The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 95

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Bede: Commentaries on the Gospels of Mark and Luke

c. AD 700 – 735

SERMONINDEX

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Introduction to This Volume

How this book is arranged

This is the ninety-fifth volume of a series that gathers the writings of the early Church in order of date, from the generation after the apostles down to the eighth century. This volume holds Bede, Commentaries on the Gospels of Mark and Luke, from the period about AD 700 – 735.

Within each work the text is divided into chapters and numbered sections, so that any passage can be found again and cited. The small bold figures in the text are the section numbers.

The translations

The text is in English only. Wherever a modern English version has been prepared for SermonIndex it is used here; otherwise the book prints an older public-domain translation. In both cases the wording is the translator's own: older translations have not been altered beyond dividing them into sections. The sources for every work are listed at the back of the book, together with the licence under which each text is released. All the works in this volume are printed in the modern English versions prepared for SermonIndex.

In this volume

Bede was born about AD 673 on land belonging to the monastery of Wearmouth in Northumbria. At seven years old he was given to the abbot Benedict Biscop, and he spent the rest of his life in the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, rarely leaving them. He was made a deacon at nineteen and a priest at thirty. He taught the monks, sang the daily services, and wrote on the Scriptures, on the calendar and on the history of his own people. Most of his books explain the Bible by gathering what Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory had taught, and adding his own lessons for the Church. His Ecclesiastical History of the English People, finished in AD 731, is the chief source for the early English church. He died at Jarrow in AD 735, and the title Venerable was given to him in the centuries after.

Each section of the two commentaries is headed by the verse of the Gospel on which Bede is writing. The letters between Acca and Bede, which introduce the Commentary on Luke, are printed before the commentary itself. The Commentary on Luke was long, and it is given here as one work in twenty-four chapters, one for each chapter of the Gospel.

Dates and authorship

Dates are approximate and are debated by scholars. Each work begins with a short introduction that states what is known about its author and its date, and what is uncertain.

PART ONE

Commentary on Mark

The shortest Gospel, explained for Bishop Acca.

Commentary on Mark

The Venerable Bede

AD 673–735

Bede's commentary on the Gospel of Mark, written for Acca, bishop of Hexham, with a short letter at the front. It explains the Gospel verse by verse and sets Mark beside the other three evangelists, where the accounts seem to differ.

letter to bishop acca

About to write the exposition of the Gospel according to Mark, with the help of the same evangelical grace, we considered it proper to first briefly indicate the reason why Mark wrote the Gospel. When the clear light of the true God had arisen for the city of Rome through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Peter, the word of truth so pleased the minds of all with its agreeable hearing that there was never any satiety for those who listened to him daily. Hence, the hearing alone did not suffice for them, but they beseeched Mark, his disciple, with all prayers that he would commit to writing what he preached by word, to have it as their perpetual reminder so that they would continue in the meditations of such a word, both at home and abroad. Nor did they cease from beseeching until they obtained what they had prayed for. When Peter recognized through the Holy Spirit that he had been divested by this pious theft, he was delighted. Considering their faith and devotion through these things, he confirmed the deed and handed the Scripture over to the churches to be read perpetually. Clement, in the sixth book of his Dispositions, describes these events in such a manner. Likewise, the bishop of Hierapolis, named Papias, gives similar testimony. He says that Peter, in the first epistle he wrote from the city of Rome, mentions Mark, in which he tropically named Rome as Babylon, saying:

"The church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, greets you, and so does Mark, my son. Therefore, having taken the Gospel which he himself had written, he proceeded to Egypt, and first announcing Christ in Alexan-

dria, he established a church with such doctrine and purity of life that he compelled all followers of Christ to his example. Finally, Philo, the most eloquent of the Jews, observing the first church in Alexandria still adhering to Jewish ways, wrote a book about their life as if in praise of his own people. And just as Luke recounts that the believers in Jerusalem had all things in common, so Philo recorded that this happened in Alexandria under Mark's instruction. They furthermore report that he was of Israelite origin, born from a priestly lineage, and after the passion and resurrection of the Lord Savior, imbued with the evangelical faith and sacraments through the preaching of the apostles, and count him among those of whom Luke writes, "A great number of the priests obeyed the faith" (Acts 6). Therefore, being taught by the legal ordinances, he demonstrated the best way of life for the people he called to faith. He also showed the canonical observance of Easter, which was to be imitated by all the churches of Christ.

In this Gospel, dear bishop Acca, and at your and other numerous brothers' urging, I will write according to what the Lord has granted, chiefly collecting what we have found in the venerable examples of the Fathers, here and there. But I will also interpose some original thoughts in imitation of their sense where it seems appropriate. I humbly beseech the reader that if he considers these our small works worthy of copying, he carefully preserves the annotation of names given above, just as it is confirmed to have been done in the exposition of the blessed Luke's Gospel which we composed many years ago with the help of God's grace. May the heavenly grace always protect your holiness praying for us. And before everything, I beseech all who may read this to intercede for my physical and spiritual frailties before the merciful Judge.

CHAPTER 1

Mark 1:1

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, etc. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet. The beginning of the Gospel of Mark should be compared to the beginning of Matthew, where he says: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, etc. And from both, our one Lord Jesus Christ is to be understood as the Son of God and man. And fittingly the first evangelist calls him the Son of Man, the second the Son of God, so that our understanding may gradually rise from the lesser to the greater, and through faith and the sacraments of assumed humanity, ascend to the recognition of di-

vine eternity. Fittingly, he who was to describe human genealogy began with the Son of Man, namely David or Abraham, from whose lineage he assumed the substance of flesh. Fittingly, he who was to start his book from the beginning of the evangelical preaching wished to call our Lord Jesus Christ more as the Son of God, because it was in accordance with both aspects: the human nature from the lineage of patriarchs or kings of flesh, and the divine power to preach the Gospel to the world. Indeed, the Gospel is called the good news. And what is better news than: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. III)? Therefore, it is human to be born humanly, but it is of God to preach the entry of the heavenly kingdom to the repentant.

And thus Matthew rightly calls him the Son of David, whom he asserts to come in the flesh. Mark rightly calls him the Son of God, whom he designates at the very front of his writing as the author of the Gospel and the sponsor of the eternal kingdom. It is noteworthy that the holy Evangelists, who left us the written dispensation of the Lord's incarnation, were indeed fired by one spirit in their approach to their writing duty, but each set a different beginning and a different endpoint for their narrative. Matthew, taking his beginning from the nativity of the Lord, carried the sequence of his narration up to the time of the Lord's resurrection. Mark, starting from the beginning of the evangelical preaching, reached up to the time of the Lord's ascension and the preaching of his disciples to all nations over the world. Luke, beginning from the nativity of the forerunner, ended his Gospel in the ascension of the Lord, when the disciples returning to Jerusalem were expecting the advent of the Holy Spirit in divine praises. John, taking his beginning from the eternity of the Word of God, by whom all things were made, himself reached up to the time of the Lord's resurrection by evangelizing. Therefore, intending to write the Gospel, Mark aptly first of all puts forth the testimonies of the prophets by whom this was long ago foretold to happen.

So that he might indicate to all that the things he was writing were to be received as true and without a scruple of doubt, because he showed them to have been foreseen and foretold by prophets filled with the Holy Spirit, and at the same time in the same beginning of his Gospel instructs both the Jews, who had received the Law and the Prophets, to also receive the sacraments of the Gospel which their prophets had foretold, and the Gentiles, who had come to the Lord through all the proclamations of the Gospel, to also re-

ceive and venerate the authority of the Law and the Prophets, lest anyone, like the heretics, should accept either only the Old Testament or only the New, and thus remain alien to the testament of God.

Mark 1:2

Behold, I send my angel, etc. The angel is called John, not by the association of nature according to the heresy of Origen, but by the dignity of the office. For angel in Greek is called messenger in Latin. By which name, rightly, that man could be called who was sent by God to bear witness to the light (John I), and to announce to the world the Lord coming in the flesh. Nor should it be wondered at mystically that one who is greater than all born of women (Matt. XI) should be called an angel, when it is universally accepted that all who rightly perform the duty of the priestly rank can be called angels because of their duty to evangelize, as the prophet says: The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts (Mal. II).

Mark 1:3

A voice crying out in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, etc. It is clear that the only-begotten Son is called the Word of the Father, as John attests, who says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1). And we know from our speech itself that the voice sounds first, so that the word can be heard afterward. Therefore, John is called a voice by the prophet because the word precedes. Thus, the voice is said to precede the Lord's coming because through his ministry the Word of the Father is heard by men. He also cries out in the desert because he announces the consolation of redemption to the forsaken and desolate Judah. What he cries out, however, is revealed when it is added: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Whoever preaches true faith and good works, what else does he do but prepare the way for the Lord to enter the hearts of the listeners, so that the power of grace may penetrate, the light of truth may shine, and make straight paths for God, by forming pure thoughts in the mind through the word of good preaching? Indeed it must be noted that from the prophetic testimonies which Mark has placed, one is only found in Isaiah, while the other is found in Malachi.

Yet the evangelist should not be thought to have erred or been deceitful, who says this was written in Isaiah which Isaiah did not write, but rather it

should be understood that even if the words placed from Malachi are not found in Isaiah, the sense of them is found in Isaiah, and in several other places, and more clearly in what he himself added here: A voice crying out in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. For who does not see how great the agreement is in both statements? For what Malachi said, that an angel should be sent before the face of the Lord who would prepare his way, is indeed the same as what Isaiah said, that a voice crying out should be heard in the desert, who said: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Because just as John could rightly be called an angel, because he preceded the face of the Lord by preaching, so he could rightly be called the voice, because he preceded the Word of God by sounding it, as was stated above. But in both statements the way of the Lord is similarly preached to be prepared. Therefore, the evangelist is not mistaken, who writes this said by Isaiah: which even if not in the same words, nevertheless he finds written by him in the same sense. However, it could have happened that in the mind of Mark writing the Gospel, Isaiah occurred instead of Malachi, as happens.

But he would without any doubt correct this, at least being admonished by others who could read this while he was still living in the flesh, unless he thought that the name of another prophet occurred to his memory, which was governed by the Holy Spirit, not without reason, because the Lord ordained it to be written thus. But why the Lord ordained it so, that most useful cause should be easily thought of, namely, that it is thus hinted that all the holy prophets spoke by one spirit in wonderful agreement, which is much greater than if all the sayings of all the prophets were spoken by the mouth of one man. And therefore, whatever the Holy Spirit said through them should be undoubtedly accepted, and each one's words belong to all, and all to each one. Therefore, what has been said through Isaiah is as much Malachi's as Isaiah's, and what has been said through Malachi is as much Isaiah's as Malachi's, what need was there for Mark to correct when reading to himself what name occurred for another? And rather, following the authority of the Holy Spirit, by whom he certainly more than us felt his mind was governed, thus he would leave this written as it is? For the Lord had ordained to instruct him in this way to show us that there is such great harmony in his words among the prophets, that we should most fittingly even attribute what is found said by Malachi to Isaiah.

Mark 1:4

John was baptizing in the desert, etc. It is known by all peoples that John not only preached the baptism of repentance but also administered it to some, yet he could not grant baptism for the remission of sins. For the remission of sins is granted to us solely in the baptism of Christ. Therefore, it must be noted what is said, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, because he could not grant the baptism that absolves sins, he preached it, so that just as he preceded the incarnate Word of the Father with the word of preaching, so he might precede the baptism of repentance, by which sins are absolved, with his own baptism, by which sins cannot be absolved. And they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. An example of confessing sins and promising a better life is given to those who desire to receive baptism, just as while Paul was preaching in Ephesus, many believers were coming confessing and proclaiming their deeds, so that, having renounced their old life, they might merit to be renewed in Christ. Hence, also, it was said to blessed Peter, when various kinds of animals were shown to him in a heavenly sheet: Rise, Peter, kill and eat (Acts X). Which is clearly to say: Kill the unbelievers from what they were before, from renunciation of sins and the promise of pious religion, and thus, having been imbued with the sacraments of the Christian faith, convert them into the members of the holy Church.

Mark 1:6

And John was clothed with camel's hair, etc. He says, with hair, not wool. One is a sign of austere clothing; the other of softer luxury. But the leather belt with which Elijah was girded is a sign of mortification. Furthermore, the following: And he ate locusts and wild honey, is fitting for an inhabitant of solitude, so that he might fulfill the necessity of human flesh, not the pleasures of food. His clothing and his diet can also suitably express the quality of his internal conduct through their significance. For he used harsher garments, just as the Lord bore witness in his praises, saying to the Jews: What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses (Matthew XI), because he did not foster the life of sinners with flattery, but rebuked them with the vigor of harsh exhortation, saying: O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come (Matthew XXIII)? He

had a leather belt around his loins, because he crucified his flesh with its vices and desires, which we have learned to be characteristic of those who are of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle attests. He ate locusts and wild honey, for his preaching seemed indeed sweet to the crowds, with the people imagining and all thinking in their hearts about him, whether he might be the Christ. But that opinion quickly vanished, when his listeners learned that he was not the Christ, but the precursor and prophet of Christ. For in honey there is sweetness, in locusts there is an energetic flight, but one that is quickly fleeting.

Mark 1:7

And he preached, saying: One mightier than I is coming, etc. Among the ancients, it was customary that if one did not wish to take as a wife the one who corresponded to him, the one who would be closest by kinship would loose the shoe strap of that man. What then did Christ appear among men, except as the bridegroom of the holy Church? About whom the same John also says: He who has the bride is the bridegroom (John 3). But since men thought that John was the Christ, which the same John denies, he rightly announces himself to be unworthy to loose the strap of his shoe. As if he openly says: I am not able to uncover the footsteps of the Redeemer, because I unworthily do not assume the name of bridegroom. However, this can be understood in another way. For who does not know that shoes are made from dead animals? The incarnate Lord, coming, indeed appeared as if shod, who in his divinity assumed our mortal decay. But the mystery of this incarnation the human eye cannot penetrate. It can by no means be investigated how the Word is embodied, how the highest and life-giving Spirit is animated within the mother's womb, how he who has no beginning and exists is conceived. The strap of the shoe, therefore, is the binding of the mystery.

John, therefore, is not able to loose the strap of his shoe, because even he cannot investigate the mystery of the incarnation, which he recognized through the spirit of prophecy. I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. John does not yet openly proclaim the Lord as God or the Son of God, but rather only a man stronger than himself. For their listeners, being still unrefined, were not yet capable of grasping such great mysteries, that the eternal Son of God, taking on man from the Virgin, was born again into the world, but they had to be gradually introduced through the recognition of glorified humanity to faith in divine eternity. However,

in a certain hidden and veiled manner, he declares this one to be the true God, while confirming that he will baptize with the Holy Spirit. For who can doubt that no other than God can give the grace of the Holy Spirit? But as time went on, when he saw that his listeners were more capable of understanding, he also openly preached him as the Son of God, saying: "But he who sent me to baptize with water said to me: Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.

We are baptized by the Lord in the Holy Spirit, not only when on the day of baptism we are washed in the font of life for the remission of sins, but also daily when we are kindled by the grace of the same Spirit to do the things pleasing to God.

Mark 1:9

And it came to pass in those days, etc. The Savior received baptism from John for three reasons. First, because He was born a man, He might fulfill all righteousness and humility of the law. Second, that by His baptism He might approve the baptism of John. Third, that sanctifying the water of Jordan, through the descent of the dove, He might show the coming of the Holy Spirit in the washing of believers.

Mark 1:10

And immediately ascending out of the water He saw the heavens opened, etc. The mystery of the Trinity is demonstrated in the baptism of the Lord. The Lord is baptized, the Spirit descends in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father bearing witness to the Son is heard. The heavens are opened, not by the unbinding of elements, but by spiritual eyes, with which Ezekiel too at the beginning of his book recalls them as opened. Also, a dove sat upon Jesus' head, lest anyone should think that the voice of the Father was made to John, and not to the Lord. Rightly did it say: And the Spirit like a dove descending, and added, and remaining on Him. For this indeed is the special gift conferred upon the Mediator of God and men, that the Holy Spirit, once filling Him, should never depart but remain perpetual in Him. For to His faithful, for the performance of notable virtues and miracles, the grace of the Spirit is sometimes given, sometimes withdrawn. Yet it is never absent to them for the work of piety and justice, for maintaining the love of God and neighbor. Hence of that Spirit it is promised, the Lord saying to them: You

know Him because He will remain with you and be in you (John 14). But in the Lord particularly, the Spirit remains always, not as in His elect according to the measure of faith, but as John says:

We have seen His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1). But the Spirit remains in Him, not from the time only when He was baptized in the Jordan, but rather from the time when He was conceived in the virginal womb. For that the Spirit appeared to descend upon Him at His baptism was a sign of the spiritual grace to be conferred upon us in baptism, to those regenerated from water and the Spirit for the remission of sins, the fuller grace of the same Spirit is customarily given by the heavenly imposition of the bishop's hand. Also, the fact that He saw the heavens opened after baptism, was done for our benefit, by which the gate of the heavenly kingdom is opened through the washing of the regenerating water, which was closed to the whole human race, with cherubim and a flaming sword interposed, when the first parents sinned and were driven from paradise. For this flame is quenched for each faithful person, when he is dipped into the vital waters. He is reconciled to the angelic spirits, when he returns to the peace of his Creator, so that if he keeps the sacraments of faith with a pure heart and body, he may soon, loosed from the flesh, enter the heavenly kingdom. Otherwise, how then were the heavens opened to the Lord, who, when He became man and dwelt with us on earth, equally contained heaven and earth by divine power?

But also, the paternal voice was revealed from heaven: You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased, not teaching the Son what He did not know, but showing to us what we should believe: that He who came to be baptized with others by John was indeed the true Son of God; not only the Lord of John but of the whole world, and therefore truly able to baptize in the Holy Spirit. The same voice also taught us that by the water of purification and the Spirit of sanctification we could be made sons of God. For as many as received Him, He gave them power to become sons of God (John 1). Also, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, because it is a very simple animal, and alien to the malice of gall, to figuratively suggest to us that He seeks simple hearts, and does not deign to dwell in impure minds, as was Simon to whom Peter said: You have neither part nor lot in this matter; for I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity (Acts 8).

Mark 1:12

And immediately the Spirit drove him out into the desert, etc. Similarly, Matthew, after describing the Lord's baptism and the voice from the heavens saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," immediately added: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. IV). However, lest anyone come into doubt as to by which spirit he was led or driven into the desert, Luke first wrote that Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan; and then he added: "And was led by the Spirit into the desert," so that it might not be thought that the unclean spirit had prevailed against him, who, full of the Holy Spirit, went about where he wished and did what he wished. The forty days and nights during which he was tempted represent the entire time of this age, during which his members, namely, the holy Church, are never ceased to be tempted. For the world is divided into four parts, in which we serve the Lord. There are also ten commandments, by whose observance we, serving the Lord, strive against the unceasing malice of the enemy. Ten times four make forty. Therefore, the whole time of our military service is aptly contained in the number of forty days and nights.

Thus, the Lord, after being baptized, is driven by the Spirit into the desert and is tempted by Satan, to provide a model of life for his faithful, who, after the remission of sins received in baptism, should not only be prepared to perform works of virtue, but also to endure persecution for righteousness' sake. He thus withdraws into the desert to teach us to forsake the allurements of the world and the company of the wicked, and to serve the divine commandments in all things. He is tempted alone by the devil to signify that all who desire to live piously in Christ suffer persecution, and that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts XIV). He is tempted for forty days and forty nights to indicate that as long as we live here serving the Lord, whether favorable times entice us (which corresponds to the days), or adversities strike us (which corresponds to the figures of the night), the adversary, who walks through the whole world, is always present attempting to hinder our journey. And he was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. He dwells among the beasts as a man, but uses the ministry of angels as God. So too, when we, in the desert of holy conversation, endure the bestial behaviors of men with a pure mind, we merit the

ministry of angels, by whose service we are transferred from the body to eternal joys in heaven.

Mark 1:14

After John had been arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, etc. With John having been arrested, it was appropriate that he himself began to preach. With the law ceasing, consequently the Gospel arises. If, however, the Savior preaches the same things which John the Baptist had previously said, he shows himself to be the son of the same God, of whom that one is a prophet. Let no one think, however, that the tradition of John into prison happened immediately after the forty-day fast and the temptation of the Lord. For anyone who has read the Gospel of John will find that before his arrest the Lord both taught and performed many miracles. After all, you have in his Gospel: "This beginning of miracles Jesus did in Cana of Galilee" (John 2). And again: "For John was not yet cast into prison" (John 3). They say, moreover, that when John read the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he indeed approved of the text of the history and confirmed them as speaking the truth, but maintained that they narrated the history of only one year, in which he also suffered, after the imprisonment of John. Therefore, passing over the year whose events had been expounded by the three, he narrated the deeds of the previous time, before John was shut up in prison, as it will be clear to those who carefully read the four volumes of the Gospels.

This matter also resolves the discordance that seemed to be with John compared to the others. When Mark had stated that Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, he added and said: And saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel. The time is fulfilled, he says. Namely, that which the Apostle says: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (Galatians 4). Therefore, the times are fulfilled, repent. How long it has been since this has been proclaimed, and may it someday be heard: The times are fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near! Repent and believe in the Gospel. Renounce dead works, believe in the living God. What does it profit to believe without good works? It was not the merit of good works that brought you to faith, but faith begins, so that good works might follow.

Mark 1:16

And passing along the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, etc. These were the first to be called to follow the Lord. Fishermen and unlearned men are sent to preach, so that the faith of believers would not be thought to rest in human eloquence and learning but in the power of God. It is possible, however, to ask how He called the fishermen two by two from their boats: first Peter and Andrew, then moving a little further, the other two sons of Zebedee, as Matthew and Mark recount, while Luke says their two boats were filled with that great catch of fish, and he mentions James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as Peter's partners called to help, when they could not pull in the nets due to the fullness, and all marveled at the multitude of fish that had been caught, and He said only to Peter: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men (Luke 5), yet they followed Him with their boats drawn up on land. From this, it is understood that what Luke suggests first happened indeed, and that they were not yet called by the Lord at that time, but it was only foretold to Peter that he would catch men. This was not said as if he would never catch fish again. For after the Lord's resurrection, we read that they went fishing. It was said, therefore, that henceforth he would catch men, not that he would no longer catch fish.

Thus, according to Luke, we understand they went back to fishing customarily, so that later what Matthew and Mark recount happened, when He called them two by two, and He commanded them to follow Him, first the two of Peter and Andrew, then the two sons of Zebedee. For then, without dragging their boats to shore as if preoccupied with returning, they followed Him as one who called and commanded them to follow. And they entered Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath, He entered the synagogue and taught them. That He frequented the very gifts of His teaching and healing on the Sabbaths, He teaches that He is not under the law but above the law, who also came to fulfill the same law, not to dissolve it; not to choose the Jewish Sabbath, on which it was neither permitted to kindle a fire nor to move hand or foot, but the true Sabbath, and the rest beloved to the Lord, if we dedicate ourselves to the salvation of souls, abstaining from servile work, that is, from all illicit actions.

Mark 1:22

And they were astonished at his doctrine, etc. For they taught the people those things that were written in Moses and the prophets: but Jesus, as God and the Lord of Moses himself, out of the freedom of his will, either added those things which seemed less in the law, or changing, preached to the people, as we read in Matthew: It was said to the ancients, but I say to you (Matt. V).

Mark 1:23–26

And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, etc. This is not a confession of the will, which follows the reward of confessing, but an extortion of necessity, which compels the guilty to confess. And just as if runaway slaves, after a long time, see their master, they fear nothing but whips, so also the demons, seeing the Lord suddenly dwelling on earth, believed that he had come to judge them. The presence of the Savior is torment for demons. And Jesus rebuked him saying: Be silent, and come out of the man. For by the envy of the devil death entered into the world (Wisdom XII), therefore against the author of death itself, the medicine of salvation ought to work first: first the serpent's tongue, so that it may not spread poison further, be shut; then the woman, who was first seduced, be cured from the fever of carnal desire; thirdly, the man, who heard the words of his badly advising wife, be cleansed from the leprosy of his error, so that the order of restoration in the Lord may be the same as the fall in the first parents: And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. Luke says of the unclean spirit that it came out of the man without harming him. Therefore, it can seem contrary, how according to Mark, he convulsed (or as some manuscripts have, threw him down), yet he did not harm him according to Luke.

But Luke also says: And having thrown him in the midst, the demon went out of him, and did not harm him (Luke IV). Hence, it is understood that Mark said convulsing him, or throwing him down, in the same sense that Luke said he threw him in the midst, so that what Luke follows with, and did not harm him, is understood that this tossing and vexation of the limbs did not injure him, as demons usually exit, even tearing away or dislocating some limbs.

Mark 1:27

And they were all amazed, such that they questioned among themselves, etc. Seeing the virtue of the miracle, they marvel at the newness of the Lord's teaching, and are stirred to inquire about the things they had heard through the things they had seen. For certainly the signs that either the Lord himself did in the assumed man, or that he gave to the disciples to do, were done so that through these, faith in the Gospel of the kingdom of God, which was being preached, might be more certain, while those who promised future heavenly joys to the earthborn demonstrated heavenly and divine works on earth. Truly, the disciples conducted everything as pure men with the Lord granting. But the Lord himself singularly operated in the virtue of power and worked healings and miracles, and spoke in the world what He heard from the Father. For even before (as the Gospel testifies) he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. VII). And now, with the crowd attesting, he commands the unclean spirits with authority, and they obey him (Mark I).

Mark 1:29

And immediately, leaving the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon, etc. If we have said that the man freed from the demon signifies a mind cleansed from impure thoughts, consequently a woman afflicted with fever but cured by the command of the Lord shows the flesh restrained from the fervor of its concupiscence by the precepts of continence. For all bitterness, and wrath, and indignation, and clamor, and blasphemy (Ephesians IV), is the fury of an unclean spirit. Indeed, fornication, impurity, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness (which is idolatry [Ephesians V]), are to be understood as the fever of seductive flesh. And immediately they told him about her, and approaching, he lifted her up, taking her by the hand. In the Gospel of Luke, it is written that they asked him on her behalf, and standing over her, he rebuked the fever. For sometimes the Savior, when asked, sometimes voluntarily heals the sick, showing himself always to grant the prayers of the faithful against the passions of vices, and sometimes to give to them not understanding what they are asking, or to grant them what they piously ask for even if not understood, just as the Psalmist requests: Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults, O Lord (Psalm XIX).

Mark 1: 31

And immediately the fever left her, and she ministered to them. It is natural for those recovering from a fever to grow weary at the onset of health and to feel the discomfort of the illness. However, the health conferred by the command of the Lord returns wholly at once. Not only does it return, but it is also accompanied by such strength that she immediately is able to minister to those who helped her, and, according to the laws of typology, those members that had served impurity unto iniquity to bear fruit unto death, now serve righteousness unto eternal life. [Mark 1:32] -- But when evening had come and the sun had set, they brought to him, etc. The setting of the sun signifies the passion and death of him who said: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John IX). And when the sun sets, more demoniacs than before, more sick are healed. Because while temporarily living in the flesh, he taught a few Jews, but after the defeat of the kingdom of death, he transmitted the gifts of faith and salvation to all the peoples of the world. To whom the Psalmist sings as if to the heralds of life and light: "Prepare the way for him who rides upon the sunset" (Psalm LXVII). For the Lord ascends over the sunset, because from where he lay in suffering, from there he manifested his greater glory by rising.

Mark 1: 34

And he cast out many demons, etc. Luke writes more openly about these things: "Indeed, demons were coming out of many, crying out and saying: 'You are the Son of God.' And he rebuking them, would not allow them to speak, because they knew him to be the Christ" (Luke IV). Therefore the demons confessed the Son of God; and they knew him to be the Christ, because the devil knew him as a man fatigued by a forty-day fast, but could not ascertain by temptation whether he was also the Son of God; now through the power of signs he either understood or rather suspected he was the Son of God. He did not persuade the Jews to crucify him because he thought he was neither Christ nor the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that he would be damned by his death. Indeed, the Apostle says about this mystery hidden from ages that none of the rulers of this age knew it. For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. II). But the Psalmist makes clear why the Lord prevents demons from speaking, saying: "To the sinner, however, God said: Why do you declare my statutes and take

my covenant in your mouth? You have hated discipline" (Psalm XLIX), and so on. Lest anyone following the preacher hears the errant. For the devil is an evil teacher, who often mixes falsehood with truth, so as to cover the testimony of deceit with the appearance of truth.

Mark 1: 35

And rising very early in the morning, he went out to a deserted place, etc. If the setting sun expresses the death of the Savior, why should not his resurrection be indicated by the returning dawn? With the light having appeared, he went to the desert of the nations, and there he prayed among his faithful ones, for he stirred their hearts to the power of prayer through the grace of his Spirit. And he was preaching in their synagogues and throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons. In this preaching, which he describes him as having had throughout all Galilee, is also understood that sermon held on the mount, which Matthew commemorates. For Mark follows thus:

Mark 1: 40

And there came to him a leper beseeching him, etc. Concerning this leper who was cleansed, it connects that he should be understood as the one whom Matthew mentions as being cleansed when the Lord came down from the mountain after that discourse. For thus Matthew says: When he had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him (Matt. VIII). And behold, a leper came and worshipped him, saying: Lord, if you will, you can make me clean, etc. And because the Lord said: I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matt. V), he who was excluded by the law, presuming to be cleansed by the power of the Lord, judged that grace exists not from the law but above the law, which could wash away the stain of the leper. However, just as the authority of power is declared in the Lord, so in him is the constancy of faith. He fell on his face, which is an act of humility and shame, as everyone should be ashamed of the blemishes of his life; but shame did not suppress confession. He showed his wound, requested a remedy, and it is a confession full of religion and faith. If you will, he says, you can make me clean. He attributed the power to the will of the Lord. But concerning the will of the Lord, he did not doubt not as one incredulous in piety but as one conscious of his own foulness, he did not presume.

However, Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched forth his hand and touched him, and said to him: I will, be clean. And when he had said it, im-

mediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. There is nothing intermediate between the work of God and the command, because the work is in the command. Finally, he spoke, and they were made (Ps. XXXII). You see, therefore, that it cannot be doubted that the will of God is power? Therefore, if his will is power, they who assert the unity of will, assuredly assert the unity of power. Therefore, as one who has the power of healing, and the authority of commanding, he does not avoid the testimony of working. For he says 'I will' because of Photinus, he commands because of Arius, he touches because of Manichaeus. And indeed the law prohibits touching lepers; but since the Lord is the lawgiver, he does not obey the law but makes the law. Therefore, he did not touch because he could not cleanse without touching, but to prove that he was not subject to the law. He did not fear contamination as humans do, but because he could not be defiled who was liberating others, the leprosy flees at the touch of the Lord, which used to contaminate the one touching. Together with this wonder, he healed in the same manner in which he had been entreated. If you will, you can make me clean. He says, I will, be clean.

You have the will, you also have the effect of piety. Therefore, (contrary to what many Latins think) it should not be joined and read "I will to make you clean," but separated, so that first he says 'I will', then he commands, 'be clean.'

Mark 1:43

And he immediately threatened him and cast him out, etc. Why is it commanded to tell no one, except to indicate that our benefits are not to be publicized, but kept hidden, so that we refrain not only from the reward of money but also from praise.

Mark 1:44

But go and show yourself to the chief priests, etc. He is ordered to show himself to the priest so that the priest might understand that he was cured not by the order of the law, but by the grace of God above the law. However, he is to offer a sacrifice to show that the Lord did not overthrow the law but fulfilled it, who, walking according to the law, healed those above the law whom the remedies of the law had not healed. And he well added: As a testimony to them, that is, if they believe in God, if the leprosy of impiety departs. If it troubles anyone how the Lord seems to approve the Mosaic sacrifice when

the Church has not accepted it, let him remember that the holy of holies sacrifice, which is His body, had not yet begun. For He had not yet offered His holocaust in His passion. But it was not fitting that symbolic sacrifices be taken away before that which was signified was confirmed through the testimony of the apostles preaching and the faith of the believing people. Because this man typically designates the human race weakened by sins, it is rightly described not only as a leper but also, according to the Gospel of Luke, as full of leprosy. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. III).

That is, as the hand of the Savior, that is the incarnate Word of God, extended and touched human nature, they might be cleansed from the variety of ancient error, and be able to hear with the apostles: You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you (John XV), and those who were abominable from the people of God, secluded from the camps, might once again be returned to the temple and offered to the priest, indeed to Him to whom it is said: You are a priest forever (Psalm CIX), hearing from the Apostle: For the temple of God is holy, which you are (1 Cor. III); and they might offer for their cleansing as Moses commanded, that is, present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Rom. XII).

Mark 1:45

But he, having gone out, began to proclaim and to spread the word, so much so that he could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to him from everywhere. The perfect salvation of one compels many crowds to the Lord: for as he showed himself to be healed both inwardly and outwardly, by no means did he conceal the benefit received as he had been commanded by the one from whom he received it: on the contrary, having performed the duty of an evangelist, he immediately began to proclaim and spread the word once he had gone out. Hence it is rightly questioned why the Lord commanded certain deeds to be hidden, and yet they could not be hidden even for an hour. For did the only-begotten Son, coeternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, wish something in this regard that he could not fulfill? But it should be noted that our Redeemer, through his mortal body, provided us with an example in all actions that he performed. For making a miracle and commanding it to be kept quiet, and yet it couldn't be kept quiet. So that his elect, following the example of his teaching, should indeed wish to hide in humility the great things they do, but to benefit others, they are unwillingly revealed, so that it is both of

great humility to desire one's works to be kept silent, and of great sublimity that their works cannot be silenced. Thus, the Lord did not wish to do anything that he could not achieve, but he provided an example by the teaching of what his members should desire, and what will happen to them even against their will.

CHAPTER 2

Mark 2:1

And again he entered Capernaum, etc. The Savior of all, God, with saving step, surveys all things. And sometimes in deserts, now in the city, now by the sea, he ministers to the crowds the gifts of heavenly doctrine and virtues. Sometimes he alone prays on the mount, sometimes he assists those laboring at sea so that they may not perish. Everywhere, he imparts the gifts of salvation, so that he demonstrates all ranks and conditions pertain to his grace. According to the mystical understanding, after performing a miracle in the city, he withdraws to the desert, and there receives the crowds coming to him with kind piety, to show that he prefers a quiet life, remote from the cares of the world, and, due to this pursuit, takes care to heal bodies. Indeed, in a human manner, as if avoiding the crowd seeking him, he did not want to enter the city openly. But allegorically, it teaches that truth does not exhibit an open manifestation of itself to tumultuous carnal minds, but generously infuses the light of its gifts to those whom it sees to be detached from the allurements of temporal things. Yet because heavenly piety does not forsake even the carnal, but also grants them the grace of its visitation, through which also they may become spiritual, the Lord returns to the city after the desert: speaking the word to many converging there, and by healing the paralytic, he provides many the occasion for internal healing which is in faith.

Now, teaching the Lord and the house being so full that they didn't have room, not even at the door, specifically designates our salvation who have come to faith from the Gentiles, that when the Lord preached in Judea, we were not yet able to enter to hear. But to us, nonetheless being outside, he made the words of his doctrine arrive, because he himself collected us through the mouths of holy preachers, and although found outside the synagogue where he preached, made us participants of his Gospel. And they came carrying a paralytic to him, because he was carried by four. The healing of this paralytic designates the salvation of a soul after a long inertia of car-

nal allure desiring Christ, which first of all needs ministers who uplift it and bring it to Christ, i.e., good teachers who suggest hope of healing and aid of intercession. They are rightly said to have been four, either because the strength of all preaching and every word is established by the four books of the holy Gospel, or because there are four virtues by which the confidence of the mind is raised to deserve health. Of these is said in the praise of eternal wisdom: "For she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and courage, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life" (Wisdom VIII). Some call them prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice by different names. And when they could not bring him in through the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was.

They desire to offer the paralytic to Christ, but being obstructed on all sides by the crowd, they are shut off because often the soul, after the laziness of a sick body and desiring to be renewed by the remedy of heavenly grace, is hindered by the obstacle of ancient habit. Often even within the delights of secret prayer, and as it were sweet conversation with the Lord, a crowd of thoughts intervening obstructs the keenness of mind so that Christ is not seen. And what is to be done amid these things? Certainly not to remain below outwardly where the crowds rage, but ascend to the roof of the house where Christ teaches, that is, the loftiness of Sacred Scripture must be sought, and the law of the Lord meditated upon day and night as the Psalmist says. In what does the young man correct his way? In keeping your words, he says (Ps. 119). And uncovering it, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. When the roof is uncovered, the sick man is laid down before Jesus, because, with the mysteries of the Scriptures opened, one comes to the knowledge of Christ, that is, descends to his humility with the piety of faith. And indeed the house of Jesus is found covered with tiles according to another evangelist's narrative, because under the contemptible covering of letters, if there is one who uncovers, the virtue of spiritual grace will be found.

The uncovering of the tiles in the house of Jesus is the revelation in the vileness of the letter of the spiritual sense and heavenly secrets. What indeed is laid down with the bed signifies that Christ ought to be known by man still constituted in this flesh.

Mark 2:5

When Jesus saw their faith, etc. The Lord, about to cure a man of paralysis, first dissolved the bonds of sins, to show that he was condemned due to the

bonds of sins by the dissolution of his limbs, and that he could not be restored to health in his limbs unless these bonds were relaxed. Likewise, to that paralytic, who was waiting in vain by the pool of Bethesda for the movement of the water for a long time, it is said by the Lord, healed: "Behold, you have been made well; do not sin anymore, lest something worse happen to you." (John XIV). [Mark 2:5] -- "Son," he said, "your sins are forgiven you." O wondrous humility! He calls "son" the despised and weak man, dissolved in all his limbs, whom the priests would not deign to touch. Or rightly "son" because his sins are forgiven him. It should indeed be considered how much the faith of each person is worth before God, since the faith of others was so great that a whole man, that is, was suddenly saved both outwardly and inwardly, and the errors of some were loosed by the merit of others.

Mark 2:6

Now there were some of the scribes sitting there, thinking in their hearts, etc. The scribes speak truly, that no one can forgive sins but God alone, who through them also forgives, to whom He has granted the power to forgive. And therefore Christ is proved truly to be God because He can forgive sins like God. They bear true witness to God but are deceived by denying the person of Christ. The Jews thus err, who although they believe that Christ both is God and can forgive sins, yet do not believe that Jesus is the Christ. But the Arians err much more foolishly, who, while conquered by the words of the Gospel, do not dare to deny that Jesus is the Christ and that He can forgive sins, nevertheless they are not afraid to deny Him as God. But He, desiring to save the faithless, manifests Himself to be God by both the knowledge of hidden things and the power of deeds. For it follows: As soon as Jesus perceived in His spirit that they thus reasoned within themselves, He said to them: Why do you think these things in your hearts? He shows Himself to be God who can know the hidden things of the heart. And in a certain way, He speaks silently: With the same majesty and power by which I observe your thoughts, I can also forgive sins to men. Understand from yourselves what the paralytic gains. What is easier to say to the paralytic:

"Your sins are forgiven," or to say: "Rise, take up your bed, and walk"? There is a great difference between saying and doing. Whether the paralytic's sins are forgiven only the one who forgave knows. But "Rise and walk," both he who rose and those who saw him rising could approve. Therefore, a carnal sign is made that the spiritual might be proven; although it is of the same

virtue to forgive the faults of both the body and the soul. And it is given to us to understand that many bodily weaknesses occur because of sins. And for this reason perhaps sins are forgiven first, so that the causes of the weakness being removed, health may be restored. Indeed, there are five differentiations of causes for which we are afflicted with bodily troubles in this life. For we are either burdened with the infirmity of the just body to increase merits through patience, as the blessed fathers, Job and Tobias and countless martyrs in both Testaments. Or, to protect the virtues received, lest they perish by the temptation of pride, as the apostle Paul, to whom a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan was given to buffet him, lest he be exalted by the abundance of revelations. Or, to understand and correct our sins, as Mary the sister of Aaron in the desert was struck with leprosy for her audacity and prideful words. Or, as the paralytic of whom we speak, who could only be healed of his weakness after his sins were first forgiven.

Or, for the glory of God who saves, either by Himself or through His servants, as the man born blind in the Gospel, who neither sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. Like Lazarus, whose sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Or, for the commencement of eternal damnation, belonging to and being proper to the reprobate, like Antiochus and Herod, who both in their time resisting God, showed to all by their present afflictions the miseries they were to suffer in perpetual hellish torments. To whom agrees the prophet's word: Crush them with double destruction. Hence it is necessary in all temporal adversities we endure, with humility to give thanks to the Lord, and being conscious of our infirmity, to rejoice in the remedies bestowed on us. It is necessary to diligently explore our works and thoughts upon returning to our conscience, and whatever we find we have sinned in, let us cleanse with worthy punishment; whatever we discover that, by pride, we have believed to be rightly done but is lost to this faulty vanity, let us likewise chastise with humble satisfaction. For this often becomes a cause of scourges for us. However, it is the characteristic of the perfect and a special gift of men to be scourged for the increase of rewards. But to be driven by temporal blows to eternal torments is the punishment of the impenitent reprobate.

Mark 2:10

But that you may know that the Son of man has power, etc. If he is also God according to the Psalmist, who as far as the east is from the west has removed our transgressions from us, and the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, therefore he himself is both God and the son of man, so that Christ as man can forgive sins through the power of his divinity, and the same God Christ, through the frailty of his humanity, can die for sinners. Spiritually, to arise from the bed is to draw the soul, which lay sick due to carnal desires, away from them. But to take up the bed is to also subdue the flesh, corrected by the bridle of continence, and to separate it from earthly delights through the hope of heavenly rewards. To go home after taking up the bed is to return to paradise. For indeed, this is our true home, which first received man, not rightfully lost, but through deceit, ultimately restored by him who owed nothing to the deceitful enemy. Alternatively, the man who was healed carries the bed home, when the soul, having received the forgiveness of sins, returns with the body to the inner vigilance of itself, lest it admit anything after pardon for which it may be justly struck again. And immediately he rose, and taking up the bed, he went before all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this.

How marvelous is the power of divine authority, where, without any intervening delay of time, the swift healing follows the command of the Savior! Rightly those who were present, condemning the javelins of blasphemy, turn their amazed hearts to the praise of such majesty. And he went out again to the sea, and all the crowd came to him, and he taught them. Teaching in Capernaum, the Lord demonstrated the heavenly power of his doctrine through the healing of the paralytic. After this, he went out to the sea, to not only instruct the civil life of men in the way of truth, but also to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the inhabitants of the sea, teaching them to scorn the wavering motions of passing things and to overcome them with the firmness of faith. Finally, he teaches the great crowd that comes to him there. There he makes an apostle and evangelist of a tax collector called from the toll booth. There he deems many sinners corrected through penance worthy of his supper, making them hearers of his secrets, and leading them away from swelling waves and the deceiving leviathans of desires to the solidity of a peaceful life, which is in the hope of heavenly goods. For it follows:

Mark 2:14

And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, etc. At the custom house, he says to the care and duty of collecting taxes; for τέλος in Greek is called tax in Latin: moreover, the same Levi is also Matthew. But Luke and Mark, out of respect and honor for the evangelist, did not want to put the well-known name. However, Matthew himself, according to what is written, a righteous man is his own accuser: in the beginning of his discourse, he names himself Matthew and a publican; to show those reading that no one who is converted should despair of salvation, since from being a publican he was suddenly changed into an apostle, from a tax collector into an evangelist.

