King of kings enters to possess his temple perpetually, and he not only purifies it from the contamination of the committed crime, but also illustrates it with the glory of continual inhabitation thereafter. As it is said through the same prophet: "And the Desired of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts (Ibid.)."

We exhort therefore, most dearly beloved, and we salutarily admonish the prudence of your holy devotion, so that if you know the temple of your breast to be either corrupted by the art of the ancient enemy, or also polluted by the contamination of any most grave crime committed, approach that pontiff who principally obtains the power of restoration and of all human salvation; cast away the sordes of depraved concupiscence from the chamber of your mind, mitigate the stings of fury and wrath through the mildness of patience, expel the poison of petulant luxury, move away the darkness of vain thoughts by the intuition of supernal contemplation; and thus the sordes of all vices being cast far away, let the ornaments of spiritual virtues succeed, by which delighted sweetly, almighty God may construct that domicile in you, in which he himself may be the summit at once and the foundation. The summit indeed, as it is written: "The stone, which the builders rejected, the same is made into the head of the corner (Psalm 117)." The foundation indeed, as it is said: "For other foundation can no man lay, besides that which is laid, Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 3)."

Let not therefore your mind be, most dearly beloved, a warehouse of merchandise, not a treasury of cupidity, not an area of warriors. For whatever you diligently turn in your conscience, this same thing you are also in the divine estimation. For every desire of ours, whether of good or of evil, is discerned depicted in our mind before the divine sight. Furthermore if the flame of lust seethes in thee, thy mind is a house of fornication, not a house of prayer; if the fuel of envy and hatred is within, it is seen to be not a domicile of peace, but a field of contest. Let therefore our mind be not a furnace of obscene luxury, not a sink of carnal passions, not finally a wallowing-place of vices, but let it be with the help of almighty God a hall of spiritual virtues, which the supernal inhabitant himself may deign to visit and to dwell in the temple of the breast dedicated to him, as he promises through the prophet, saying: "I will walk in them, and will dwell and will be their God (2 Cor. 6)," who lives and reigns in the perfect Trinity one and true God forever and ever. Amen.

SERMONES MORALES. Sermo de vitio linguae. Sermo de spirituali certamine. Sermo synodalis.

MORAL SERMONS. Sermon on the vice of the tongue. Sermon on the spiritual contest. Synodal sermon.