Mark 2:14

And rising, he followed him. In the Gospel of Luke, it is written more fully: And leaving all, he rose and followed him (Luke 5). Therefore Matthew, understanding what it truly means to follow the Lord, leaves all things and follows. To follow indeed is to imitate. And so, in order to follow the poor Christ not so much in steps as in affection, he left what was his own, who was accustomed to seizing what belonged to others. And giving us a perfect form of renunciation of the world, he not only left the profits of taxes but also disregarded the danger that could come from the leaders of the world, because he left the accounts of the taxes unfinished and disordered. For he was led by such a great desire to follow the Lord that he retained no regard or thought for this life at all. Indeed, the Lord himself, who outwardly called him with human speech to follow him, inwardly kindled him with divine inspiration to follow immediately when called, and he taught invisibly how it ought to be followed. On account of this, he rightly became a faithful steward of the Lord's talents while abandoning human affairs with disdain.

Mark 2:15

And it happened that as He reclined in the house, many tax collectors, etc. The evangelist Luke writes that Levi held a great banquet for Him in his house, which aptly aligns with the figures of mysteries. For whoever receives Christ in the inner residence is nourished with the greatest delights of overflowing pleasures. Thus, the Lord willingly enters and reclines in the affection of the one who has believed. And this is the spiritual banquet of good works, at which the rich people are in need, and the poor feast. Tax collect-

ors, as their name even shows, are called those who collect public taxes or those who are contractors of the treasury's taxes or public goods, as well as those who pursue the profits of this world through businesses, are designated by the same term. Therefore, the tax collector, having seen that by turning from sins to better things, he found a place of repentance, and for that reason, they also do not despair of salvation. Neither do the tax collectors who come to Jesus remain in their former vices, as the Pharisees and scribes, who grumble, but they repent, as the subsequent statement of the evangelist indicates, saying: "For there were many who also followed Him." The Lord, however, went to the banquets of sinners so that He might have the opportunity to teach and offer spiritual food to His hosts. Finally, even though they often describe Him going to a banquet, nothing else is reported except what He did or taught there, so that both the humility of the Lord in going to sinners and the power of His teaching in the conversion of penitents are demonstrated.

Mark 2:16

And the scribes and Pharisees seeing that he was eating with sinners, etc. If through Matthew's choosing and calling the faith of the publicans is expressed of the gentiles, who first coveted the gain of the world, but now are refreshed with the Lord at the feast of charity and with diligent devotion of good works, surely the pride of the scribes and Pharisees indicates the envy of the Jews, troubled about the salvation of the gentiles. He speaks to them: Amen I say to you, that the publicans and prostitutes will precede you into the kingdom of God.—Hearing this Jesus said to them: The healthy do not need a physician, but those who are ill. For I did not come to call the righteous but sinners. He reproaches the scribes and Pharisees, who, thinking themselves righteous, shunned the company of sinners. He calls himself a physician, who by a marvelous kind of healing was wounded for our iniquities, and by his bruises we are healed (Isaiah 53). Moreover, he calls healthy and righteous those who, ignorant of God's righteousness, and wanting to establish their own, have not subjected themselves to the righteousness of God (Romans 10); who, presuming on the law, do not seek the grace of the Gospel. Furthermore, he calls the ill and sinners those who, overcome by the consciousness of their fragility, and seeing that they cannot be justified by the law, submit their necks to the grace of Christ by repenting.

Mark 2:18

And the disciples of John were there, etc. Others recount that the evangelists themselves questioned the Pharisees and the disciples of John about this with the Lord. Here, however, the evangelical message seems to sound as if some others, moved by this concern, posed this question to him. From which it must be gathered that this question was posed to the Lord by many, namely by the Pharisees and the disciples of John, and by the guests or by others who were moved by this: why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast; but the disciples of the Savior do not fast. However, in a mystical sense, it can be explained thus: that the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but those of Christ do not fast, because everyone who either boasts of works of the law without faith, or, which is more serious, follows the traditions of men, or even certainly hears the preaching of Christ with the ear of the body only and not with the faith of the heart, abstaining from spiritual goods, with a fasting heart, withers away. But he who is faithfully incorporated by love into the members of Christ cannot fast, who feasts on his flesh and blood. Otherwise, John does not drink wine and strong drink, the Lord eats and drinks with publicans and sinners, because he increases merit through abstinence when there is no power in nature.

The Lord, however, who naturally possesses the ability to forgive sins, why would he avoid those whom he could make even purer by abstaining? But Christ also fasted, so that you would not evade the precept, he ate with sinners, so that you would perceive grace, recognize power. And Jesus said to them: Can the children of the marriage feast fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they shall fast on that day. In Matthew, it is thus placed: Can the children of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Matt. IX). The bridegroom is therefore Christ; the bride is the Church. From this holy and spiritual union, the apostles are created. They cannot mourn and fast, as long as they see the bridegroom in the wedding chamber and know that the bridegroom is with the bride. But when the nuptials are over and the time of passion and resurrection has come, then the children of the bridegroom will fast. According to the laws of allegory, it must be understood that as long as the bridegroom is with us and we are in joy, we can neither fast nor mourn. But when he has withdrawn and flown away because

of sins, then fasting must be prescribed, then grief must be taken up. No one sews a patch of unshrunken cloth on an old garment.

Otherwise, the new patch takes away from the old, and a worse tear is made. When the Lord was asked why his disciples did not fast, he responded that those who are still carnal and not yet solidified in the faith of his passion and resurrection cannot endure the more severe precepts of fasting and continence, lest through excessive austerity they also lose the faith which they seemed to have. Hence, he still calls the disciples old garments, to which a new patch, that is, any piece of doctrine pertaining to the temperance of a new life, is unfitly sewn, because if this happens, the doctrine itself is, in a way, torn, whose part that pertains to fasting from food is untimely handed down, since it teaches a general fasting not only from the desire for food but from all temporal delights. Whose like a patch, that is, some part that pertains to food, he says should not be imparted to men still bound to old customs, because from there also a kind of tearing seems to happen, and it does not fit with the oldness itself.

Mark 2:22

And no one puts wine, etc. He also compares them to old wineskins, which he says are more easily burst by new wine, that is, by spiritual precepts, than being able to contain it. However, they were already new wineskins when, after the ascension of the Lord, they were renewed by praying and hoping for the desire of His consolation. For then they received the Holy Spirit, when, filled with it, they spoke in all tongues, it was said by the Jews who did not understand but nonetheless truly witnessed: These men are full of new wine (Acts 2). For new wine had already come into new wineskins, that is, the fervor of the Holy Spirit had filled the hearts of the spiritually new. Otherwise. A teacher must be cautious not to entrust the secrets of new mysteries to a soul not yet renewed but still enduring in the oldness of wickedness. But if anyone asks what the difference mystically is between new wine and a new garment, it is easily apparent, because we are internally refreshed and intoxicated by wine, whereas we are externally clothed by a garment. But while both pertain to the significance of spiritual life, the garment indeed insinuates our good works which we perform outwardly and by which we shine before men. However, new wine expresses the fervor of faith, hope, and charity, by which in the sight of our Creator we are inwardly renewed in the newness of our mind.

Mark 2: 23

And again it happened on the Sabbath, etc. We read in the following passages that there were many who came and went, and they did not even have time to eat, and thus they were almost hungry like men. But what they rub the ears of grain with their hands, and console their hunger, is an indication of a more austere life, seeking not prepared feasts, but simple foods. However, the Pharisees said to him: Behold, why are your disciples doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? Note that the first apostles of the Savior destroy the letter of the Sabbath against the Hebionites, who, while accepting the other apostles, reject Paul as a transgressor of the law. Mystically, however, the disciples pass through the fields, namely those about which the Lord said: Lift up your eyes and see the regions, for they are already white for harvest. And he who reaps receives wages (John IV), as holy teachers observe with the care of pious concern those whom they seek to instruct in the faith of truth, and with diligent consideration ponder how each one should be drawn to salvation and in what order. And therefore it is understood that nothing is better than hungering for the salvation of men, which the first of the reapers, once hungering among the prayers, soon when offered the dainties he desired, heard: Arise, Peter, kill and eat (Acts X).

And there is wonderful harmony of the sacrament, for there too animals ordered to be slain and eaten are sent from heaven, and here the disciples, consecrating the ears of corn with the Lord looking on, are said, according to the accounts of the other evangelists, to have rubbed them with their hands and eaten. For this is what the Apostle says: Mortify your members that are upon the earth, and put off the old man with his deeds (Coloss. III). For no one can otherwise pass into the body of Christ, nor otherwise nourish the teacher with the fruits of their progress, than if, having renounced the old desires, one becomes a new man with the new commandment of love. Therefore, to pluck the ears of grain is to draw men away from earthly intentions, where they had fixed, as it were, the root of their minds; but to rub them with hands is, through examples of virtues, to strip away, as it were, the husks and coverings of the chaff, even from the very desires of the flesh, the purity of the mind. To eat the grains is to be incorporated into the members of the Church, each one cleansed from the filth of vices, through the preaching mouths. And it is well remembered that the disciples did this while go-

ing before the Lord, for the teacher's word must precede, and thus the grace of the supreme visitation illuminates the following heart of the listener.

Well on the Sabbath, for the holy teachers both labor in preaching for the hope of future rest, and equally admonish their listeners not to insist on superfluous works for the love of the world, but rather to labor hard for eternal rest in good works. Again, they walk through the fields with the Lord, who, striving to obey divine commands, delight in diligently meditating on the sacred words. They hunger in the fields, desiring to find the bread of life in the same sacred words they read through, that is, they care to reach those words by which they may kindle in themselves a greater love for their Creator. And this on the Sabbath, when they rejoice to be free from the turbulent thoughts with a calm mind, and to see how sweet the Lord is, and how blessed the man who hopes in Him (Psalm XXXIII). And assuming the habit of piety and humility, they strive to reach the rest of their souls. They pluck the ears that perhaps occur, and turn and purify them with their hands until they reach the food, when they take up the testimonies of the Scriptures which they reach by reading, and discuss them with diligent investigation until they find the marrow of love that seemed to be hidden in them.

For just as the grains of wheat which refresh are veiled by the roughness of the chaff which bristles, so often under what seemed the usefulness of the letter are hidden the gifts of divine love, which feed the hungry and thirsty minds of the faithful with the dainties of inner sweetness. But this refreshment of minds indeed displeases the foolish defenders of the Sabbath, but is approved by the Lord of the Sabbath, for those who follow only the surface of the letter neither know true refreshment of minds nor reach the inner rest of souls. Hence their recklessness is rightly confounded by the mouth of Truth, while it is added:

Mark 2:25

And he said to them: Have you never read, etc.? To refute the Pharisees' accusation, he recalls an old story, when David, fleeing Saul, came to Nob and was received by the priest Abimelech, and asked for food (1 Samuel 21). Since he did not have ordinary bread, he gave him consecrated bread, which only priests and Levites were allowed to eat. He only asked if the young men were pure from women: and when he answered from yesterday and the day before, he did not hesitate to give the bread, considering it better (as the prophet says, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice [Hosea 6]) to free men from the danger

of hunger than to offer a sacrifice to God. For the acceptable sacrifice to God is the salvation of men. Therefore, the Lord argues and says: If both David is holy and Abimelech the priest is not blamed by you, but each of them transgressed the commandment of the law with reasonable excuse, and hunger is the cause, why do you not approve the same hunger in the apostles which you approve in others? Although, in this matter, there is much difference. These rub the ears of grain in their hands on the Sabbath, those ate Levitical bread. There, even at the solemnity of the Sabbath, the days of the new moons illuminated it, and in the feasts when he fled from the royal court.

Figuratively speaking, when it is said that David and his men received the consecrated bread, it shows that the food of the priesthood would pass into common use, either because we all ought to imitate the priestly life, or because all the children of the Church are priests. For we are anointed into a holy priesthood, offering ourselves as spiritual sacrifices to God. We have spoken more fully about this whole story according to our understanding in the exposition of the book of Kings, and about the table and the bread of the presence, in the book on the exposition of the tabernacle and its vessels. As for why the Lord calls Abimelech the chief of the priests instead of Abiathar, there is no discrepancy. For both were there when David came and asked for and received the bread, namely Abimelech the chief of the priests, and Abiathar his son. After Abimelech was killed by Saul, along with eighty-five priests of his household, Abiathar fled to David and became his companion throughout his exile. Later, when David reigned, he received the office of high priest and remained in the pontificate throughout his reign, surpassing his father in much greater excellence. Therefore, he was worthy of being remembered by the Lord as the high priest even while his father lived. And he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Greater care is due to the health and life of a man than to the observance of the Sabbath.

For the Sabbath is commanded to be observed in such a way that if there is necessity, one is not guilty of breaking the Sabbath. Therefore, circumcision on the Sabbath is not prohibited because it is necessary. For Joshua also circled the walls of Jericho with his army for seven days. And the Maccabees fought on the Sabbath out of necessity. Hence, if the disciples were hungry, what was not permitted by the law became permitted out of the necessity of hunger. This is a similar case to that which exists today in legal fasts: where if

anyone breaks the fast because of illness, he is by no means guilty. Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. If, he says, David the king fed with priestly food is excusable, and according to another evangelist's account the priests violate the Sabbath by temple service and are without blame, how much more is the Son of Man, who is the true king and the true priest, and therefore the Lord of the Sabbath, not guilty of plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath?

CHAPTER 3

Mark 3:1

And he entered again into the synagogue, etc. The man who had a withered hand indicates the human race withered in the fertility of good works, but cured by the Lord's compassion. His right hand, which had withered in the first parent when plucking the forbidden tree's fruit, was restored to the health of good works' juices by the Redeemer's grace when He stretched out innocent hands on the tree of the cross. And fittingly, the hand was withered in the synagogue, because where the gift of knowledge is greater, there the danger of inexcusable guilt is more severe. And they watched him whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might accuse him. Because the Master had excused the breaking of the Sabbath which they blamed in the disciples by a likely example, now they want to accuse the very Master by watching, so that if He heals on the Sabbath, they may charge Him with transgression; if He does not heal, they may accuse Him of cruelty or impotence. And he said to the man with the withered hand: Stand forth. And he says to them: Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do harm? The Lord, predicting the calumny the Jews with faithless minds had prepared for Him, reproaches them because they violated the precepts of the law by a wrongful interpretation, thinking even from good works to rest on the Sabbath, while the law commands abstention from evil, saying:

You shall not do any servile work on it, that is sin. For everyone who commits sin is a servant of sin. By this precept, He also foreshadows the form of the future age in the present: where those who have done good through the six ages of this world, will have rest in the seventh age, not from good works, but only from evil. For even if secular works rest, nevertheless the act of good work in the praise of God is not idle. To save a life or to kill? This is, to heal a man, or not? It is the same as He had said before, To do good or to do harm? Not that the supremely good God can be the author of evil or per-

dition for us, but that Scripture customarily speaks of not saving as killing. Just as He is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart, not that He made a soft heart hard, but that He did not mercifully soften it, hardened by preceding merits. And when we pray, Lead us not into temptation (Matt. VI), by immediately adding, But deliver us from evil, we plainly are taught that to lead into temptation by Him is nothing other than not to free from evil, and to destroy a soul is not to save from perdition.

If anyone is moved, why the Lord, when He was about to heal a body, asked about the salvation of the soul, let him understand either that the soul by the custom of Scriptures is put for the man, as it is said: These are the souls which came out of the loins of Jacob (Exod. I), or that these miracles were done for the sake of the soul's salvation, or that this healing of the hand signified the salvation of the soul, which, ceasing from good works (as I have said), seemed to have a withered right hand. But they were silent. And looking around at them with anger, grieved at the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man: Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it out; and his hand was restored. The withered hand is ordered to be stretched out for healing, because in no better order is the fruitless weakness of the soul cured than by the largesse of alms. Therefore John the Baptist, when questioned by the crowds about what they should do so as not to be cast into fire like withered trees, commanded only this: He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise (Luke III). And in Ecclesiasticus it is said: Son, let not your hand be stretched out to take, but drawn back when it comes to giving (Eccli. IV).

For in vain does he stretch out his hands to God in prayer for sins, who does not extend them to a begging widow to confer a benefit.

Mark 3:6

But the Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him. He refers to the Herodians as the ministers of Herod the tetrarch, who, on account of the enmity which their lord exercised against John, also plotted against and hated the Savior whom John preached. However, it was of great foolishness for those who greatly needed salvation to take counsel about the death of the Savior. Their zeal for wickedness is shown when they even consider it a crime that he stretched out the hand of the one who was sick to heal it at his word, as if none of them had ever done greater works on the Sabbath, such as carrying food, offering a

cup, and performing other necessary tasks for sustenance. For indeed, he who said "Let there be," and it was made, could not be convicted of working on the Sabbath.

Mark 3:7

And Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea. He withdrew as a man fleeing the snares of those who persecuted Him, because neither had His hour of suffering yet arrived, nor was the place of His suffering outside Jerusalem. He withdrew, fleeing from those who persecuted Him out of hatred; but He went to a place where He found many following Him out of love. For it is added: And a large crowd from Galilee and Judea followed Him, and from Jerusalem and Idumaea, and beyond Jordan, and those around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what He was doing, came to Him. Behold, the Pharisees and Herodians, namely the teachers of the people and the king's ministers, sought to destroy the Lord with unanimous counsel. But the unlearned crowd and the masses gathered from everywhere followed Him with unanimous love. They, seeing the works of His virtues and hearing the words of His teaching, wanted to learn nothing more than to persecute Him. These, led only by the reputation of His virtues, came in a great throng to hear Him and to demand the help of salvation. Hence, they soon deserved to achieve the effect of their will and desire, with many healed by the Lord, as is read in the following. Where He also set an example for His followers, if they suffered persecution in one city, to flee to another. Finally, Paul, instructed by the Lord's example and precept, fled from Damascus, where he was threatened by the snares of the wicked.

But having left there, he found countless people elsewhere who followed him to piety. Truly according to the laws of allegory, the Lord in that He went out from the synagogue, withdrew to the sea, everywhere encountering a large multitude coming to Him to be healed and taught, manifestly prefigured our salvation, to whom He deigned to come through faith, leaving Judea due to their perfidy. Rightly indeed are the incredulous nations, long tossed by the diverse windings of errors, compared to the instability, bitterness, and darkness of the fluctuating sea. But the Lord came to the sea with His disciples, and a large crowd from various provinces followed Him, because the hearts of the nations came to Him as the Apostles preached. And after He kindly consecrated in them a home dear to Himself, He already received many coming to Him generously and granted them to possess the de-

sired salvation. To them aptly fits what follows: And He told His disciples to have a small boat ready for Him because of the crowd, lest they crush Him. For He healed many, so that they pressed upon Him, that they might touch Him. The small boat serving the Lord on the sea is indeed the Church, gathered from the nations, and crossing the waves of the passing world by the virtue of a free mind.

The more the bosom of the heart expands to receive the grace of its Creator, the higher it rises above all the volumes of transient things, as a small boat tossed by the winds on the waves of a swelling sea. However, there is a difference between compressing the Lord and touching Him. For he touches Him who receives His faith and love with a true heart. They compress Him who disturb the peace of those in whom the truth used to dwell with carnal thoughts or even deeds. Therefore, it is aptly said that those who touched Him were saved, because indeed true faith and love are accustomed to generate eternal salvation. Because of the crowd, lest they compress Him, the Lord ascended into a boat, because fleeing the troubled minds of the carnal, He rejoices to come and make His abode with those who have learned to despise both the fleeting glory and the abasement of the world.

Mark 3:11

"However many had plagues, unclean spirits, when they saw him, would fall down before him." Both groups would indeed fall down before the Lord, that is, both those who had plagues of physical infirmities and those who were afflicted by unclean spirits: but the sick, with a simple intention of obtaining health, and the demoniacs, or rather the demons dwelling in them, compelled by the force of divine fear, not only to fall down before him, but also to confess his majesty. For struck by the presence of his power, and exceedingly terrified, they dared not hide who they had already recognized was the Son of God. It is greatly to be wondered at, or rather deplored, the blindness of the Arians who, after the glory of his resurrection and ascension, after the faith of the Gospel had been spread throughout the whole world, after churches had been established among all nations, and the name of the Lord the Savior had been praised from the rising to the setting of the sun, suddenly deny that he is the Son of God, whom even the demons, while he was still clothed in mortal flesh, openly acknowledged to be the Son of God. For thus it continues: And they cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.' And he sternly ordered them not to make him known. But why he forbade

unclean spirits to speak about him, the Psalmist makes clear, who says: To the sinner, however, God said, 'Why do you declare my statutes and take my covenant in your mouth? You hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you' (Psalm 49).

Mark 3:12

Therefore, the sinner is forbidden to preach the Lord, lest anyone follow the erring while they preach. For the devil is a deceitful teacher, who often mixes falsehoods with truths, so that he may conceal the testimony of deceit under the appearance of truth. Moreover, it was not only the demons, who confessed unwillingly, that were willing to be silent about Christ, but also those who, healed by him, willingly wanted to confess. Indeed, even the apostles, who were to preach him throughout the whole world after his resurrection, were commanded to remain completely silent about him before his passion, lest the proclamation of his divine majesty prevent the dispensation of his passion, and with the passion delayed, the salvation of the world, which was to come through it, be denied."

Mark 3:13–14

And going up into the mountain, he called to himself those whom he wanted, and they came to him, and he made it so that there were twelve with him. That mountain on which the Lord chose the apostles signifies the height of justice, by which they were to be instructed and which they were to preach to men. For because he was going to send them to preach the Gospel of the heavenly kingdom, he rightly wished to remind them, by the height of the place where they were chosen, not to dissolve their mind in low desires, but always to raise it to desire and seek higher things. Thus also, intending to give the law to his former people, he appeared on a mountain; from the mountain he thundered what was to be done. Indeed, because it was not yet time to say: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4), but only to say, "Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Exod. 20), these same words, however, typically promise us the eternal kingdom, which is in the land of the living: the people could not approach the Lord speaking on the mountain, but heard from below what was being said, because they did not yet know how to ascend with a mind capable of understanding the mysteries being mentioned; Moses alone, because he had

learned to hear the law spiritually, ascended the summit of the mountain where God was. It is well said, that ascending the mountain, the Lord called to himself those he wanted. For it was not by their choice and zeal, but by divine will and grace, that they were called to apostleship. Hence, he also says to them elsewhere: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15).

Mark 3:14

And he made it so that there were twelve with him. Certainly, for the sake of the mystery of grace, so that they might commend the salvation of the world, which they were to preach by word, also by their number. Indeed, three times four makes twelve. And three times four are the apostles sent to preach, so that they might baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit through all the regions of the fourfold world. Whence it is also written concerning the holy city, Jerusalem, descending from heaven from God, that it had three gates on the east, and three gates on the north, and three gates on the south, and three gates on the west (Rev 21). Where it is shown figuratively that, with the apostles and their successors preaching, all the nations throughout the world would enter the Church in the faith of the Holy Trinity. In which sacrament as well, the children of Israel once encamped around the tabernacle, so that on every side, in a square, three tribes would remain (Num 1). For undoubtedly the early Church which was in Judea was, surrounded on all sides by believing nations from the whole world, going to set up spiritual camps to God in faith and confession of the Holy Trinity.

Mark 3:14–15

And to send them to preach the Gospel, He gave them the power to heal diseases and to cast out demons. After He forbid the unworthy spirits to preach, He chose the saints, who would cast out the impure spirits, and they themselves would preach the Gospel with a pure mind and tongue. To whom (as the evangelist Matthew writes) He also conferred the power of healing other sicknesses, and even of raising the dead, so that the greatness of the promised heavenly things might be attested by the greatness of the deeds, and the power shown might give faith to the words, and those who preached new things might also do new things. Whence also now, when the number of the faithful has grown, within the holy Church there are many who hold to the

way of virtues without having the signs of virtues. For a miracle is displayed in vain outwardly, if there is lacking the work accomplished inwardly. For according to the voice of the master of the nations, tongues are a sign not for the faithful, but for the unbelievers (1 Cor 14).

Mark 3:16

And he gave Simon the name Peter. Not now for the first time did he name Simon Peter, but long before when, as he was brought to him by his brother Andrew and looked at him, he said: You are Simon son of John; you shall be called Cephas, which means Peter (John I). But when the Evangelist wanted to list the names of the twelve apostles, he had to say Peter, he took care to briefly mention that he was not called this before, but that the Lord had so named him, although not then, but when John recorded the very words of the Lord, clearly making the listeners attentive. For if he had been called this before, you would not see the mystery of the rock in the same way, thinking that he was called so by chance, not by the providence of God. Therefore, he wanted him to be called something else first, so that from the very change of name, the vitality of the sacrament would be commended. The same Peter, then, in Greek or Latin, which is Cephas in Syrian. And in both languages, the name is derived from the rock: no doubt from that about which Paul says: And the rock was Christ (I Cor. X). For just as the true light, Christ, granted to the apostles to be called the light of the world, so also he bestowed on Simon, who believed in Christ the rock, the name of Peter. With another allusion to the etymology, he said:

You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my Church (Matt. XVI). But truly Simon, setting aside lamentation, or hearing sadness, is interpreted for that time when, after the resurrection, having seen the Lord, he set aside the sorrow of that death or his denial: but he immediately heard the sadness of his own death, with the Lord saying: But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish (John XXI).

Mark 3:17

And James, the son of Zebedee, and John, the brother of James (it is understood from the previous verses that he called them to him when he went up into the mountain). And he gave them the names Boanerges, which means sons of thunder. They were aptly named sons of thunder, as one of them, re-

sounding with that theological voice from heaven, which no one had known how to utter before, said: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, etc. (John I). It left such weighty power within it, that if he ever desired to thunder more, the world itself could not contain it. And both often deserved to be led apart and into the mountain by the Lord, and at times to perceive the terrifying sound from the cloud: This is my beloved son, listen to him (Mark IX). They also bore names most fitting to their merits. For James means supplanter. John, in whom is both grace, or the Lord's grace, as he is called. For he rejoiced to supplant the care of the flesh when the Lord called, and to despise the flesh itself when Herod killed him; and the latter, because of the grace of special love which he deserved through virginal glory, reclined on the chest of his Redeemer at the supper.

Mark 3:18

And Andrew and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas. Andrew is a Greek name, and it means manly, from the fact that in Greek, a man is called Ἀνήρ. This name is most fittingly adorned for him who, upon John's preaching, promptly ensured he followed, saw, and listened to the Lamb of God, and later, when called himself, left everything to follow Him and adhere to Him continually without delay. Philip is interpreted as the mouth of a lamp or lamps. And rightly so, because called by the Lord, he received the light of grace, which enlightened and kindled his heart, and promptly sought to share it with his brother through the service of his mouth, saying: We have found Him whom Moses wrote about in the Law and the Prophets, Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth (John I). Bartholomew is a Syriac, not Hebrew name, and it means the son of the one who suspends the waters, which evidently sounds like the Son of God, who lifts the minds of His preachers to contemplate heavenly things, so that as they soar more freely aloft, they may more fruitfully intoxicate the hearts of earthly men with the drops of their words. Matthew is called donated, namely because by the great gift of the Lord, he, from being a tax collector and a publican, was deputed to the office of apostle and evangelist. Thomas means abyss or twin, which in Greek is Δίδυμος, both of which interpretations suit his condition.

Didymus he could rightly be called, because of his doubtful heart in believing the fact of the Lord's resurrection. He could equally justly be called

an abyss when with sure faith he penetrated the depth of the Lord's power celebrated in the resurrection. Indeed, it should be noted that listing the apostles by name, the evangelist Matthew places them thus: Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the publican. Therefore, the other evangelists, when naming them together, place Matthew first and then Thomas, and they do not designate him as a publican, lest recalling his former manner of life, they seem to reproach the evangelist. But he himself indeed puts Thomas before him and calls himself a publican, so that where sin abounded, grace might much more abound (Romans V). And James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus. James the son of Alphaeus he listed with an additional identifier, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. He is the one who in the Gospels is called the brother of the Lord, and in the Epistle to the Galatians: since Mary the wife of Alphaeus was the sister of Mary the mother of the Lord, whom John the evangelist surnames Mary of Clopas, perhaps because either the same Alphaeus was also called Clopas or Mary, after Alphaeus's death following the birth of James, married Clopas. For since James could rightly be called the son of Alphaeus, meaning learned, the apostles themselves attest, who immediately after the Lord's passion, appointed him to govern the church of Jerusalem.

Thaddaeus is the same whom Luke in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles names Judas of James. He was indeed the brother of James the brother of the Lord, as he writes in his Epistle. Therefore he was also called the brother of the Lord, as attested by his fellow countrymen, who, marveling at his virtues, said: Is this not the carpenter's son and Mary's, brother of James and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon (Matthew XIII)?

Mark 3:19

And Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And these he listed with an addition, to distinguish Simon Peter and Judas James. But Simon the Canaanite received his surname from the village of Cana in Galilee, which the evangelist Luke translated as Simon the Zealot. Indeed, Cana means zeal. The Canaanite is called Zealot, that is, emulator. But Judas Iscariot, either from the village where he was born or from the tribe of Issachar, took his name as a premonition of his damnation. Indeed, Issachar, which means reward, hints at the price of betrayal. Iscariot, which is interpreted as a memory of death, shows that he was not persuaded suddenly but had long contemplated the crime of betraying the Lord. He was chosen

among the apostles not by imprudence, but by providence. For how great is the truth, which even the service of an adversary does not weaken? How great is the morality of the Lord, who preferred to risk His judgment among us rather than His affection? For He had taken on the fragility of man, and therefore did not refuse these parts of human weakness. He wanted to be abandoned, He wanted to be betrayed, He wanted to be handed over by His apostle, so that you, abandoned by a companion, betrayed by a companion, may bear moderately that your judgment was in error, your benefit was lost. When He had ordained the apostles on the mountain, to send them forth to preach the Gospel, He aptly added:

Mark 3:20

And they come to the house. For He led the apostles chosen on the mountain back to the house, as if silently admonishing them that after receiving the rank of apostleship, they should return to their conscience, and that the greater care they have taken on of teaching the people, the more diligently they should consider and penetrate the dwelling places of their own minds, and lest anything be found there that might offend the eyes of the hidden inspector, they should seek it out with diligent examination. For thus, each one rightly governs his neighbor if he first thoroughly explores and purges from his own heart whatever wickedness was within. [Mark 3:20] -- And again the crowd gathered, so much so that they could not even eat bread. Oh, how happy is the occupation of the Savior, how blessed is the multitude of the gathering crowd, to whom there was so much eagerness to hear the word of God, so much care to obtain salvation, that to the author of salvation and to those who were with Him, not even the hour of eating remained free from the solace of imparting life to the needy! Would that, Lord Jesus, in our times as well, you might grant as much grace to your faithful, who, by their studiousness in learning, hinder their teachers not only from the desire for carnal pleasures but sometimes also from the very reception of daily bread. But let us see how much the external crowd esteems the presence of their relatives. It follows,

Mark 3:21

And when his own people heard of it, they went out to seize him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." Truly, as he himself says elsewhere, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." For

those whom others desire to approach, see, and hear as the author of life and the wisdom of God, his relatives decide that he must be bound as if he were out of his mind. Since they could not grasp the depth of the wisdom they heard, they believed that he spoke with an alien mind: akin to the example of those who could not bear the sacrament of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" And consequently, they went away, and no longer walked with him. Allegorically, however, in that the crowd frequently convenes to him, and he is scorned by his own as if he were mad, the salvation of the believing from the Gentiles is approved, and the envy and treachery of the Jews is noted. Of whom John says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11) There is indeed a great difference between those who do not understand the word of God because of the dullness of their minds and those who deliberately blaspheme and persecute what they understand. For there still remains a hope of salvation for these if perhaps they understand; but for those who are unwilling to understand to act well, and devise iniquity on their bed, what hope of salvation remains any longer, when they strive to reject by detesting and persecuting what they have rightly understood for the salvation of their souls? For consider what follows.

Mark 3:22

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the prince of demons he casts out demons. It is not without reason that those who brought such blasphemy against the Lord are said to have come down from Jerusalem; but it surely foreshadowed that he would be persecuted by the citizens of that place unto death. Indeed, we read above that a great crowd from Galilee followed him, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea and beyond the Jordan, and those around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, having heard what he was doing, came to him. Therefore, the crowd coming from Jerusalem followed the Lord, as also from other regions of the Jews, or even of the Gentiles. For who does not know that Idumea, Tyre, and Sidon were provinces or cities of the Gentiles? But the scribes coming down from Jerusalem persecuted him with dreadful blasphemies, because it was clearly to be in the time of his passion, that a crowd of the Jewish people would bring him to Jerusalem with palms and praises, the Gentiles would desire to see him, but the scribes and elders of the people would plot his death.

Therefore, to the crowds, who seemed less instructed, always marveling at the deeds of the Lord, they endeavored to either deny these things, or to corrupt those which they could not deny with a sinister interpretation, as if these were not the works of Divinity, but of the filthiest spirit, that is Beelzebub, who was the god of Ekron. For Beel is indeed Baal, but Zebub is called a fly. Nor according to certain faulty copies is the letter k or d to be read at the end of the name, but b. Therefore Beelzebub is interpreted as Baal of the flies, that is the man of the flies, or having flies, due indeed to the filth of sacrificial blood, from whose most vile rite or name they designated the prince of demons.

Mark 3:23

And calling them together, he said to them in parables: How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. A kingdom and city divided against itself cannot persist. But just as small things grow through harmony, so the greatest things fall apart through discord (Sallust). Therefore, if Satan fights against himself, and a demon is an enemy of another demon, the end of the world should already have come so that adversarial powers would not have a place in it, since war among them means peace for humans. But if you think, O Scribes and Pharisees, that the departure of demons is due to obedience to their prince, to deceive ignorant men with fraudulent simulation, what can you say about the health of bodies, which the Lord has brought about. It is one thing if you assign to demons also the weaknesses of members and the signs of spiritual powers. And if Satan has risen up against himself, he is divided, and he cannot stand, but has an end. By saying this, he wanted to be understood from their own confession that by not believing in him they had chosen to be in the kingdom of the devil, which surely could not stand divided against itself. Therefore, let the Pharisees choose what they will. If Satan cannot cast out Satan, they could find nothing to say against the Lord. But if he can, they should more carefully consider themselves, and depart from his kingdom, which cannot stand divided against itself.

Mark 3:27

No one can enter the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house. He calls

the strong man the devil, his goods, the men deceived by him; his house, the world which lies in wickedness. In which until the coming of the Savior, he exercised a wretchedly pacified dominion, because he rested quietly in the hearts of the unbelievers without any contradiction. But the Lord bound the strong man, that is, he restrained the devil from deceiving the elect, and then plundered his house, because he united to the members of his Church those whom he foresaw would be rescued from the devil's snares and whom he designated to various orders of dignity within it. Or certainly, he plundered his house because he distributed all the parts of the world, over which the ancient enemy once ruled, to the successors of the apostles, so that each in his own province would lead back the people converted from error to the way of life. The Lord therefore showed through the parable, but now very clearly, that he did not free men from demons through a deceitful operation in agreement with them, as they slandered, but with a completely different and opposing power of divinity: and thus they committed a great crime who said that what they recognized to be of God was from the devil.

Mark 3:28

Amen, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter. All sins and blasphemies are not indiscriminately forgiven to all men, but to those who perform worthy repentance for their errors in this life. Nor has the perverse assertion of Novatian any place, so as to deny pardon to the penitent who have lapsed in martyrdom; nor Origen, so as to assert that after the universal judgment, even granted the immense number of passing ages, all sinners and blasphemers will obtain forgiveness of sins and be led to the heavenly kingdom. This error is also refuted by the following words of the Lord, when he adds:

Mark 3:29

Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, has no forgiveness forever, but is guilty of an eternal sin. Therefore, whoever understandingly and manifestly denies the works of God, spurred by envy, calumniates, and says that Christ, the Word of God, and the works of the Holy Spirit are of Beelzebub, to him it will not be forgiven neither in this age nor in the future. Not that we deny that if he desires to repent, he can be forgiven by Him who wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; but we believe that the blasphemer who believes in the Judge and Giver of pardon, who says

this blasphemy is never to be forgiven, admits his merits require that he never reaches forgiveness nor the fruits of worthy repentance. As John the Evangelist most truthfully wrote about some who were blinded due to the merit of their blasphemy: "Therefore they could not believe, because, again Isaiah said: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them" (John XII). Therefore, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, by which anyone, in the likeness of the devil and his angels, does not shrink from attacking the majesty of the Deity against his conscience, has no forgiveness forever, but is guilty of an eternal sin, as the evangelist clearly declares, who, having placed this testimony of the Lord, adds and says:

Mark 3: 30

Because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit." For those who neither believe in the Holy Spirit nor believe He is God, nor believe He is indeed God but less than the Father and the Son, and confess this, being led by human ignorance rather than devilish envy, are held by the crime of unforgivable blasphemy: specifically those Jewish leaders and others corrupted by a similar pestilence of envy, blaspheming against majesty, will perish without end. However, what is said according to Matthew, that whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, or speaks a word against the Holy Spirit, will not have forgiveness either in this age or in the future, is given to be understood that some faults are forgiven in this age, while others in the future. For what is denied about one fault, the consequent understanding is clear because it is granted about some. Nevertheless, it should be believed that this can happen with small and minor sins, such as continual idle talk, immoderate laughter, or the sin of concern for familial matters, which is rarely conducted without fault even by those who know how to avoid blame, or in not serious faults by the error of ignorance, all of which still weigh after death if not forgiven while still in this life. However, it should be known that no one will obtain any purification for even the smallest sins unless, while still in this life, they merit to obtain it through good deeds.

Mark 3: 31

And his mother and his brothers come, and standing outside, they sent to him, calling him. And a crowd was seated around him, etc. The brothers of the Lord, not to be thought sons of the blessed ever-virgin Mary, according

to Helvidius, nor sons of Joseph by another wife, according to some, but rather to be understood as his relatives. Surely, the fact that the Lord, when requested by his mother and brothers, does not leave his duty of preaching, is not a rejection of his mother's pious duty, whose commandment is, Honor your father and your mother, but instead, he shows that he owes more to the paternal mysteries than to maternal affections: instructing us by example as well as by word, when he says, Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. X). He does not contemptuously disregard his brothers, but, preferring the spiritual work to the kinship of the flesh, he teaches that the more religious bond of the hearts is greater than that of the bodies. Mystically, however, the mother and brothers of Jesus are the Synagogue, from whose flesh he is born, and the people of the Jews, who, while the Savior is teaching inside, coming, are unable to enter: they spiritually neglect to understand his words. For the crowd, having preoccupied, enters his house to listen to his words, as the evangelist Matthew declares: because, with Judea hesitating, the Gentiles flocked to Christ and, by faith growing nearer, received the inner mysteries of life with so much more capacity of mind. According to what the Psalmist says, Come to him, and be enlightened (Psalm XXXIII).

Mark 3:32

And they say to him: Behold your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you. And responding to them, he said: Who is my mother and my brothers? Inside is the word, inside is the light. Therefore elsewhere, he says, so that those who enter may see the light (Luke VIII). If then, those standing outside are not recognized even as parents, and perhaps they are not recognized for the sake of our example, how will we be recognized if we stand outside? For those standing outside, his kin, unwilling to see the Lord, while the Jews, not seeking the spiritual sense in the law, fixed themselves outside to the keeping of the letter, and as if compelling Christ to go out to teach carnal matters, rather than consenting to enter to learn the spiritual. [Mark 3:34] -- And looking around at those who were sitting around him, he said: Behold, my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother, and sister, and mother. When he who does the will of God is called the sister and brother of the Lord, it is not surprising due to both sexes being gathered to faith. But it is very astonishing how even mother is also said. For he deigned to call his faithful disciples brothers, saying: Go, an-

nounce to my brothers. Whoever, therefore, is able to become the brother of the Lord by coming to faith, it must be asked how he can also be mother. But we must know that he who is the brother and sister of Jesus by believing, becomes a mother by preaching. For he as it were births the Lord, whom he has infused into the heart of the listener. And he becomes his mother if the love of the Lord is generated in the mind of the neighbor through his voice.

CHAPTER 4

Mark 4:1

And again he began to teach by the sea. If we look at the Gospel of Matthew, it is clear that this teaching of the Lord by the sea took place on the same day as the previous sermon celebrated in the house. For when that sermon was finished, Matthew immediately added, saying: On that day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea, and large crowds gathered around him, etc. (Matthew XIII). Not only the deeds and words of the Lord, but also the journeys and places where he performs miracles and preaches, are full of heavenly mysteries. After giving a sermon in a house, where he was said to have a demon, he began to teach by the sea, to show that, having abandoned Judea because of the fault of unbelief, he would go to save the Gentiles. Indeed, the proud and unbelieving hearts of the Gentiles are rightly likened to the swollen and bitter waves of the sea. Who does not know that the house of the Lord was an unbelieving Judea? But, having left the house in which he suffered the blasphemies of the wicked, he began to teach by the sea, because, having abandoned the Synagogue due to its unbelief, he came to gather the multitude of the Gentile people through the apostles. Hence it is aptly first put forward that while he was preaching in the house, his mother and brothers stood outside and were not recognized by him, and thus, leaving the house, he went to teach by the sea, because after the Synagogue fixed itself firmly outside on the preservation of the letter and preferred to put the figures of the law before the inner secrets of the faith of the Lord, the Lord conferred the sacraments of salvation, which it had rejected, to the foreign nations throughout the world.

Mark 4:1–2

And a great crowd gathered to him, so that he got into a boat and sat in the sea, and the whole crowd was on the land by the sea; and he taught them many things in parables. The fact that a great crowd gathered to the Lord

while he was teaching by the sea signifies the multitude of people flocking to the faith of truth through the preaching of the apostles. But the fact that he got into a boat and sat in the sea prefigured the Church to be built among the nations that were unbelieving and contradictory. For it is as if the Lord sits in the boat placed in the middle of the sea, when he enlightens the minds of the faithful, who dwell among the faithful, with the grace of his visitation, and consecrates his beloved dwelling among them. Furthermore, the crowd which was on the land by the sea, listening to the words of the Lord, such that they were neither touched by the waves of the sea nor sitting with him in the boat above the waves, most aptly represents those who have recently gathered to hear the word. Indeed, they are separated by the piety of their minds from the bitterness, obscurity, and instability of the reprobate, but they are still not yet imbued with the heavenly mysteries they desire.

Mark 4:3

And he said to them in his teaching: Listen; behold, a sower went out to sow. The Lord himself, in the following, explaining this parable, asserts that the seed is the word of God, and that the sower is himself. But when he says that a sower went out to sow, he left it for us to inquire. Therefore, the sower went out to sow because the Lord, coming forth from the bosom of the Father, came into the world, and the word of truth, which he saw with the Father, he sowed to the human race either by himself or by those he appointed, according to what Habakkuk says in his praises of him, You went out to save your people, to save your anointed ones (Habakkuk 3:13), that is, those whom you deign to consecrate with the anointing of your Spirit and make participants in your holy name. Or certainly he went out to sow when, after calling the chosen portion of the synagogue to faith, he also poured out the gifts of his grace to the gathering of the nations. He also signified this by his journey, when after preaching at home, he went out to the sea to teach. Finally, while preaching at home, he abandoned some for the unforgivable crime of their blasphemy; he called others his mother and brothers because of their devotion to piety. This clearly expresses the difference in the Jewish nation, in which many were rebellious to the Lord, yet some were worthy of divine adoption.

Mark 4:4

And while he was sowing, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it. In the Gospel of Luke, it is written about this seed: Some fell beside the path, and it was trampled, and the birds of the air ate it. Therefore, whatever the Lord deigned to explain in this parable must be received with pious faith. But what he left silent for our understanding, must be sought and briefly summarized with an equally pious intention. The seed that fell along the path was destroyed by a double injury, both trampled by those passing by and snatched by the birds. The path, therefore, represents the mind worn and dry from the incessant passage of evil thoughts, so that it is incapable of receiving and germinating the seed of the word. And thus, whatever good seed happens to fall near such a path perishes, trampled by the passage of wicked thought and snatched away by demons. Rightly are these called birds of the air, either because they are of a heavenly and spiritual nature or because they fly through the air.

Mark 4:5

But some fell upon rocky places, where it had not much earth; and it immediately sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And the Lord explains the mystery of this seed. In this exposition, we learn that these things are not always allegorically placed in the same significance. For stone indicates the hardness of a stubborn mind, earth the gentleness of an obedient soul, and the sun the fervor of a raging persecution; although elsewhere he places the sun in a good light, saying the righteous will shine in the future like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And in the construction of the spiritual house, he teaches that digging deep, earth must be removed, and stone laid in the foundation, that is, the earthly thoughts are to be cleansed from the innermost recess of the heart, and the strength of invincible faith to be laid in the foundation of good works. In this instance, the depth of earth properly cultivated should have received the seed of the word, the uprightness of a soul exercised in heavenly disciplines and regularly trained in listening and obeying divine words. But rocky places, covered with thin soil, can quickly germinate the received seed, yet do not have the strength to set roots;

these are, without a doubt, hearts untrained in the studies of discipline, softened by no trials of temptation, delighted only for a moment by the sweetness of the heard word and celestial promises, but fall away in time of temptation; for when they present the fleeting sweetness of the heavenly oracle to their inherent austerity, as if a place designated for the holy seed, they cover a great heap of stones with a thin layer of soil. Therefore, they cannot reach the fruit of righteousness because of the little amount of saving desire inherent in them to conceive the seed of life, and the abundance of harmful hardness that obstructs the fruit of salvation.

Mark 4:9

And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." As often as this admonition is interposed either in the Gospel or in the Revelation of John, it is insinuated that what is said is mystical and is salubrious for hearing and learning. For the ears for hearing are the ears of the heart, and the inner senses, the ears for obeying and doing what has been commanded. [Mark 4:11-12] -- But to those who are outside, everything is done in parables, so that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they turn and be forgiven their sins. It should be noted in these words of the Lord that not only what he said but also what he did were parables, that is, signs of mystical things, since it is said that those to whom everything was done in parables neither could lead what they saw and heard to understanding. For what would hinder those looking at his deeds or journeys from understanding, if something more than what is apparent to the eyes of the flesh was not intended to be spiritually understood? Therefore, to those who are outside and do not approach the feet of the Lord to receive from his teaching, everything is done in parables, both the deeds and words of the Savior, because they are neither able to recognize him as God in the things he worked with power, nor in the mysteries he preached. Therefore, they do not deserve to attain the remission of sins which is to be obtained through the grace of his faith.

Mark 4:15

These are those who are beside the way where the word is sown. And when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts, etc. In this explanation of the Lord, the entire distance of those who could hear the word of salvation but cannot reach salvation is

comprehended. For there are those who do not deign to grasp the word they hear with any faith, understanding, or even any opportunity for trying usefulness. In whose undisciplined and hard hearts the sown word is immediately snatched away by unclean spirits, like birds seizing the seed from the trampled path of life. There are those who both recognize the usefulness of the heard word and taste the desire, but they are hindered from reaching what they approve by others who terrifyingly oppose the way, while others by flattering prosperity delay. The Lord compares the former to rocky ground and the latter to thorny ground. Clearly, the Gentiles are excluded, who do not even deserve to hear the words of life. And it should not seem strange why the Lord compared riches to thorns, since thorns fight and riches delight. They are rightly called thorns, because they tear the mind with the pricks of their thoughts. And when they lead to sin, they wound it like an inflicted wound causing it to bleed. But even apart from the stings of vices, the desire for riches devastates the mind greatly and does not allow it to be secure.

For when someone vigilantly and anxiously watches by what order or art to acquire what they do not yet have, or by what foresight to preserve what they have already acquired, or finally by what glory and dignity to enjoy the abundance of acquired things, how necessary is it that the miserable mind is ulcerated by the stings of cares every hour? Hence, the Lord aptly, intending to call riches thorns in the exposition, preceded with miseries, saying: "Others are sown among thorns, these are those who hear the word: and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. "The cares," he says, "of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. For whoever is deceived by the vain desire for riches, it is necessary that the accompanying or even preceding continuous misery of cares afflict him. For what is more miserable than those who, the more they have, the more they need, and the less they seem to have of themselves? According to what a certain poet mocking the lovers of money said: "Love of money grows as much as money itself grows. (Juvenal) And how much happier are those not only in the desire for true riches but also in the very contempt of false ones, who truly confess themselves to be as having nothing and yet possessing all things? Well did he say: "And the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches," and added:

"And the desires for other things. For the Scripture commands: "Desiring wisdom, keep the commandments, and God will provide it for you. And again it says: "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, he greatly delights in his commandments. (Psalm 112) On the other hand, whoever, neglecting wisdom and despising the commandments of the Lord, wanders by desiring other things, can neither receive the fruit of wisdom nor attain the joy of true blessedness. For such desires choke the word because with their importunate thoughts they strangle the throat of the mind. And while they do not allow good desire to enter the heart, they kill as it were the passage of vital breath. Whence by just judgment it happens that as much as they desire other things, so much they are far from that poverty of spirit and desire by which they long to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Philippians 1). But rather, the wretched one fears that it will truly happen to him, to be dissolved from this life and to be with the devil.

Mark 4:20

And these are the ones sown on good ground: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, one thirty, and one sixty, and one hundred. Good ground, that is, the faithful conscience of the elect, opposes all the evil yields of the earth, for it both willingly receives the seed of the word entrusted to it and, preserving it consistently among adversities and prosperities, maintains it until the time of fruition. And it bears fruit, producing one thirty, one sixty, and one hundred. Thirty, specifically, when it instills the faith of the Holy Trinity in the hearts of the elect. Sixty, when it teaches the perfection of good work. For, since the adornment of the world was completed in the number six, good work is rightly designated by this number. One hundred, when in all our actions it shows us the rewards to be sought in the heavenly kingdom. For one hundred, which are transferred to the right hand by counting, are rightly set in the significance of eternal happiness. For although thirty and sixty are still contained in the left hand, one hundred pass to the right. Although the great faith which reveals to us the knowledge of our Creator is significant, and the great works by which faith is fulfilled, lest it be idle, are significant, both are necessary in this life; the reward of faith and works exercised through love is to be hoped for in the life to come.

Mark 4:21

And he said to them: "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not to be set on a stand? For there is nothing hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Because he had previously said to the apostles and those who were with them: "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those outside, everything is in parables," now he shows through them that the same mystery is to be revealed to others at some point as well, and that the hearts of all who are going to enter the house of God are to be illuminated by the flames of faith. With these words, he symbolically teaches the confidence of preaching, lest anyone hide the light of knowledge they know out of fear of physical discomforts. For with the terms 'basket' and 'bed,' he designates this present life and the flesh in which we live; but with the term 'lamp,' he designates the word by which we are enlightened. For since the time of our life is contained within a certain measure of divine provision, it is rightly compared to a basket. And who does not see that the body, in which the soul temporarily dwells and rests, can rightly be called a bed? Hence it is said to a certain healed person:

"Rise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (Matthew 9). Which is clearly to say: Rise from the body of negligence; and raise up the body, in whose desires you lay for a long time, towards the practice of good works diligently: and thus enter the house of eternal habitation, where you will receive the rewards of good works. Therefore, whoever, out of love for this temporal life and carnal allurements, hides the word of God, covers the lamp with a basket or a bed, because they place the desires of the flesh above the revelation of truth, which they fear to proclaim. But he places the lamp on a stand, who subjugates his body to the service of God, so that the preaching of truth is superior, and the service of the body is inferior: yet through that very service of the body, the superior doctrine shines forth, which through bodily actions, that is, through voice and tongue and other movements of the body, is imparted to those learning through good works. Therefore, he places the lamp on a stand when the Apostle says: "I do not box as one beating the air, but I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9).

Mark 4:22

For nothing is hidden, except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. He says, do not be ashamed of the Gospel of God, but among the darkness of persecutors, raise the light of the word upon the candlestick of your body, retaining with a steadfast mind that day of ultimate recompense, where the Lord will illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and will reveal the thoughts of hearts. For then both praise from God awaits you, and eternal punishment for the adversaries of the truth. [Mark 4:23] -- If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. If anyone has the understanding to perceive the word of God, let him not withdraw, let him not turn his hearing to fables, but diligently lend his ear to examining those things which the truth has spoken, diligently employ his hands in fulfilling those things which he has already understood, diligently subject his tongue to preaching those things opportunely and inopportunely.

Mark 4:24

And he said to them: Take heed what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and more will be added to you. If you diligently (he says) strive to do all the good you can, and to share it with your neighbors: divine grace will assist you, both presently, by giving you the understanding to grasp higher matters, and the ability to accomplish worthier deeds; and in the future, beyond what you know to hope for, it will truly add to you the gifts of eternal recompense. [Mark 4:25] -- For whoever has, to him more will be given. And whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. He said, with full intention, give effort to the word that you hear, by remembering and examining: because whoever has love for the word, even the sense of understanding what he loves will be given to him. But whoever does not have love for hearing the word, even if he seems to excel either by natural talent or by exercise in letters, will enjoy none of the sweetness of true wisdom. And although it seems to have been especially said about the apostles, to whom it was given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God more by charity and faith, and about the perfidious Jews, who, seeing in parables, did not see; and hearing, did not understand; namely, that they would lose the letter of the law in which they boasted: it can however also be generally understood that sometimes an ingenious reader by

neglecting deprives himself of wisdom, which one slow in talent but studious, by laboring, tastes.

Mark 4:26–27

And he said to them: Such is the kingdom of God, as if a man casts seed upon the earth and sleeps; and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows while he does not know it. For the earth produces fruit by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the fruit has brought itself forth, he immediately wields the sickle, because the harvest is at hand. A man casts seed upon the earth, when he instills good intention into his heart. And after he has cast the seed, he sleeps, because he already rests in the hope of good work. But he rises at night and by day, because he progresses among adversities and prosperities. And the seed sprouts and grows while he does not know it; because even when he cannot yet measure his growth, the virtue once conceived leads to progress. And the earth produces fruit by itself, because with grace preceding itself, the human mind spontaneously rises to the fruit of good work. But this same earth first brings forth the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. To produce the blade, indeed, is to still have the tenderness of good initiation. But the blade reaches the ear when the virtue conceived in the mind draws itself to the progress of good work. And the full grain in the ear fructifies, when the virtue already progresses so as to be of robust and perfect work.

And when the fruit has produced itself, he immediately wields the sickle, because the harvest time is at hand. For the Almighty God, with the fruit produced, wields the sickle and cuts off His harvest, because when He has led each one to perfect works, He cuts off their temporal life by His sent judgment, to bring His grain to the heavenly granaries. Therefore, when we conceive good desires, we cast seed into the earth. But when we begin to act rightly, we are the blade. However, when we grow to the perfect work of goodness, we reach the ear. When we are solidified in the perfection of the same operation, we already bring forth the full grain in the ear. Hence no one should be seen still in the tenderness of the mind for good purpose, because the grain of God begins from the blade to become grain.

Mark 4:30

And he said: To what shall we liken the kingdom of God, or with what parable shall we compare it? It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown in

the ground, is smaller than all the seeds that are on the earth. The kingdom of God is the preaching of the Gospel and the knowledge of the Scriptures which leads to life, and about which it is said to the Jews: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits. Therefore, the kingdom of this kind is like a mustard seed which, according to the Gospel of Matthew, a man took and sowed in his field (Matthew XIII). The man who sows is understood by many to be the Savior, who sows in the hearts of the believers. By others, the man himself sowing in the earth or his field, that is, in himself and in his heart. Who is it that sows if not our understanding and mind? Which, receiving the seed of preaching and nurturing the sown with the moisture of faith, makes it sprout in the field of his heart.

Mark 4:31

When it is sown in the ground, he says, it is smaller than all the seeds that are on the earth. But when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all garden plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests under its shade. The preaching of the Gospel is the smallest among all disciplines. For the first teaching indeed does not hold the truth of faith, proclaiming a man, Lord God, dead and the scandal of the cross. Compare such teaching to the doctrines of philosophers, and their books and the splendor of eloquence and the composition of words, and you will see how much lesser the sown seeds of the Gospel are. But when those have grown, they show nothing biting, nothing vivid, nothing vital. Everything swells, flaccid and withered, into vegetables and herbs, which dry up and crumble. However, this preaching which seemed small in the beginning, whether sown in the soul of the believer or in the whole world, does not rise into vegetables, but grows into a tree, as is said very clearly by the other Evangelists. Therefore the mustard seed sown in the land or the field of the Lord arises and is transformed from a vegetable into a tree, whose nature is to surpass the nature of all herbs in height, breadth, and longevity. Great indeed is the height of this tree, because the preaching of the Gospel lifts up the minds of its hearers to desire heavenly things.

It is spread out with branches, because it has occupied the ends of the whole world through preachers born from it. It surpasses in longevity, because the truth it proclaims will never be obliterated by any end. Under its shade, the birds of the heavens dwell, for the souls of the faithful that are ac-

customed to fly to heavenly things with desire, and to have their heart above, neglecting the desires of temporal things, according to the voice of the Psalmist: In the protection of the wings of the Lord they will hope (Psalm 90). Hence the bride in the Song of Songs, that is, the Church gathered from many souls of the saints, boasts and says: Under the shadow of him whom I desired, I sat, and his fruit was sweet to my throat (Song of Solomon 2). Which is to say openly: Under the protection of him whom I desired to see, I, deprived of the comfort of others, subjected myself, and the joy of his sight and presence was sweet to my heart, compelling me to despise, indeed to disdain, whatever is outside him.

Mark 4:33

And with many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable he did not speak to them. But privately he expounded all things to his disciples. This is not said as if he spoke no plain words to the crowds, but that he spoke to them only in parables: rather, it is because almost no speech of his can be found in which something of parables is not interwoven.

Mark 4:35

And he said to them that day when evening had come: Let us cross over. And dismissing the crowd, they took him along in the boat just as he was, and other boats were with him. In this passage, the Lord deigns to show both natures of his one and the same person, when he, who as a man sleeps in the boat, calms the fury of the sea with a word as God. Furthermore, by allegory, the sea which he desires to cross with his own is taken as the dark and bitter turbulence of the present world. But the little boat he boards is best understood as the wood of his most holy passion. By whose benefit, all the faithful, aided, rise above the waves of the world and reach the abode of the heavenly homeland, as if to the stability of a secure shore. However, the other boats said to have been with the Lord, but not brought into the deep or reported to have endured any storm, clearly signify those who, having been imbued with the faith of the Lord's cross, have not yet been struck by the whirlwind of tribulations, and only preserve the mysteries of faith received in the peace of the Church; or indeed, those who, after repeated gales of temptations, use a little granted calm of peace for a time. It is uncertain whether those boats, recently made, were brought into port or returned to port after experiencing

the dangers of the sea. Hence, they can rightly denote both those who have not yet been tested by temptations, and those who, after frequent examination by tribulations for Christ, now, with temptations somewhat stilled, enjoy the tranquility of things.

Mark 4:37

And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves were beating into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. And he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. While the disciples were sailing, Christ fell asleep, because when the faithful trample the world underfoot and meditate on the peace of the future kingdom in their minds, and, whether by the favorable breath of the Holy Spirit or by the rowing of their own effort, they eagerly cast behind their backs the infidelity of worldly pride, the time of the Lord's passion suddenly arrived. Hence it is fitting to mention that this event took place in the evening, to signify not only the sleeping of the Lord but also the very hour of the setting of the true sun. But as he ascended the stern of the cross, where he would take the sleep of death, the waves of persecutors, stirred by demonic storms, rose up. Yet it is not his patience that is disturbed by these, but the weakness of the disciples that is shaken, trembles, and is imperiled.

Mark 4:38

And they woke him up and said to him: Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? And the disciples woke the Lord, so that they would not perish by the savagery of the waves while he slept, because they most eagerly sought his resurrection, whose death they had seen, lest their minds perish forever in spiritual death if he himself were to sleep in the death of the flesh any longer. Hence it well follows: [Mark 4:39] -- And rising, he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Indeed, rising, he rebuked the wind, because he subdued the pride of the devil, who had the power of death, while celebrating his resurrection. He also commanded the sea to be silent and restored calm, because by overcoming death and rising from the grave, he subdued the mad rage of the Jews, who had shouted, shaking their heads: If he is the Son of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him (Matt. 27). It is noteworthy according to the letter that all creatures are aware of their Creator. For those to whom he rebukes and commands, they feel the One commanding. Not by the error of heretics, who think that all things are living beings, but by the

majesty of the Creator. For those things that are insensible to us are sensible to Him.

Mark 4:40

And he said to them: Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith? They are rightly reproached, who were afraid with Christ present, since certainly whoever adheres to him cannot perish. This is similar to when, after the sleep of death, he appeared to the disciples and reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen (Mark 16). And again he said to them: O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? (Luke 24) As if by the metaphor of a ship he were to say: Was it not necessary for Christ to be asleep, while waves from everywhere beat upon the ship in which he was sleeping, and thus, having been awakened, with the surging waves immediately calmed, to reveal the power of his divinity to all? And they feared with great fear, and said to one another: Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? Matthew writes it thus: And the men were amazed, saying: What kind of man is this? etc. Therefore, not the disciples, but the sailors and the others who were in the ship were amazed, and doubted about the person to whom the wind and the sea obeyed.

But if anyone contentiously wants to say that those who were amazed were the disciples, we will respond that they are rightly called men because they had not yet known the power of the Savior. And we too, each individually, imbued with the sign of the Lord's cross, intending to leave the world, indeed board the ship with Jesus, we try to cross the sea. But though he who watches over Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, yet he often seems to sleep while we sail, as among the roars of the sea itself, when amid the persistent efforts of virtues, or of unclean spirits, or of few men, or even by the force of our own thoughts, the brightness of faith becomes obscured, the height of hope melts away, the flame of love grows cold. Yet amid such storms, it is necessary for us to run to that helmsman, to rouse him diligently, who does not serve but commands the winds. Immediately he will calm the storms, restore tranquility, and grant the harbor of salvation.

CHAPTER 5

Mark 5:1

And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. Gerasa is a notable city of Arabia beyond the Jordan, attached to the mountain of Gilead, which the tribe of Manasseh held, not far from the lake of Tiberias, into which the swine were cast. It signifies, however, the nation of the Gentiles, which after the slumber of the passion and the glory of his resurrection, the Savior deigned to visit through the preachers he sent. Hence Gerasa, or Gergesenes (as some read), well interprets as "casting out the colonist," or "the approaching stranger"; namely, indicating that the gentile people both expelled the hostile inhabitant from their heart and who were far, became near by the blood of Christ. [Mark 5:2] -- And when he had come out of the ship, immediately a man with an unclean spirit met him from the tombs, who had his dwelling among the tombs. This man, who was vexed by an unclean spirit and was mad to the Lord but soon to be healed, holds the figure of the gentile people, who, up to the time of the Lord's incarnation, deluded by demonic doctrines, worshiped idols as God. He had his dwelling among the tombs because he delighted in dead works, that is, in sins. For what are the bodies of the faithless if not certain sepulchres of the dead, in which the word of God does not dwell, but a soul dead in sins is enclosed?

Mark 5:4

And no one was able to bind him anymore, not even with chains, for he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and he had torn the chains apart and smashed the fetters: and no one could tame him. By chains and fetters are signified the severe and hard laws of the Gentiles, by which sins are restrained even in their republic. And with the chains broken (as Luke writes), he was driven by the demon into the wilderness, who, having also transgressed those laws, was led by desire to those crimes that already exceeded common custom. [Mark 5:5] -- And always, night and day, he was in the tombs and in the mountains, crying out and cutting himself with stones. Always, night and day, the demoniac raged because paganism, whether struggling with the adverse circumstances of things or any peace and prosperity of a flattering world might smile, he never knew how to shake off the yoke of serving evil spirits from the neck of his mind. Through the foulness of his

deeds, he lay as if in the tombs, wandered on the mountain peaks through the act of pride, and through the words of the hardest infidelity, as if frenziedly seizing stones, he cut himself. But with John the Baptist bearing witness, the Lord raised children for Abraham from the stones, while he turned the hard hearts of infidels to the grace of piety.

Mark 5:6

But seeing Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him, and crying out with a loud voice, he said: What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? How great is the madness of Arius to believe Jesus is a creature and not God, whom the demons believe to be the Son of the Most High God and tremble! What impiety of the Jews it is to say that he cast out demons by the prince of demons, whom the demons themselves confess to have nothing in common with him! This very thing that they shouted in the frenzy of the demoniac then, they did not cease to say and confess later in the shrines of idols, namely that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Most High God, and that they have no peace or fellowship with him. [Mark 5:7] -- I adjure you by God, do not torment me. For he was saying to him: Come out of the man, unclean spirit. The enemy of human salvation considers it no small torment to cease harming a man, and the longer he used to possess him, the harder he agrees to let him go. Hence, it must be earnestly studied that if at any time, as humans, we are overcome by the devil, we should immediately strive to escape his snares, lest, by resisting his strength somewhat tardily, it becomes more laborious at some point to expel him.

Mark 5:9

And he asked him, "What is your name?" And he said to him, "Legion is my name, for we are many." He inquires not as one ignorant of the name, but so that, once the plague that tormented the man had been publicly confessed, the virtue of healing might appear more gracious. Even the priests of our time, who know how to cast out demons through the grace of exorcism, are accustomed to say that the afflicted can only be healed to the extent that they can disclose, by confessing openly, everything that they have suffered from unclean spirits through sight, hearing, taste, touch, or any other sense of the body or mind, whether awake or asleep. Now, what the spirit said, "Legion is my name, for we are many," signifies that the people of the nations are not subjected to any one individual but to countless and various

rites of idolatry. Against this, it is written that the multitude of the believers were of one heart and one mind (Acts IV). Hence, well in the construction of Babylon, the unity of languages was shattered by the spirit of pride, while in Jerusalem, the diversity of languages was united through the grace of the holy. And that confusion, this vision of peace, because evidently in various languages and nations, one faith and piety fortifies the elect throughout the world, bringing about peace. But for the reprobates, several sects, more than languages, dissociate and confuse them.

Mark 5:10

And he pleaded with Him greatly, that He would not send them out of the region. In the Gospel of Luke, it is written thus: And they begged Him not to command them to go into the abyss. Therefore, the demons knew that at some time in the future they would be sent into the abyss by the coming of the Lord, not foreseeing the future themselves, but recalling what the prophets had said about them. And so, the glory of the Lord's coming, which they marveled at, they feared would extend to their own condemnation. [Mark 5:11] -- There was a large herd of pigs feeding near the mountain. And the spirits implored him, saying: Send us into the pigs, that we may enter them. And Jesus immediately granted them. Therefore, he allowed what they were asking for, that through the destruction of the pigs, an occasion for salvation might be offered to humans. For the shepherds, witnessing these things, immediately reported them to the city. Let the Manichaean be ashamed. If the souls of humans and beasts are from the same substance and author, how can two thousand pigs be drowned for the salvation of one person? In their destruction, however, men who are unclean, devoid of voice and reason, are judged figuratively, who, feeding on the mountain of pride, delight in filthy actions. For demons can dominate over such through the worship of idols. For unless someone lives like a pig, the devil will not take power over him, or only to test him, but not even to destroy him.

Mark 5:13

And the unclean spirits, coming out, entered into the pigs, and with great force, the herd rushed into the sea, about two thousand of them, and were drowned in the sea. This signifies that once the Church is glorified and the people of the Gentiles are freed from the domination of demons, those who refused to believe in Christ engage in their sacrilegious rites in secluded

places, submerged in blind and profound curiosity. And it should be noted that the unclean spirits would not have gone into the pigs unless the gentle Savior had granted it to those who were asking, whom he could certainly consign to the abyss. Wishing to teach us something necessary, namely, that they were much less able to harm humans by their own power, who could not even harm any kind of cattle. This power, however, the good God can give us by hidden justice, he cannot give unjustly.

Mark 5:14

But those who fed them fled, and reported it in the city and in the fields. That the shepherds of the pigs, fleeing, reported these things, signifies that even some leaders of the impious, although they flee from the Christian law, nonetheless proclaim its power among the nations with awe and wonder. [Mark 5:14-15] -- And they went out to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the man who had been possessed by demons sitting, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid, etc. It is written in the Gospel of Luke, "Sitting at his feet." It signifies that the multitude, delighted by their old life, honors indeed but does not want to endure the Christian law, saying that they cannot fulfill it, yet admiring the faithful people who have been healed from their former lost way of life. To sit at the Lord's feet is for him from whom demons had exited, just as those corrected from sins with fixed intention of the mind, to stare at the tracks of their Savior which they follow. To be clothed again is to receive with a sound mind the pursuit of virtues that the insane had lost. This figure fits aptly with that parable of the Lord in which the prodigal and extravagant son, returning to the father, is immediately dressed in the first robe with a ring, clearly indicating that whoever truly repents with a heart for what was lost can, by the grace given by Christ, recover the first works of righteousness they had fallen from, along with the ring of unbroken faith.

Mark 5:17

And they began to ask him to depart from their region. The Gerasenes, aware of their own frailty, judged themselves unworthy of the Lord's presence, not grasping the word of God, nor yet able to bear the weight of wisdom with their still weak minds. This is also read to have happened to Peter himself upon seeing the miracle of the fish: and to the widow of Zarephath, who recognized that her hospitality was blessed by the presence of the blessed

Elijah, nonetheless felt burdened, saying: "What do you have against me, man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to kill my son" (1 Kings 17).

Mark 5:18–19

And when he was entering the ship, the man who had been vexed by the demon began to beseech him that he might be with him; and he did not admit him, but said to him: Go to your house, to your own people, and announce to them how much the Lord has done for you, and has had mercy on you. These words can rightly be understood from that saying of the Apostle when he says: To dissolve and to be with Christ is far better, but to remain in the flesh is necessary for your sake (Philippians 1); so that everyone understands that after the remission of sins, one should return to a good conscience and serve the Gospel, for the salvation of others too, so that afterwards he may rest with Christ, and not neglect the ministering suitable to the redemption of the brethren, by wanting too prematurely to be with Christ. But when Matthew mentions two being healed from the legion of demons, whereas Mark and Luke mention one, you should understand that one of them was a person of some higher and more renowned position, whom that region grieved most deeply for, and for whose salvation they were most anxious. This is what the two Evangelists, wanting to indicate, decided to mention only him, whose fame from that deed had spread more widely and more famously. But also, the climax of the allegory agrees, because just as one possessed by a demon, in the same way two gentile peoples do not inconveniently express the type. For when Noah generated three sons, only the family of one was received into the possession of God, from the remaining two, different nations who were enslaved to idols were procreated.

Mark 5:22

And there came one of the rulers of the synagogue, named Jairus, and seeing him, he fell at his feet, etc. In this reading, where the ruler of the synagogue asks for the salvation of his daughter, but as the Lord goes to his house, a woman with an issue of blood precedes and seizes health, and then the daughter of the ruler attains the health she wished for, indeed called back to life from death, the salvation of the human race is shown, which the Lord coming in the flesh so dispensed, that first some from Israel would come to faith, then the fullness of the Gentiles would enter, and thus all of Israel

would be saved. Who then is this ruler of the synagogue, who comes to the Lord to ask for his daughter, better understood as Moses himself? Hence he is well called Jairus, which means enlightening or enlightened, because he received the words of life to give to us, and by these words he enlightens others, and he himself is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to write or teach vital instructions. Seeing Jesus, he fell at His feet, because foreseeing in the spirit the Lord coming in the flesh, he surrendered himself to His power with a humble heart: he thus recognized that at the end of the age the man would be incarnate, understanding that He existed as God eternally before all ages. For if the head of Christ is God, what is more fitting than to accept His feet, which touched the earth of our mortality, as His assumed humanity? And the ruler of the synagogue falling at the feet of Jesus means that the lawgiver with the whole offspring of the patriarchs recognizes and admits, along with the Apostle, that the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Cor. 1:25).

Mark 5:23

And he earnestly begged Him, saying: "My daughter is at the point of death; come, lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." In the Gospel of Luke, it is written that she was his only daughter about twelve years old, and she was dying. Therefore, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue is the Synagogue itself, uniquely composed by legal institution, as if it were the only one born of Moses. And this girl, as if in the twelfth year of life, that is, as the time of puberty approached, was dying, because nobly brought up by the prophets, after having reached the years of understanding and after she should have generated spiritual offspring for God, suddenly struck by the weakening errors, hopelessly abandoned the paths of spiritual life, and if not assisted by Christ, would have completely fallen into dreadful death.

Mark 5:24

And he went with him, and a great crowd followed him and pressed upon him. The Lord, proceeding to heal the girl, is pressed by the crowd, because while offering salutary teachings to the Jewish people, by which he might lift up their conscience sick with vices, he was burdened by the harmful habits of carnal people. [Mark 5:25] -- And a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years. The woman flowing with blood, but cured by the Lord, is the

Church gathered from the Gentiles, which was polluted by the innate flow of carnal pleasures and was already separated from the congregation of the faithful, but while the word of God was determined to save Judea, she seized salvation with certain hope, already prepared and promised to others. It is noteworthy that both the daughter of the synagogue ruler was twelve years old, and this woman had a flow of blood for twelve years; that is, at the same time when the former was born, the latter began to be ill. For at nearly the same age of this world, both the Synagogue in the patriarchs was born, and the nation of the foreign Gentiles began to be defiled by the foulness of idolatry throughout the world. For the flow of blood can be rightly understood in two ways, that is, both concerning the pollution of idolatry and concerning those things that are done with the delight of flesh and blood.

Mark 5:26

And she had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse. Understand physicians either as false theologians, or as philosophers and secular law teachers, who, disputing about virtues and vices very subtly, promised to offer useful precepts for living and believing to mortals, or certainly those unclean spirits themselves, who, like consulting men, pushed themselves to be worshiped as gods. By eagerly listening to them, the Gentiles wasted the powers of natural industry all the more, but were no less able to be cleansed from the filth of their iniquity. But when she recognized that the Jewish people were sick and the true physician from heaven had arrived, she also began to hope for and seek a remedy for her illness.

Mark 5:27–28

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, "If I just touch His clothes, I will be healed." And immediately the source of her bleeding dried up. The Church comes and touches the Lord when it approaches Him through the truth of faith. However, it comes from behind, or as He Himself said: "If anyone serves me, he must follow me" (John 12). And elsewhere it is commanded: "You shall walk after the Lord your God." Or, because not seeing the Lord present in the flesh, after the mysteries of His incarnation had been fulfilled, it reached the grace of faith and recognition of Him. Thus, by the participation in His sacraments, it deserved to be saved from sins, as if by the touch of

His garments, it dried up the source of her blood. For the source of blood is the origin of sin. The source of anyone's blood is the beginning of impure thought, from which all sin is born. But the Lord, with His evangelical words, not only sought to restrain evil deeds and words but also to uproot the root of wicked thoughts, granting that both be cleansed by evangelical sacraments, as if He endowed His garments with the power to dry up the source of filth.

Mark 5:30

And immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself the power that had gone out from Him, turned to the crowd and said: "Who touched My garments?" He asked not to learn what He did not know, but that the power He clearly knew, indeed which He Himself had given, might be declared in the woman, and by the declared and recognized power of faith, many might reach salvation. [Mark 5:31] -- And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing against You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" The crowd pressing around Him in every direction, one believing woman touches the Lord, because those burdened by various disordered heresies or perverse habits, only the heart faithfully venerating the Catholic Church, is honored. For just as some seeing do not see, and hearing do not hear, so too those touching do not touch, who touch Christ not with a simple but with a doubtful or feigned heart. Therefore, to a certain one loving but not yet fully believing, He Himself says: "Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father (John 20). Clearly stating what it means to truly touch Him, namely to believe Him equal to the Father.

Mark 5:32

And He looked around to see her who had done this. The Lord does not forget His faithful, nor does He cease to look upon those who hope in Him, but judges all who merit salvation as worthy of His regard and compassion. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him. [Mark 5:33] -- But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. Behold where the questioning of the Lord was directed, namely that the woman openly confessing the truth of her long-standing infirmity, sudden belief, divine propitiation, and the healing given to her, would herself be more firmly confirmed in

faith, and would provide an example of salvation and life to many. Finally, it follows.

Mark 5:34

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace and be healed of your affliction." He did not say, "Your faith will save you," but "has saved you." For in the fact that you believed, you are already saved. While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader's house, saying, "Your daughter has died; why bother the teacher any further?" As the woman was cured of the flow of blood, the daughter of the synagogue leader was immediately reported dead, because while the Church is cleansed from the stain of sins and called a daughter due to the merit of faith, the Synagogue, filled with both disbelief and jealousy, is dissolved in mourning. Disbelief, because it did not want to believe in Christ. Jealousy, because it grieves that the Church believes. For it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: "On the next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and they began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him." (Acts 13). And what the messengers said to the synagogue leader, "Why bother the teacher any further?" is still said by those today who see such a desolate state of the synagogue that they do not believe it can be restored, and thus do not consider it necessary to ask for its resurrection. But what is impossible with human beings is possible with God (Mark 10); hence it fittingly follows:

Mark 5:36

"But Jesus, overhearing the word that was spoken, said to the synagogue leader, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.'" The synagogue leader is understood as the teacher of the law, about whom the Lord says, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat" (Matthew 23). For if he himself is willing to believe, the Synagogue subject to him will also be saved. [Mark 5:38] -- And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and see the tumult, and they weep and wail greatly. And, he says, let all who hope in you rejoice, they will exult forever, and you will dwell in them. However, because the Synagogue deservedly lost this joy of the Lord's indwelling due to unbelief, it lies as if dead among those who weep and wail. Yet, heavenly mercy does not allow it to perish utterly, but rather, towards the end of the age, according to

the election of grace, it restores its remnants to salvation and life. Whence it is aptly added:

Mark 5: 39

And entering, he said to them: Why are you troubled and weeping? The girl is not dead, but sleeping. To men she was dead, who could not raise her, but to God she was sleeping, in whose arrangement, the soul was received and lived, and the body rested to be resurrected. Hence, the Christian custom has prevailed that the dead who are undoubted to be resurrected are called sleeping; as the Apostle says: We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who sleep, so that you may not grieve as the rest who have no hope (1 Thess. 4). But also in part of the allegory, while the soul that sins itself shall die, however that which the Lord foresees to be about to be resurrected and to come to eternal life, though dead to us, could not incongruously be said to have slept to Him.

Mark 5: 40

And they laughed at him. But he, having ejected them all, takes the father and mother of the girl, etc. Because they preferred to mock the word of the one raising rather than to believe, they are deservedly excluded outside, as unworthy to see the power of the one raising and the mystery of the one rising. Likewise, the crowd is ejected outside so that the girl may be raised, because if the importunate crowd of secular cares is not first expelled from the innermost parts of the heart, the soul which lies dead within will not rise. For while it scatters itself through countless thoughts of earthly desires, it cannot collect itself back to the consideration of itself at all. [Mark 5:41] -- And holding the hand of the girl, he said to her: Talitha cumi, which is translated: Little girl, I say to you, arise. A diligent reader might ask why the truthful Evangelist, explaining the words of the Savior, added from his own: I say to you, when in the Syrian language he used, nothing more was said than: Little girl, arise. Unless perhaps he thought it necessary to convey the force of the Lord's command, aiming to express the meaning of the speaker rather than the exact words to his readers. For it is known to be customary for the Evangelists and apostles, when they take testimonies from the Old Testament, to place greater emphasis on the prophetic sense rather than the words. And the Lord, holding the hand of the girl, raised her, because unless

the hands of the Jews, which are full of blood, are first purified, their synagogue, which is dead, will not rise.

Mark 5:42

And immediately the girl rose and walked. Well, she rose and walked. For whomever the heavenly hand of mercy touches to revive from the dead due to sins, not only must he rise from the filth and lethargy of crimes, but he must also immediately advance in good works, evidently according to the psalmist, entering without blemish and practicing works of justice.

Mark 5:42

And they were amazed with great astonishment. And He strongly commanded them that no one should know this. And He commanded that something should be given her to eat. As a testimony of true resurrection, He commanded that food be given to the girl, lest it be thought by unbelievers to be not truth but a phantom that appeared. But also, if anyone has risen from spiritual death, it is necessary that they are soon fed with heavenly bread, and indeed become partakers of the divine word and the sacred altar. For according to the moral understanding, those three dead whom the Savior raised in the bodies signify three kinds of resurrection of souls. Indeed, some, by giving consent to evil pleasure, cause death to themselves by the hidden thought of sin. But implying that such people should be revived, the Savior raised the daughter of the synagogue leader, who was not yet carried out but died at home, as if harboring the vice secretly in the heart. Others, not only consenting to harmful pleasure but also committing the evil wherein they take pleasure, bring their dead out, as it were, beyond the gates. And demonstrating that these too can be resurrected if they repent, He raised the young man, the son of the widow, carried out beyond the city's gates, and restored him to his mother, because He restored the soul repenting from the darkness of sin to the unity of the Church.

Some, however, not only by thinking or doing illicit things, but also by the very habit of sinning, corrupt themselves as if by burying. Yet neither for these to be raised is the virtue and grace of the Savior lesser, if indeed there are thoughtful souls devoted to Christ who watch over their salvation like devoted sisters. For to indicate this, He raised Lazarus, who had been in the tomb for four days, and because his sister testified that he already smelled bad, as indeed notorious acts of vice are usually accompanied by a bad reputa-

tion. It must be noted, however, that the graver the death of the soul, the more intensely the fervor of penance must persist for it to deserve to rise. For lighter and daily errors can be cured by lighter penance. Wanting to secretly show this, the Lord resurrected the girl lying in the room with a very easy and brief word, saying: Girl, arise. And due to the ease of resurrection, He denied she was dead. But the young man carried out was resurrected with more words, as he had to be emphasized with: Young man, I say to you, arise. The four-day dead, however, needed that Jesus, groaning in spirit, troubled Himself, weep, groan again, and cry out with a great voice: Lazarus, come forth. And thus at last the one who was considered hopeless, shunning the burden of darkness, was restored to life and light.

But it is also noted that since public offense requires public remedy, but lighter sins can be removed by lighter and secret penance, the girl lying at home arises with few witnesses, and it is strongly commanded that they disclose it to no one. The young man outside the gate is resurrected while accompanied and watched by many. Lazarus, called from the tomb, became known to such an extent that due to the testimony of those who saw, many people met the Lord with palms, and many Jews went away and believed in Jesus because of him. The Lord heard of the fourth dead man announced by a disciple, but since there were no living people to pray for his resurrection, He said: Let the dead bury their dead (Luke 9), that is, let the wicked weigh down the wicked with harmful praises: and because there was no just person to correct in mercy, let the oil of the sinner make their heads fat.

CHAPTER 6

Mark 6:1

And he went out from there and came into his own country, and his disciples followed him; and when the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing him were amazed at his teaching, saying: Where did this man get all these things? And what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works performed by his hands? He calls his country Nazareth, in which he was brought up. But how great is the blindness of the Nazarenes, who, if their minds were not obtuse, could have recognized him as the Christ through his words and deeds, yet they despise him solely because of knowing his family. They refer wisdom to teaching and power to healings and miracles that he performed. Which distinction the Apostle recalls aptly and beautifully, saying: Jews demand signs, and

Greeks seek wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1). In this context, he refers power to signs because of the Jews and wisdom to teaching because of the Greeks, that is, the Gentiles.

Mark 6:3

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. The scandal and error of the Jews are our salvation and the condemnation of the heretics. For they so clearly saw the man Jesus Christ, that they called him the carpenter, and according to another Evangelist, the carpenter's son; they also testified that his brothers and sisters were with them. Yet these are not to be considered as the actual children of Joseph or Mary, according to the heretics, but rather, according to the custom of sacred Scripture, they must be understood as their relatives, in the same way that Abraham and Lot are called brothers, although Lot was the son of Abraham's brother. And you have many such examples. [Mark 6:3] -- However, not without the provision of a certain sacrament did the Lord, appearing in the flesh, wish to be considered and called a craftsman and the son of a craftsman: but rather, even through this, He taught that He was the son of Him before the ages, who, as the maker of all things, in the beginning created heaven and earth (John I). For although human things are not comparable to divine things, yet the type is perfect, because the Father of Christ works by fire and spirit. Hence also His precursor said about Him as the son of a craftsman: He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew III). He who in this great house of the world fabricates vessels of different kinds, or rather, by softening the vessels of wrath with the fire of His spirit, transforms them into vessels of mercy: but the Jews are ignorant of this sacrament: they look down upon the works of divine power out of contemplation of carnal lineage.

Mark 6:4

And Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house. It is testified in the Scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ is called a prophet, and Moses, predicting His future incarnation to the children of Israel, said: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like unto me,

you shall listen to him. Not only He who is the head and Lord of the prophets, but also Elijah and Jeremiah, and the other prophets, were held in less honor in their own country than in foreign cities, because it is almost natural for citizens always to envy their fellow citizens. They do not consider the man's present works, but remember his frail infancy, as if they themselves had not also come to mature age through the same stages of life.

Mark 6:5

And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Not that He could not perform many miracles even among the unbelievers, but that in doing many, He might condemn the unbelievers. However, it can also be understood otherwise, that Jesus is despised in His house and country, that is, among the Jewish people, and therefore He performed few signs there, lest they become utterly inexcusable. Greater signs, however, He performs daily among the nations through the apostles, not so much in the healing of bodies as in the salvation of souls. As for the Lord being said to marvel at their unbelief, it is not as if He marvels at something unexpected and unforeseen, He who knows all things before they happen, just as He did not begin to marvel at the faith of the centurion as something new and previously unknown when He heard the words of his pious confession and said: "I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel" (Luke VII). But He who knows the secrets of the heart shows that He marvels before men, indicating what is to be marveled at by men. Indeed, the faith of the centurion was marvelous, who, without a human teacher, without the eloquence of the Scriptures, without angelic oracles, recognized through miracles by divinely illuminated natural understanding that He who appeared as human in the frailty of humanity was truly God.

Conversely, the unbelief of the Nazarenes was no less astonishing, who, despite having an abundance of teachers and divine words in which the coming of Christ was preached, and having Christ Himself present among them, pressing the knowledge of Himself on them through both words and signs, still persisted in their disbelief. But in one instance, the blindness of the Jews is noted as marvelous, who were unwilling to believe in their own prophets about Christ, nor in Christ Himself born among them. In the other instance, the faith of the Gentiles is crowned, who, even though Christ was

born among the Jews and cast out by them, deserved to receive Him, the mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ, with the sacred oracles.

Mark 6:7

And he went around the villages in a circuit, teaching; and he called the twelve and began to send them two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. The kind and merciful Lord and master does not envy his servants and disciples his own virtues; and just as he had healed all sickness and all infirmity, he also gave his apostles power, to heal all infirmity and all sickness. But there is a great difference between having and giving, granting and receiving. He, whatever he does, acts by the power of the Lord; those, if they do anything, confess their own weakness and the power of the Lord, saying, like Peter: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk (Acts III).

Mark 6:8

And he commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff only. No bag, no bread, nor money in their belt, but be shod with sandals, and not put on two tunics. Such a preacher ought to have trust in God, that even if he does not provide for the needs of this life, he should surely know these things will not be lacking. Lest his mind be occupied with temporal things, he would provide less for others eternals. However, it is often questioned how Matthew and Luke recall that the Lord said to the disciples not to carry a staff, while Mark says: And he commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff only. This is resolved by understanding that the staff, which according to Mark is to be carried, is understood under a different signification than that which, according to Matthew and Luke, is not to be carried: just as temptation is understood under another signification in the saying, God tempts no one, and in another is said, The Lord your God tempts you, to know whether you love him. The former is of deception, the latter is of probation. Thus both sayings are to be taken as spoken by the Lord to the apostles, and to not carry a staff, and to carry nothing except a staff. For when he said to them according to Matthew: Do not possess gold, nor silver, etc.; he immediately added: For the laborer is worthy of his food.

This clearly shows why he did not want them to possess or carry these things. Not that they are not necessary for the sustenance of this life, but because he was sending them out in such a way that he demonstrated these

things would be owed to them by those to whom they proclaim the Gospel and believe. It is clear, however, that the Lord did not command these things in such a way that evangelists should not live from anywhere else than from those to whom they preach the Gospel. Otherwise, the apostle who sustained himself by the labor of his hands so as not to burden anyone would have acted against this precept; but he gave the authority by which they knew these things were owed to them. When, however, something is commanded by the Lord, unless it is performed, it is a fault of disobedience. When authority is given, it is permissible for anyone not to use it and to relinquish their right. Therefore, the Lord ordaining this, which the apostle says he ordained, that those who proclaim the Gospel should live from the Gospel, spoke to the apostles so that they, secure, would not possess nor carry the necessary things for this life, neither great nor small. Therefore, he added, Nor a staff, showing that all things are owed by his faithful to his ministers, requiring nothing superfluous. Thus by adding, For the laborer is worthy of his food, he completely revealed and clarified the source of these words.

Therefore, he signified this authority by the name of the staff when he said to take nothing for the journey except a staff only, so it is understood that through the authority received from the Lord (which is signified by the name of the staff), even things not carried will not be lacking. This is also to be understood about two tunics, that nothing besides the one he wears should be thought necessary to be carried by him, concerned that it would be needed, since it could be received by that authority. Therefore, Mark, by saying they should be shod with sandals or shoes, suggests that this footwear has some mystical signification, so that the foot is neither covered nor naked to the ground, that is, neither the Gospel should be hidden, nor should it rely on earthly comforts.

Mark 6:9

And what is not to be carried or worn as two tunics, but more explicitly is forbidden to be put on, saying; and not to be clothed with two tunics, what does it admonish them, unless to walk not doubly, but simply? Otherwise. In the two tunics, it seems to me to show a double garment, not that in places of Scythia freezing with icy snow, one should be content with a single tunic; but that in the tunic we understand the garment, so that we do not keep another reserved for ourselves out of fear for the future. Allegorically, however,

by the purse, the burdens of the world, by the bread, temporal delights, by the money in the belt, the hidden wisdom is designated. For he who has the word of wisdom, but neglects to share it with his neighbor, holds the money shut in a belt: and it is written: Hidden wisdom and concealed treasure, what is the use in both? (Ecclesiasticus 41). Therefore, apostles should not carry a purse, nor bread, nor money in their belt, because whoever has received the office of a teacher, should neither be weighed down by the burdens of secular affairs, nor be dissolved by carnal desires, nor hide the entrusted talent of the word in the leisure of sluggish laziness.

Mark 6:10

And he said to them: Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there. In Matthew it is written thus: Whatever town or village you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave (Matthew 10). He gives a general command of constancy, that they should observe the laws of hospitality, asserting that it is unbecoming for the preacher of the kingdom of heaven to rush from house to house and lose the rights of an inviolate hospitality. Nor is it idle according to Matthew that the house into which the apostles should enter is to be chosen, so that the reason for changing hospitality and violating the bond of hospitality does not stand. [Mark 6:11] -- And whoever does not receive you or listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them. Dust is shaken off the feet as a testimony of one's work, showing that they have entered the city and that the apostolic preaching has reached them. Or the dust is shaken off so that nothing is taken from them, not even what is necessary for sustenance, by those who have rejected the Gospel.

Mark 6:12

And they went out and preached that people should repent, and they cast out many demons, etc. The Apostle James says: "Is any one among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him" (James 5). Hence it is clear that this custom of the holy Church has been handed down by the apostles themselves, that the possessed or any other sick persons should be anointed with oil, consecrated by episcopal blessing.

Mark 6:14

And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become known, and people said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead." The extreme malice and furor of the Jews against the Lord are taught to us from almost every place in the Gospel; behold, they believed John, of whom it was said that he performed no sign, could have risen from the dead, without any witness. But Jesus, a man approved by God with deeds and signs (Acts 2), at whose death the elements trembled, whose resurrection and ascension were eagerly proclaimed by angels, apostles, men, and women alike; they preferred to believe not that He had risen, but that He had been stolen away secretly. When they said that John had risen from the dead, and that for this reason unexpected powers or actions were manifest in him, they correctly understood about the power of the resurrection, that the saints would have greater power when they have risen from the dead than they had when burdened with the weakness of the flesh. But they also showed that the miracle of the resurrection is not unbelievable, as they believed it of their own accord without any teaching, yet they proved by their own blindness and envy that they had not believed the credible truth in the Lord.

Mark 6:16

When this was heard, Herod said: "John, whom I beheaded, has risen from the dead." Luke wrote about this in this way: "Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John was risen from the dead; by some, that Elijah had appeared, etc." (Luke IX). It must be understood, therefore, either that after this perplexity he confirmed in his mind what was said by others when he said: "John, whom I beheaded, has risen from the dead"; or these words must be pronounced in such a way as to indicate that he was still doubtful. For if he were to say: "Is this indeed, or is this perhaps John the Baptist?" there would be no need to remind anything about pronunciation, because he would be understood as doubting and hesitating. Now, since these words are lacking, it can be pronounced in both ways, so that we can understand him to have spoken, confirmed by the words of others, or still (as Luke recounts) hesitating.

Mark 6:17

For Herod himself sent and seized John, and bound him in prison because of Herodias. The old story relates that Philip, the son of the elder Herod, under whom the Lord fled to Egypt, and the brother of that Herod under whom Christ suffered, had married Herodias, the daughter of King Aretas. Afterward, however, because of certain disputes against his son-in-law, her father took his daughter and, to the grief of her former husband, married her to his enemy. But who this Philip is, the Evangelist Luke teaches more fully: "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, Philip his brother tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis" (Luke III). [Mark 6:17-18] -- Thus John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, with the same authority with which Elijah had rebuked Ahab and Jezebel, reproved Herod and Herodias for having an unlawful marriage, and that it was not permitted, while his brother was alive, to marry his brother's wife, preferring to risk his safety with the king rather than to be forgetful of God's commandments for the sake of flattery.

Mark 6:21

And when a convenient day had come, Herod on his birthday made a supper for his lords, etc. Herod and Pharaoh alone among mortals are read to have celebrated their birthdays with joyful festivities; but each king defiled his own festival with blood under ill-omened auspices. However, Herod with much greater impiety, since he killed a holy and innocent teacher of truth, and the herald of life and the heavenly kingdom, and this at the request and petition of a dancer, neither was he ashamed to present the head of the slain man before the guests. For Pharaoh is not read to have committed such madness, but only ordering a sinful eunuch to be deprived of life. So far as he strayed from the cult of true religion, so much lighter is his transgression in violating his own festival. Nevertheless, from the example of both it is proven, it is more useful to us to recall frequently in fear and chaste behavior the day of future death, rather than to celebrate the day of birth in revelry. For man is born to labor in the world (Job 5), and the elect pass unto rest through death from the world.

Mark 6:22

And when the daughter of Herodias had come in and danced, and pleased Herod. Herod is not excused for having committed murder unwillingly and reluctantly because of an oath, since he perhaps swore for the purpose of preparing the machinery for the future killing. Otherwise, if he claims to have done it for the sake of an oath, if she had asked for the death of his father or mother, would he have done it, or not? What therefore he would have repudiated in his own case, he ought also to have contemned in the prophet. [Mark 6:24] -- When she had gone out, she said to her mother: "What shall I ask?" And she said: "The head of John the Baptist, etc." Herodias, fearing lest Herod should at some point come to his senses, or become a friend of her brother Philip and dissolve the illicit marriage with divorce, advised her daughter to immediately ask for the head of John at the very banquet, a work worthy of the dance, a prize worthy of blood!

Mark 6:26

And the king was distressed, because of the oath and because of those who were reclining at the table, he did not want to sadden her, but having sent an executioner, he commanded that her head be brought on a platter, etc. It is the habit of Scriptures that the historian recounts the opinion of many just as it was believed by all at that time. Just as Joseph is called the father of Jesus even by Mary herself, so now Herod is said to be distressed because those reclining at the table thought this. For, a pretender of his mind and a skilled murderer, he showed sadness on his face while he had joy in his mind. And he excused his crime by an oath, so that under the pretense of piety, he would become impious. But when it is added: And because of those reclining at the table, he wanted all to be partners in his crime, so that in a luxurious and impure banquet, bloody food would be served.

Mark 6:28

And he brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. This can be understood literally, but we even today perceive in the head of John the prophet, that the Jews lost Christ, who is the head of prophets. Alternatively: The beheading of John indicates the reduction of his fame, by which Christ was believed by the people, just as the exaltation on the cross of the Lord Savior marked the advancement of faith, because before he was thought by the crowds to be a prophet, the Lord of

prophets, and Christ the Son of God was acknowledged by all the faithful. Thus, John was diminished by his beheading, and the Lord was exalted on the cross, because, as the same John said, it was necessary for him to grow, but for John to diminish. And it was fitting that he who was esteemed as a prophet be recognized as Christ, and he who was considered Christ because of the height of his virtues be understood to be the prophet and precursor of Christ. This very distinction of the time at which each of them was born has been clearly signified, because John, who was to decrease, was born when the divine light begins to wane. But the Lord, who is the true light of the world, at that time of the year when days begin to grow longer, bestowed on us the shining gifts of his nativity.

Mark 6:29

Upon hearing this, his disciples came, took away his body, and placed it in a tomb. Josephus reports that John, being bound, was taken to the fortress of Machaerus, where he was beheaded. Ecclesiastical history narrates that he was buried in Sebaste, a city of Palestine, which was once called Samaria. But in the time of the leader Julian, pagans, envying the Christians who piously visited his tomb, attacked the monument, scattered the bones across the fields, and, upon gathering them again, burned them with fire and once more dispersed them across the fields. At that time, there were monks from Jerusalem present there, who, mingling among the pagans as they collected the bones, gathered the majority of them and brought them to their father Philip in Jerusalem. And he sent them to the blessed Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, where they were kept until the time of Theophilus, bishop of the same city, when, by the order of Prince Theodosius, all the shrines of the nations were destroyed. Then, after the temple of Serapis was cleansed of impurities, they were placed there, and the basilica was consecrated in honor of Saint John in place of the shrine of Serapis. Read the eleventh book of Ecclesiastical History.

Mark 6:30

And the apostles, gathering together, reported to Jesus all that they had done and taught. Not only did the apostles report to the Lord what they had done and taught themselves, but also what John suffered while they were engaged in teaching, or his own disciples or those disciples of John reported to him, as Matthew describes. Hence follows that which comes next: [Mark 6:31] --

And he said to them: Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little while, etc. Not only for the sake of their rest, but also for the mystical significance, because indeed Judah, having abandoned, which had taken away the head of prophecy from itself by not believing, in the desert of the Church which had no husband, the food of the word would be for the believers, as if to bestow feasts of bread and fish. For there the holy preachers, who in unbelieving and opposing Judea, were for some time pressed by the heavy burden of tribulations, found rest from the grace of faith bestowed upon the nations. And what need there was to grant rest to the disciples is subsequently shown, when it says:

Mark 6:31

For many were coming and going, and they had not even time to eat. Where the great happiness of that time is demonstrated by the labor of the teachers and the zeal of the learners, which would that it return in our time, so that such great crowds of faithful listeners throng to the ministers of the word, that they have no free time for tending to the body. For when the necessary hour for tending to the body is denied, how much less is there opportunity for indulging in the allurements of soul or flesh? Rather, from whom the word of faith and the ministry of salvation is sought timely and untimely, the spirit of these men is consequently kindled always to do and think of heavenly things, lest by their actions they contradict what they teach with words. [Mark 6:32] -- And getting into the boat, they went away to a desert place apart. Not the disciples alone, but taking the Lord with them, they got into the boat and sought a desert place, as the evangelist Matthew clearly shows.

Mark 6:33

And they saw them going away, and many recognized them, and they ran afoot from all the towns, etc. By saying that they outstripped them on foot, it is shown that the disciples with the Lord did not reach another shore of the sea or Jordan by ship, but having crossed a certain strait or lake, they went to the nearby places of the same region, which the natives could reach on foot.

Mark 6:34

And going out, Jesus saw a great crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them

many things. How He had compassion on them, Matthew explains more fully by saying: And He had compassion on them, and healed their sick. For this is truly to have compassion on the poor and those without a shepherd, to open the way of truth to them by teaching; and to remove bodily ailments by healing; but also to refresh the hungry, revitalizing them to the praise of divine generosity. The following parts of this reading also commemorate Him doing these things. Moreover, He tests the faith of the crowds and, having tested it, rewards it with a worthy recompense. For by seeking solitude, He explores whether they care to follow. They, by following and not with beasts of burden or various vehicles, but by taking the path of the desert with their own effort of feet, show how much they care for their salvation. Again, He, as the powerful and compassionate Savior and healer, by welcoming the weary, teaching the ignorant, healing the sick, refreshing the hungry, indicates how much He delights in the devotion of believers. According to the laws of allegory, Christ sought the deserts of the nations, and many bands of the faithful, leaving the confines of their old way of life, neglecting the support of various doctrines, followed. And He who was first known in Judea, after the teeth of the Jews became weapons and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword (Psalm 57), God was exalted above the heavens, and His glory over all the earth.

Mark 6:35

And when the hour was now late, His disciples came to Him saying: The place is deserted, and the hour is already past. Send them away so that going into the nearby villages and towns, they may buy themselves food to eat. The late hour signifies evening time, as Luke testifies, who says: But the day began to decline, and the twelve came to Him saying: Send the crowds away, etc. (Luke 9). When the day declined, the Savior refreshes the crowds, either because the end of times is near, or when the Sun of Righteousness set for us, we were saved from the long decay of spiritual famine.

Mark 6:37

And he answering said to them: Give them something to eat. He provokes the apostles to the breaking of the bread, so that by their testifying they have nothing, the greatness of the sign might be better known: at the same time insinuating that daily through them our fasting hearts must be fed, clearly when we are roused to love heavenly things either by their examples or their

writings. Note, however, that the evangelist John, writing about this miracle of the loaves, prefaced it with the announcement that the Passover, the feast day of the Jews, was near. However, Matthew and Mark recall that this happened immediately after John was killed. From this, it is inferred that John was beheaded at the approach of this same Paschal festival, and the mystery of the Lord's Passion was completed in the following year, when the Paschal time returned again. And therefore, signified in the book of the Sacraments is his nativity on the fourth Kalends of September, and in the Martyrology, which is adorned with the names of Eusebius and Jerome, it is read: on the fourth Kalends of September, in the city of Edessa in the province of Phoenicia, the nativity of John the Baptist, the day on which he was beheaded: this does not specifically denote the day of his beheading, but rather the day on which his head was found in the same city of Edessa and placed in a church.

Indeed, as the Chronicles of Marcellinus testify, in the time of Emperor Marcian, two eastern monks came to Jerusalem to worship and see the holy places; to whom the same precursor of the Lord, standing by revelation, commanded to go to the dwelling of Herod the king and seek his head there, and upon finding it, to place it in honor. Found by them and taken, but soon lost through negligence, it was brought to Edessa by others and placed in a certain cave in an urn underground, ignobly for a considerable time, until John again showed himself and his head to a certain pious abbot and priest named Marcellus, when he lived in the same cave. Clearly, it was found by the bishop of that city, named Julioramus, through the aforementioned priest. From that time, the beheading of the blessed precursor began to be celebrated in that city on the day when his head was found or lifted. You will find this written more extensively in the aforementioned book of Chronicles.

Mark 6:38

And he says to them: How many loaves do you have? Go and see. And when they knew, they said: Five, and two fish. By the five loaves of the Apostles, and two fish, the whole scripture of the Old Testament is signified. By the five loaves, namely the five books of the Mosaic law, by which the knowledge of divine eternity, the creation of the world, the course of the passing age, and the true religion of serving God became known to mankind. By the two fish, the psalms and the prophets are represented, which fed the people edu-

cated in the law of God with the new sweetness of grace from the promise of the Lord's incarnation. By this threefold distinction of sacred Scripture, we are taught by the Lord's authority that the entire series of the old instrument is comprehended. For appearing to the disciples after the resurrection, the Lord himself said that it was necessary that all things that were written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms concerning me should be fulfilled (Luke 24). And when he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and to hand them over, spiritually understood, to the faithful listeners, as though blessing the apostolic loaves and the fish, and multiplying them with the gift of internal sweetness, he ordered them to be distributed to the crowds.

Well, according to the Gospel of John, the loaves, which signify the law, are reported to have been barley loaves, which is mainly the food of animals and mostly of rustic servants, because to those just beginning and not yet perfect listeners, harsher and more coarse precepts must be entrusted. For the natural man does not receive the things that are of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2). And therefore the Lord, giving gifts according to each one's strength and always provoking toward more perfect things, first feeds five thousand with five loaves, second four thousand men with seven loaves, third entrusts the mystery of his flesh and blood to the disciples: at last he grants the great gift to the elect, that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom.

Mark 6:39

And he commanded them to make them all sit down in companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. The different groups of those reclining signify the distinct gatherings of the churches around the world, which make up one catholic. The Lord commanded them well to recline by hundreds and by fifties, so that the crowd of the faithful, both distinguished by locations and united by morals, might receive their food. Indeed, the rest of the jubilee is contained in the mystery of the number fifty, and fifty is doubled to reach a hundred. Therefore, because one first rests from evil work, so that later the soul rests more fully in thought, some recline by fifties, others by hundreds, because there are some who have rest from corrupt actions, and there are some who already have rest in mind from perverse thoughts. They also reclined well on the green grass. For it is written, All flesh is grass (Isa. XL). And those reclining on the green

grass are fed with the Lord's food, who, through the zeal of continence and trampling down the allurements of carnal desires, devote themselves to listening and fulfilling the words of God.

Mark 6:41

And taking the five loaves and the two fishes, looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke and gave to his disciples to set before them; and he divided the two fishes among them all. The Savior, to the hungry crowds, does not create new food, but accepting what the disciples had, blesses it; because coming in the flesh, he did not preach other than what was foretold, but shows how the writings of the Law and the Prophets are laden with the mysteries of grace. He looks to heaven to teach that the gaze of the mind must be directed there and that the light of knowledge is to be sought there. He breaks and distributes to the disciples to set before the crowds because he revealed the sacraments of prophecy to the holy teachers who preach these throughout the world. [Mark 6:43] -- And they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. What is left over for the crowds is lifted by the disciples; for the holier mysteries that the unskilled cannot grasp are not to be negligently omitted, but are to be sought by the perfected. For the twelve baskets symbolize the apostles, and by the apostles, all the choirs of following teachers are represented, indeed despised outwardly by men, but inwardly filled with the remnants of the saving food to nourish the hearts of the humble. For it is known that servile work is usually carried out with baskets, but He Himself filled the baskets with fragments of bread, Who chose the weak things of this world to confound the strong.

Mark 6:44

Now those who ate were five thousand men. Because there are five senses of the outer human being, the five thousand men who followed the Lord signify those who, though still in a secular condition, know how to use well the external things they possess. They are rightly fed with five loaves, because such people must still be instructed by legal precepts. For those who completely renounce the world and are four thousand, and are fed with seven loaves, that is, they are elevated by the evangelical perfection and are inwardly taught by spiritual grace.

Mark 6:45

And immediately he compelled his disciples to get into the ship and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd, etc. Why he compelled his disciples to get into the ship, and he himself, after dismissing the crowd, went up into the mountain to pray, John clearly declares, who, after completing that celestial refreshment, immediately added: "Jesus therefore, knowing that they would come and take him by force to make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone" (John VI). Here he shows us a necessary example of living, that in the good things we do, we should avoid the retribution of human favor, and the exercise of spiritual virtues should not turn us to the desire for temporal pleasures. For it happened to some, that while they were admired for the merit of a higher life in their habits and were thought rightfully worthy of honor, upon receiving money or estates, they lost the rudiments of justice they had begun, and careless, they were corrupted by carnal seductions and avarice, and even by those who honored them for their good deeds, they became, due to their evil actions, not only despised but also hated. It is much less dangerous to be worn out by the wickedness of opponents in the things we do rightly than to be soothed by the favor of those who honor us. For the latter often corrupts a more secure mind, while the former always makes one circumspect and cautious.

Hence the Lord, initiating the path of life for us to follow, when those who admired his virtues wanted to make him king, fled into the mountain to pray. But when those who envied his virtues intended to deliver him to death, he promptly faced them and offered himself to be bound and crucified by the furious, teaching us by an evident example to be ready to endure the adversities of the world and to be cautious to avoid its flatteries when they might ensnare us; and lest the world's prosperity decieve us by softening us, we should implore the Lord with frequent prayers. The disciples preceded the Lord across the sea to Bethsaida, which is a city in Galilee of the apostles Andrew, Peter, and Philip, near the lake Gennesaret, as we find in books about places. Here he rightly advises how Mark says, after the miracle of the loaves, the disciples came across the sea to Bethsaida, while Luke seems to say that the memorable miracle and the celestial refreshment took place in the regions of Bethsaida. For he says: "Taking them, he withdrew privately to a deserted place, which is Bethsaida. But when the crowds found out, they fol-

lowed him, and he received them" (Luke IX). And other things followed, up to the completion of the sacred refreshment history. Unless perhaps we understand by what Luke says, to a deserted place, which is Bethsaida, not the vicinity of the city itself, but the deserted places pertaining to it.

For Mark openly states that they preceded him to Bethsaida, where the boundaries of the city are clearly marked. But Luke, who does not say "to the deserted place, which is Bethsaida," but "which is Bethsaida," can rightly be understood, unless I am mistaken, as not referring to the city itself but to the deserted place pertaining to it, that is, adjacent to its boundaries. However, the Evangelist John narrates that the crowds ate bread near Tiberias, and the disciples getting into the ship came across the sea to Capernaum, both of which are cities in Galilee near the lake of Gennesaret, which is also called Tiberias from the city of Tiberias.

Mark 6:46

And when he dismissed them, he went into the mountain to pray. Not everyone who prays ascends into the mountain; for there is prayer that commits sin. But he who prays well, who seeks God by praying, this one, progressing from earthly things to higher things, ascends the summit of higher care. However, he who prays concerned about riches, or worldly honor, or certainly the death of an enemy, lying in the lowest parts himself, sends vile prayers to God. The Lord, however, prays not to petition for himself, but to intercede for me. For although he has placed all things in the power of his Son; nevertheless, the Son, to fulfill the form of a man, thinks it proper to petition the Father for us, because he is our advocate. For the Apostle says, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ" (1 John 2). If he is an advocate, he ought to intervene for my sins. Therefore, he prays not as weak, but as pious. Do you want to know that he can do all things he wills? He is both advocate and judge. In one is the duty of piety, in the other is the insignia of power.

Mark 6:47

And when evening was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And seeing them toiling in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them. The labor of the disciples in rowing, and the wind being contrary to them, signifies the various labors of the holy Church, which, among the waves of the opposing world and the foul flows of spirits strives to reach

the rest of the heavenly homeland as if to the safe station of the shore. Where it is well said, that the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. Because sometimes the Church, by such pressures of the pagans, is not only afflicted but also defiled to such an extent that (if it could be done) its Redeemer seems to have entirely deserted it for a time. Whence comes that voice of it amidst the waves and storms of sweeping temptations, and seeking the help of his protection with groaning clamor, "Why, O Lord, have you withdrawn far off? You despise in times of necessity, in tribulation" (Ps. IX)? Which likewise exposes the voice of the persecuting enemy, adjoining the following of the Psalm: "For he has said in his heart, God has forgotten; he has turned away his face, that he see not to the end" (Ibid.). But indeed He does not forget the prayer of the poor, nor does He turn away his face from those who hope in Him:

rather, He both helps those struggling with enemies to overcome and crowns the victors forever. Whence also here it is openly said, that he saw them toiling in rowing. For the Lord saw them laboring in the sea, although he was himself placed on the land, because even if sometimes he seems to delay imparting help to the troubled, nonetheless he supports them with the regard of his mercy so they do not fail in tribulations, and sometimes even with manifest help, having conquered adversities, as if treading upon and calming the waves, he liberates, as here also it is subsequently insinuated when it is said:

Mark 6:48

And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. Military stations and watches are divided into periods of three hours each. Therefore, when it says that the Lord came to them in the fourth watch of the night, it shows that they were in danger all night, and help was given to them at the end of the night. [Mark 6:48] -- They struggle through the entire dark time of the night, but as dawn approaches and the morning star promises the rise of the sun and day, the Lord comes, walking over, and subdues the swelling waves of the sea. For when human frailty, beset with pressures, considers its own weakness, it sees nothing concerning itself but the darkness of distress and the heat of fighting enemies. But when it lifts its mind to the light of heavenly protection and the gifts of perpetual reward, it sees, as it were, the sudden appearance of the morning star among the shadows of the night, which announces the coming day. For the morning star,

for the most part, is said to illuminate three hours of the night, that is, the entire morning watch. And the Lord will come who, when the dangers of temptations have been lulled, will grant full confidence of freedom through His protection. It follows:

Mark 6:48

And he wanted to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought he was a ghost, and they cried out. For they all saw him and were troubled. Even now heretics think the Lord was a ghost and did not truly take on flesh from the virgin. Indeed, Theodore of Pharan, once a bishop, wrote that the Lord did not have physical weight according to the flesh but walked on the sea without weight and body. But the Catholic faith professes that he had weight according to the flesh, a corporeal burden, and walked on the waters with weight and bodily burden without sinking his feet. For Dionysius, an eminent writer among the ecclesiastical, in his works on the Divine Names, speaks thus: For we do not understand how from the virgin's blood by a law beyond natural formation, and how with feet set without sinking, bearing bodily weight and material burden, he walked on the wet and unstable substance. But how the Lord wished to pass by them, as if strangers, whom he had come to deliver from the peril of shipwreck, except that, disturbed and frightened for a moment, but immediately freed, they might marvel all the more at the miracle of their deliverance and give greater thanks to their deliverer? For even in the tempests of persecutions which arise for the constancy of faith from the faithless, such divine providence is sometimes shown.

For often the heavenly piety seemed to desert the faithful placed in tribulation so that it might seem as if Jesus wished to pass by the struggling disciples on the sea. Hence it is also in the psalmist, sweating in the struggle of the Church's martyrdom: Why have you forgotten me, why have you rejected me, and why do I go about mourning while the enemy afflicts me? While all my bones are being broken, etc. But the terrifying enemies say, Where is their God? (Psalm XLII) as if threatening shipwreck to the weary apostles. Their God himself says: When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and the rivers will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you (Isaiah XLIII). Hence it is rightly added here:

Mark 6:50

And immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. The first aid to those trembling and in danger is to banish fear struck into their hearts. The second is to quench the fury of the storms with the power of His presence. Nor is it to be wondered at that, when the Lord ascended into the boat, the wind ceased. For in whatever heart God is present by the grace of His love, soon all the battles of vices, and the opposing world, or evil spirits, are repressed and calmed. [Mark 6:51] -- And they were even more astounded within themselves. For they had not understood about the loaves. For their hearts were hardened. Indeed, the Lord showed that he was the creator of things in the miracle of the loaves: and in walking upon the waves, he taught that he had a body free from all the heaviness of sins: and in calming the winds and subduing the rage of the waves, he demonstrated that he ruled over the elements. But the disciples, still cardinal, did not yet recognize this to be God. And indeed, they were astonished at the magnitude of His virtues: yet they were not yet able to recognize in Him the truth of divine majesty.

Mark 6:53

When they had disembarked from the boat, they immediately recognized him: And running through that whole region, they began to carry those who were ill on mats to wherever they heard he was. They recognized him by reputation, not by face: or certainly because of the greatness of the signs he performed among the people, very many knew him by appearance as well. And see how great is the faith of the people of the land of Gennesaret, that they are not content with the salvation of those who are present only, but send out to other cities around, so that all may run to the healer. [Mark 6:56] -- And wherever he entered into villages, cities, or the countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him to let them touch even the fringe of his garment. And all who touched him were healed. Those who are unwell should not touch the body of Jesus, nor his whole garment, but the outermost fringe. And whoever touches it will be healed. Understand the fringe of his garment as the least commandment, which if anyone breaks, he will be called least in the kingdom of heaven: or the assumption of flesh by which we come to the word of God, and afterwards enjoy his majesty.

CHAPTER 7

Mark 7:1

And the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem gathered around him. And when they saw some of his disciples eating bread with unclean hands (that is, unwashed), they found fault. Oh how true is that confession of the Lord to the Father, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to the little ones. The men of the region of Gennesaret, who seemed less learned, not only come themselves but also bring their sick; indeed, they carry them to the Lord so that they might deserve to touch even the fringe of his garment to be healed. Hence, they immediately obtain the reward of the desired healing. But indeed the Pharisees and scribes, who ought to have been the teachers of the people, come to the Lord not to hear the word, nor to seek a cure, but only to stir up debates, and they blame them for not washing their hands, in whose works, whatever is done by hands or other members of the body, nothing defiling of impurity could be found; whereas they ought to blame themselves more, who, having hands washed with water, bore a conscience defiled with malice. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands often, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they purify themselves.

Mark 7:4

It is a superstitious tradition of men to wash frequently before eating bread, once washed, and not to eat unless they baptize themselves from the market. But the doctrine of truth is necessary, which orders those who wish to participate with the bread of life descending from heaven to often cleanse their works with the washing of alms, tears, and other fruits of righteousness, so that they may be able to communicate with heavenly mysteries with a pure heart and body. It is necessary to purge the defilements that anyone has contracted from the cares of temporal business with the following diligence of good thoughts and acts, if he desires to enjoy the feasts of internal refreshment. But the Pharisees, taking the spiritual words of the prophets carnally, which commanded them concerning the chastisement of heart and works, saying: Wash yourselves, be clean, and be purified, you who bear the vessels of the Lord (Isa. I), these only observed the washing of the body. But Pharisees in vain, all Jews in vain, wash their hands, and are baptized from the market,

as long as they despise being washed by the fountain of the Savior. In vain do they keep the baptisms of vessels, who neglect to cleanse the filth of their hearts and bodies: since it is certain that Moses and the prophets who ordered the vessels of the people of God to be either washed with water, or purged by fire, or sanctified with oil for whatever reason, did not command in this the cleansing of material things, but rather the chastisement and holiness of minds and works, and the salvation of souls.

Mark 7:5

And the Pharisees and the scribes questioned him: Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with common hands? The stupidity of the Pharisees and scribes is astonishing. They argue with the Son of God, why he does not observe the traditions and precepts of men. The hands, that is, works, of course, not the hands of the body, but of the soul, must be washed, so that the word of God may be done in them. [Mark 7:9] -- And he said to them: Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. He refutes the false accusation with a true reply. Since (he says) you neglect the commandments of the Lord for the sake of human tradition, why do you think my disciples deserve to be reproached for disregarding the commands of the elders, so that they may keep the decrees of God?

Mark 7:10

For Moses said: Honor your father and your mother. And he who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die. In Scripture, honor is not felt so much in greetings and the rendering of services as in alms and the giving of gifts. Honor (says the Apostle) widows who are truly widows (1 Tim. 5). Here honor is understood as a gift. And in another place: Elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and teaching (Ibid.). And by this commandment, we are ordered not to muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain, so that the worker is worthy of his wages (Ibid.).

Mark 7:11

But you say: If a man says to his father or mother, "Corban" (which means offering), whatever benefit you might have received from me, you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother. The Lord had commanded, considering the weaknesses, ages, or needs of parents, that children

should honor their parents even by providing life's necessities. The Scribes and Pharisees, wishing to undermine this most provident law of God and to introduce impiety under the guise of piety, taught the wicked children that if anyone wishes to dedicate what ought to be offered to parents to God, who is the true Father, the offering to the Lord takes precedence over gifts to parents. Or certainly, the parents themselves, avoiding consecrated items to prevent committing sacrilege, would be impoverished; and thus, the offering of the children could under the guise of the temple and God flow into the profits of the priests. This terrible custom of the Pharisees arises from such a circumstance. Having many indebted persons unwilling to repay their loans, these persons transferred their debts to the priests, so that, once the money was collected, it would serve the temple's ministries and their uses. Furthermore, this may briefly be understood as: "Whatever gift is from me benefits you." He implies, you compel children to say to their parents: "Whatever gift I was to offer to God, I spend on your food, and it benefits you, O father and mother," so that they, fearing to accept what they saw dedicated to God, would prefer to lead a life of poverty rather than eat from consecrated things.

Mark 7:15

And calling the crowd again, he said to them: Listen to me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a man that entering into him can defile him. But the things that come out of a man, those are what defile a man. The word "defile" properly belongs to the Scriptures, and is used in ordinary speech. The people of the Jews, boasting that they are part of God, call common the foods which all men use. For example: pork, oysters, hares, and such animals that do not split the hoof, nor chew the cud, nor are scaly among fishes. Hence it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: What God has sanctified, do not call common (Acts X). Therefore, that which is common, that is open to all men, and as if it is not a part of God, is called unclean. Nothing (he says) outside a man entering into him can defile him. But the things that come out of a man, those are what defile a man. A prudent reader may object and say: If what enters into the mouth does not defile a man, why do we not eat meat sacrificed to idols? And the Apostle writes: You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons (I Cor. X). It must therefore be known that the foods themselves, as creatures of God, are by themselves clean, but the invocation of idols and demons make them unclean.

Mark 7:17

And when he had entered into the house from the crowd, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them: Are you also without understanding? What had been said openly, and was clear to hear, the apostles thought was spoken in a parable, and in a manifest matter they seek a mystical understanding. And they are reproved by the Lord for thinking that what was spoken plainly was said as a parable. From this we observe that it is a fault of the listener who wishes to understand clearly spoken matters obscurely or obscure matters clearly.

Mark 7:19

Do you not understand that everything entering from outside into a man cannot defile him because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is expelled into the latrine, purging all foods? All the passages of the Gospels among heretics and the perverse are full of scandals. And from this little statement, some accuse that the Lord, ignorant of physical disputation, thinks that all foods go into the stomach and are digested in the latrine, whereas the infused foods are immediately spread through the limbs, veins, and marrow of the nerves. Hence, we also see many who, due to a stomach defect, continually vomit, immediately expelling what they ingested after meals, and yet are corpulent because the more liquid food and drink spread through the limbs at first touch. But such men, in their desire to criticize another's lack of skill, show their own. Although the thinnest humor and liquid food, when it has been concocted and digested in the veins and limbs, descends to the lower parts through hidden pathways of the body, which the Greeks call πόρους, and goes into the latrine. He was saying, however, that what comes out of a man defiles the man. For from within, from the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, and others. "From the heart," he says, "come evil thoughts. Therefore, the principal part of the soul, not according to Plato in the brain, but according to Christ in the heart, is.

And those are to be refuted from this assertion who think that thoughts are instilled by the devil and not born from one's own will. The devil can be an assistant and inciter of evil thoughts, but he cannot be an author. If, however, he, always lying in wait, inflames the light spark of our thoughts with his kindlings, we should not believe that he also scrutinizes the secrets of the

heart, but judges from the body's condition and gestures what we are pondering inwardly. For example, if he sees us looking frequently at a beautiful woman, he understands that the heart is wounded by the dart of love.

Mark 7:24

And from there, rising, he went to the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Leaving behind the scribes and Pharisees, who were detractors, he crossed into the parts of Tyre and Sidon to cure the Tyrians and Sidonians. [Mark 7:24] -- And entering a house, he did not want anyone to know, but he could not be hidden. It is rightly asked how it is said that the Lord did not want anyone to know his journey, yet could not be hidden. For what is it that he could not do, who, even while placed among men temporally, invisibly arranged everything that happened outside inwardly with the Father? Or for what reason is he thought to have entered the regions of Tyre and Sidon, except to free the daughter of the Syrophoenician from a demon, and through the faith of the Gentile woman to refute the disbelief of the scribes and Pharisees? But it must be faithfully and piously believed that not at all did what he did not want happen to him in this matter, but that it was shown primarily in his good works which the faithful following his journey should wish to do. For upon entering the house, he commanded the disciples not to reveal to anyone in the unknown region who he was. Nonetheless, he himself made known this entrance to the Gentile woman and to whomever he wished among the wise, he himself kindled her heart with an invisible prompt to seek salvation from him, so that by her example they might learn to whom the grace of healing the sick should be conferred in the exhibition of miracles, to avoid, as much as possible, human glory and favor, yet not cease from the pious work of virtue, whenever these deeds were justly deserved by the faith of the good or necessarily compelled by the unbelief of the wicked.

Mark 7:24

And he could not, he said, remain hidden. For a woman, as soon as she heard about him, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, entered and fell at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth. Typically, however, this Gentile woman, coming to the Lord with faith, represents the Church gathered from the Gentiles. She begs the Lord for her demon-possessed daughter, as for the people who do not yet believe, so that they too may be freed from the deceptions of the devil, she entreats the divine mercy.

She, according to Matthew, went out from her borders, but in this Gospel, it is said that she entered to the Lord and fell at his feet, so that from both assertions it may be gathered that only those faithfully and rightly pray for the erring who abandon the dwellings of their former unbelief and transfer themselves with pious devotion into the house of the Lord, namely the Church.

Mark 7:26

And she asked, he said, him to cast out the demon from her daughter. He said to her: Let the children be filled first. As if he was speaking more clearly: It remains that even you who are of the Gentiles will attain salvation; but first it is necessary that the Jews, who by merit of the ancient election are accustomed to be called by the name of the children of God, be filled with the heavenly bread, and thus finally the food of life be given to the Gentiles.

Mark 7:27

For it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. And she answered and said to him: Yes, Lord. For even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the children's table. The wondrous faith, patience, and humility of the Church under the persona of the Canaanite woman is being proclaimed. Faith, by which she believed that her daughter could be healed. Patience, by which she perseveres in prayers despite being ignored so many times (as Matthew writes). Humility, by which she compares herself not to dogs but to little dogs. She says, I know I do not deserve the children's bread, nor can I take whole meals, nor sit at the table with the father; but I am content with the leftover scraps of the little dogs, so that by the humility of the crumbs I may come to the greatness of the whole bread. Wondrous reversal of things, once Israel was the son, not dogs, the order of names is changed due to the diversity of faith. Concerning them it is later said: Many dogs have surrounded me (Psalm 21). And: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision (Philippians 3). Concerning us, turned from the barking of blasphemous contradiction to the grace of piety, he himself says elsewhere: And I have other sheep that are not of this fold, I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice (John 10).

It must be noted indeed that the believing woman speaks mystically, because little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs. The table is indeed Holy Scripture, which provides us the bread of life. Thus the Church

says from here: You prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies (Psalm 22). The children's crumbs are the inner mysteries of the Scriptures, with which the hearts of the humble are usually refreshed. About which elsewhere it is promised to the holy Church, the Prophet saying of the Lord: He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest of the wheat (Psalm 147). Therefore the little dogs do not eat crusts, but crumbs of the children's bread, because those converted to the faith who were despised among the nations seek not the surface of the letter in the Scriptures, but the marrow of spiritual senses by which they might be able to progress in good deeds. And this under the table of the masters, while humbly submitted to the word of the sacred discourse, they subject all their heart and body to fulfilling what is commanded, so that by means of the merit of due humility they may be raised to hope for the rewards promised by the Lord in heaven.

Mark 7:29

And he said to her: For this saying, go. The demon has gone out of your daughter. Because of the humble and faithful saying of the mother, the demon left her daughter. Here is given an example of catechizing and baptizing infants, because evidently through the faith and confession of the parents in baptism, infants are freed from the devil, who are not yet able to know or do anything good or evil by themselves. [Mark 7:31] -- And again, leaving the borders of Tyre, he came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. Decapolis is (as the name itself proves) a region of ten cities across the Jordan to the East around Hippos and Pella and Gadara, opposite Galilee. Therefore, it is said that the Lord came to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis, which does not mean that he entered the very borders of Decapolis. For it is not said that he crossed over the sea, but rather that he came up to the sea, and reached the place which looked toward the midst of the borders of Decapolis far across the sea.

Mark 7:32

And they bring to him a deaf and mute man; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. The deaf and mute man is one who neither has ears for hearing the words of God, nor opens his mouth for speaking, such as those who have already learned to speak and hear the divine words through long prac-

tice must needs be offered to the Lord for healing, so that those whom human frailty cannot heal, he himself by the right hand of his grace may save.

Mark 7:33

And taking him aside from the crowd, He put His fingers into his ears. The first door of salvation is for the infirm man to be taken aside from the crowd by the Lord. For He takes the infirm man aside from the crowd when, illuminating the mind weakened by sins through the visit of His mercy, He calls him away from the customary manners of human conversation, and provokes him to follow the paths of His commandments. He puts His fingers into his ears when, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, He opens the ears of the heart to understand and receive the words of salvation. For the Lord Himself testifies that the Spirit is called the finger of God, when He says to the Jews: "But if I cast out devils by the finger of God, by whom do your sons cast them out?" (Luke 11:20). Another Evangelist explains this saying: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28). By this same finger, the magicians in Egypt were overcome by Moses, saying: "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19); and the law was written on stone tablets because, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are both defended from the snares of men or evil spirits, and are taught the knowledge of God's will. Therefore, the fingers of God inserted into the ears of him who needed healing are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which He reveals to the hearts that had deviated from the path of truth the understanding and learning of the knowledge of salvation. And because the light of truth once known should be followed by confession, it is aptly added:

Mark 7:33

And spitting, he touched his tongue. The Lord indeed touches the tongue of the sick with spittle, when he instructs the mouths of catechumens towards the confession of faith. The spittle of the Lord signifies the taste of wisdom, which, as testified by the wise man, speaks: "I came from the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn" (Eccli. XXIV). And hence elsewhere, when his spittle mixed with earth, the man born blind was illuminated. The spittle which comes from the head of the Lord signifies his divine nature which is from God; the portion of earth with which the spittle is mixed signifies the human nature taken from men. And through the medicine composed of his spittle and earth, he opened the eyes of the man born blind, because the hu-

man race is released from the innate darkness of their errors through the confession of his two natures. Thus, the Lord, spitting, touches the tongue of the mute to enable him to speak, when he instructs mouths long silent to bring forth words of wisdom by the contact of his piety. Hence it is aptly added:

Mark 7:34

And looking up to heaven, he sighed; and said to him: Effeta, which is to say, Be opened. He looked up to heaven to teach that speech to the mute, hearing to the deaf, and healing to all infirmities, should be sought from there. He sighed, not because it was necessary for him to ask anything from the Father with a sigh, he who with the Father grants all things to those who ask, but to give us an example of sighing, when we invoke the aid of heavenly piety for our sins or those of our neighbors. But when he says: Effeta, that is, be opened, it pertains specifically to the ears. For the ears are to be opened for hearing, while the tongue needs to be freed from the bonds of its slowness to be able to speak; and hence it is added:

Mark 7:35

And immediately his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak correctly. Here, both natures of the one and same mediator between God and humans are clearly distinct. For, ascending into heaven as a man, he sighed to pray to God, but soon with one word, as divinely powerful in majesty, he healed. Rightly, it is said of him, whose ears the Lord opened, and whose tongue's bond he loosed, because he spoke correctly. For only he speaks correctly, whether confessing God or preaching to others, whose hearing divine grace unlocks so that he can listen to and obey heavenly commands, and whose tongue the Lord instructs in speaking by the touch of wisdom, which he himself is. Such a one can rightly say with the Psalmist: Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise (Psalm 50). And with Isaiah: The Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He wakens me morning by morning; he wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed (Isaiah 50).

Mark 7:36

And he commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he commanded them, the more they proclaimed it, and they were exceedingly astonished,

saying: He has done all things well, he makes the deaf hear, and the mute speak. If he knew they would proclaim it even more as he had the present and future wills of humans known, why then did he command this except to show the lazy how much more fervently and eagerly they ought to preach, whom he commands to preach when those who were forbidden could not keep silent?

CHAPTER 8

Mark 8:1

In those days, when again there was a great crowd and they had nothing to eat, He called His disciples and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have now been with me for three days and have nothing to eat, etc. In this reading, we must consider in the one and same Redeemer our the distinct operation of divinity and humanity; and the error of Eutyches, who presumes to teach only one operation in Christ, must be thoroughly expelled from Christian borders. For who does not see that the fact that the Lord has compassion on the crowd, lest they faint either from hunger or the labor of a long journey, is an affection and compassion of human frailty? But that He fed four thousand men with seven loaves and a few small fish is the work of divine power? Mystically, however, this miracle signifies that we cannot otherwise pass safely through the path of this present world unless the grace of our Redeemer refreshes us with the nourishment of His word. Typologically, the difference between this feeding and that of the five loaves and two fishes is that there the letter of the Old Testament, full of spiritual grace, was signified; here, however, the truth and grace of the New Testament is shown to be ministered to the faithful.

Surely, both feedings occurred on a mountain, as the narration of other evangelists declares, because the rightly understood Scriptures of both Testaments command us to the height of heavenly precepts and rewards, and both proclaim in a harmonious voice the height of Christ, who is the mountain of the house of the Lord at the summit of the mountains. For He who exalts the city or house of the Lord built upon Himself, that is, the Church, in the height of good works and makes it manifest to all nations, He refreshes it, abstracted from lowly pleasures, with the bread of heaven, and kindles it to the appetite for supernal sweetness by giving the pledge of spiritual food.

Mark 8:2

I have compassion on the crowd, he said, because they have already been with me for three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. Why the crowd waited for the Lord for three days, Matthew explains more fully, who says: And when he went up on the mountain, he sat there. And large crowds came to him, bringing with them the mute, the blind, the lame, the crippled, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them (Matt. XV). Therefore, the crowd waited for the Lord for three days because of the healing of their sick, just as the elect, illuminated by faith in the Holy Trinity, continually beseech the Lord with perseverance for the sins of their own and their neighbors', namely, the sicknesses of the soul. Likewise, the crowd waits for the Lord for three days when a multitude of the faithful, turning away from the sins they have committed through repentance, turn to the Lord in deeds, in speech, and in thought. The Lord does not want to send them away hungry to their homes, lest they faint on the way, because converted sinners in the way of present life faint if they are sent away in their conscience without the nourishment of holy doctrine. Therefore, lest they grow weary in the journey of this pilgrimage, they must be nourished with sacred admonition. But we must deeply ponder the pious sentence that proceeded from the mouth of truth, which says:

Mark 8:3

Some of them have come from afar. For there is one who, having experienced no deceit and no corruptions of the flesh, hastened to the service of the Almighty God. He did not come from afar, because through incorruption and innocence he was near. Another, tainted by no impurity, no disgrace, but having experienced only marriage, turned to spiritual ministry. Neither did he come from afar, because though he used the granted union, he did not err through illicit means. However, others return to repentance and turn to the service of the Almighty God after deeds of the flesh, others after false testimonies, others after thefts committed, others after inflicted injuries and violence, others after perpetrated murders. These, indeed, come to the Lord from afar. For the more someone has erred in wicked deeds, the further he has retreated from the Almighty Lord. Therefore, let nourishment be given also to those who come from afar, because repentant sinners

must be given the foods of holy teachings, so that they restore their strength in God, which they lost in their vices. Similarly, Jews who believed in Christ came to Him from nearby, because they were instructed about Him by the writings of the Law and the Prophets. Believers from the Gentiles, indeed, came from afar to Christ, because they were not forewarned of His faith by any monuments of the holy pages.

Mark 8:5

And he asked them: How many loaves do you have? They said: Seven. The seven loaves are well placed in the mystery of the New Testament, in which the septiform grace of the Holy Spirit, more fully revealed to all the faithful, is both believed in and given. They are not found to be of barley, like those five loaves, with which five thousand men were fed, lest again, as in the law, the vital food of the soul be hidden by bodily sacraments. For the marrow of barley is tightly covered by a very tenacious husk. [Mark 8:6] -- And he commanded the crowd to recline on the ground. Earlier, during the feeding of the five loaves, the crowd reclined on the green grass; now, when they are to be fed with seven loaves, they are commanded to recline on the ground, because through the Scripture of the law we are ordered to tread and suppress the desires of the flesh. For all flesh is grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass (I Peter I). However, in the New Testament, we are commanded to forsake even the very land and temporal goods. Or certainly because the mountain on which the crowd was fed with the Lord's loaves signifies (as we said above) the height of our Redeemer, there they are fed on grass, here on the ground. For there the loftiness of Christ is covered because of carnal men and earthly Jerusalem, with carnal hope and desire; but here, with all carnal desire removed, it contained the guests of the New Testament, the foundation of lasting hope, like the solidity of the mountain itself, with no grass interposed.

Mark 8:6

And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke them and gave to his disciples to set before the crowd. The Lord, taking the loaves, gave them to his disciples so that they might distribute them to the crowd, because, bestowing the spiritual gifts of knowledge upon the apostles, he wanted the nourishment of life to be distributed through their ministry to his Church throughout the world. However, the breaking of the loaves which he gave to

his disciples signifies the opening of the sacraments, by which the world was to be nourished unto eternal salvation. For when the Lord himself says: And no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal (Matt. 11), what did he show us except that the bread of life was to be opened to us through him, when we could not penetrate it by ourselves? The prophet, lamenting the pitiable hunger of some, said: The children asked for bread, but no one broke it for them (Lam. 4). Which is to say in other words: The unlearned sought the food of the word of God, to be strengthened and restored to the virtue of good works, but, with teachers lacking, there was no one to reveal the secrets of the Scriptures to them and to instruct them in the path of truth. But taking the loaves to break, the Lord gives thanks, to show how much he rejoices over the salvation of the human race, and to teach us always to give thanks to God when, either with earthly bread for the body or with heavenly grace from above granted, we are refreshed.

Mark 8:7

And they had some small fishes, and he blessed them and ordered them to be set before them. If in the seven loaves is signified the Scripture of the New Testament, in the reading of which we find internal feasts for the mind through the grace of the Holy Spirit, what do we accept in the small fishes which the Lord blessed and likewise ordered to be set before the crowd, except the saints of that time, when the same Scripture was composed, or whose faith, life, and sufferings that very Scripture contains? Who, having been rescued from the turbulent waves of this world and consecrated by divine blessing, have provided us with internal refreshment, so that we do not fail in the passing journey of this world, by the example of their life or death.

Mark 8:8

And they ate and were satisfied. They eat of the Lord's loaves and fishes, and are satisfied, those who, hearing the words of God and observing examples, hasten to be stirred and to rise to the advancement of a more correct life through these things. To whom the saying of the Psalmist aptly fits: The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek him shall praise the Lord. Their hearts shall live forever and ever (Psalm XXI). Which is plainly to say: The humble shall hear the word of God and do it, and to the praise not of themselves, but of the supreme giver, they shall refer all the good things they

perform. Hence deservedly they shall reach the eternal life of the inner man, being satisfied with the bread of life. To whom, on the contrary, it is reproached through the prophet: You have eaten and are not satisfied. For they eat and are not satisfied, who taste the bread of the word of God by hearing it, but by not doing what they hear, they receive nothing of the internal sweetness by which their hearts may be confirmed in the memory of the mind.

Mark 8:8

And they took up the fragments that were left, seven baskets full. The apostles took up what was left over after the crowds were fed, and they filled seven baskets, because the higher precepts of perfection, or rather exhortations and counsels, cannot be reached by the general multitude of the faithful by keeping and fulfilling them. The execution of these properly pertains to those who, filled with a greater grace of the Holy Spirit, transcend the general conversion of the people of God in the sublimity of mind and work. To such ones it is said: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell all that you have" (Matthew 19), etc. Hence it is fittingly that the baskets in which the fragments of the Lord's food were stored are mentioned as being seven due to the sevenfold grace of the spirit. For baskets are usually woven from rush and palm leaves, and they are rightly placed as a symbol of the saints. For the rush is accustomed to grow above the waters, while the palm adorns the victorious hand. And the chosen ones are rightly compared to the vessels made of rushes, as they place the root of the heart in the very source of life, lest it wither from the love of eternity. They are also likened to those woven from palm leaves, as they retain in their pure heart the memory of the eternal reward. And it is fittingly narrated that although the crowd could not contain the remnants of the Lord's meal, it is said to have eaten and been satisfied. For there are some who, even if they cannot leave all their possessions, nor fulfill what is said of virgins: "He who can accept this, let him accept it" (Matthew 19), and other such things, are still filled with righteousness when they hunger and thirst, and by hearing the commandments of God's law, they reach eternal life.

Mark 8:9

Now those who ate were about four thousand, and He sent them away. Well, four thousand, that even in the number itself they might show they were fed

with evangelical food. [Mark 8:10] -- And immediately getting into the boat with His disciples, He came to the region of Dalmanutha. For in Matthew we read: "And after sending away the crowd, He got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan" (Matthew 15). It is not to be doubted that it is the same place under either name. For many Codices do not have, even according to Mark, except Magadan.

Mark 8:11

And the Pharisees went out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. Thus they seek a sign, as if what they had seen were not signs. But what they seek is shown when it is said: Seeking from Him a sign from heaven. Either they desired fire to come down from above in the manner of Elijah, or like Samuel in the summer season, they wished for the thunder to roar, the lightning to flash, and rains to fall, as if they could not also slander those and say that they happened from hidden and various passions of the air. But you who slander what you see with your eyes, hold with your hands, feel with utility, what will you do about those things which come from heaven? Certainly, you will answer that magicians in Egypt also performed many signs from heaven. Or surely they seek a sign from heaven, so that He who fed many thousands of people with a few loaves would now, in imitation of Moses with manna sent from heaven and scattered everywhere, sustain the whole people for a long time. Which we read in the Gospel of John that after the eating of the loaves, the crowds sought from Him, saying: What sign then do you do so that we may see and believe you? What do you work? Our fathers ate manna in the desert (John 6), as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat (Ibid.).

Mark 8:12

And sighing deeply in spirit, he said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, if a sign will be given to this generation. He, who above thanked the crowd believing for heavenly benefit to be restored, now sighed and was saddened over the foolish petition of the Pharisees who did not believe and tempted, because truly bearing the nature of man, with real feelings of human nature, just as he rejoices over the salvation of men, so too he grieves and sighs over their errors. Hence also elsewhere, when many were led to salvation through the preaching of the apostles, it is written about him: "In that very hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said: 'I thank you, Fath-

er, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to little children'" (Luke 10). And when he was about to rebuke Judas' deed, he was troubled in spirit, as John writes, and he testified, and said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray me" (John 13). But what he says, "If a sign will be given to this generation," means it will not be given, according to that in the Psalm: "Once I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David" (Psalm 89), that is, I will not lie to David. Hence Saint Augustine, speaking of the harmony of the evangelists, bears witness that it is thus written in Mark:

"And no sign will be given to it. Therefore, no sign will be given to that generation, that is, to those tempting the Lord and rejecting his words. Certainly a sign such as the tempters were seeking, this is to say, from heaven. Nevertheless, many heavenly signs he gave them on earth. Besides, to the generation seeking the gift, requiring the face of the God of Jacob, he showed a sign from heaven, when, with the apostles watching, he ascended into heaven, when, with the Spirit sent from above, he filled the primitive Church, when at the imposition of the hands of the apostles in Samaria, Caesarea, Ephesus, and many other cities and places, he ministered the grace of the Holy Spirit to the believers from heaven.

Mark 8:13

And dismissing them, he ascended the boat again and went across the strait. And they forgot to take bread, and they had nothing with them on the boat except one loaf. Someone may ask and say how they did not have bread, who, immediately after filling seven baskets, ascended the boat, and came to the borders of Magedan, and there heard the sailors that they should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Scripture testifies that they forgot to take them with them. However, that they forgot to take provisions with them before they were about to sail across the strait indicates how little they cared for the flesh in other respects, for whom the very necessity of replenishing the body, which naturally exists in all mortals, had escaped their minds due to their attention to following the Lord. But the one loaf they had with them on the boat mystically signifies the bread of life itself, namely the Lord and Savior. Because they were always inwardly refreshed in heart by His love, they cared less for the earthly bread with which the body is usually fed.

Mark 8:15

And he was instructing them, saying: See and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. The leaven of the Pharisees is to place the decrees of divine law below human traditions, or certainly to preach the law in words while opposing it in deeds. Their leaven is to test the Lord, neither believing in His teachings nor in His works, but mocking and asking for other things in which they could believe. The leaven of Herod is adultery, homicide, rashness in swearing, false pretenses of religion, and what is the head and origin of all crimes, hatred and persecution against Christ and His precursor and first proclaimer of the heavenly kingdom. From which leaven of either, even the Apostle, not prohibiting, says: Therefore let us celebrate not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Cor. V).

Mark 8:16

And they reasoned among themselves, saying: We have no bread. Which knowing, Jesus said to them: Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see, and having ears, do you not hear, nor remember when I broke the five loaves among five thousand, and how many baskets full of fragments you took up? etc. Because of the command which the Savior had given, saying: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, he teaches them what the five loaves and the seven, or the small fish, mean, and the five thousand men and the four thousand who were fed in the wilderness. Though the greatness of the signs is clear, yet something else is shown by spiritual understanding. For if the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and the leaven of Herod signify not physical bread but perverse traditions and heretical doctrines, why should not the food with which the people of God were fed signify true and complete doctrine? This kind of leaven, which must be avoided by all means, Marcion and Valentinus and all heretics have had. Leaven has this power, that if it be mixed with flour, what seemed small grows larger and attracts the whole mixture to its taste. Likewise, heretical doctrine, if it casts even a small spark into your heart, in a short time will grow into a huge flame and draw the whole possession of a man to itself. This is what the Apostle also speaks of: A little leaven corrupts the whole mass (Gal. V).

Mark 8:22

And they came to Bethsaida, and they brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. All the diseases healed by the Lord are signs of the spiritual diseases by which the soul draws near to eternal death through sin. For just as in the deaf and mute healed by the Lord the restoration of the mind is implied of those who neither knew how to hear the word of God nor to speak, and soon in the feeding of the hungry crowd who had followed the Lord that sweetness is foreshadowed with which he usually feeds the hearts of those who love and seek him, so in this blind man gradually healed by the Lord the enlightenment of the foolish hearts, and those straying far from the path of truth is designated. They begged him to touch him, knowing that the touch of the Lord could cleanse the leper, and also could illuminate the blind. But we touch the Lord when we cling to him with whole-hearted and sincere faith. Indeed, we learn that his touch is most beneficial to us by the example of the woman who in happy boldness touched the hem of his garment. The Lord touches us when he illuminates our mind with the breath of his spirit, and kindles in us the recognition of our own weakness and the pursuit of good action.

Mark 8:23

And taking the blind man's hand, he led him out of the village. He took the blind man's hand to strengthen him for the performance of good work which he had not known due to the prolonged darkness of his heart. He led him out of the village to separate him from ordinary life, so that, freed from distractions, he might more freely seek with a diligent heart the will of his creator, by which he might merit to be enlightened. For whoever desires to see the light of eternity must always follow, not the examples of the crowds, but the guidance of his redeemer.

Mark 8:23

And spitting on his eyes, and laying his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything. And looking up, he said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking. Then again he laid his hands on his eyes, and he began to see and was restored so that he saw everything clearly. Therefore, the Lord healed this man gradually and not immediately at once, though he could have healed him with a single word if he wished, to show the magnitude of human blindness, which usually comes to the light of divine vision gradually

and through certain stages of progress, or to give us frequent indications of His grace, through which each of our increments towards perfection are aided so that they can progress and not fall short. It has often been said that the spittle of the Lord's mouth signifies the grace of His spirit. Concerning the touch of His hands, which insinuate the power of His assistance, there is no doubt. For spittle proceeds internally from the head of the Lord; the hands, however, are members placed on the exterior of the body. Thus, the Lord, spitting on the eyes of the blind man, lays His hands on him so that he may see, because He cleansed the blindness of the human race both through the invisible gifts of divine compassion and through the outwardly manifested sacraments of assumed humanity.

At first, the one who was being healed saw men as trees walking, that is, indeed seeing the form of bodies among the shadows but unable to discern any features of the limbs with his vision still dim, just as densely grown trees appear to those looking from afar or certainly in dim light, so that it is not easy to distinguish whether it is a tree or a man. Because undoubtedly, the first entrance into virtue for everyone is to observe the life and morals of other men, so that whatever good he sees anywhere, he may imitate, and whatever evil, he may avoid and detest. But whoever is so foolish and depressed by the darkness of a long time that he still cannot distinguish between good and evil, faith and perfidy, sincere works of piety and the simulation of justice, sees men walking like trees, because he sees the actions of the multitude without the light of discretion. And what remains for such people, except that divine favor, which granted him the care of observing man, may also confer upon him the gift of discerning which way of life among men is to be followed, whose teaching should be heeded? Hence, it is aptly said that with the second laying on of His hands, the Lord restored clear sight to him.

For he indeed sees everything clearly who was once blind, when one who deserved to be inwardly illuminated has clearly learned how to believe, how to live, and what rewards for the faith of truth and the practice of justice are to be hoped for in the future.

Mark 8:26

And he sent him to his home, saying: Go to your home: and if you enter the village, say to no one. That He ordered him to go to his home mystically admonishes all who are enlightened by the knowledge of truth to return to

their hearts and consider with anxious mind how much has been granted to them, and responding to the benefits conferred upon them with the worthy execution of deeds. That He commanded him to cover his healing with silence, as He did for many others whom He healed, provides an example to His followers not to seek the favor of the crowd for their miraculous deeds, but to be content to please only divine eyes, where the reward for works remains. [Mark 8:27] -- And Jesus and His disciples went out to the village of Caesarea Philippi. This Philip is the brother of Herod, of whom we spoke before, tetrarch of the regions of Ituraea and Trachonitis, who in honor of Tiberius Caesar named Caesarea Philippi, which is now called Paneas, and it is in the province of Phoenicia; imitating Herod his father, who in honor of Augustus Caesar named Caesarea, which was previously called Tower of Straton, and built Libyad beyond the Jordan in the name of his daughter. This place is Caesarea Philippi, where the Jordan arises at the roots of Lebanon, and it has two sources, one named Jor, and the other Dan, which mixed together create the name Jordan.

Mark 8:27

And he questioned his disciples along the way, saying: Who do men say that I am? They answered him, saying: Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets. The Lord rightly, intending to test the faith of the disciples, first inquires about people's opinion, lest their confession seem founded not on the recognition of truth but on the opinion of the crowd, and lest they be thought to believe not from what they have learned, but to hesitate like Herod from what they have heard. Therefore, to Peter confessing him as Christ, according to Matthew, he says: Because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you (Matthew 16), that is, human teaching did not teach you the truth of faith. Those who hold a different opinion about the Lord are also rightly noted by the name of men. For those who faithfully and devoutly recognize the truth of his power deserve not at all to be called men, but gods. The Lord shows that the apostles were such as these with his second question. For he continues:

Mark 8:29

Then he says to them: But who do you say that I am? Note, prudent reader, from the following text that the apostles are not at all called men, but gods. For when he had said: Who do men say I am, he added: But who do you say

that I am? To them who are men giving human opinions, he says: But you, who are gods, who do you think I am? [Mark 8:29] -- Peter answered, saying: You are the Christ. Although the other apostles knew, Peter responded before the others. He encompassed everything, expressing both nature and name, in which is the summit of virtues. Do we indeed discuss questions about the generation of God? When Paul indicated knowing nothing except Christ Jesus, and him crucified, and Peter thought nothing more than that Christ should be confessed as the Son of God, do we examine with human frailty when and how he was born, and how great he is? Therefore, the end of my faith is Christ, the end of faith is the Son. I am not permitted to know the sequence of the generation, but I am not permitted to be ignorant of the faith of the generation.

Mark 8:30

And he warned them not to tell anyone about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, etc. For this reason, he did not want to be proclaimed before his passion and resurrection, so that afterward, when the sacrament of his blood was completed, he could more appropriately say to the apostles: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Because it would not benefit to preach him publicly, and to reveal his majesty to the people, whom in a short while they would see scourged and crucified, suffering many things by the elders, scribes, and the chief priests. And note that he who must suffer many things and be killed, and rise again, is called the Son of Man, because, although Christ suffered in the flesh, he remained divinely impassible.

Mark 8:32

And Peter, taking him aside, began to rebuke him. Matthew explains more clearly how he rebuked him, saying: "And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying: 'God forbid, Lord, this shall never happen to you' (Matt. XVI). We have often said that Peter was of excessive fervor and had the greatest love for the Lord Savior. Therefore, after his confession in which he said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,' and the reward from the Savior where he heard according to Matthew: 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven' (Matt. XVI), he suddenly hears from the Lord that he must go to Jer-

usalem, and there suffer many things from the elders, scribes, and chief priests, and be killed, and on the third day rise again: he does not want to see his confession destroyed, nor does he think it possible that the Son of God could be killed; and he took him into his affection, or led him aside separately, so that he would not seem to argue with the teacher in the presence of the other disciples. And he began to rebuke him with the affection of love, and wishing to say: "God forbid, Lord," or (as it is better translated in Greek), "Be merciful to yourself, Lord, this shall not happen to you;" that is, it cannot happen, nor can my ears receive that the Son of God is to be killed.

Mark 8:33

When he had turned and saw his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying: Go behind me, Satan. Satan is interpreted as adversary or contrary. Because you speak contrary (he said) to my will, you should be called adversary. Many think that it was not Peter who was corrected, but the adversarial spirit that suggested these things to the apostle to say. But to me, an apostolic error, arising from the affection of piety, will never seem to be the incentive of the devil. Go, Satan, is said to the devil: Go behind me. Peter hears: Go behind me, that is, follow my judgment. [Mark 8:33] -- For you are not mindful of the things of God, but of the things of men. It is of my will, and of the Father's, whose will I have come to do, that I should die for the salvation of men. Considering only your will, you do not wish the grain of wheat to fall into the ground, that it might bring forth much fruit.

Mark 8:34

And having called the crowd with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, etc. After showing his disciples the mystery of his passion and resurrection, he urges them together with the crowd to follow the example of his passion. And to all who suffer tribulation for his sake, he promises future salvation of their souls, but not to all, rather to the more perfect: how much he was to suffer, and that he would rise from the dead, he revealed. Here he established the form of teaching for the ministers of the word, so that, considering the capacity of their listeners, they might remember to instruct each one according to their ability, and not entrust deeper mysteries than they can comprehend to weak listeners. "If anyone wishes" (he says) "to follow me, let him deny himself. Now we deny ourselves when we avoid what we were through our former way of life and

strive for that to which we are called through renewal. Let us consider how Paul had denied himself, who said, "And the life I now live, I live not by my own power" (Galatians 2). For that fierce persecutor had died and the pious preacher had begun to live. For if it were he, he would certainly not be pious. But let him who denies living by his own power, say whence it comes that he proclaims sacred words through the teaching of truth. Immediately he adds, "But Christ lives in me" (Ibid.).

As if to say openly: Indeed, I am dead to myself, for I do not live carnally; yet I am not essentially dead, for I live spiritually in Christ. Let, therefore, Truth say, let it say, "If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself. For unless someone withdraws from himself, he does not approach the one who is above him. Nor can he grasp what is beyond himself if he does not know how to mortify what is within him. But now, he who denies himself from vices must seek virtues in which he may grow. For when it is said, "If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself," it immediately adds:

Mark 8:34

And let him take up his cross and follow me. For indeed, the cross is taken up in two ways: either through the affliction of the body by abstinence, or through the affliction of the soul by compassion for one's neighbor. Let us consider how Paul bore his cross in both ways, who said: "I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (I Cor. IX). Behold, in the affliction of the body we heard the cross of the flesh; now, in the compassion for one's neighbor, let us hear the cross of the mind. He says: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn?" (II Cor. XI) Indeed, a perfect preacher, to give an example of abstinence, carried the cross in the body. And because he bore the sufferings of others in himself, he carried the cross in his heart.

Mark 8:35

For whoever wants to save their soul will lose it. But whoever loses their soul for my sake and the gospel will save it. Thus it is said to the faithful: Whoever wants to save their soul will lose it. But whoever loses their soul for my sake and the gospel will save it. As if it were said to a farmer: If you save the grain, you lose it; if you sow it, you renew it. For who does not know that when grain is sown, it disappears from sight, perishing in the ground? But from where it rots in the dust, it springs forth in renewal. Because the holy Church

has different times of persecution and peace, our Redeemer designated those times in his teachings. For in times of persecution, the soul is to be laid down. But in times of peace, earthly desires, which can dominate more, are to be broken. Hence now it is said:

Mark 8:36

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? When persecution from adversaries is absent, the heart must be guarded much more vigilantly. For in times of peace, since it is allowed to live, it is also allowed to desire. Often, however, we overcome avarice, but there remains an obstacle because we guard the ways of righteousness with less custody, to perfection. For often we despise having everything, but yet we are still hindered by the use of human respect, so that we cannot yet express in voice the righteousness which we keep in mind. And we neglect the face of God for the defense of justice as much as we fear human faces against justice. But the fitting remedy is also added to this wound when the Lord says:

Mark 8:38

"For whoever confesses Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also confess him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." But behold now men say to themselves: "We no longer are ashamed of the Lord and His words, because we openly confess Him with our voice." To which I reply that in this Christian populace there are some who confess Christ because they observe that all are Christians. Therefore, the voice of profession is not sufficient proof of faith, which is defended from shame by the profession of generality. And yet, let each person examine himself, so that he may truly prove himself in the confession of Christ, if he does not already feel ashamed of His name, if he has fully subdued human shame to the virtue of the mind. Indeed, in times of persecution, the faithful could feel ashamed to be stripped of their possessions, to be deposed from their dignities, to be afflicted with scourges. But in times of peace, since these things are absent from our persecutions, there is another way to show ourselves. We often fear being despised by neighbors, we disdain to tolerate verbal injuries. If perhaps a quarrel happens with a neighbor, we feel ashamed to be the first to make amends. For the carnal heart, while seeking the glory of this life, rejects humility.

CHAPTER 9

Mark 9:1

And he said to them: Truly I say to you, that there are some standing here who will not taste death until, etc. The Kingdom of God in this place is called the present Church. And because some of the disciples were going to live in the body to the extent that they would see the Church of God constructed and raised up against the glory of this world, it is now said as a comforting promise: There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God coming in power. But since the Lord was issuing commands about enduring the death so great, what was necessary that he suddenly came to this promise? If we attentively consider this, we shall recognize how great a dispensation of piety takes place. For something needed to be promised even to the unlearned disciples regarding the present life, so that they might be more strongly established for the future. Thus the Israelite people, being freed from the land of Egypt, are promised the land of promise, so that while they were to be called to heavenly gifts, they might be persuaded by earthly promises. Hence it is rightly said through the Psalmist: He gave them the regions of the Gentiles, and they possessed the labors of the peoples, so that they might keep his statutes and seek his law (Psalm 105).

Thus, in this place, Truth speaking to the unlearned disciples promises that they will see the kingdom of God on earth, so that it might be more faithfully presumed by them in heaven. But if we wish to receive the Kingdom of God by this saying as the future beatitude in heaven, certain ones of those standing there saw it not many days later on the mountain. This indeed was done by pious foresight so that by the contemplation of the always enduring joy, even if grasped quickly and briefly, they might more strongly endure the present adversities of the passing world. With very fitting language, the saints are testified to taste death, for indeed the death of the body is tasted by them as if by sipping, while truly the life of the soul is possessed by holding.

Mark 9:2

And after six days Jesus took Peter and James and John, and led them up into a high mountain apart by themselves, and he was transfigured before them. In the Gospel of Luke it is written thus: "And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a

mountain to pray" (Luke IX). and so forth: But on the eighth day the Lord revealed to the disciples the glory of the promised future blessedness, so that by showing the sweetness of the heavenly life, he might refresh the hearts of all who could hear this, and by the number of eight days, he might teach that true joy of the resurrection would come at the due time. For on the eighth day, that is, after the sixth day of the Sabbath on which he ascended the cross, and the seventh day of the Sabbath on which he rested in the sepulcher, he rose from the dead, and we, after the six ages of this world in which we rejoice to suffer and labor for the Lord, and the seventh day of the Sabbath of souls, which in the meantime is carried on in another life, will rise again in the eighth age.

For what Matthew and Mark say, that the Lord was transfigured after six days, they do not differ either in the order of time or in the reason of the mystery from Luke, who says eight days, because they only include the days in between, hence they recount absolutely that it happened after six days. He adds both the first day on which the Lord promised this, and the last day on which he fulfilled his promise. And so more temperately he states about eight days. And in the mystical reasoning there, it is significant for the saints to rest from all labor after the six ages of the world, but here it signifies that they will rise again at the eighth time. Hence the sixth psalm is beautifully inscribed for the octave, with the beginning: "O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger," because indeed through the six ages when it is allowed to work, one must persist in prayers, lest in the eighth time of retribution we be rebuked by an angry judge. Therefore the Lord himself wanted to teach us in this place by showing the example of his prayer, which according to Luke, says he went up into the mountain to pray. For he went up into the mountain to pray and was transfigured in such a way to show that those who expect the fruit of the resurrection, who desire to see the king in his beauty, should dwell in the heights of mind, and be devoted to continuous prayers.

He takes only three disciples with him either because many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. XX), or because those who now preserve with incorrupt mind the faith they have received in the Holy Trinity, will then deserve to rejoice in his eternal vision.

Mark 9:3

And he (says) was transfigured before them, and his garments became exceedingly radiant white like snow. The transfigured Savior did not lose the

substance of true flesh but showed the glory of his or our future resurrection. He, as he then appeared to the apostles, will appear likewise to all the elect after judgment. For at the very time of judgment, he will be seen by both the good and the wicked in the form of a servant, so that the ungodly may recognize him whom they despised, the Jews him whom they denied, the soldiers him whom they crucified, and Pilate and Herod him whom they judged. The garments of the Lord, rightly, are understood as his saints, as the Apostle testifies, who says: For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians III). These garments, indeed, seemed despised and similar to others while the Lord was on earth; but when he ascends the mountain, they shine with new brightness because now indeed we are children of God, but it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears, we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is (1 John III). Hence it is well added about these same garments: Such as no fuller on earth can whiten. For it is understood that the fuller is to be interpreted as him whom the penitent Psalmist prays to: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm L). He cannot give to his faithful on earth the brightness that remains preserved for them in the heavens.

Mark 9: 4

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Moses and Elijah, one of whom we read was dead and the other taken up into the heavens, were seen in majesty with the Lord (as Luke writes), signifying the future glory of all the saints in Him. Evidently at the time of judgment, some will be found alive in the flesh, or also, having previously tasted death, will be resurrected and will reign together with Him. As the Apostle testifies: The dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. IV). Alternatively, Moses and Elijah, that is, the legislator and the eminent prophet, appear and speak with the Lord coming in the flesh, to show that He is the one whom all the oracles of the law and the prophets promised. However, they appear not in the lowly places, but on the mountain with Him, because, indeed, only those who transcend earthly desires in their mind perceive the majesty of Holy Scripture, which is fulfilled in the Lord. Finally, even the sons of Israel saw Moses, but they did not deserve to follow him as he went up to God on the mountain, and they saw him turned back to them not without a veil. They

knew Elijah, but it was only Elisha who with the sons of the prophets contemplated his triumphant ascent. Because many of us widely read the words of Scripture; but how exalted it shines in the mysteries of Christ, very few more perfect ones understand.

Mark 9:5

And responding, Peter said: Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. For he did not know what he was saying. They were indeed terrified with fear. Oh, how great is the happiness to be present to the vision of divinity among the choirs of angels perpetually, if only the transformed humanity of Christ, along with the company of the two saints seen for a moment, delights so much that Peter wishes to establish them, lest they depart, though in his awe of human fragility, he doesn't know what he is saying, but the affection planted in him gives an indication! For he did not know what he was saying, who forgot that the kingdom of God was promised by the Lord to the saints, not somewhere on earth, but in the heavens. Neither did he remember that he and his fellow apostles, still surrounded by mortal flesh, could not yet attain the state of immortal life, as he exceeded in mind, which in the house of the Father that is in heaven, necessarily is not a house made by hand. But even now, he is noted for incompetence, whoever desires to make three tents for the law, the prophets, and the Gospels, when these cannot be separated from each other at all, having one tabernacle, that is, the Church of God.

Mark 9:7

And a cloud overshadowed them. He who sought a material tabernacle received the overshadowing of a cloud, that he might learn that in the resurrection the saints are to be protected not by the covering of dwellings, but by the glory of the Holy Spirit. From which the Psalmist says: But the children of men will trust in the shelter of your wings (Psalm 35). And in his Apocalypse, John says: And I saw no temple in it (Rev. 21), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Mark 9:7

And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him. Because they had asked foolishly, they were not worthy to receive a response from the Lord; but the Father answers on behalf of the Son, so that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled. "I do not speak for myself, but the

Father who sent me speaks for me" (John V). The voice of the Father speaking from heaven is also heard, bearing witness concerning the Son, and teaching Peter, with error removed, the truth: indeed, through Peter, teaching the other apostles. "This," he says, "is my beloved Son; it is to him that a tent must be built, it is he who must be obeyed. This is the Son; they, Moses and Elijah, are servants. They also must prepare a tent for the Lord within the innermost parts of their hearts, along with you. Indeed, this place in the Gospel agrees with the words of Moses himself, with which bearing witness to the Lord's incarnation he said: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren; you shall listen to him just as you listen to me, according to all that he tells you. But it shall come to pass: Every soul that does not listen to that prophet will be cut off from the people" (Deut. XVIII).

Therefore, whom Moses foretold would come in the flesh and should be listened to by every soul that wishes to be saved, God the Father now shows to the disciples as having already come in the flesh and marked him as his Son with a heavenly voice. And as if more clearly expounding the faith concerning his arrival to them, he says: "This man, this is he whom this Moses promised to you would be born in the world many times. Listen to his words according to the commandment of Moses, and command all true lovers to listen. And it should be noted that just as when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, so also on the mountain where he was glorified, the mystery of the whole Holy Trinity is declared. Because indeed the glory of him which believers confess in baptism, we will behold and praise in the resurrection. And it is not in vain that the Holy Spirit appears here in a bright cloud, as another evangelist mentions, whereas there he appeared as a dove, because those who now keep with a simple heart the faith they have received, will then with clear light behold what they have believed, and they will be perpetually protected by that very grace with which they have been illuminated.

Mark 9:8

And immediately looking around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with them. When the Son began to be designated, the servants soon departed, lest the father's voice be thought to have been directed to them. Otherwise, when a voice was made over the Son, he was found alone, because when he has revealed himself to the elect, God will be all in all; indeed he himself with his own will shine as one through all, that is, the head with the body. For this unity he said elsewhere: And no one has ascended to heaven except

he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven (John 3). [Mark 9:9] -- And as they were coming down from the mountain, he instructed them not to tell anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. The foreshadowing of the future kingdom and the glory of the triumphant one had been shown on the mountain. Therefore, he did not want this to be preached among the people, lest it be unbelievable due to the greatness of the matter, and after such great glory, the following cross might be a scandal to the minds.

Mark 9:11

And they asked him, saying: Why then do the Pharisees and Scribes say that Elijah must come first? It is a tradition of the Pharisees, according to Malachi the prophet, who is the last of the twelve, that Elijah will come before the advent of the Savior and will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, and restore all things to their former state. Therefore, the disciples suppose this transformation of glory they had seen on the mountain to be the fulfillment, and they say: If you have already come in glory, how is it that your forerunner does not appear? Especially because they had seen Elijah depart. But when the scribes add and say that Elijah must come first, by saying first they imply that unless Elijah comes, there is no second advent of the Savior.

Mark 9:12

And He answering said to them: Elias when he comes, will first restore all things. He will restore all things, indeed those which the prophet has previously shown by saying: Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers (Malachi 4). He will also restore that which is due to death, and which he has postponed by living long. This the Lord also subsequently intimated here, when He forthwith added: [Mark 9:12] -- And how it is written of the Son of Man, that he must suffer many things and be despised. That is, just as many prophets have variously written many things about Christ's passion, so also Elias, when he comes, will suffer many things, being despised by the impious. Therefore, he will restore all things, first namely the hearts of men of that age, instructing them to believe in Christ, and to resist the perfidy of the Antichrist; then himself by putting down his own soul for the martyrdom of

faith in Christ. About whom is more fully narrated in the mystical discourse in the Apocalypse.

Mark 9:13

But I say to you, that Elias also came, and they did to him whatever they wanted, as it is written of him. He who is to come in the second advent of the Savior in bodily form, now came through John in spirit and power. They did to him whatever they wanted, that is they despised him, and beheaded him. [Mark 9:14] -- And coming to his disciples, he saw a great crowd around them, and scribes disputing with them. And immediately all the people, seeing him, were amazed, and they were afraid. And running to him, they greeted him. Notable in all places is the difference in the mind of the scribes and the crowd. For the crowd was with the disciples, and also the scribes; but, when the Lord came, immediately all the crowd was amazed and afraid, and running to greet him. The scribes are said to have shown nothing of devotion, faith, humility, or reverence to him. But what the crowd or the scribes were disputing with the disciples of the Lord, the evangelist does not say. However, it can, I believe, be rightly understood to be a question that was raised, why they, being disciples of the Savior, could not save the demoniac who was placed in the midst. This can be inferred from the following words of the Gospel, when it is said:

Mark 9:16–18

And he asked them: What are you discussing among yourselves? And one from the crowd answered: Teacher, I brought my son to you, who has a mute spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams, and grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. And I spoke to your disciples to cast it out, and they could not. It is noteworthy that the places always correspond to the circumstances. On the mountain, the Lord prays, is transformed, and reveals to his disciples the secrets of his majesty. Descending to the lower parts, he is met by the crowd and struck by the tears of the wretched. Above, he unveils the mysteries of the kingdom to his disciples; below, he reproaches the sins of infidelity of the crowds. Above, he reveals the Father's voice to those who can follow him; below, he expels evil spirits from those who are tormented. He still continues to do so now according to the quality of merits, letting some ascend while ceaselessly descending for others. For those who are still carnal and beginners, he strengthens, teaches, and chastises,

seeking the low places. But he glorifies the perfect, whose conversation is in heaven, by exalting them more highly, instructing them more freely about the eternal matters, and often teaching them things that cannot even be heard by the crowds. As for this demoniac whom the Lord cured when descending from the mountain, Mark indeed recounts him as being deaf and mute, but Matthew recalls him as being a lunatic.

It signifies those of whom it is written: The fool changes like the moon. They never remain in the same state, changing now to these, now to those vices, and growing and diminishing. They are mute for not confessing the faith: deaf for not even hearing the word of truth. They foam while they waste away in folly. For it is of fools and the languid and the dull to send foam of saliva from the mouth. They grind their teeth when they blaze with the fury of anger. They become rigid when they languish in laziness and live weakly without the zealous pursuit of virtue. But what he said: And I spoke to your disciples to cast it out, and they could not, secretly blames the apostles, since the inability to heal sometimes pertains not to the weakness of those healing, but to the faith of those who are to be healed, as the Lord says: Let it be done to you according to your faith (Matt. II).

Mark 9:19

And answering them, he said: O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you? Not that he was overcome by weariness, meek and gentle as he was, who did not open his mouth like a lamb before its shearer, nor did he burst forth into words of fury, but rather in the likeness of a doctor, if he sees a sick person acting against his precepts, he might say: How long shall I come to your house? How long shall I waste the industry of my art, with me ordering something and you accomplishing the opposite? But to this extent he was not angry at the man but at the vice, and he reproved the Jews through one man for their unbelief, that he immediately said: [Mark 9:19] -- Bring him to me. And they brought him. And when he saw him, immediately the spirit troubled him, and throwing him to the ground, he rolled about foaming. The spirit troubles and throws the boy brought to the Lord to the ground, because often when we try to turn to the Lord after sins, we are assaulted by greater and new attacks from the ancient enemy. This, indeed, the cunning adversary does, so that either he may instill a hatred of virtue, or vindicate the injury of his expulsion. Hence, indeed (to pass from the particular to the general), that at the beginnings of

the holy Church he inflicted so many grievous struggles of persecutions because he grieved that losses of souls had suddenly been inflicted upon his kingdom.

Mark 9:21

And he asked his father: How long has it been since this happened to him? And he said: From childhood. And often it cast him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. Let Julian be ashamed who dares to say that all men are born in the flesh without any contamination of sin, and as innocent in every way as Adam was when he was created. For what did this child have that he should be tormented by the bitterest demon from childhood, if he was not held by any bond of original sin, who is agreed to have not yet been able to have any personal sin? Let the Catholic confess, because no one is born immune from the stain of the first transgression, and let him invoke the grace of God, by which he is delivered from the body of death through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let the scribe learned in the kingdom of heaven understand that in this demoniac cured by the Lord is designated the salvation of all the faithful, who come into the world bound by the guilt of original fault, and are saved only by the faith and grace of one Redeemer Jesus Christ. But what was said: And often it cast him into the fire and into the water, designates the greatest crimes of human folly. For the burning of the fire must be referred to the fervor of anger. Water to the pleasures of the flesh, which by delights are wont to dissolve the mind. Or certainly the demoniac is carried into the fire, wherein the hearts of adulterers are inflamed, and into the waters which are wont to extinguish charity.

Mark 9:22

But if you can do anything, help us, have compassion on us. Jesus said to him: If you can believe, all things are possible to the one who believes. The Lord renders a fitting answer to the petitioner. For he himself said: If you can do anything, help us. And the Lord: If you can, he said, believe, I can have compassion and help you, for true faith deserves to obtain all that it healthily asks for. To which the leper who cried out faithfully: Lord, if you will, you can make me clean (Luke V), received a response suitable to his faith: I will, be clean (Ibid). [Mark 9:24] -- And immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, saying: I believe, Lord; help my unbelief. No one becomes supreme suddenly: but in good conduct, everyone begins from the smallest

things, so as to reach the great. For the beginnings of virtue are one thing, progress another, and perfection yet another. For if faith itself were not led to its perfection by certain stages, this one, when asked if he believed, would not answer: I believe, Lord; help my unbelief. For if he believed, why did he speak of unbelief? And if he knew he had unbelief, how did he believe? But because faith grows through the hidden inspiration of grace by the steps of one's merits, at one and the same time the one who did not yet believe perfectly both believed and was unbelieving.

Mark 9:25

And when Jesus saw the crowd running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again. The rebuke of the Lord is the power of the divine command. But he rebuked not the boy who was suffering harm, but the demon who was inflicting it. For whoever desires to correct a sinner must indeed exterminate the vice by rebuking and cursing it, but nourish the man by loving him. And well did the Lord who drives out the unclean spirit from the man at the same time command it not to enter him again. For he is truly freed from demonic domination, who avoids returning to the sins from which he was once cleansed by repenting by living poorly. [Mark 9:26] -- And crying out and greatly convulsing him, it came out of him. The unclean spirit, about to depart from the man, convulses him, and terrifies the onlookers with a frantic cry. For often the devil, while being expelled from the heart, generates sharper temptations in it than he had previously stirred up when he possessed it quietly.

Mark 9:26

And he became as dead; so that many said, he is dead. But Jesus, taking his hand, lifted him up, and he rose. Him whom the impious enemy had already been forced to flee and had struck down, rendering him like unto the dead, this pious Savior raised up with his gentle right hand touch. He showed by the power of saving that He was truly God, and also demonstrated by the manner of the human touch that He truly possessed the nature of flesh. For the insane Manichaeus denies that He was truly clothed in flesh: but He, by raising, cleansing, and enlightening so many with His touch, condemned that heresy even before it was born.

Mark 9:28

And when He had entered into the house, His disciples asked Him privately: Why could not we cast him out? And He said to them: This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting. While teaching the apostles how the most wicked demon should be expelled, He instructed all to life, so that we may know that all the gravest temptations of either unclean spirits or men are to be overcome by fasting and prayers. The wrath of the Lord, when kindled in vengeance of our sins, can also be appeased by this singular remedy. Generally, fasting is not only to abstain from food but also to refrain from all carnal temptations, indeed, to contain oneself from all passions of vices. Likewise, general prayer is not solely in the words with which we invoke divine clemency, but also in all things which we do in devout faith as service to our Creator, as the apostle testifies, saying: Always rejoicing, pray without ceasing (I Thess. V). For how can anyone invoke God with words at all hours and moments without ceasing? But then we pray without ceasing when we conduct those works alone which commend us to the piety of our Creator. By which fasting and what prayer, with the Lord's help, we will vanquish and repel all the snares of the ancient enemy.

Mark 9:30–31

And departing from there, they passed through Galilee, and he did not want anyone to know. But he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them, "The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And after being killed, on the third day he will rise again." He always mixes sorrow with prosperity, so that when they suddenly come, they will not terrify the apostles, but their minds will endure them by premeditation. For if it grieves them that he is to be killed, it ought to gladden them that he will rise again on the third day. [Mark 9:32] -- But they did not understand this saying, and they were afraid to ask him. This ignorance of the disciples is born not so much from their slowness of mind as from the love of the Savior, who, while still carnal and ignorant of the mystery of the cross, could not believe that he whom they knew as true God would die. And because they were used to hearing him often speak through figures, fearing the event of his death, they wanted to interpret what he spoke plainly about his betrayal and passion as figuratively signifying something else.

Mark 9:33

And they came to Capernaum. When they were in the house, he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent. For they had been disputing among themselves on the way about who was the greatest. The disciples' dispute seems to have arisen about primacy because they had seen Peter, James, and John taken apart onto a mountain, and it was believed that some secret had been entrusted to them there. But also, to Peter, according to what Matthew narrates, the keys of the kingdom of heaven were promised, and the Church of the Lord was to be built upon the rock of faith from which he had taken his name. Therefore, they were questioning whether those three, or Peter alone among all the apostles, was preeminent.

Mark 9:35

And sitting down, he called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first among you, he will be the last of all and the servant of all." And taking a child, he set him in the midst of them. And embracing him, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me. Seeing the disciples' thoughts, the Lord heals the desire for glory by the struggle for humility and warns that primacy is not to be sought: first he gives a gentle command of humility, and then he teaches by the example of childlike innocence. For he said, "Whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me;" either simply Christ's poor, he shows are to be received by those who intend to be greater for his honor's sake, or certainly he advises that they themselves be without malice like little children so that they preserve simplicity without arrogance, charity without envy, and devotion without anger. But in embracing the child, he signifies that the humble are worthy of his embrace and love, and such people, when they fulfill what he has commanded: "Learn from me, because I am gentle and humble of heart" (Matthew 11), can rightly boast and say: "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand will embrace me" (Song of Songs 2). Now well did he add, after saying, "Whoever receives one such child," "in my name," so that clearly the form of virtue, which, with nature as their guide, a child observes, they themselves might follow for the name of Christ, with the help of rational industry. But since he taught that he is received in children, clearly as the head in his members, he added and said:

Mark 9:37

"And whoever receives me, does not receive me, but him who sent me." Wanting himself to be believed as such and as great as the Father is. "So much so," he said, "is there no difference between me and him that whoever receives me, also receives him who sent me."

Mark 9:38

John answered him, saying: Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, who does not follow us, and we forbade him. John, loving the Lord with supreme devotion and therefore worthy of being loved in return, thought that he who does not use the office should be excluded from the benefit, but it is taught that no one should be barred from the good which he partially possesses, but rather should be encouraged towards that which he does not yet have. For it follows: But Jesus said: Do not forbid him; for there is no one who does a mighty work in my name who will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For whoever is not against you is for you. Taught by this sentence, the Apostle says: But whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice (Philippians I). But although he rejoices, even in those who proclaim Christ insincerely, and such persons doing signs in the name of Christ for the salvation of others are considered not to be forbidden, yet to such persons by these signs, their conscience is not rendered secure. Rather, on that day when they will say: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many mighty works (Matthew VII)? They will receive the answer: I never knew you; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity (Ibid.). Therefore, in heretics and evil Catholics, it is not the common sacraments, in which they are with us and are not against us, but the divisions contrary to the peace of truth by which they are against us and do not follow the Lord with us, that we must detest and forbid.

Mark 9:41

For whoever gives you a cup of cold water to drink because you belong to Christ, truly I tell you, he will not lose his reward (Psalm 140). We read in the prophet David: To excuse excuses in sins, that many presented quasi-just excuses for their sins, so that they seem to sin out of necessity what they willfully commit. The Lord, the searcher of hearts and minds, who foresees future thoughts in each individual, had said: Whoever receives one such child

in my name receives me. Someone could argue and say: I am hindered by poverty, my meager state restrains me so that I cannot practice hospitality. And He dispels this excuse by the simplest precept, that we should wholeheartedly offer a cup of water, and this cold, according to Matthew. He says cold water, not hot, so that the opportunity of poverty and shortage of firewood in heating would not be sought as an excuse. The Apostle instructs similarly to the Galatians: Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches (Gal. 6). And he encourages disciples towards the refreshment of their teachers. And because anyone could plead poverty and evade the command, he solves the imminent question before proposing it by saying: Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap (Ibid.).

Mark 9:42

And whoever shall cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck, and he were cast into the sea. Although this general sentence can be applied against all who cause someone to stumble, yet according to the context of the speech, it can also be understood as said against the apostles, who, disputing among themselves over who was the greatest, seemed to be contending over dignity with each other. And if they had remained in this vice, they could lose those whom they called to faith through their scandal, while seeing the apostles fighting among themselves over honor. What he said: It is better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, speaks according to the custom of the province, where among the ancient Jews the punishment for greater crimes was that they were drowned in the deep with a stone tied around them. And indeed it is better for an innocent person, however atrocious the temporal punishment, to end his bodily life, than by harming a brother, to deserve eternal death of the soul. And rightly, someone who can be scandalized is called little. For whoever is great, whatever he may see, whatever he may suffer, he does not depart from the faith. But whoever is little in mind and small, he seeks occasions to be scandalized.

Therefore it is necessary for us especially to take care of those who are small in faith, lest by our occasion they are offended and withdraw from the faith, and fall from salvation. It is to be noted certainly, that in our good work, sometimes the scandal of our neighbor must be avoided: but some-

times it is to be utterly disregarded. For in as much as we can avoid the scandal of our neighbors without sin, we ought to. But if scandal arises from the truth, it is more useful to permit scandal to arise, than to abandon the truth. Also, by the millstone, the circular and laborious nature of secular life is expressed, and by the depth of the sea, final damnation is designated. Therefore, whoever has been brought to the appearance of holiness, or destroys others by word or example; truly, it was better for this person to be bound to earthly deeds under an outward appearance until death, than to demonstrate to others the sacred duties in fault as something to imitate. For certainly if he alone fell, somehow the more tolerable punishment of hell would torture him.

Mark 9:43

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. Because he had previously taught not to cause those who believe in him to stumble, he now consequently admonishes us how much we should avoid those who cause us to stumble, that is, who strive by word or example to drive us to the ruin of sin. Indeed, he calls our necessary friend our hand, whose work and daily assistance we need. But if such a one wishes to harm us concerning our soul, he is to be excluded from our company, lest if we wish to share a part with the lost in this life, we perish with him in the future life. Which is also added: [Mark 9:44] -- Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. By the worm he designates the rottenness of hell, just as by the fire he designates the burning, or by the worm he means the late repentance of crimes, which will never cease to sting the conscience of the afflicted in torments: so that the fire is the punishment raging externally, the worm the pain accusing internally.

Mark 9:45

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter eternal life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell, the unquenchable fire, etc. In the foot, as in the hand, he teaches that dear ones who are incorrigible should be alienated from us, lest through the uncleanness of those whom we cannot correct, we too are polluted and perish. But just as the hand is necessary for us for our work, so such people are called feet because of their service and usefulness in our engagements.

Mark 9:47

And if your eye scandalizes you, cast it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. In plucking out the eye because of scandal, our same carnal friends, truly spiritual adversaries, are meant. But when we need their counsel and provision, and they try to deceive us with bad advice and turn us onto the path of error, their company must be entirely abandoned by us. Indeed, the Greek word "scandal" refers to what we might call a stumbling block or ruin and an occasion of being tripped. Some say "scandal" in Greek, in Latin "scruple". Therefore, he offends his brother who gives him an occasion of ruin by a less correct word or deed. It can also simply be said: If someone seems as necessary to us as a hand, foot, or eye, being useful, diligent, and sharp-sighted, yet causes us scandal and drags us into hell through discordant morals, we should not use or be refreshed by his temporal benefits, to the danger of our souls. Because the Lord has mentioned the worm and eternal fire thrice, it remains to say how we can avoid the stench of the worm and the torment of the fire. It continues:

Mark 9:49

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. For the stench of worms is usually born from the corruption of flesh and blood. Therefore, fresh meat is seasoned with salt so that, once the blood moisture is dried out, worms cannot breed. Thus, flesh and blood create worms, for carnal pleasure, which is not resisted by the seasoning of continence, generates eternal punishment for the luxurious. Whoever wishes to avoid this stench should strive to season both the body with the salt of continence and the mind with the seasoning of wisdom to restrain it from the stain of error and vice. It is remarkably said: "For every one shall be salted with fire. What is salted with salt wards off the decay of worms. But what is salted with fire, that is, seasoned with flames sprinkled with salt, not only drives away all contagion of worms but also consumes the very flesh that is so salted. The decrees of the divine law declare it to be usual in the matter of sacrifices that were burned on the altar, where in every sacrifice and offering it was commanded that salt be offered. Thus, salt signifies the sweetness of wisdom, and fire signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit. "For every one shall be salted with fire" because every chosen person ought to be cleansed from the

corruption of carnal desire by spiritual wisdom, so that they may be made a fitting sacrifice for the divine altars.

Thus it is fitting that, after saying "For every one shall be salted with fire," it added "And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. For he truly exists as the sacrifice of the Lord who, by purifying his body and soul from vices through the love of the Holy Spirit, consecrates himself to God. Not only is such a sacrifice sprinkled with salt, but it is also consumed by fire when not only the contagion of sin is driven away, but even the pleasure of the present life, which is in the flesh, is taken away from the minds of the chosen, and they long with a focused mind for the conversation of future life. Was not the sacrifice salted with sacred fire who said, "But our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. III)? From where also we expect the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, conformed to the body of his glory (Ibid.). For those who, with the most certain hope of future immortality, looked upon their frail body as already reformed in the likeness of the Lord's resurrection, lived as consecrated victims to God through spiritual fire even in the present, according to the word of the same apostle: "I beseech you, brothers, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God" (Rom. XV). We can rightly understand what is said: "For every one shall be salted with fire.

And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark IX), that the altar of God is the heart of the chosen, and the sacrifices to be offered on this altar are the good works of the faithful. In every sacrifice, salt should be offered because no good work exists that does not salt wisdom, cleansing it of all corruption of vain praise, and other perverse or superfluous thoughts. For the care of continence punishes the enticements of the flesh. The fire that consumes sacrifices on the altar is certainly the one of which John said: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Ibid. III); through whom our good works are helped so they may either commence or be perfected, or surely the fire of tribulation through which the patience of the faithful is exercised so that it may have perfect work. Therefore, everyone shall be salted with fire, and the sacrifice shall be salted with salt (Ibid. IX), because every faithful person who wants to avoid the eternal worm of torment must be chastened either by the fire of spiritual grace or by the tribulations coming from outside, so they can become a worthy sacrifice to God. This passage relates to the preceding parts, where the command was given to cut off the

scandalizing members: for this is also to be salted with fire, that is, to be exercised by temptations, to deny those close to us and loved ones for the love of Christ.

Mark 9:50

Good salt. But if the salt becomes insipid, with what will you season it? It is good to hear the word of God more frequently, to season the secrets of the heart with the salt of spiritual wisdom, indeed to become the salt of the earth with the apostles themselves, that is, to suffice for the minds of those still wise in earthly matters to be saturated. But if someone, once restored by the seasoning of truth, returns to apostasy, by what other teacher is he corrected, who rejected the sweetness of wisdom he himself tasted, either terrified by the world or enticed by its prosperity? To him aptly fits the saying of the wise man: Who will heal the enchanter struck by the serpent? Certainly, by this opinion, Judas Iscariot and his companions are not unreasonably believed to be specially designated, who, corrupted by greed, did not hesitate both to lose the rank of apostleship and to betray the Lord. Yet, because there are some who, while greater knowledge elevates them, are separated from the fellowship of others, and as if the more they know, the more they depart from the virtue of concord, it is rightly added:

Mark 9:50

Have salt in yourselves, and have peace among yourselves. For by salt indeed is designated the wisdom of the word. Therefore, he who strives to speak wisely should greatly fear lest his eloquence confound the unity of listeners. For salt without peace is not a gift of virtue, but an increase of damnation. For the better one knows, the worse he sins. And hence without excuse he will deserve punishment, who prudently, if he willed, could have avoided sin.

CHAPTER 10

Mark 10:1

And from there rising up, he comes into the regions of Judea beyond the Jordan. Up to this point the evangelist Mark narrated those things about the Lord which he did and taught in Galilee. Here he begins to narrate those things which he did, taught, or suffered in Judea. And first indeed beyond the Jordan to the east, then also on this side of the Jordan, when he came to Jericho, Bethany, and Jerusalem. For while the whole province of the Jews is generally called Judea to distinguish it from other nations, more specifically

its southern region is called Judea, to distinguish it from Samaria, Galilee, Decapolis, and other regions in the same province.

Mark 10:1

And again the crowds came together around him, and as was his custom, he again taught them. And the Pharisees approached him and questioned him if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife, testing him. And here one must note the difference in mindset between the crowds and the Pharisees. These came together to be taught and to have their sick healed, as the evangelist Matthew clearly recalls. But those approached to deceive the Savior and Teacher of truth by testing him. Nor is this surprising. For devotion of piety brought these, the goad of envy brought those. They ask, therefore, whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause, so that they might trap him in a sort of cunning argument, and whatever he answers, he will be subject to an accusation. If he says that a wife may be divorced for any reason and that others may be taken, the preacher of chastity will seem to be teaching contrary to himself. But if he answers that a wife should not be divorced for any cause, he will be held as guilty of sacrilege and acting against the teaching of Moses and through Moses of God. Therefore, the Lord tempers his response in such a way that he avoids their trap, invoking holy Scripture as testimony and opposing the natural law and the original sentence from God to the secondary one, which was granted not by God's will but by the necessity of sinners.

Mark 10:3–5

"What," he said, "did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." To which Jesus responded, "It was because of the hardness of your hearts that he wrote you this, etc." What he says is this: Can God be contrary to himself, commanding one thing at first and then breaking his own decree with a new command? It should not be thought so. But Moses, when he saw that due to the desire for subsequent wives, who might be wealthier, younger, or more beautiful, the first wives were either being killed or leading a miserable life, chose to allow discord rather than for hatred and murders to continue and be perpetrated. At the same time, notice that he did not say, because of the hardness of your hearts, God permitted you, but Moses; that, according to the Apostle, it may be seen as the counsel of a man, not a command of God.

Mark 10:6

From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. This is written in the beginning of Genesis. By saying male and female, He showed that second marriages are to be avoided. For He did not say male and females, as was sought from a prior divorce, but male and female, so that they might be bound in the companionship of one spouse. [Mark 10:7] -- For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife. Similarly, He said, Cleave to his wife, not to wives. [Mark 10:8] -- And the two shall become one flesh. Therefore now they are no longer two, but one flesh. The reward of marriage is that two become one flesh. Chastity joined to the spirit becomes one spirit. [Mark 10:9] -- What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. What God has joined, making one flesh out of man and woman, man cannot separate, except perhaps God alone. Man separates when, due to the desire for a second wife, he dismisses the first. God separates whom He has joined, when by mutual consent, for the service of God, because the time is short, thus we have wives as though we had none.

Mark 10:10

And in the house again, His disciples asked Him about the same matter. And He said to them: Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. In Matthew, it is written more fully: Whoever divorces his wife except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery (Matthew V). [Mark 10:12] -- Therefore, there is only one carnal cause, fornication: and one spiritual cause, the fear of God, so that a wife may be dismissed, as many are read to have done for the sake of religion. But no cause is prescribed by God's law, for the one who is left to marry another while she lives. [Mark 10:13] -- And they brought little children to Him that He might touch them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Not that they did not want them to be blessed by the voice and hand of the Savior, but because, not yet having complete faith, they thought He would be worn out by the importunity of those who brought them.

Mark 10:14

When Jesus saw them, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God be-

longs to such as these." He said significantly, "to such as these," not "to these," to show that it is not age that reigns, but character; and that the reward is promised to those who have similar innocence and simplicity. The Apostle also agrees with this sentiment: "Brothers, do not be children in understanding, but in malice be children, and in understanding be perfect." [Mark 10:15] -- Amen, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. As a child does not persist in anger, does not remember harm done, does not delight in seeing a beautiful woman, does not think one thing and speak another; so you, unless you have such innocence and purity of mind, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Otherwise, we are commanded to receive the kingdom of God, that is, the teaching of the Gospel, like little children, because as a child does not contradict his teachers in learning, nor constructs arguments and words against them resisting, but faithfully receives what is taught, and with fear obeys and is quiet; so we too in obeying must simply and without any objection act according to the words of the Lord.

Mark 10:16

And embracing them and laying His hands on them, He blessed them. By embracing, He blessed the children to signify that the humble in spirit are worthy of His blessing, grace, and love. [Mark 10:17] -- And as He went out onto the road, a certain man ran up, knelt before Him, and asked Him, saying, etc. I believe that this seeker of eternal life had heard from the Lord that only those who wish to be like little children are worthy of entering the kingdom of heaven, and therefore, being careful, he sought to know more surely, not through parables but openly, by what merits of deeds he might obtain eternal life.

Mark 10:18

But Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." Because he had called the teacher good and had not confessed him as God or the Son of God, he learned that, although a holy man, in comparison to God, no one is good, about whom it is said, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good" (Psalm 106). However, the one God who is good is not to be understood as the Father alone, but also the Son who says, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10); and also the Holy Spirit, because the Father will give the good Spirit from heaven to those asking him (Luke 11), that is, the one and

indivisible Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the only and one God, who is good. Therefore, the Lord does not deny that he is good, but signifies that he is God; he does not deny that he is a good teacher, but testifies that no teacher is good except God. This is the chastity of youthful innocence, which is set before us to be imitated if we want to enter the kingdom of God. It should indeed be noted that justice, kept to the time of the law, not only conferred the good things of the earth but also eternal life to its practitioners.

Mark 10:20

And he, answering, said, "Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth," etc. This man should not be thought to have tempted the Lord with any vow (as some have thought), nor to have lied about his life when he said that he had kept the commandments of the law, but simply to have confessed how he lived. Because if he were held guilty of lying or hypocrisy, by no means, having looked into the secrets of his heart, would Jesus be said to love him. For the Lord loves those who keep the commands of the law, although lesser; but nonetheless, he shows them what in the law was lesser, to those who wish to be perfect because he did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill. To which indeed pertains what is consequently joined here. [Mark 10:21] -- Go, sell whatever you have, and give, etc. Whoever wishes to be perfect ought to sell what he has, and not sell part of it like Ananias and Sapphira, but sell everything, and when he has sold it, give everything to the poor, and thus prepare for himself a treasure in the kingdom of heaven. Nor is this sufficient for perfection unless, after despising riches, he follows the Savior, that is, having forsaken evil, he does good. For it is easier to despise a purse than a will. Many, leaving behind riches, do not follow the Lord. However, he follows the Lord who is His imitator and walks in His footsteps. For he who says he believes in Christ ought to walk as He walked.

Mark 10:22

He who, saddened by the word, went away grieving. For he had many possessions. This is the sadness that leads to death. The cause of the sadness is rendered, because he had many possessions, that is, thorns and thistles arising, which choked the Lord's seed. [Mark 10:23] -- And looking around, Jesus said to His disciples: How difficult it is for those who have riches to

enter the kingdom, etc. It is clear indeed that those who strive here to multiply riches neglect to seek the joys of another life: but there is much difference between having and loving riches. Many indeed, having them, do not love; many, not having them, love. Similarly, others both have and love. Others rejoice neither to have nor to love the riches of the world, whose state is safer, because they can say with the Apostle: For to us the world is crucified, and we to the world (Gal. V). Hence Solomon does not say, he who has, but he who loves riches will not enjoy their fruits (Eccl. V). And the Lord Himself, explaining to the disciples who were amazed at the words of this sentence, added saying:

Mark 10: 24

Little children, how difficult it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God. Where it must be noted that he did not say, how impossible, but how difficult it is. For what is impossible cannot be done at all. What is difficult can be done with toil. For it can indeed be done, but with great labor, with the help of God's grace, that those who have riches, or trust in riches, divesting themselves of the fetters of avarice, may enter the gate of the heavenly kingdom: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," etc. (Matt. XIX). If it is easier for a camel, with its large and enormous limbs, to penetrate the narrow eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, then no rich man shall enter the kingdom of God. And how is it that in the Gospel, Matthew, Zacchaeus, and Joseph, or in the Old Testament, many rich men entered the kingdom of God? Unless perhaps because they learned, by the inspiration of the Lord, to consider riches as nothing or to forsake them completely from their whole heart. For did David trust in the riches of his kingdom? Who also sings of himself: "For I am poor and needy" (Psalm XXIV); and exhorts others, "If riches increase, do not set your heart on them" (Psalm LXI). I believe he did not dare to say, do not receive them.

Is it believable that Abraham preferred his wealth to the Lord, for whom he did not hesitate to strike his only heir? In a higher sense, it is easier for Christ to suffer for the lovers of the world than for the lovers of the world to be converted to Christ. For by the name of the camel, he wanted himself to be understood, who willingly bore the burdens of our humility and infirmity. For in whom is it more clearly understood than in him, what is written: "The greater you are, humble yourself in all things" (Eccli. III)? By the needle

he signifies the nails, by the nails the sufferings endured in his passion. Therefore, he says the eye of the needle is the straits of his passion. By which torn, he condescended to mend, that is, to restore as it were, the garments of our nature; so that after the fall, being better reformed, we may rejoice at the testimony of the Apostle saying: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. III).

Mark 10:26

And they were more astonished, saying to themselves, "And who can be saved?" To which this response refers, although the crowd of the poor, which could have been saved by the ruin of the rich, is incomparably greater, unless they understood that all who love riches, even if they cannot obtain them, are counted among the number of the rich. [Mark 10:27] -- And Jesus, looking at them, said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." It is not to be understood that the greedy and proud, who were signified by the name of that rich man, will enter the kingdom of heaven with their greed and pride: but it is possible for God, that through His word, as we see both to have been done and to be done daily, that they are converted from the greed for temporal things to the love of eternal things, and from pernicious pride to salutary humility.

Mark 10:28

Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and have followed You." Great confidence—Peter was a fisherman, he was not rich, he sought food by hand and skill, and yet he speaks confidently, "We have left everything." And because it is not enough only to leave, he adds what is perfect: "And have followed You." We have done what You commanded, what then will You give us as a reward?

Mark 10:29–30

Jesus responded and said: Amen I say to you: There is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or fields for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and fields, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life. Some, using this kind of statement as an occasion, propagate the Jewish fable of a thousand-year reign after the resurrection of the just, during which all that we have given up for God's sake will be repaid to us a hun-

dredfold, and eternal life will be granted besides. And the foolish do not see that, even if in other matters the promise is worthy, the remuneration of wives a hundred times over, according to other evangelists, would appear scandalous, especially since the Lord Himself testifies that in the resurrection there will be no marrying, and asserts that those things given up for His sake will be received in this present time with persecutions. But those Chiliasists confirm that all those persecutions, like other contrary things, are wholly absent from their millennium. Therefore, this is the sense: Whoever has left carnal things for the Gospel of Christ will receive spiritual goods, which, in their worth and merit, will be as if a hundredfold number were compared to a small number.

Because clearly, from the brothers and associates of his purpose, who are bound to him in spiritual glue, he will receive much greater affection even in this life. Read the Acts of the Apostles, where it says that the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one, and all things were common among them, and there was no needy person among them (Acts 4), who had left their own for the Lord's sake. Of whom also the Apostle says, "As having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor. 6). Certainly, what he says, "He will receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and fields with persecutions" (Mark 10), could be understood as a deeper signification. For the number one hundred, transferred from the left to the right, although it seems to hold the same figure in the bending of the fingers which ten had in the left, it greatly surpasses in magnitude. Because indeed, those who despise temporal things for the kingdom of God, even in this life full of persecutions, taste the joy of the same kingdom with certain faith, and in the expectation of the heavenly homeland (which is rightly signified in the right hand), they enjoy the most sincere love of all the elect equally.

But because many do not complete the pursuit of virtues with the same intention of piety with which they begin, but either cool down after receiving the love of virtues or completely relapse into the mire of crimes, a terrifying sentence is immediately added.

Mark 10:31

"But many that are first shall be last, and the last first. For example, see Judas, who turned from an apostle into an apostate, and you will say that many that are first shall be last; see the thief on the cross, who became a confessor, and

on the same day he was crucified for his sins, rejoicing in paradise with Christ by the grace of faith, and you will say that the last shall be first. But also every day we see many in lay attire excelling in the great merits of life, and others who, from their earliest age, have been fervent in spiritual zeal, yet at the end become sluggish in idleness, growing weak, and finishing in the flesh what they began in the spirit with lazy foolishness. [Mark 10:32] -- And they were on the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going ahead of them, and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. Therefore, the disciples, proceeding with the Lord towards Jerusalem, were amazed and afraid because they remembered his word in which he had predicted that he would suffer much from the chief priests and scribes and would be killed, fearing that they themselves might be killed with him, or at least that he whose life and teaching they rejoiced in, would fall into the hands of his enemies.

Mark 10:32

And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was going to happen to him. 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles, and they will mock him, and will spit on him, and will scourge him, and will kill him, and after three days he will rise again.' Our Redeemer, foreseeing that his passion would disturb the spirits of his disciples, foretold to them both the penalty of his passion and the glory of his resurrection well in advance, so that when they saw him dying (as had been foretold), they might not doubt that he would also rise again. Here he most clearly refutes the madness of the pagans, who are accustomed to ridicule his cross, when he shows both the time of his approaching passion as if he were foreseeing future events, and approaches the place of his death as if he were unafraid."

Mark 10:35

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come to him, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, thou wouldst do it for us. And he said to them: What will you that I should do for you? And they said: Grant to us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. Matthew writes that their mother asked the Lord for this on their behalf; but Mark, wishing to reveal their desire and counsel to the readers,

omits the intervening mother, and says rather that they themselves asked, which he knew had been asked at their request through the mother. Finally, the Lord, according to both Evangelists, replied not to the mother but to them: [Mark 10:38] -- You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the cup that I drink of, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized? And they said to him: We can. They know not what they ask, who seek from the Lord the seat of glory which they had not yet deserved. Indeed, the summit of honor was already pleasing to them, but first they had to traverse the path of labor. They desired to reign on high with Christ, but first they had to suffer humbly for Christ. For by the term of the cup or baptism, he designates the passion of martyrdom, through which it became fitting for both him and them to be perfected. Hence, elsewhere, he speaks of his passion: But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished (Luke 12)? And as he approached his passion, he prayed, saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me (Mark 14).

Mark 10:39

But Jesus said to them, "You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you shall be baptized. The question arises, in what manner did the sons of Zebedee, that is, James and John, drink the cup of martyrdom, or how were they baptized with the baptism of the Lord, when Scripture narrates that only the Apostle James was beheaded by Herod; however, John ended his life by natural death. But if we read the ecclesiastical histories, in which it is reported that he too, for martyrdom, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, and then emerged as a champion to receive the crown of Christ and was immediately exiled to the island of Patmos, we will see that his spirit did not lack martyrdom, and that John drank the cup of confession, which the three youths drank in the fiery furnace, even though the persecutor did not shed his blood. But he adds:

Mark 10:40

To sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to give to you, but to those for whom it is prepared, is thus to be understood: The kingdom of heaven is not for the giver, but for the receiver. For there is no respect of persons with God (Romans II), but whoever presents himself worthy of the kingdom of heaven, he will receive what is prepared not for the person, but for the life. If therefore you are such as who will attain the kingdom of heav-

en, which my Father has prepared for those who triumph and are victorious, you too shall receive it. Likewise, it is not mine to give to you, but to those for whom it is prepared. It is not mine to give to the proud, for this is what you still are. But if you wish to receive it, cease to be what you are. It is prepared for others, and you be those others, and it shall be prepared for you. What does it mean, be others? First humble yourselves, who now wish to be exalted.

Mark 10:41

And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant about James and John. The ten apostles did not become indignant with the mother of the sons of Zebedee, nor did they attribute the audacity of the request to the woman, but to the sons, who, unaware of their own measure, were inflamed with excessive desire. To whom also the Lord had said: You do not know what you are asking. [Mark 10:42] -- But Jesus, calling them, said to them: You know that those who are considered to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, etc. Humble and meek teacher, he neither reproaches the two asking with excessive greed, nor does he rebuke the remaining ten with indignation and envy, but he sets such an example, by which he teaches that he is greater who is lesser, and that he becomes the master who is the servant of all. Therefore, in vain do those ask immoderately, or do these ones grieve over the desire for greatness, since one comes to the pinnacle of virtues not by power, but by humility. Finally, he proposes his own example, so that if his words were lightly esteemed, they might blush at his deeds. And he says:

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Note what we have often said, that he who serves is called the Son of Man, and to give his life as a ransom for many; when he assumed the form of a servant, to shed his blood for the world. And he did not say, to give his life as a ransom for all, but for many, that is, for those who were willing to believe.

Mark 10:46

And they come to Jericho. And as he was going out of Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, a blind man, was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,

he began to cry out, etc. Matthew, in this place, says two blind men were sitting by the roadside and crying out to the Lord, who were illuminated. But Luke says that as he approached Jericho, a blind man was illuminated by him in a similar order. No wise person should assert that the Evangelists write contrary to each other, but rather that one writes more fully what the other omits. Indeed, Matthew reports that the Lord illuminated two blind men, while Mark chose to mention one being illuminated, yet does not deny the presence of the other, which should be understood as one of them being particularly notable. This is also sufficiently clear by the fact that Mark mentioned both his name and his father's name, which rarely happens with those healed by the Lord, and only because Jesus also expressed by name Jairus, the synagogue leader, whose daughter Jesus raised. It shows further by this that the synagogue leader was notable in that place. Undoubtedly, therefore, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, having fallen from some great fortune, was of very well-known and famous misery, who not only was blind but also sat begging.

Hence, Mark wanted to mention only him, as his illumination brought such fame to the miracle as his notable calamity. Therefore, the blind whom the Lord illuminated by calling out to him are people ignorant of the true light (which is Christ), but, given to recognize and confess their blindness and to seek the light of truth. Jericho, which is said to be interpreted as "moon," signifies the defect of our mutability and mortality. This is clarified especially by that parable in the Gospel where a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers, and, wounded and stripped by them, was brought back to health through the compassion of the Samaritan, signaling that humankind, falling from the vision of supreme peace into the deadly desire of this world, is brought back through the Savior to the life which it had lost by erring. Therefore, the Lord approaching Jericho restored vision to the blind, because coming in the flesh and approaching passion, he brought many to the faith and confession of divine knowledge. For it was not in the early times of his incarnation, but a few years before he suffered, that is, after he began to be thirty years old, he exhibited to the world the ministry of the word by which it was illuminated. Yet, departing from Jericho, he illuminated the blind because, rising from the dead and ascending to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles and dispersed them to illuminate all the nations of the world.

Moreover, approaching Jericho, he illuminated one, and departing from Jericho, he illuminated two. This typifies that before his passion, he preached to only one people, the Jews, but after his resurrection and ascension, he more openly revealed through the apostles both to Jews and Gentiles the mysteries of his eternal divinity and the humanity he assumed. And Mark writes that he illuminated one, looking specifically to the salvation of the Gentiles, who were utterly deprived of the light of truth. Thus, as notable as was the blindness of their infidelity, so notable became the grace of the Savior illuminating them. And rightly, Mark, who was writing the Gospel among the Gentiles, says one was illuminated, matching the figure of those he was teaching to faith and salvation. Matthew, however, who wrote his Gospel for believers from the Hebrews, which was also to come to the knowledge of the Gentiles, rightly says two were illuminated, to teach that the same grace of faith pertains to both peoples. This is also maintained in the ensuing reading of the donkey on which the Lord deigned to sit. Matthew, who evangelized to the faithful from the Jews, reports both a donkey and its colt brought to the Lord. The other three Evangelists, however, who wrote for the Church gathered from the nations, mention only the donkey brought to the Lord, entirely silent about the mother. They simply figure the faith of the Gentiles; while Matthew also indicates by the order of his narrative that the faithful Gentile people were born from the faithful synagogue.

Therefore, as the Lord and his disciples, and a large crowd, were departing from Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; because with the Lord ascending to heaven, many faithful following, and indeed all the elect from the beginning of the world entering with him into the gate of the heavenly kingdom, immediately the Gentile people, long blind in unbelief, having heard of the coming of the Savior, began to have the hope of their salvation and illumination. It is said appropriately that he was sitting by the way begging. For one begs sitting by the way who, not yet entering the path of truth or knowing it, strives with diligent intention and desire for salvation to reach it, and persistently investigates what true religious worship is. This is especially shown in the story of the centurion Cornelius, who, by frequent prayers, prayed to the God he worshiped to deign to illuminate him. What does it mean to hear in passing, but to restore light while standing, if not that by his humanity he pitied, and by the power of his divinity he

dispelled the darkness from us? For he who was born and suffered for us, who rose and ascended into heaven, as it were passed; because this action was temporal. But standing, he illuminated the blind because the eternity of the Word does not pass as that dispensation did, but remains renewing all things. To stand of God is to arrange all things in unchangeable thought.

Therefore, he who heard the voice of the petitioner in passing, restored light standing. For although he endured temporal things for us, he nevertheless gave us light from that which does not know the change of mutability. But he who worshiped God, prayed frequently to deign to illuminate him.

Mark 10:47–48

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me." Hearing Jesus, the blind man prays for mercy, and many were trying to prevent him from calling out, but he does not desist. For the people of the nations, having recognized the fame of the name of Christ, sought to become His partakers; many opposed, first the Jews, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, then also the Gentiles frequently exerted a sharper and stronger persecution so that the world, destined to receive light and healing from Christ, would not call upon Him. Nevertheless, the insane fury of those attacking could not deprive those who were predestined to eternal life of the salvation arranged for them.

Mark 10:49

And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Here stands He who previously was passing by. In this matter, the Lord intimates something from which knowledge of His humanity and divinity can be usefully understood. For He heard the blind man crying out while passing by, but standing, He exhibited the miracle of illumination. And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; rise, He is calling you." The Lord calls the blind man crying out to Him, when to the people of nations desiring the knowledge of truth, He entrusts the word of faith through holy preachers. Truly, those who call the blind man, tell him to take heart, to rise, and come to the Lord. When preaching the word to the untaught, they tell them to have hope of salvation, to arise from the lethargy of vices, and to equip themselves

for the pursuit of virtues by which they may merit illumination. Saying with the prophet: "Approach him and be enlightened" (Psalm 34); and again: "Arise, you who sleep, and rise from the dead, and Christ will illuminate you" (Ephesians 5). And because the early Church from the Gentiles was so fervent with the desire for the promised light in Christ, that many, having forsaken the world's resources, followed the evangelical life naked, in order to merit to have eternal treasure in heaven, it is rightly added about the blind man being illuminated:

Mark 10: 50

Throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to him. Indeed, he throws off his cloak and springs up so that, arriving, he might be illuminated by Christ, who, casting off the fetters of the world, hurries toward the giver of eternal light with an unencumbered mind. [Mark 10:51] -- And Jesus, responding, said to him: What do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him: Rabboni, that I may see. Did the one who could restore light not know what the blind man wanted? But he wants this to be requested, which he foresees that we should ask and that he should grant. For he persistently urges us to prayer and says: For your Father knows what you need before you ask him (Matthew 6:8). Therefore, for this reason, he requires that it be asked; for this, he requires that the heart be stirred to prayer. Hence also the blind man immediately adds: Rabboni, that I may see. Behold, the blind man asks light from the Lord, not gold. He considers it of little value to seek anything outside the light, for even if a blind man can possess anything, without light he cannot see what he has. Let us imitate him whom we have heard to be saved both in body and mind. Let us not seek false riches, not earthly gifts, not transient honors from the Lord, but light. Indeed, that light which we can see with the holy angels, which neither a beginning initiates nor an end confines. To that light indeed the way is faith. Hence rightly and by illuminating the blind man, the response is given at once.

Mark 10: 52

Go, your faith has made you well. And immediately, he said, he saw, and followed him on the way. He sees and follows, who does what he understands to be good. He sees, however, but does not follow, who understands the good indeed, but disregards doing it well. For he follows Jesus the Lord, who imitates. Hence He says: If anyone serves me, let him follow me (John XII).

Therefore, let us consider the path He walks, so that we may deserve to follow. Behold, although He is the Lord and creator of angels, about to assume our nature which He created, He came into the womb of a virgin. Nevertheless, He did not wish to be born in this world among the rich, He chose poor parents, and thus the lamb which was to be offered for Him was absent, the mother found young doves and a pair of turtledoves for the sacrifice. He wished to prosper in this world, endured reproaches and mockery, spits, lashes, slaps, a crown of thorns, and the cross. And because we fell from internal joy through the delight of corporeal things, He showed with what bitterness we may return there.

CHAPTER 11

Mark 11:1

And when they were approaching Jerusalem, and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, and said to them: Go into the village opposite you. Bethany is a small village or town on the slope of the Mount of Olives, about fifteen stades from Jerusalem, as the evangelist John manifests, where Lazarus was raised from the dead, whose tomb is now demonstrated there with a constructed church. Bethany, moreover, is called the house of obedience. And suitably the Lord, about to come to Jerusalem and redeem the world with his blood, first elevated Bethany by the dignity of his presence, and there he was anointed with mystical chrism by a devout woman, because undoubtedly, before his passion, teaching many, he made for himself a house of obedience where he would dwell through the Spirit of grace, and being delighted by their pious action, he himself was anointed as if with a fragrant ointment. Hence this city is said to be situated on the Mount of Olives, to designate that the Church by the grace of its founder is to be saved, who refreshes us with the anointing of spiritual charisms and the eternal light of knowledge and piety. From whence elsewhere, when he said: A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, he immediately added: Neither do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel (Matt. V).

Because the same Mount of Olives, that is, the highest distributor of spiritual graces, who elevates his city to be prominent, also anoints it with the oil of gladness so it can shine, lest it fail. And because he did not want the light to be placed under a bushel, he sent the disciples into the village opposite them, that is, he sent teachers who would penetrate unlearned and barbarous places of the whole world, like the walls of a village set opposite, by

evangelizing. And rightly two are sent, either for the knowledge of truth and purity of action, or for the sacrament of twin love, namely of God and neighbor, to be preached throughout the whole world.

Mark 11: 2

And immediately upon entering it, you will find a colt tied, upon which no man has yet sat. Untie it and bring it. And if anyone says to you: What are you doing? say: Because the Lord needs it, and immediately he will send it here. Entering the world, the holy preachers found the people of the nations ensnared by the bonds of perfidy. For each was bound by the cords of their sins; not only of the nations, but also of the Jews. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. III). Therefore, in Matthew, the donkey together with the colt is found tied. The donkey, indeed, which was yoked and tamed, represents the Synagogue that bore the yoke of the law, while the colt of the donkey, untamed and free, signifies the people of the nations. Upon which no man has yet sat, because no rational teacher had yet applied the restraining bridle of correction, by which he might compel the tongue to refrain from evil or to go on the narrow path of life, or provided the garments of salvation by which they would be spiritually warmed, through beneficial advice for the people of the nations. A man would sit upon it if any rational person corrected its foolishness by suppressing it. Therefore, not unreasonably can the two disciples assigned to present the animals to the Lord be understood as the two orders of preachers, one directed to the Gentiles, the other to the circumcision.

Mark 11: 4

And going, they found the colt tied outside the gate at the crossroads, and they untied it. The colt is rightly found outside the gate at the crossroads. The gate, indeed, is He who says: I am the gate for the sheep. Through me, if anyone enters he will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasture. This colt, that is, the people of the nations, lacked these pastures of life, as they still stood tied outside this gate at the crossroads. And rightly at the crossroads, because they did not hold a certain single path of life and faith, but followed many uncertain and erring paths of heresies. [Mark 11:5] -- And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing untying the colt?" In the Gospel of Luke, it is written thus: "So those who were sent went and found it just as He had told them, a colt standing there. As they were un-

tying the colt, its owners said to them, 'What are you untying the colt for?' " And quite appropriately. For it had many owners, since it was not given to one doctrine and superstition, but miserably carried off into various and diverse errors at the whim of unclean spirits, proceeding to mute idols as led. Hence, by a certain customary usage of Scripture, it is said to be common, which is unclean. Just as the voice from heaven says to Peter, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common" (Acts 10). Because he who is holy belongs to God alone and is shared with no one. But he who is a sinner and unclean belongs to many. For many demons possess him, and thus he is called common.

Mark 11:7

They said to them as Jesus had commanded, and they let them go, and they brought the colt to Jesus. Those who had opposed untying the colt quieted upon hearing the name of the Lord. Because the masters of errors, who resisted the teachers of the gentiles coming to salvation, defended their darkness until, with miracles attesting, the power of the true owner and Lord shone forth. But after the power of the Lord's faith appeared, with the complaints of the adversaries giving way, the assembly of believers was freely brought to God, whom they carried in their hearts. [Mark 11:7] -- And they put their garments on it, and He sat on it. The garments of the apostles can be understood as the doctrine of virtues, the explanation of Scriptures, or certainly the varieties of ecclesiastical doctrines, by which those hearts of men, formerly bare and cold, are covered so they may be made worthy of Christ as the rider.

Mark 11:8

But many spread their garments on the way. When the Lord was borne on a donkey, many spread their garments on the way, because the holy martyrs, stripping themselves of their own fleshly clothing, prepare the way for the simpler servants of God with their blood, so that, with an unhindered step of mind, they may proceed to the walls of the heavenly city where Jesus leads. Likewise, our Savior tends towards Jerusalem sitting on a donkey when he, ruling the soul of each believer, that is, his beast of burden, leads to the inner vision of peace. He also sits on the beast when he universally presides over the holy Church and inflames it with a desire for heavenly peace. But many spread their garments on the way, for they subjugate their bodies through

abstinence to prepare the way to the mind, or they present good examples to those who follow.

Mark 11:8

But others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. And those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting: Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. They cut branches or twigs from the trees, who in the teaching of truth extract words and sentences of the Fathers from their eloquence, and submit these on the way of God to the mind of a coming listener with humble preaching. But those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting: Hosanna. Indeed, the Jewish people went ahead, the Gentiles followed. And because all the chosen, whether they could have been in Judea or those who now exist in the Church, believed and believe in the Mediator of God and men, those who go ahead and those who follow shouted Hosanna. Hosanna is said in Latin as save us. From Him, both the former sought salvation, and the present seek. They confess the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord, because there is one hope, one faith of the preceding and following peoples. For just as they were healed by witnessing His passion and resurrection, so we are saved by His past passion and by His resurrection enduring through the ages. For whom our ancestors from the Jewish people believed and loved to come, this one we believe has come and love, and we are kindled with desire for Him, so that we may behold Him face to face.

Mark 11:10

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest. And he entered Jerusalem into the temple, etc. We read in the Gospel of John that the crowds, having been fed with five loaves and two fishes, wanted to seize Jesus and make him king; but to prevent this from happening, he fled to the mountain and prayed. Now, however, as he comes to Jerusalem to suffer, he does not avoid those who make him king, who lead him to the royal city with a glorious procession and hymns worthy of the Son of God and king; he does not suppress the voices of those who proclaim the restoration of the kingdom of patriarch David in him and the recovery of the blessings of old. Why, then, does he now willingly embrace what he avoided before by fleeing, and not refuse to accept the kingdom, which while still living in the world he did not wish to receive, but now, about to depart from

the world through the passion of the cross, he does not refuse to accept, unless it is to openly teach that he is a king not of a temporal and earthly, but of an eternal empire in heaven? To which kingdom indeed he would arrive through the contempt of death, the glory of resurrection, and the triumph of ascension. Hence it is that after the resurrection, appearing to the disciples, he said:

All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me, and other things of the same place. It should certainly be noted how great a consonance there is between the crowd praising the Lord and the voice of the archangel Gabriel announcing to the virgin mother, who said: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever (Luke I). Now, the Lord took the seat or kingdom of David to call the people, to whom David once provided the reins of the temporal kingdom as well as examples of justice, and whom they were accustomed to inspire with the modulations of spiritual hymns to faith and love for their Creator, to the heavenly and immortal kingdom by means of words, gifts, deeds, and promises worthy of such a mediator between God and men, and to lead them to the very vision of God the Father. In this it is joined: Hosanna in the highest, that is, salvation. This clearly shows that the coming of Christ is not only the salvation of men but of the whole world; uniting the earthly with the heavenly, so that every knee shall bow to him, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. It should certainly be noted that the word Hosanna, a Hebrew word, is composed of two parts, corrupted and intact.

For save or save us is said by them Osi, while anna is an interjection of one who is beseeching. Just as among the Latins there is an interjection for one who is in pain, "heu," and an interjection for one who is marveling, "papae. Finally, in the hundred and seventeenth psalm, where the seventy interpreters translated "O Lord, save me," in Hebrew it is written: Anna Adonai, osi anna. This our interpreter Jerome, elucidating more diligently, translated thus: I beseech you, O Lord, save I beseech. For it signifies the same thing, "O Lord," through the interjection of beseeching, as "I beseech you, O Lord," through the very word of supplication. Hosanna thus signifies "save, I beseech," with the vowel letter i, which terminates the first word when it is perfectly said osi, being consumed by the force of the vowel letter a, with which the following word begins anna. Which the metrical poets call synaloepha in

scanning verses, although when scanning they leap over the written letter; however, in this word Hosanna, the letter i is neither even written, but with the sense of the speakers preserved, is utterly extinguished.

Mark 11:11

And he entered Jerusalem into the temple. Having entered the city, he first went to the temple, showing us the form of religion which we should follow. So that when by chance we enter a village or town or any other place where there is a house dedicated to the worship of God, we first go to this; and, after we have commended ourselves to the Lord through the duty of prayers, we then withdraw to attend to the temporal business for which we came. However, as the time of the Passion approached, the Lord wished to draw near to the place of the Passion and remain there, where at the appointed and predetermined time he could be found by those through whom the Passion was to be accomplished. Through this, he also intimated to all those hearing that he would face death not unwillingly, as the profane thought, but of his own will. When the hour was approaching, he boldly went to the place where he had foretold far in advance through himself and his prophets that he would suffer. It should be noted that this entry of his into Jerusalem occurred five days before Passover, during which he decided to fulfill the mystery of his most holy Passion. For John narrates that six days before Passover, he came to Bethany, where a supper was made for him, and many reclining at the table, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed him with mystical ointment;

and the next day, sitting on a donkey, with a large crowd meeting him with palms, he came to Jerusalem. Here, not only the harmony in things but also in the times of the Old and New Testaments, the shadow and the truth, the law and the Gospel, must not be passed over in silence. For it is written in the law, with the Lord speaking to Moses and Aaron: "This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Speak to the whole congregation of Israel, and say to them: On the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb according to their ancestral houses, a lamb for each household. And shortly after: "And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight" (Exodus 12). Therefore, on the tenth day of the first month, the lamb to be sacrificed at Passover was commanded to be brought into the house, because also on the tenth day of

the same month, that is, five days before Passover, the Lord was to enter the city in which he would suffer.

And just as the lamb chosen from the whole flock awaited the certain day of its sacrifice, so also the Lord, as the whole council of elders and leaders conspired against him, steadfastly awaited the hour in which he would offer himself as a sacrifice to God and a victim in the odor of sweetness for the salvation of the world. The lamb was sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight, and the Lord, at the same hour, eating the lamb with his disciples, where he completed the decrees of the legal Passover, immediately went out with them to the place of prayer, where, being captured and bound by the Jews, he began at once the mysteries of his blessed suffering.

Mark 11:11

And having looked around at everything, since it was already evening, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. He did not do this just once; but for all five days after he had gone up to Jerusalem until the time of the Passion, he was accustomed to do this very thing: that during the day he would teach in the temple, but at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as we read in Luke. For by teaching the unbelievers, he diligently fulfilled the duty of correction. However, by staying among the faithful, he graciously exhibited the kindness of his favor to them. It is well noted that, after looking around at everything, he went out to Bethany. Indeed, the internal judge examines the hearts of all, and when he does not find a place to rest his head among those who oppose and resist the truth, he withdraws to the faithful and rejoices in making a dwelling with the Father in those who obey the word. For Bethany is called the house of obedience. This also must be understood, that the Lord was of such great poverty, and so did not flatter anyone, that he found no host, no lodging in that greatest city, but stayed in the small country place with Lazarus and his sisters. For their village is Bethany.

Mark 11:12

And the next day, when they went out from Bethany, he was hungry. He was hungry, either showing the truth of human flesh or desiring the salvation of believers, burning with zeal against the unbelief of Israel.

Mark 11:13

And when he saw from afar a fig tree having leaves, he went to see if perhaps he might find anything on it. And when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And answering, Jesus said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again. Just as the Lord was accustomed to saying many things in parables, so also he was accustomed to doing certain things in parables. For what reason would there be for him to seek fruit on a fig tree when he was hungry, when any man knew that it was not yet the time for figs, and to condemn the tree to an eternal curse for not having fruit at that time, unless, by this act, he intended to admonish the people whom he was teaching by word, that no one producing leaves but not fruit, that is, displaying the words of righteousness without deeds, would deserve to be cut down and cast into the fire? For every tree is known not by its flowers, not by its leaves, but by its fruit; that is, every man is tested and proven not by the reputation of fame or the pomp of words, but by the testimony of their actions. Therefore, the Lord, being hungry, saw a fig tree having leaves and came to seek fruit on it, but did not find any.

Because desiring the salvation of the human race, he saw Judea having the words of the law and the prophets, and came to test, by teaching, correcting, and performing miracles, if he might find any fruit of faith and life in their hearts. But because the fig tree was found to have leaves without fruit, it is condemned, because Judea, which resounded with the words of Scripture without deeds, deserved to be punished with vengeance. However, I would say this, not that the entire Synagogue was rejected, from which certainly the early Church was constructed. But that portion of the Synagogue which refused to feed the hungry Christ with good works deservedly earned condemnation, preferring to be overshadowed by the leaves of spiritual words rather than to be adorned with the fruits of the Spirit. To them, he says elsewhere: "I go, and you will seek me, and in your sin you will die" (John 5:34). This passage, indeed, fits with that parable of his, where he says: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and did not find any. He then said to the vinedresser: Behold, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down, why does it even occupy the ground? But he answered and said to him: Lord, leave it for this year also, until I dig around it and put manure on it. And if it bears fruit, well;

but if not, you shall cut it down (Luke 13:6-9). The vinedresser is the order of the apostles and spiritual doctors, who diligently called the Synagogue to repentance, lest it perish, and strove to supplicate the Lord for its salvation. Especially James, the brother of the Lord, who was put in charge of governing the Church in Jerusalem. But because that Synagogue neither in the legal edicts, nor in the prophetic declarations, nor in the grace of the shining Gospel itself, agreed to bear the fruit of obedience, it remained a sterile fig tree for three years and was rejected by the Lord and overturned by eternal malediction. For it was not only cast away from the lot of the elect, but also cut off from the very ground it occupied in vain. But also you, if you do not wish to hear in judgment from Christ: Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire, for I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat (Matthew 25:41), beware of being a sterile tree in this life; rather, offer to the poor Christ who is hungry the fruit of piety he needs.

Mark 11:15

And they come to Jerusalem. And when he had entered the temple, he began to cast out those who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves. What the Lord did by cursing the barren fig tree as a symbol, he soon showed more clearly by casting out the wicked from the temple. For the tree did not sin in that it did not have fruit when the Lord was hungry, since the time for fruit had not yet come; but the priests sinned by conducting secular business in the house of the Lord, and they neglected to bear the fruit of piety which they owed, and which the Lord hungered for in them. The Lord withered the tree with a curse, so that those who saw or heard might more greatly understand that they would be condemned by divine judgment if they were without the fruits of deeds, but only relied on the praise of religious speech, or on the appearance and covering of flourishing leaves. But because they did not understand, he then exercised the necessary severity of deserved vengeance upon them. And he cast out the commerce of human affairs from that house, in which it was commanded that only divine things be conducted, sacrifices and prayers be offered to God, the word of God be read, heard, and sung.

And indeed it is to be believed that he found only those things being sold or bought in the temple which were necessary for the ministry of the same temple, based on what we read happening elsewhere, when he entered the

same temple and found in it sellers and buyers of sheep, oxen, and doves. Clearly, it is to be believed that all these things were bought by those who came from afar from the locals, so that they might be offered in the house of the Lord. If, therefore, the Lord did not even want those things to be sold in the temple which he wanted to be offered in the temple, namely because of the greed or fraud that is usually the crime of merchants, how great a punishment, do you think, would he inflict if he found anyone there engaged in laughter or idle talk, or enslaved to any other vice? For if the Lord does not allow temporal business to be conducted in his house, which can be conducted freely elsewhere, how much more do those things deserve celestial wrath that are not allowed anywhere, if they are conducted in buildings consecrated to God? But because the Holy Spirit appeared upon the Lord in the form of a dove, rightly, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are signified by doves. Who, then, are those in the temple of God today who sell doves, but those in the Church who take a price for the imposition of hands?

Through this imposition, namely, the Holy Spirit is given from heaven. Therefore, the dove is sold when the imposition of hands, through which the Holy Spirit is received, is provided for a price. But our Redeemer overturned the seats of those who sold doves, because he destroys the priesthood of such merchants. Hence, sacred canons condemn the Simoniac heresy and command that those who seek a price for conferring ordinations be deprived of the priesthood. Therefore, the seat of those who sell doves is overturned, because those who sell spiritual grace are deprived of the priesthood either before humans or before the eyes of God.

Mark 11:16

And He would not allow anyone to carry vessels through the temple. He speaks of those vessels which were brought in for the sake of trading. Moreover, far be it that the Lord would cast out from the temple the vessels dedicated to God, or prohibit them from being brought into the temple, where He provided an example of His future judgment; but rather He eliminates the impure and profane vessels from the temple and prohibits them from being brought in any longer, as He not only drives away and expels all the reprobates from the Church, but also, to prevent them from entering again to disturb the Church, restrains them with an eternal scourge. But also in the present time this is the true house of the Lord, that is, the purification of the hearts of the faithful, so that not only does the divinely inspired com-

punction remove the sins that were present, but also, lest these sins return, the divine grace persevering in them may help.

Mark 11:17

And He taught, saying to them: Is it not written that my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? He says, for all nations, not for one Jewish nation, nor in one place in the city of Jerusalem, but in the whole world, and not with the sacrifices of bulls and goats and rams, but with prayer. [Mark 11:17] -- But you have made it a den of robbers. Those who sat in the temple to receive gifts, certainly it was no doubt that they would seek harms from some who did not give. Therefore, the house of prayer had become a den of robbers, because they had learned to stand in the temple for this purpose, to either pursue those not giving gifts physically or to kill those giving spiritually. The temple and the house of God are also the mind and conscience of the faithful, which, if ever it produces perverse thoughts in the injury of a neighbor, resides as it were in a den of robbers. And they simply kill those walking uprightly, when they thrust swords into those who are guilty of no offense. For the mind of the faithful is no longer a house of prayer, but a den of robbers, when, having abandoned the innocence and simplicity of holiness, it strives to do that by which it may harm its neighbors.

Mark 11:20

And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. Not only the branches or the trunks of the barren fig tree, but even the root itself, drying up, showed the sentence of divine reprobation upon it. And John says that the axe is laid to the root of the trees (Matt. III). Therefore, the fig tree dried up from the roots to show that the impious nation was not to be corrected temporarily or partially by invasions of foreigners, and then immediately, with the Lord's mercy, after repentance, to be restored to its former freedom, as sacred history often reports; but rather, it was to be struck with eternal damnation, dried up from the roots, so that it might be intimated that the wicked people were to be utterly deprived not only of external human glory but even of inner divine favor. For it lost both the salvation and the life it could have received in the heavens and the homeland it had already obtained on earth.

Mark 11: 22

And Jesus answering said to them: Have faith in God. Amen, I say to you, that whoever says to this mountain: Be lifted up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Those gentiles who wrote curses against the Church usually reproach our people for not having complete faith in God, because they have never been able to move mountains. To which it must be replied that not everything that has happened in the Church is written, just as our Scripture testifies about the deeds of Christ Himself, our God and Lord. Therefore, it could also have happened that the mountain was removed from the earth and cast into the sea, if necessity required it. As we read about what was done by the prayers of the blessed father Gregory of Neocaesarea, bishop of Pontus, a man distinguished by merits and virtues, that a mountain yielded ground to the extent that the inhabitants of the city needed. For when he wanted to build a church in a suitable place, he saw that it was narrower than required because on one side it was confined by a sea cliff and on the other by a nearby mountain. He came to the place at night, and on his knees admonished the Lord of His promise, to move the mountain further away according to the faith of the petitioner.

And in the morning, he returned and found that the mountain had left as much space for the church builders as they needed. Therefore, this man or another man of the same merit could have obtained from the Lord, by the merit of faith, that even the mountain would be lifted up and cast into the sea if the opportunity demanded it. However, because the term mountain is sometimes used to signify the devil, evidently due to the pride with which he rises against God and wishes to be like the Most High, the mountain is removed from the earth and cast into the sea at the command of those strong in faith when holy teachers preaching the word drive out the unclean spirit from the hearts of those ordained to life, and he is permitted to exercise the madness of his tyranny in the turbulent and bitter minds of unbelievers. Not that he hadn't had his seat and kingdom there before, but because he rages more fiercely against those he can harm as much as he regrets having been driven out by the injury inflicted by the pious. To this is similar that passage of the Apocalypse: And the second angel sounded the trumpet, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea (Rev. VIII).

For when the angel sounded the trumpet, a mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, because, when the teacher of truth preached the word, the ancient enemy, inflamed with the torches of envy, heavily corrupted the minds of the perverse to avenge his expulsion from the faithful upon the unfaithful.

Mark 11:25

And when you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins. It is to be noted the distinction of those praying. He who has perfect faith, which works through love, can by praying or even commanding, move spiritual mountains. As Paul did with Elymas the magician, whom he deprived of his sight and his wicked art. Likewise with the soothsayer in Philippi, from whom he cast out a malignant spirit, a most haughty mountain to be sure. But the same mountain being cast into the sea, as much maddened fire it had brought, the persecution of the Gentiles immediately following against him taught him well. But those who have not yet climbed to such a height of perfection, let them ask for their sins to be forgiven, so that they may be counted worthy to enter eternal life, and undoubtedly they will obtain what they ask for, if they first forgive those who sin against them. But if they scorn to do this, not only can they not perform miracles by praying, but they cannot even obtain forgiveness of their own sins.

Mark 11:28

And when he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders came to him and said to him: "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority to do these things?" In various ways they raise the same calumny as before, when they said: "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons." For when they say, "By what authority do you do these things?" they doubt the power of God, and want it to be understood that what he does is by the power of the devil. Also adding: "Who gave you this authority?" most openly they deny the Son of God, whom they think performs signs not by his own power, but by that of others. [Mark 11:29] -- But Jesus answering said: "I will also ask you one thing, and you answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me." The Lord could have refuted the calumny of the tempters with an open answer,

but he prudently asks, so that they may be condemned either by their silence or by their own decision.

Mark 11:31

But they considered among themselves, saying: If we say, from heaven, he will say to us: Why then did you not believe him? For he whom you acknowledge to have had prophecy from heaven, testified about me, and you heard from him by what authority I do these things. [Mark 11:32] -- If we say from men, we fear the people. For all held John to be a true prophet. Therefore, they saw that whichever of these they answered, they would fall into a trap, fearing stoning, but more fearing the confession of the truth. [Mark 11:33] -- And answering, they say to Jesus: We do not know. And Jesus, responding, said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things. I do not tell you what I know, because you do not want to admit what you know. Most justly rejected, they indeed went away confused. And it was fulfilled what in the psalm the Father God says through the prophet: I have prepared a lamp for my Christ, that is, John himself. I will clothe his enemies with shame (Psalm 131). It should be noted, moreover, that the knowledge of the truth is to be hidden from those who seek it for two main reasons. Namely, when he who asks is either less capable of understanding what he seeks, or is unworthy because of hatred or contempt of the truth itself, to whom it ought to be revealed what he seeks. For one of these reasons, the Lord said: I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. For the other reason, he commanded the disciples: Do not give what is holy to dogs, nor throw your pearls before swine.

CHAPTER 12

Mark 12:1

And he began to speak to them in parables: A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a pit, and built a tower. This man who planted the vineyard is the same who in another parable hired laborers into his vineyard. He planted the vineyard about which Isaiah speaks most fully in a song, ultimately saying: The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. And in the psalm, it is said: You have transplanted a vineyard from Egypt; you expelled the nations and planted it. And he set a hedge around it, whether a city wall or the assistance of angels. And he dug a pit in it, whether a winepress, or an altar, or those winepresses whose titles are marked by three

psalms, the eighth, the eightieth, and the eighty-third. And he built a tower, undoubtedly the temple about which it is said through Micah: And you, O tower of the flock, daughter of Zion.

Mark 12:1

And he leased it to husbandmen. Elsewhere, he called these workers of the vineyard, who had been hired at the first, third, sixth and ninth hours. And he went away on a journey, not by changing location. For where can God be absent from, since all things are filled by him? And he who says through Jeremiah: I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off, says the Lord? But he seems to go away from the vineyard to leave the vine-dressers free will in working. [Mark 12:2] -- And he sent a servant to the tenants at the proper time to receive from the tenants some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. Indeed, he set the time for the fruit, not for the harvest. For no fruit was found from the obstinate people, no yield of this vineyard was found, even though it was often and diligently sought. Therefore, the servant who was sent first is understood to be Moses, the lawgiver, who for forty continuous years sought some fruit of the law he had given from the cultivators, but they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. For they provoked Moses in the camps and Aaron, the holy one of the Lord. And Moses was vexed because of them, for they grieved his Spirit. This same servant also clearly declares in a song what he thinks about the fruit of this vineyard, saying, "For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and their branching is from Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the venom of dragons, and the cruel poison of asps" (Deut. XXXII).

Mark 12:4

And again he sent another servant to them, and they wounded him in the head and treated him shamefully. The other servant signifies David the king and prophet and the other psalmists, who were sent after Moses, so that by the modulation of psalmody and the sweetness of the harp they might stir the cultivators of the vineyard to the practice of good works after the legal edicts. For David himself, who lifted up the hearts of the people to desire heavenly things, established that the continuous praises of the Lord be sung with sweet melody among the rites of carnal sacrifices. But they also wounded this devotion, treating it shamefully by wounding it in the head,

because disregarding the songs of the psalmists which called to the praise of the Lord, they rejected David, who had shone as the head and source of psalmody in the Holy Spirit. For they said: "What portion do we have in David, or what inheritance in the son of Jesse?" (1 Kings 12) With these words, they both changed his kingdom with an ignoble stock, and his religion with impiety. Nevertheless, he prayed for this vineyard, which, transplanted from Egypt, had covered the mountains of Palestine with its shade, that it might not be utterly destroyed: "Lord God of hosts, return now, look down from heaven and see, and visit this vineyard, and protect what your right hand has planted" (Psalm 80). Here he equally explained who that man is who planted this vineyard, namely the Lord God of hosts.

Mark 12:5

And again he sent another, and they killed him, and many others, beating some and killing others. A third servant with his companions, understand a chorus of prophets, who with continuous attestations confronted the people and predicted the evils that were imminent for this vineyard. But which of the prophets were they not persecuting? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Lord Savior (Acts VII). And all these spoke much about the barrenness of this vineyard, but the lamentation of one Jeremiah is sufficient to mention. But I, he says, planted you as a chosen vineyard, all true seed, how then have you turned into a degenerate shoot of a foreign vine (Jer. II)? Clearly, by these three ranks of servants all the figures of the teachers under the law can be understood, the Lord elsewhere openly declares, saying: For everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled (Luke XXIV).

Mark 12:6

Therefore, still having one beloved son, he sent him to them last, saying: They will respect my son. What he said: They will respect my son, does not come from ignorance. For what does the head of the household not know, who is understood as God the Father in this place? But God is always said to be in doubt so that free will may be reserved for man. Let us ask Arius and Eunomius. Behold, the Father is said to be ignorant, and moderates his judgment, and as much as it depends on us, is proven to be lying. Whatever they respond on behalf of the Father, let them understand the same for the Son, who says he does not know the day of completion.

Mark 12:7

The husbandmen said to one another: This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. Most plainly the Lord proves that the leaders of the Jews crucified the Son of God not out of ignorance, but out of envy. For they understood this to be the one of whom it was said: Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance (Psalm II). And so, as if consulting for themselves, they said: Behold, the whole world has gone after him. And if we let him thus alone, all men will believe in him (John XII). Therefore the inheritance of the Son is the Church, given to him from among all the nations, which the Father did not leave to him by dying, but he himself wondrously acquired by his own death, which he possessed by rising again. However, after killing him, the evil husbandmen sought to seize it, when the Jews, crucifying him, endeavored to extinguish the faith that comes through him and preferred rather their own righteousness, which is by the law, and sought to instill it in the gentiles.

Mark 12:8

And taking him, they killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. It notes their persistent malice, who, even with the Lord crucified and risen from the dead, did not wish to believe in the preaching of the apostles but cast him away as if he were a vile corpse. For, as far as it was in their power, excluding him from their borders, they delivered him to be received by the gentiles. [Mark 12:9] -- What will the Lord of the vineyard do, therefore? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others. The Lord himself explained this verse shortly afterward in Matthew, saying: Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matthew XXI). He also figuratively showed this was about to happen when he cursed the unfruitful fig tree as an example of the unbelieving Jews. Conversely, he compared those who afterward believed, whether from the Jews or the gentiles, to a fruitful and excellent tree, saying: I am the vine; you are the branches. He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit (John XV). When he had said that the Lord of the vineyard, after the destruction of the wicked husbandmen, would give the vineyard to others, he immediately affirmed that this was procured by divine guidance in a prophetic example, saying:

Mark 12:10

Have you not read this Scripture: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone? This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. How, he says, will this prophecy be fulfilled, that the stone rejected by the builders is said to be placed as the cornerstone, unless because Christ, rejected and killed by you, is to be preached to the Gentiles who will believe, so that, like a cornerstone, he may unite the two in himself and build from both peoples one faithful city for himself, one temple? For he now calls the same synagogue teachers, whom he previously called tenants, builders. For those who were commanded to cultivate the people subject to them to bear the fruits of life, like a vineyard, were also commanded to construct and adorn it as a house worthy of God as its inhabitant. Hence, the Apostle, writing to the faithful, says: You are God's field, God's building (I Cor. III). But those who refused to return the fruit of God's vineyard to the great householder, like the worst tenants, the same, like evil masons, strive to remove from the house of God the precious and chosen stone, which was to be placed either in the foundation or in the corner, that is, they sought to take away the faith of Christ from their listeners.

Mark 12:12

And they sought to seize him, and they feared the crowd. For they understood that he had spoken this parable against them, and leaving him, they went away. The chief priests and the scribes, as if they found the Lord lying against them, sought to kill him. But by seeking this, they taught that what he had said was true. For he himself is the heir, whose unjust death he declared would be avenged by the father. Those wicked tenants, who from killing the Son of God were indeed delayed a little by human fear, until his hour had come, could never be restrained by divine love. Surely, in a moral sense, for each of the faithful, when the mystery of baptism entrusted to him is exercised by working, it is as if the vineyard he cultivates is leased out. One servant is sent, another, and a third, to receive produce, when law, psalms, prophecy, whose admonition to follow by doing well, are read. But the sent servant, afflicted with insults or beaten, is cast out, when the word heard is disdained, or (what is worse) even blasphemed. Moreover, the sent heir is killed, as far as it depends on them, who have also trampled the Son of God and insulted the spirit of grace by which he was sanctified. With the wicked

tenant destroyed, the vineyard will be given to another, when the gift of grace which the proud one spurned, the humble one will be enriched.

But even this, that the chief priests, scribes, and elders seeking to lay hands on Jesus are restrained by fear of the crowd, happens daily in the Church, when anyone, merely on account of the name "brother," does not love the unity of ecclesiastical faith and peace, either out of shame or fear of the multitude of good brothers living together, refrains from attacking it. Yet, as the Lord says of the most foolish bird, the ostrich, when the time comes, it raises its wings on high, because by persecuting the Church, he will rejoice to have crucified the Lord and have him as a showpiece.

Mark 12:13

And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and Herodians, to catch him in his words. The Herodians are said to be soldiers of Herod the tetrarch, who was also at that time in Jerusalem, and in scorning and mocking the Lord, he agreed with Pilate and the Jews, as the evangelist Luke attests. Therefore, seeking to seize the Lord, the chief priests, scribes, and elders feared the crowd. And thus, since they could not do so by themselves, they attempted to accomplish it through the hands of earthly authority, so that they themselves might seem to be free of his death. For recently under Caesar Augustus, Judaea was subjected to the Romans when a census was celebrated throughout the whole world, and it had become tributary, and there was great sedition among the people, some saying that for the sake of security and peace, for which the Romans fought for all, tribute ought to be paid; but the Pharisees, who prided themselves on righteousness, contended otherwise, that the people of God, who paid tithes, and gave firstfruits, and all other things written in the law, ought not to be subject to human laws. The spark of this sedition grew so strong that after the resurrection of the Lord, the Romans pressed on and the native people, the kingdom, as well as that august temple with its religion, moreover even the light itself, chose rather to perish than to pay tribute.

Mark 12:14

Those coming said to him: Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and do not care about anyone. For you do not look at the face of man, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? This flattering and deceitful question provokes the respondent, so that he fears God

more than Caesar, and says that tribute ought not to be paid, so that immediately the Herodians, hearing this, could seize him as the author of sedition against the Romans. [Mark 12:15] -- But knowing their deceit, he said to them: Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius so that I may see it. And they brought it to him. Wisdom always acts wisely, so that the tempters are rather confounded by their own words: Bring me, he said, a denarius. This is a type of coin, which was accounted for ten nummi, and had the image of Caesar.

Mark 12:16

And he said to them: Whose image and inscription is this? Those who think the question of the Savior shows his ignorance, and not his design, should learn from the present passage that Jesus could certainly have known whose image was on the coin: but he asks so that he might appropriately respond to their words. [Mark 12:17] -- They said to him: Caesar's. Then Jesus, answering, said to them: Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. What he said: Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, the coin, the tribute, and the money; and unto God the things that are God's, we understand as tithes, first fruits, offerings, and sacrifices. Just as he himself pays the tribute for himself and for Peter, and rendered to God the things that are God's, doing the will of the Father. Another way: Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Just as Caesar demands from us the impression of his image, so too does God, that just as the coin is rendered to Caesar, so the soul illuminated and marked by the light of his countenance is rendered to God. Hence the Psalmist says: The light of your countenance, O Lord, has been signed upon us (Psalm IV). This light is also the whole of man, and true good, which is seen not with the eyes but with the mind. He said it is signed upon us, just as a coin is engraved with the image of the king. For man was made in the image and likeness of God, which he corrupted by sinning. Therefore, his true and eternal good is if he is marked again by being reborn.

Mark 12:17

And they marveled at him. Those who should have believed in such great wisdom, marveled because their cunning in plotting had found no place. And, as Matthew writes, they left him and went away, carrying their unbelief

along with the miracle. [Mark 12:18] -- The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him. There were two sects among the Jews, one of the Pharisees and the other of the Sadducees. The Pharisees, who preferred justice of traditions and observances which they called "deuterosis," were commonly known as separated from the people. But the Sadducees, whose name means "just," also claimed what they were not. The former believed in the resurrection of both body and soul, and admitted angels and spirits; the latter, following the Acts of the Apostles, denied everything. [Mark 12:19] -- And they questioned him, saying: Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies leaving a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children, and so on. Believing neither in the resurrection of bodies nor the survival of souls beyond death, they rightly concoct such a tale to ridicule those who assert the resurrection of bodies. Yet it could happen that such an event occurred in their nation.

Mark 12: 23

In the resurrection, when they rise again, to which of them will the woman be wife? For the seven had her as a wife. They use the absurdity of the story to deny the truth of the resurrection; but mystically, these seven brothers who died without children are like all the wicked, who, throughout the entire span of this life which revolves in seven days, are barren of good works. To each of them who is taken by a miserable death, ultimately worldly living itself, which they wasted without producing any vital work, will pass away like a barren wife. [Mark 12:24] -- And Jesus answered them, saying: Are you not mistaken because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? They err because they do not know the Scriptures. And because they are ignorant of the Scriptures, consequently they do not know the power of God, which is Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God (I Cor. I).

Mark 12: 25

For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven. The Latin custom does not correspond to the Greek idiom. Women are properly said to marry, and men to take wives. But let us simply understand this to mean that marrying applies to men, and being married applies to wives. If in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, then bodies which can marry and

be given in marriage shall rise. For no one says of a stone or a tree and those things which do not have genital members that they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but of those who, while able to marry, nevertheless do not marry for some reason. But what follows: "But are as the angels in heaven," a spiritual conversation is promised. For they are as the angels in heaven, who, renewed by the glory of the resurrection, enjoy the perpetual vision of God without any fear of death, without any stain of corruption, without any activity of earthly state. To which anyone desiring to ascend to the equality of angelic dignity must now condescend by acting piously towards the least of the brethren.

Mark 12:26

But concerning the dead, that they will rise, have you not read in the book of Moses at the bush, how God spoke to him, saying: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? To confirm the truth of the resurrection, he could use many more manifest examples, among which is this: The dead will be raised, and those in the tombs will rise. And in another place: Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and others to shame and ever-lasting contempt (Dan. XII). Therefore it is asked what the Lord meant by bringing forth this testimony, which seems ambiguous or not sufficiently relevant to the truth of the resurrection. We have previously said that the Sadducees, not confessing either angels, spirits, or the resurrection of bodies, also preached the destruction of souls. These Sadducees accepted only the five books of Moses, rejecting the prophecies of the prophets. Thus it was foolish to bring forth testimonies whose authority they did not follow. Now, to prove the eternity of souls, he presents the example: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Immediately he adds:

Mark 12:27

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. So, when he proved that souls remain after death (for it could not be that he was the God of those who in no way subsisted), consequently, the resurrection of bodies which performed good or bad deeds together with their souls would also be introduced. [Mark 12:28] -- And one of the scribes came up who had heard them disputing. And seeing that he had answered them well, he asked him which commandment was the first of all. Jesus answered him that the first of all

commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. He says the first and greatest commandment is that before all things we each should place in our innermost heart, as the only foundation of piety. This he demonstrated more clearly in conclusion, when he said: There is no greater commandment than these. Therefore the first and greatest commandment is the acknowledgement and confession of divine unity along with the performance of good works. Good works are perfected in the love of God and neighbor. The Apostle commends this briefly in other words, saying: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but faith working through love (Galatians 5).

Mark 12: 32

And the scribe said to him: Well said, teacher, you have truly said that there is one God, and there is none other besides him. And to love him with all your heart, and with all your understanding, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, is greater than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. It is shown by this response of the scribe that there was often a serious question debated among the scribes and Pharisees about what was the first or greatest commandment of divine law, some indeed praising offerings and sacrifices, others preferring with greater authority the works of faith and love, because many of the fathers before the law, without any custom of victims and sacrifices, pleased God through faith alone, which works through love, and were held in the highest regard by him; but none was ever found to have pleased God through holocausts and sacrifices alone without faith and love. In which opinion this scribe also declared himself to be.

Mark 12: 34

But Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: You are not far from the kingdom of God. He was not far from the kingdom of God because he was shown to be a supporter of the precepts that are characteristic of the New Testament and evangelical perfection. Hence, it must be more carefully inquired how Matthew says that the scribe here or the doctor of the law (as he calls him) was testing the Lord, asking about the first or greatest com-

mandment, whom, according to this evangelist, the Lord asserts is not far from the kingdom of God, whereas it is evident that those who seek wisdom through testing cannot find it, and therefore cannot approach the gate of the heavenly kingdom, which is revealed only to the wise. For Scripture says: "And seek him in the simplicity of heart, because he is found by those who do not test him" (Wisdom 1). Unless perhaps we say that he came indeed to test the Lord, but hearing His response, being corrected, soon returned to the grace of piety; and whom he previously thought was to be deceived by testing, he later recognized must be followed by embracing. Or certainly, let us not consider the very temptation to be evil, as if wanting to deceive an enemy, but rather cautious, as wanting to test more thoroughly someone unknown. For it is not written in vain: "He who easily believes will become less in heart" (Sirach 19).

Mark 12:34

And no one dared to question him anymore. The Pharisees and Sadducees, and other leaders of the Jews seeking an occasion for calumny and to find some word that could be subject to traps, because they were refuted in their words, no longer questioned him, but openly handed him over to the Roman authority. From this, we understand that the poison of envy can indeed be overcome, but it is difficult to be fully quieted. [Mark 12:35] -- And answering, Jesus, teaching in the temple, said: How do the scribes say that Christ is the Son of David? For he himself says in the Holy Spirit: The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies as a footstool for your feet. For David himself calls him Lord, and how is he his son? The questioning of Jesus benefits us even today against the Jews. For even those who confess that Christ is to come assert that he is a simple and holy man from the lineage of David. Therefore, let us question them, instructed by the Lord, if he is a simple man, and only a son of David, how does David call him his Lord, not with uncertain error, nor of his own will, but in the Holy Spirit. They are not reprehended for calling him David's son, but because they do not believe him to be the Son of God: indeed, he himself is both Lord of David, remaining God before the ages, and appeared as the son of David, being born as a man at the end of time. But the fact that enemies are subjected to him by the Father denotes not the weakness of the Son, but the unity of nature, because in one the other works. For the Son also subjects enemies to the Father, because he glorifies the Father on earth.

Mark 12:38

And he said to them in his teaching: Beware of the scribes who desire to walk in long robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, and to sit in the first seats in the synagogues, and to have the first places at feasts. Walking in long robes signifies appearing in public adorned in more splendid garments, in which among other things, that rich man who feasted sumptuously every day is described as sinning. However, it should be noted that he does not forbid those to whom it is appropriate by order of office to be greeted in the marketplace, or to sit or recline in the first places, but he certainly teaches that those who love these things inappropriately, whether they possess them or not, should be avoided by the faithful as wicked, rebuking the disposition, not the rank, with just discernment. Although this too is not free from fault, if those who desire to be called teachers in the chair of Moses in the synagogue are also involved in lawsuits in the marketplace. We are certainly commanded to beware of those desiring vain glory for two reasons, believing that what they do is good and should be done, or we may be inflamed with emulation, rejoicing in vain to be praised for the good they feign.

Mark 12:40

Those who devour widows' houses under the pretense of long prayers will receive a harsher judgment. He did not merely say, "They will receive judgment," but added "harsher," to insinuate that those who stand praying in corners to be seen by people deserve condemnation. And those who engage in such practices more extensively, as though they were more religious, not only seeking praise from people but also money, are to be punished with a severer judgment. For there are those who, pretending to be righteous and of great merit before God, do not hesitate to take money from anyone of humble means and troubled by the awareness of their sins, as though they will act as their advocates in judgment. And while the outstretched hands of the poor typically bring aid through prayers, these individuals, mainly for the purpose of taking money from the poor, spend the night in prayer. To such individuals the curse of Judas fittingly applies: "When he is judged, let him come out condemned, and let his prayer become sin" (Psalm 108). When he is judged, he comes out condemned, and he takes his prayer into sin, as he, now held in high regard by humans, then finds himself not only incapable of interceding for others but also insufficient in his own merits before

the divine judgment. In fact, he will bear the punishment for the very prayers by which he deceived human judgment.

Mark 12:41

And Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and watched how the crowd put money into the treasury. Because in Greek speech φυλάττειν is said to mean "to guard," and "gaza" in the Persian language means "riches," the treasury is customarily called a place where riches are kept. By this name both the chest in which the people's donations were collected for the temple's necessities and the porticoes where they were kept were called. You have an example of the porticoes in the Gospel. Jesus, He said, spoke these words in the treasury, teaching in the temple (John 8). You have about the chest in the book of Kings: And Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the Lord. And the priests that kept the door put all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord into it. And when they saw that there was much money in the chest, the king's scribe and the high priest came up and tied up and counted the money that was found in the house of the Lord (2 Kings 12). Therefore, the Lord, who warned that seekers of preeminence and vain glory should be avoided, who predicted with prolonged simulated prayers that judgment would be rendered, also judges those bringing gifts to the house of the Lord with a certain scrutiny, so that He may reward each according to their heart and deeds, because in the same manner the same internal judge always acts in the Church unceasingly.

Mark 12:41

And many rich people put in large amounts. But when a poor widow came, she put in two small coins, which is a quadrans. Mathematicians call a quadrans the fourth part of anything, namely of a place, of time, or of money. Thus, perhaps in this passage, it signifies a fourth part of a shekel, that is, five obols. [Mark 12:43] -- And he called his disciples and said to them: Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. This place morally indeed suggests to us that anything we offer with a good intention is acceptable to God, who values not the substance of the offerings, but the conscience; he does not consider how much is in the sacrifice, but from how much it is given. According to the rules of allegory, the rich who were putting gifts into the treasury represent the Jews

proud of the righteousness of the law, whereas the poor widow signifies the simplicity of the Church. She is rightly called poor, because she has cast away either the spirit of pride or the desires for temporal things, as if they were the riches of the world. She is called a widow because her husband endured death for her, and now, hidden from her eyes in the recesses of heaven, lives as if in another part of the region. She puts two mites into the treasury, because into the sight of the Divine Majesty, where the offerings of our devout works, as if written and inscribed in a definite number, are kept, she brings either love of God and neighbor or the gifts of her faith and prayer. These, considered small due to her own frailty, but accepted because of the merit of pious intention, surpass all the works of the proud Jews.

Mark 12: 44

For all of them have contributed out of their abundance. But she, out of her poverty, has given all she had, her whole livelihood. The Jew contributes to the gifts of God out of his abundance, who, presuming upon his own righteousness, prays to himself thus: God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, etc. (Luke 18). But the Church gives all her living to the gifts of God, understanding that all she lives is not by her own merit, but by divine grace, saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner (Ibid.). And again: I will keep my strength for you, because you are my protector, my God; his mercy will precede me (Psalm 58).

CHAPTER 13

Mark 13: 1

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Teacher, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here. And Jesus answering said to him: Do you see all these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. According to history, the meaning is clear. However, as the Lord departed from the temple, all the structures of the law and the composition of the commandments were so destroyed that nothing could be fulfilled by the Jews; and with the head removed, all the members clashed among themselves. And because, with faith established among the Gentiles and the Church of Christ, Judea was about to bear the worthy punishments for its perfidy, it was fitting for the Lord, after praising the devotion of the Church in the poor widow, to leave the temple, and to predict its future ruin and that the buildings then

admired would soon be leveled. Divinely, it was arranged that, with the grace of the evangelical faith revealed throughout the world, the temple itself, once august with its ceremonies, would be removed, lest anyone still young and suckling in the faith, seeing those things which were made by the holy prophets and instituted by the Lord remaining, might wonder at the secular sanctity and gradually slip from the sincerity of the faith which is in Christ Jesus into carnal Judaism. Therefore, God, providing for our infirmity and desiring his Church to multiply, caused all those things to be overturned and utterly removed, so that with the shadow and type ceasing, the truth now declared throughout the world might hold the greater palm.

Mark 13:3

And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately. Tell us when these things will be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished? Because as some were praising the buildings of the temple, the Lord openly responded that all these would be destroyed. The disciples secretly inquired about the time and signs of the foretold destruction. The Lord sits on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, discussing the ruin of the temple and the destruction of the nation, so that even in the very position of his body he aligns with the words he speaks, mystically indicating that while resting in the holy, he detests the madness of the proud. For who does not see that the Mount of Olives signifies the fruitful height of the holy Church, which the Lord always delights to dwell in? For truly, that mountain was known not for having unfruitful trees and a barren forest, but for producing olives, which provide light to dispel the shadows of the night, cures for infirmities, and rest for the weary. All of which particularly happen in the Church, as it itself says: But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever (Psalm 52).

Mark 13:5

And Jesus, answering, began to say to them: See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name saying, I am he, and they will lead many astray. Many, as the destruction of Jerusalem approached, were leaders who claimed they were christs, and reported that the time of liberation was near at hand. Many heresiarchs appeared in the Church even in the times of the apostles, who, among many other things contrary to truth, proclaimed that

the day of the Lord was imminent. These the Apostle condemns in the Epistle to the Thessalonians. Many in the name of Christ were Antichrists, the first of whom is Simon Magus: to whom, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, all who were in Samaria listened, from the least to the greatest, saying: This man is the power of God that is called great, because he had for a long time bewitched them with his magical arts (Acts 8).

Mark 13:7

But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled. For such things must happen, but the end is not yet. Wars pertain to enemies, seditions to citizens. Both of these abounded abundantly from the time of the Lord's Passion among the people of the Jews, who chose a seditious robber for themselves instead of the Savior Christ. However, the apostles, as these events draw near, are warned not to be terrified, not to abandon Jerusalem and Judea, because evidently the end, which should rather be deferred until the fortieth year, namely the desolation of the province and the ultimate destruction of the city and temple, is to follow. [Mark 13:8] -- Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be earthquakes in various places, and pestilences and famines. These are the beginnings of sorrows. In the Gospel of Luke, it is written: And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and pestilences and famines (Luke 21). It is known that these things happened literally before the last and most bitter pains, by which the entire province was devastated, or rather erased, during the time of the Jewish sedition. But kingdom against kingdom, and the pestilence of those whose speech spreads like cancer, and the famine of hearing the word of God, and the upheaval of the whole earth, and the separation from the true faith, can be better understood in heretics, who, fighting against each other, bring about the victory of the Church. Moreover, the Lord reveals why so many adversities were deservedly bestowed upon Jerusalem and the whole province of the Jews, by adding when he says:

Mark 13:9

But watch yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before kings and governors for my sake, for a testimony to them. Indeed, the very fact that the Jewish people, either alone or as the greatest cause, were the cause of their own destruction, because after the killing of the Lord Savior, they tormented the heralds and

confessors of his name and faith with impious cruelty. [Mark 13:10] -- And the Gospel of God must first be preached to all nations. This is confirmed by Ecclesiastical histories, in which it is reported that all the apostles, long before the destruction of the province of Judea, were dispersed throughout the entire world to preach the Gospel, except James son of Zebedee, and James the brother of the Lord, who were the first in Judea to shed their blood for the word of the Gospel. Therefore, since the Lord knew that the hearts of the disciples would be troubled by the destruction and loss of their nation, He alleviates them with this consolation, so that they might know that even with the Jews being cast off, they would still have companions for the joy and heavenly kingdom, indeed gathering many more from all the nations of the world than would perish from Judea.

Mark 13:11

And when they lead you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand what you will speak, but say whatever is given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. When we are led to judges because of Christ, we must simply express our will for Christ. Moreover, it is Christ Himself who speaks in us, and the grace of the Holy Spirit is given in answering. [Mark 13:12] -- Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all because of my name. But, etc. We have often seen this happen in persecutions, and there is no loyal affection among those who have different faiths. [Mark 13:14] -- But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, let the reader understand. Where Mark says: Standing where it ought not, in Matthew it is written: Standing in the holy place (Matthew 24); which altogether signifies the same thing, because surely the abomination of desolation ought not to stand in the holy place. When we are called to understanding, it is shown to be mystical what is said. However, it can be simply understood either concerning the Antichrist, or the image of Caesar which Pilate placed in the temple, or the equestrian statue of Hadrian, which stood for a long time in the very holy of holies place. According to the old Scripture, an idol is also called an abomination. And hence it is added, of desolation, because the idol is placed in the desolate and deserted temple.

Mark 13:14

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. And let him who is on the rooftop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not turn back to take his garment. It is clear that these things happened literally when, with the approaching Roman war and the extermination of the Jewish people, warned by an oracle, all the Christians who were in the province withdrew farther away, as Ecclesiastical History narrates, and sitting across the Jordan, they remained for a time in the city of Pella under the protection of Agrippa, the king of the Jews, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, who, with those Jews willing to obey him, always acted in submission to Roman authority. According to spiritual meanings, when we see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not, that is, heresies and crimes reigning among those who seemed to be consecrated by heavenly mysteries, when we observe peace among the faithful being disturbed by workers of iniquity, speakers of lies, men of blood and deceit whom the Lord will abhor, then whoever remains in Judea, that is in the confession of true faith, should not be enslaved by earthly and weak deeds but should ascend the summit of virtues as high as the more numerous wide and wandering paths of vices we see being followed.

Then whoever is on the rooftop, that is, who spiritually lives as if in the free air, exceeding carnal matters in mind, should not descend to the base deeds of past conduct, nor repeat the desires of the world or flesh which he had left behind. For our house means either this world or our flesh in which we dwell, which the Apostle speaks of: For we know that if our earthly house of this habitation is dissolved, we have a building from God (2 Cor. 5). And whoever works in the Church, like Paul and Apollos planting and watering (1 Cor. 3), should not look back at worldly hopes, which he renounced, nor presume to take up again the trappings of a fleeting life, which he had already stripped off to follow Christ.

Mark 13:17

Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. Woe to the present captivity for those pregnant and nursing women, whose heavy burdens of the womb or hands of their children greatly impede the necessity of flight. Read the story of the Kings, where the wife of Jonathan,

by trying to avoid the evil of captivity with a hasty flight, received her son who had fallen from her bosom permanently lame. [Mark 13:18] -- But pray that it does not happen in winter. In Matthew it is written: But pray that your flight be not in the winter neither on the Sabbath. If we wish to take this concerning the captivity of Jerusalem, when it was captured by Titus and Vespasian, they should pray that their flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath, because in the one, the hardness of the cold blocks the way to proceed to solitude, and to hide in mountains and deserts; in the other, it is either a transgression of the law if they want to flee, or imminent death if they stay behind. But if it is understood about the consummation of the world, this instructs us lest our faith and love in Christ grow cold, nor let us be idle and sluggish in the work of God on the Sabbath of virtues. For this saying of the Lord pertains partly to the Jewish captivity which happened by the Romans, and partly to the day of judgment. For in Matthew, the disciples are understood to have asked the Lord, when He was about to speak these things: Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?

Mark 13:19

For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, nor ever will be. These words properly fit the times of the Antichrist, when not only will there be torments more frequent than they used to be, inflicted upon the faithful, but (what is worse) the operation of signs will also accompany those who inflict the torments: as the Apostle testifies, who says, "whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all deception, signs, and lying wonders" (II Thess. II). Indeed, how many miracles and how many powers the holy martyrs often performed before their persecutors, and yet they did not wish to believe nor to cease from persecuting. Who then will be converted to the faith, an unbeliever, whose faith already believing does not fear and is shaken, when the persecutor of piety also becomes the worker of virtue, the same one who rages with torments so that Christ is denied, provokes with miracles so that the Antichrist is believed? What then will be the refuge in these things, what hope will remain for the elect, except that the higher grace, which grants the power of patience to the pious, should quickly remove the power of persecuting and tribulating from the impious? Hence it is providently added with piety:

Mark 13:20

And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved. But for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days. For this tribulation, as much as it is heavier in the weight of oppressions than the others which preceded, so much more will it be moderated by the brevity of time. For it is believed that for three and a half years, as can be conjectured from the prophecy of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John, it will wage war against the Church throughout the world. [Mark 13:21] -- And then if anyone says to you: Here is Christ, here there, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. Some refer this to the time of the Jewish captivity, where many, saying they were Christs, led astray crowds of people after them. But it should be noted that in that siege of the miserable and wretched city, there was no faithful one to whom the divine exhortation, not to follow perverse teachers, should be made: rather, all equally, both the lesser and the greater, both the besieged and the besieging, persisted alien to Christ. Hence, it is better to be understood about heretics, who, coming against the Church, would lie about being Christs. The first of whom was Simon Magus; but the last, greater than the others, is the Antichrist.

Mark 13:24

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will darken, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars of the sky will fall. The stars will appear obscure on the day of judgment, not because their light decreases, but because the brightness of the true light, that is, of the supreme judge, will come, when he will come in his majesty, with the Father, and the holy angels; although nothing prevents it from being rightly understood that the sun and the moon, along with the other stars, will be deprived of their light for a time, just as it is known that the sun did during the Lord's Passion. For the moon at that time, being full, lay hidden under the earth. Hence that prophecy of Joel remains imperfect up to this day: after he said, "The sun will turn into darkness," he added, "And the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord comes" (Joel II). And Isaiah, speaking of the day of judgment, said, "And the moon will be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts reigns in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders is glorified" (Isaiah XXIV). However, after the day of

judgment has passed and the glory of future life has shone, when there is a new heaven and a new earth, then what the same prophet says elsewhere will occur, "And the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, like the light of seven days."

Mark 13:25

And the powers that are in the heavens will be moved. Is it any wonder that humans, who are earthly by nature and sense, are perturbed at this judgment, at the sight of which even the powers of the heavens, that is, the angelic powers, tremble? Blessed Job also attests to this, saying, "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof" (Job XXVI). What will the tablets do, then, when the pillars tremble? What will the twig of the desert endure, when the cedar of paradise is shaken? [Mark 13:27] -- And then he will send his angels, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky. By the four winds, he means the four quarters of the world: East, West, North, and South. And lest anyone think it was only from the four sides of the earth, and not rather from its entire bounds including the interior regions, he aptly added: From the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky, that is, from the extreme borders of the earth straight to its farthest limits, where, to those gazing afar, the circle of the sky seems to enclose the earth. Therefore, on that day, no elect will be left behind, who will not meet the Lord coming to judgment in the air, whether still living in the body or already resurrected to life from death. The reprobates also come to judgment, both those found living in the body and those resurrected to life from death. But with this distinction, that the just are gathered into the joy of their Lord; whereas his enemies, after the judgment is finished, are scattered and perish from the presence of God.

Mark 13:28

From the fig tree learn the parable: when its branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So also you, etc. With the example of the tree, He taught the coming of the consummation. Just as when the branches of the fig tree become tender, and the bud breaks into flower, and the bark bears leaves, you understand the coming of summer and the entrance of the west wind and of spring; so too, when you see all these things written, do not think that the end of the world is already at hand, but that certain preludes and forerunners come to show that it is near and at the

doors. But this fructification of the fig tree can be understood more deeply according to mystical senses, namely concerning the state of the Synagogue, which, when the Lord came to it once because it had no fruit of justice, was condemned to eternal barrenness among those who then were unbelievers. But because the Apostle said that blindness has happened in part to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved (Rom. XI). When this time comes, so that the long blindness of unbelief is taken away, and all Israel receives the light and salvation, what else will happen but that the fig tree, long barren, will yield the fruit it had denied? As it is written in the blessed Job: A tree has hope; if it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its shoots will not cease. If its roots grow old in the earth, and its trunk dies in the dust, at the scent of water it will bud and produce branches like a newly planted sapling. When you see this taken place, you will not doubt that the day of final judgment and the summer of true peace and light are near.

Mark 13:30

Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. By the name of generation, he either signifies every kind of people or specifically the Jews. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. The heaven that will pass away must be understood not as ethereal or sidereal but as the aerial, from which even the birds of heaven and clouds of heaven are named, as Peter attests saying: "The heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water, by the word of God; by which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. The heavens that now exist and the earth, are stored up by the same word, reserved for fire for the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men (II Peter III), clearly teaching that not other heavens will perish by fire than those that perished by water, that is, these empty and nebulous spaces of windy air. For it is not to be believed that the water of the flood, which surpassed the tops of mountains by fifteen cubits only, reached beyond the boundaries of the air and ether. However, wherever it could reach, there indeed, according to the aforementioned opinion of blessed Peter, the fire of judgment will also reach. But if heaven and earth will pass away, it can be questioned how Ecclesiastes says: "A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever" (Eccl. I).

But, with clear reason, heaven and earth pass away by the form they now have; however, they persist without end by essence. For the figure of this world is passing away (I Cor. VII). And to John, the angel says: "There will be a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. XXI); which indeed are not to be newly made, but these same ones are to be renewed. Therefore, heaven and earth both pass away and will be, because they are purged by fire from the form they now have, yet are always preserved in their own nature. Hence also it is said through the Psalmist: "You will change them, and they will be changed" (Ps. CI). Indeed, this last change of theirs, they now declare to us by these revolutions by which they unceasingly alternate for our uses. For the earth fails from its winter form through dryness, flourishes again with spring moisture. The heaven is daily covered with the darkness of night, and renewed by divine light. Hence, therefore, hence let each faithful person gather, that these things both perish and yet are renewed through their renovation, which now evidently seems to be continually repaired as though from defect.

Mark 13:32

However, of that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Arius and Eunomius rejoice as if the ignorance of the master is the glory of the disciples: and they say: "He who knows and he who is ignorant cannot be equal." But since Jesus, that is, the Word of God, made all times (for all things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made, and in all times the day of judgment must also be, can He who knows the whole, be ignorant of a part? Therefore, a reason must be given why He is said to be ignorant. The Apostle wrote concerning the Savior: "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2). Why hidden? After the resurrection, being questioned by the apostles about the day of judgment, He answered more clearly: "It is not for you to know the times or the moments which the Father has set by His own authority" (Acts 1). When He says, it is not for you to know, He shows that He Himself knows, but it is not expedient for the apostles to know, so that, always uncertain of the coming of the Judge, they may live daily as if they were to be judged that day. Furthermore, the subsequent discourse of the Gospel makes it clear. Also teaching that the Father alone knows, He includes the Son in the Father. For every father's name is of the son.

Mark 13:33

Watch, therefore, and pray. For you do not know when the time is. Like a man who, traveling abroad, leaves his house and gives authority to his servants, etc. The Lord clearly shows why He said: "Of that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Because it is not expedient for the apostles to know, so that in the uncertainty of the hanging expectation they may always believe Him to be coming, whom they do not know when He will come. And He did not say, because we do not know at what hour the Lord will come, but you do not know. And, having given the example of the householder, He more clearly teaches why He conceals the day of consummation, saying: [Mark 13:35] -- Therefore, keep watch; for you do not know when the Lord will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at the cock's crow, or in the morning. Lest, when he comes suddenly, he finds you sleeping. However, the man who went on a journey and left his house, without a doubt, is Christ, who, ascending victoriously to the Father after the resurrection, left the Church corporally, which he nevertheless never deprived of the divine presence's protection, remaining in it all days until the consummation of the age. For the place of the flesh is properly the earth, which is as though led to foreign lands when it is placed in heaven through our Redeemer. But he gave his servants the power of every work, because to his faithful, granting the grace of the Holy Spirit, he gives the ability to serve in good works. He also commanded the doorkeeper to keep watch, because he orders the spiritual pastors and leaders, with diligent care, to oversee the Church entrusted to them.

Mark 13:37

But what I say to you, I say to all: Keep watch. Not only the apostles and their successors, indeed the leaders of the Church, but all are commanded to keep watch. We are all urgently ordered to guard the doors of our hearts, lest the ancient enemy break in by suggesting evil. We must each carefully avoid being found sleeping when the Lord comes. For each of us will give an account to God. He keeps watch who has the eyes of his mind open to the vision of true light. He keeps watch who, by working, keeps what he believes. He keeps watch who repels the darkness of lethargy and negligence from himself. Hence Paul says: Awake to righteousness, and do not sin (I Cor. XV). Hence he says again: It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep (Rom. XIII).

CHAPTER 14

Mark 14:1

Now it was the Passover, and the unleavened bread after two days. Passover, which is called "phase" in Hebrew, is named not from suffering as many think, but from passing over, because the destroyer, seeing the blood on the doorposts of the Israelites, passed over and did not strike them, or the Lord Himself providing aid to His people passed over them. Explaining the sacrament of this word more sublimely, the evangelist John says: "Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that his hour had come that he should pass out of this world unto the Father" (John XIII). Where he clearly declares that the day of this solemnity is mystically called the Passover through the law because the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, in it, would either pass from this world, or lead us out of the servitude of Egypt through a wholesome passage. Certainly, according to the scripture of the Old Testament, there is a distinction between Passover and unleavened bread, in that Passover itself is called the single day on which the lamb was killed in the evening, that is, the fourteenth moon of the first month. The fifteenth moon, however, when they left Egypt, followed the festival of unleavened bread, which for seven days, that is, until the twenty-first day of the same month in the evening, the solemnity was established. Indeed, the evangelists interchangeably use the day of unleavened bread for Passover and Passover for the days of unleavened bread. For Mark says:

"Now the Passover and the unleavened bread were after two days" (Mark XIV). Luke says: "The festival day of the unleavened bread, which is called Passover" (Luke XXII). Also, John, when on the first day of the unleavened bread, that is, the fifteenth moon, the act was being carried out, says: "And they did not enter into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover" (John XVIII). They did this because the day of Passover is also commanded to be celebrated with unleavened bread, and we, as if making a perpetual Passover, are always commanded to pass from this world. For on the one day the lamb was sacrificed in the evening, and seven days of unleavened bread successively followed, because Christ Jesus, having once suffered for us in the fullness of time in the flesh, commanded that through the whole time of this age (which is conducted in seven days), we must live in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Cor. V), and always by every effort, we are admonished to flee earthly desires as the bindings

of Egypt, and to undertake a secret solitude of virtues as if from worldly conversation.

Mark 14:1

And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might take Him by craft and kill Him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. Those who ought to have been preparing the sacrifices for the nearby Passover, cleaning the temple walls, sweeping the floors, cleansing the vessels, and purifying themselves according to the law so that they would be worthy to eat the lamb, gathered together, taking counsel on how to kill the Lord, not fearing a sedition, as the simple phrase shows, but avoiding that He be taken from their hands by the help of the people. [Mark 14:3] -- And when He was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, and sat at meat. About to suffer for the entire world and to redeem all nations with His blood, He stayed in Bethany in the house of obedience, which once belonged to Simon the leper; not that the leper remained at that time, but because he who had been a leper was later cleansed by the Savior, the former name remaining, so that the power of the healer might appear. For even in the catalog of the apostles, Matthew the publican is named with his former vice and office, who certainly had ceased to be a publican. Some wish to understand Simon the leper as part of the people who believed in the Lord and were cured by Him. Simon is also called obedient.

Mark 14:3

A woman came having an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of spikenard, and having broken the jar, she poured it out on his head. This woman was Mary of Magdala, the sister of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, as John openly mentions, who also attests that this happened six days before the Passover, the day before he came to Jerusalem sitting on a donkey with palms and the praise of the crowds. She is the one, not another, who once (as Luke writes) was still a sinner, coming to the Lord's feet, washed them with tears of repentance and anointed them with the ointment of pious confession. And because she loved much, she earned forgiveness of many sins from the merciful judge. Now having been justified and made familiar with the Lord, she not only anointed his feet (as the same John narrates) but also his head (as Matthew and Mark testify) with sacred oil. Alabaster is a kind of white marble, speckled with various spots, which is typically hollowed out

for ointment vessels because it is said to preserve them uncorrupted. It is found around the Thebes of Egypt, and the whitest around Damascus of Syria, but the best is in India. Nard itself is an aromatic shrub, with a heavy (they say) and thick root, but short and black and brittle, although rich, smelling like a rose or cypress, with a bitter taste, small and dense leaf, whose tips spread into spikes.

Therefore, perfumers celebrate the spikes and leaves of nard for their dual property. And this is what Mark says: Very costly ointment of spikenard. Because indeed, the ointment which Mary brought to the Lord was not only made from the root of the nard, but also, to make it more precious, its perfume and power were enhanced by the addition of its spikes and leaves. Moreover, naturalists say about nard that it is principal among ointments. Therefore, it was rightly offered for the anointing of the Lord's head and feet. There are many kinds of it, but all are less potent except for the Indian, which is the most precious. Mystically, this devotion of Mary ministering to the Lord signifies the faith and piety of the holy Church, which speaks in the Song of Songs saying: While the king was at his table, my nard gave forth its fragrance (Song 1). Undoubtedly, these words, both once literally fulfilled by the hands of Mary, and daily spiritually fulfilled in all its members, who, spread throughout the world, glorify and say: But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ (2 Cor. 2). When it acknowledges with worthy reverence the power of his divine strength, which he shares with the Father, it truly anoints his head with precious ointment.

But when it equally regards with worthy reverence the mysteries of his assumed humanity, it surely anoints the Lord's feet with pure nard ointment, that is, faithful and true, because it piously commends and devoutly venerates that nature of his in which he deigned to touch the earth, that is, to live among men.

Mark 14:4

There were some who were indignantly saying among themselves, "Why has this waste of ointment been made? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." Mark, like Matthew, speaks synecdochically, using the plural for the singular. For John, speaking more distinctly, testifies that Judas said this, and that out of greed,

because he was a thief and had the money box and carried what was put in it. It can also be understood that other disciples either thought this or said it, or were persuaded by Judas saying it, and Matthew and Mark expressed the will of all in words, but John said it of Judas because he was a thief, while the rest rejoiced for the sake of the poor. John, however, wished to mention only him who from this occasion believed he should intimate his habit of stealing. And what follows:

Mark 14:4

And they rebuked her harshly. I do not believe it was said of the good and diligent apostles who loved Christ, but rather of the one who, under the plural number, was proven neither to have adhered faithfully to the Lord nor to his disciples, nor to have cared for the poor. [Mark 14:6] -- But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good deed to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good to them; but you will not always have me." Another question arises, why did Jesus say after the resurrection to the disciples, "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28), and now says, "But you will not always have me." But it seems to me in this place he speaks of his bodily presence: because he will not be with them after the resurrection as he is now in all associations and familiarity. Remembering this, the Apostle said, "Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer" (2 Corinthians 5).

Mark 14:8

What she had, she did; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. What you consider to be the waste of ointment is the duty of burial. It is not surprising if she gives me the good scent of her faith, since I am going to shed my blood for her. [Mark 14:9] -- Amen, I say to you, wherever this Gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her. Pay attention to this knowledge of future events, that He knew He would suffer after a few days, and that His Gospel would be celebrated in the whole world. It should be noted that just as Mary has achieved glory throughout the world, wherever the holy Church has spread, because of the homage of devoted piety she showed to the Lord, so, conversely, the one who did not fear to detract from her homage with a reckless tongue, has been infamously known for his treachery far and wide, and deservedly made

hateful to God and men alike. But the Lord, rewarding good with worthy praise, silently overlooked the future insults of the wicked.

Mark 14:10

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray him to them. Unfortunate Judas! He believes he has suffered a loss from the pouring out of the ointment and wants to compensate it with the price of his master, not even asking for a fixed amount, as if to make the betrayal seem at least lucrative, but, as if selling a worthless slave, placed it in the power of the buyers to give as much as they wanted. The fact that it says, "He went to the chief priests to betray him to them," shows that he was neither invited by the leaders nor constrained by any necessity but spontaneously entered into the plan with a wicked mind. [Mark 14:11] -- Upon hearing this, they rejoiced and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might opportunely betray Him. Many today are horrified by Judas's crime of selling his Lord and Master, and God with money, as something monstrous and wicked, yet they do not take heed. For when they speak false testimony against anyone for the sake of women, indeed because they deny the truth for money, they sell God for money. For He said: I am the truth. When they defile the fellowship of brotherhood with some plague of discord, they betray the Lord, because God is love. Therefore, those who spurn the commands of love and truth betray God, who is indeed love and truth, especially when they sin not out of weakness or ignorance, but in the likeness of Judas seek opportunities to change truth with lies and virtue with crime.

Mark 14:12

On the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover, the disciples said to Him: Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover? He calls the first day of unleavened bread the fourteenth day of the first month when, having cast away the leaven, they used to sacrifice the Passover, that is, kill the lamb in the evening. Explaining this, the Apostle says: For even Christ our Passover has been sacrificed (I Cor. V). Although He was crucified on the following day, that is on the fifteenth moon, yet on this night when the lamb was sacrificed, He handed over to His disciples the mysteries of His body and blood to be celebrated, and being captured and bound by the Jews, He hallowed the beginning of His own sacrificing, that is, of His passion.

Mark 14:13

And he sends two of his disciples and says to them: Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. This is indeed a sign of divine foresight, because while speaking with the disciples, he knows what will happen elsewhere. When, however, the disciples are preparing for Passover, a man carrying a jar, or according to another Gospel, a pitcher of water, meets them, to show that the mystery of this Passover is to be celebrated for the perfect cleansing of the whole world. For water signifies the washing of grace, the jar indicates the frailty of those through whom the same grace was to be administered to the world. Hence, they say: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Cor. IV). Therefore, the disciples prepare the Passover where the jar of water is brought, to signify that the time is here when the typical blood on the doorposts of the true Passover will be removed, and the baptism of the life-giving font will be consecrated to take away the sins of the world.

Mark 14:14

Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, that the teacher says: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? By referring to both the water-bearer and the master of the house, the omitted words are suggesting that, to all wishing to celebrate the true Passover, that is, to be imbued with the sacraments of Christ and to receive him in the hospitality of their minds, this opportunity is indicated. [Mark 14:15] -- And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared there for us, etc. The large upper room is the spiritual law, which leaving the narrowness of the letter, receives the Savior in a high place. For he who still observes the killing letter, who understands nothing in the lamb but a mere animal, certainly does less of the Passover: because he has not yet learned to grasp the majesty of the spirit in the words of God. But he who follows the water bearer, that is, the preacher of grace, into the house of the Church, prepares for Christ a banquet room in the high chamber of the mind by transcending the surface of the letter through the illuminating spirit, because he recognizes that all the mysteries of the Passover, or other decrees of the law, are his mysteries.

Mark 14:17

When evening came, he arrived with the twelve. And as they reclined and ate, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, the one who is eating with me." He who had foretold of the passion, also foretells of the betrayer, giving a place for repentance, so that when he understood that his thoughts and the secrets of his conscience were known, he might repent of his deed. And yet he does not designate him specifically, so that, being openly accused, he would not become more impudent. He places the crime within the number, so that the guilty one might act with repentance. [Mark 14:19] -- But they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one by one, "Is it I?" And surely the eleven apostles knew that they were not contemplating anything like this against the Lord, but they trusted the teacher more than themselves; and fearing their own weakness, they sorrowfully inquired about a sin of which they had no consciousness.

Mark 14:20

He said to them, "One of the twelve, who is dipping his hand with me in the dish." Oh marvelous power of the Lord! First he had said, "One of you will betray me," the betrayer persists in evil, he is more clearly accused, and yet his name is not specifically designated. Judas, while the others were saddened and withdrawing their hands and forbidding food to their mouths, with the rashness and impudence by which he was about to betray the master, even puts his hand with the master into the dish, so that his audacity could falsely claim a good conscience. [Mark 14:21] -- And indeed, the Son of Man goes as it is written of him. But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. Neither at first nor second admonished does he withdraw his foot from betrayal, but the patience of the Lord nourishes his impudence, and he treasures up wrath for himself in the day of wrath. He predicts punishment, so that whom shame did not conquer, the announced torments might correct. But today also and forever, woe to that man who malignantly approaches the table of the Lord, who with schemes hidden in mind and some crime polluting his innermost heart, does not fear to partake in the holy sacrifices of the mysteries of Christ. For even he in the example of Judas betrays the Son of Man, not indeed to sinful Jews, but yet to sinners, namely his own members, with which he presumes to desecrate that inestimable and inviolable sacrament of the Lord's body and blood. He sells God, who, neglecting

His fear and love, is convicted of valuing and caring for earthly and perishable things, indeed even criminal things, in place of Him.

Mark 14: 21

It would have been good for him if that man had not been born. This should not be thought to mean that he existed before he was born, for it cannot be well for anyone, except for him who has been. But it is simply said, it is much better not to exist than to exist badly. [Mark 14:22] -- And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessing it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: Take, this is my body. When the solemnities of the old Passover, which were celebrated in remembrance of the ancient liberation of God's people from Egypt, were finished, he moved on to the new which he wanted the Church to observe in memory of his own redemption, so that he might substitute, in place of the flesh and blood of the lamb, the sacrament of his body and blood, and show himself to be: To whom the Lord swore and will not repent: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110). He himself breaks the bread which he gives to the disciples, to show that his body's breaking would not come without his own volition and preparation, but as he says elsewhere, he has the power to lay down his life, and he has the power to take it up again. Indeed, he blessed the bread with the grace of a certain sacrament before breaking it, because the human nature he took on, which he was to suffer, he, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, filled with the grace of divine power. He blessed and broke the bread, because he deigned to submit the assumed man to death in such a way that he might truly demonstrate that he had within him the power of divine immortality, and thus teach that he would quickly be raised from death.

Mark 14: 23

And taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. As he is said to be approaching his passion, he is reported to have given thanks when he took the bread. Therefore, he gives thanks, who bears the lashes of another's iniquity. And he who showed nothing worthy of being struck, humbly blesses in the beating, to show by this what each person should do under the lash of their own fault, if he bears the lashes of another's fault with equanimity; to show by this what a subject should do in correction if, placed under the lash, he gives equal thanks to the father.

Mark 14: 24

And he said to them: This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many. Because bread strengthens the body, but wine works blood in the flesh: this is mystically related to the body of Christ, that refers to the blood. But because it is necessary that both we remain in Christ, and Christ in us, water is mixed with the wine of the Lord's cup. For according to John, the waters are the peoples. And neither water alone, nor wine alone, just as neither grain of wheat alone without the mixture and preparation of water, is permitted to be offered to anyone as bread, lest this offering be understood as signifying a separation of the head from the members, and that either Christ could have suffered without love for our redemption, or we could be saved and offered to the Father without his passion. But what he says: This is my blood of the new testament (Matthew 26), relates to the distinction of the old testament, which was dedicated with the blood of goats and calves, the legislator saying while sprinkling: This is the blood of the testament, which God has commanded unto you (Hebrews 9). For it is necessary indeed that the copies of the true are cleansed by these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these; according to what the Apostle through the whole epistle to the Hebrews, distinguishing between the law and the Gospel, declares with a most beautiful explanation and comprehensive reasoning.

Mark 14: 25

Amen, I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. The vine or vineyard of the Lord has been called the Synagogue, as all Scripture frequently testifies, and Isaiah more openly in the song sung about it: "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel" (Isaiah V). From which vineyard, indeed, the Lord was drinking for a long time, although many branches turned into the bitterness of a foreign vine, because even though many in that people deviated from the straight path of faith, there were always many throughout the time of the law, whose pious thoughts and excellent virtues delighted God. But with the Lord suffering in the flesh and rising from the dead, it was time for that legal and figurative observance to cease, and for those things which were carried out according to the letter to be transferred into a spiritual sense and held better in the new testament, with the grace of the Holy Spirit help-

ing. Therefore, going to His passion, the Lord said: I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. As if He said openly: I will no longer delight in the carnal ceremonies of the Synagogue, in which even those sacred rites of the paschal lamb held a special place. For the time of my resurrection will come, that day will come, when I, placed in the kingdom of God, that is, exalted in the glory of immortal life, will be filled with new joy together with you, from the fountain of the grace of the Spirit regenerated in the salvation of that same people.

Mark 14: 26

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. This is what we read in the psalm: "The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord will praise Him" (Psalm 21). The hymn can also be understood as the one which the Lord, according to John, sang while giving thanks to the Father, in which, lifting His eyes up, He prayed for Himself, for the disciples, and for those who would believe through their word. And beautifully, He led the disciples, who had been imbued with the sacraments of His body and blood and commended to the Father with a hymn of holy intercession, to the Mount of Olives, to symbolically show that through the reception of His sacraments and by the aid of His intercession, we ought to ascend to the higher gifts of virtues and the charismata of the Holy Spirit, by which we might be anointed in heart.

Mark 14: 27

And Jesus said to them: You will all be scandalized in this night. He foretells what they will suffer so that when they suffer, they do not despair of salvation but find release by repenting. And He specifically added, "in this night you will be scandalized," because just as those who get drunk, get drunk at night, so also those who suffer scandal, suffer it in the night and in darkness. But let us say: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Romans 13). [Mark 14:27] -- For it is written: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." This is written in other words in the prophet Zechariah; and, if I am not mistaken, it is spoken by the prophet to God: "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (Zechariah 13). The sixty-eighth psalm, which is entirely sung by the Lord, corresponds to this sense: "For they persecuted him whom you have smitten." The good shepherd is smitten so that he

may lay down his life for his sheep and from many wandering flocks there may be made one flock and one shepherd.

Mark 14:29

Peter said to Him: Even if all are scandalized, yet not I. This is neither recklessness nor falsehood, but the faith of the Apostle Peter and his ardent zeal towards the Lord the Savior.

Mark 14:30

And Jesus said to him: Truly, I say to you that today, in this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times. And Peter, in the fervor of his faith, made a promise, and the Savior, as God, knew the future. And note that Peter denies in the night, and denies three times. But after the rooster crowed, and as the darkness lessened, the approaching light was announced, he turned and wept bitterly, washing away the filth of the threefold denial with his tears. It should certainly not be thought to be contrary that Mark says: Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times, while the other evangelists simply say: Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. For the entirety of Peter's denial is a threefold denial. Because he remained in that same denial, with the intent and purpose of falsehood, until, reminded of what he had been foretold, he was healed with bitter weeping and sorrow of the heart. But this entire, that is, threefold denial, if it had begun after the first crowing of the rooster, the three who said that the Lord had spoken truly that before the rooster crows, Peter would deny him three times would seem to have spoken falsely. Again, if he had completed the whole threefold denial before the rooster began to crow, Marcus would be found to have said in vain from the person of the Lord:

Truly I say to you that you, in this night, before the rooster crows twice will deny me three times. But because that threefold denial began before the first crowing of the rooster, those three paid attention not to when Peter would complete it, but to how extensive it would be, and when it would begin, that is, threefold before the rooster crows, although it could be understood entirely in his mind before the first crowing of the rooster. Although indeed the beginning of those words of denial was before the first crowing, and after the second crowing the entire threefold denial was completed, nevertheless by the disposition of his mind and the fear of Peter, it was conceived entirely before the first crowing. Nor does it matter over how many

intervals of delay the threefold voice was announced, since his heart, even before the first crowing, possessed it entirely, so deeply was it imbued with such great fear that he could deny the Lord, not only once, but a second and third time when questioned, so that to those considering attentively and diligently how one who has already committed adultery in his heart if he looks at a woman lustfully, so Peter, whenever he expressed in words the fear which he had so vehemently conceived in his mind, that extended up to the third denial of the Lord, the entire threefold denial must be attributed to that moment when such sufficient fear for a threefold denial overtook him.

Mark 14: 32

And they come to a place called Gethsemane. The place of Gethsemane is shown to this day, where the Lord prayed, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, now a church built above it. However, Gethsemane is interpreted as the valley of the fat ones or the fatness. Indeed, not only the sayings or deeds of our Savior, but also the places and times in which he works and speaks, are full of mystical figures (as often said), when the Lord prays on the mountain, as if silently admonishing us that only high things should be sought by praying, and that we should supplicate for heavenly goods. But when he prays in the valley, and this in the valley of the fat ones or fatness, he equally insinuates to us humility always in prayers, and the internal fatness of love to be preserved, that none should dare, as it were, to boast his merits before God in prayer in the example of the proud Pharisee, but rather with humble voice and mind proclaim: God, be merciful to me a sinner (Luke XVIII). Nor bearing a heart dry of love for the neighbor, to placate the Creator's grace, should he kneel, like the one who, not willing to forgive a hundred denarii to his brother which he owed him, in vain prayed for ten thousand talents to be forgiven to him by his lord.

Nor having a heart fasting from the love of the Creator, should he in prayer seek any temporal things rather than his vision, to be counted among those of whom he said: For they have received their reward (Matthew VI). To place one's thought in the low, what else is it but a certain dryness of mind? But those who intellectually already feed on the food of inner delight by holy desires of heavenly things, as it were, grow fat by more ample nourishment. For this fatness the Psalmist longed to be filled, when he said: My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness (Psalm LXII). As regards the dispensation of the Lord's passion itself, it is fittingly appropriated to death,

that the Lord prayed in the valley of fatness, because through the valley of humility and the fatness of charity he underwent death for us. For he humbled himself, being made obedient to the Father unto death (Philippians II). And greater love than this no man has, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John XV).

Mark 14: 33

And He takes Peter, and James, and John with Him, and began to be afraid and to be very sorrowful. And He said to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death. Christ is afraid, while Peter is not afraid. Christ is afraid; Peter says: I will lay down my life for you (John 13). Christ says: My soul is troubled. Both are true, and each is full of reason, because the one who is lower does not fear, and the one who is higher carries the emotion of fear. For he, as a man, does not understand the power of death. But He, being established as God in the body, exposes the frailty of the flesh, so that the impiety of those who deny the mystery of the Incarnation might be excluded. Indeed, He said this, and Manichaeus did not believe, Valentinus denied, and Marcion judged it a phantom. However, He equaled the human set forth in the truth of the body to such an extent by emotion, that He would say: Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will (Matthew 26). Therefore He took up my will, took up my sorrow. I confidently name sorrow because I preach the cross. My will is what He called His own. Because as a man He took up my sorrow, as a man He spoke.

Mark 14: 36

And so He says: Not as I will, but as You will (Ibid.). My sorrow is what He took up with my emotion. Therefore He grieved for me, who had nothing to grieve for Himself. And setting apart the delight of eternal divinity, He is affected by the weariness of my weakness. My soul, He says, is sorrowful even unto death. The Lord is not sorrowful because of death, for He is offended by the condition of bodily emotion, not by the fear of death. For He who took on the body had to undergo all that pertains to the body, such as hunger, thirst, anguish, and sorrow. However, divinity is not altered by these emotions. [Mark 14:34] -- Endure here, and keep watch. And when he had gone on a little further, he fell to the ground. What he commands, endure here, and keep watch, does not forbid sleep, whose time had not come with impending danger, but the sleep of infidelity and the numbness of the mind.

And after giving them the command to endure and keep watch with him, proceeding a little further, he fell on his face and showed the humility of the mind through the habit of the flesh.

Mark 14:35

And he prayed that if it was possible the hour would pass from him, and said: Abba, etc. What was that voice, except the sound of our weakness? Many still frail ones grieve at the future death; but let them have a right heart, let them avoid death as much as they can; but if they cannot, let them say what the Lord himself, not for himself, but for us said. For what did he say? Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Behold you have the human will expressed. Now see the right heart.

Mark 14:36

But not what I will, but what you (will). I did not come (he says) to do my will, but the will of him who sent me (John 5). He spoke of his own will, which he temporarily assumed from the virgin; but the will of him who sent him, he marked that, namely, which eternally and eternally he had in common with the Father. He prays for the cup to pass, to truly show that he was also a man. However, remembering also why he was sent, he completes the mission for which he was sent, and cries out: But not what I will, but what you (will). If death dies without me dying, namely in the flesh, let this cup pass, he says. But because this will not happen otherwise, he says: Not what I will, but what you (will). And that he, invoking the Father with a double name, says Abba Father, shows that he is the God and Savior of both peoples, namely the Jew and the Gentile. For indeed, Abba signifies what Father means. But abba is Hebrew, father is Greek and Latin. Therefore, in order to teach that both people would believe in him and would invoke him, he himself first invokes him in both languages. For he is the good shepherd, who, giving his life for his sheep, makes one fold out of two flocks.

Therefore, with the voice of both flocks, he asks for the Father's help, so that we, informed by his example, when we feel adversities coming, invoking God the Father as the Hebrew, Abba, with one devotion of faith and charity, may seek heavenly help. Hence the admirable doctor, taking the form of teaching from the Lord, thus addresses his listeners: You have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, in which we cry out: Abba Father (Ro-

mans 8). Truly Abba to those who are from the Israelite people, us Father, who from the Gentiles came to the faith of Christ.

Mark 14:37

And coming, he found them sleeping, and said to Peter: Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? He who had previously said: Even if all are scandalized, I will never be scandalized, now, in the greatness of his sorrow, cannot overcome sleep. [Mark 14:38] -- Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. It is impossible for the human soul not to be tempted. Hence, in the Lord's Prayer we say: And lead us not into temptation (Matthew VI); which we cannot endure: not rejecting temptation entirely, but imploring the strength to withstand in temptations. Therefore, in the present, he does not say: Watch and pray, lest you be tempted, but, lest you enter into temptation. That is, lest the ultimate temptation overcomes you and ensnares you in its traps. For example, the martyr who shed his blood for the confession of the Lord was indeed tempted, but he was not entangled in the snares of temptation. However, he who denies falls into the snares of temptation.

Mark 14:38

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. This is said against the rash, who think they can achieve whatever they believe. Hence, as much as we trust in the ardor of the mind, so much should we fear the frailty of the flesh. But nevertheless, according to the Apostle, let us mortify the deeds of the flesh by the spirit. This passage is also against the Eutychians, who say there was one operation, one will in the mediator of God and men, our Lord and Savior. For when he says: The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, he shows two wills: namely, the human, which is of the flesh, and the divine, which is of the deity. Where indeed the human, because of the weakness of the flesh, refuses suffering. But the divine will is most willing. For to fear in suffering is of human frailty; but to accept the dispensation of suffering is of divine will and virtue.

Mark 14:39

And again, he went away and prayed, saying the same words; and returning again, he found them sleeping. He alone prays for all, just as he alone suffers for all. The eyes of the apostles were weakening and oppressed with the nearby denial. [Mark 14:41] -- And he came the third time, and said to them:

Sleep now, and take your rest; it is enough. When he had said: Sleep now, and take your rest, and added: It is enough, and then introduced: The hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners, and so on, it is understood that, after He had said to them: Sleep and take your rest, the Lord kept silent for a while so that what He foretold might be fulfilled, and then added: Behold, the hour is at hand, or the hour has come. Therefore, after saying those words, it is placed as 'it is enough,' meaning that the time for resting is now sufficient. But since the mention of the Lord's silence was not included, it constrains the understanding, making it necessary to seek another interpretation in those words.

Mark 14:42

Rise up, let us go. Behold, he who betrays me is at hand. After praying a third time, and commanding the fear of the apostles, followed by penance, to be corrected, secure in His passion, He proceeds to His persecutors, and voluntarily offers Himself to be killed, saying to the disciples: Rise up, let us go. Behold, he who betrays me is at hand. Let him not find us as fearful and hesitant, but let us go to death willingly, so they may see our confidence and joy in suffering. [Mark 14:44] -- Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, etc. Indeed, an impudent and wicked confidence, to call Him Master and to give a kiss to Him whom he was betraying. However, he still had something of the disciple's shame, since he did not openly hand Him over to the persecutors, but by the sign of a kiss. The Lord received the kiss of the betrayer, not to teach us to deceive, but so that He would not appear to evade the traitor, and also fulfilling that which was written in David: I was peaceful with those who hate peace (Psalm 119).

Mark 14:47

One of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Peter did this, as the evangelist John declares, indeed with the same ardor of mind with which he had done other things. For he knew how Phinehas, by punishing the sacrilegious, had received the reward of the eternal priesthood. But Luke adds that the Lord, touching the servant's ear, healed him. Therefore, the Lord never forgets his mercy, who even does not allow his enemies to be wounded. They inflict death on the just, He heals the wounds of his persecutors. Mystically teaching that even those who had contracted the wound of the soul by consenting to his death,

if they made the fruit of repentance worthy, they could merit salvation. [Mark 14:48] -- And Jesus, answering, said to them: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? etc." He said, it is foolish to seek him with swords and clubs who freely surrenders to your hands; and to search for him at night as if he were hiding and avoiding your sight, who teaches daily in the temple. But you gather against me in the dark because your power is in the darkness.

Mark 14:50

Then his disciples, leaving him, all fled. The word of the Lord which he had spoken was fulfilled, that all his disciples would be scandalized in him that very night. For even if, by the crowd permitting to the Lord's request, they fled, as John writes, they nonetheless showed the fear and timidity of their mind, that they were more ready to take refuge in flight than to endure suffering with Christ in confidence. [Mark 14:51] -- A certain young man followed him, clothed in a linen cloth over his naked body, and they seized him. But he, leaving the linen cloth behind, fled from them naked. When it says 'clothed in a linen cloth over his naked body,' it is implied on the body, that is, on the naked body, because he had no other clothing than only the linen cloth. But who this young man was, the evangelist does not say. Whoever he was, he proves that a greater love for the Lord remained in him than in the others, who, while they were already fleeing, he, bound by the bond of love, did not cease to follow him until he was apprehended by the enemies. Although he had not yet perfected love, who could even while being held flee from the companionship of the Savior. Because just as perfect love casts out fear (1 John IV), so fear, besieging the mind, proves imperfect love.

Mark 14:51–52

But it is to be noted narrowly that the evangelist writing about this young man does not say that he fled from the company or fled from following the Lord, but, he says, rejecting the linen cloth, he fled naked from them. For he fled from the enemies, whose presence and deeds he detested; he did not flee from the Lord and his Master, whose love fixed in his heart he preserved even absent in the body. Nor is there anything to prevent us from understanding that this young man was John, the disciple beloved above others by the Master. For that he was a young man at that time is indicated by his long life afterward in the flesh. For it could have happened that, having slipped from

the hands of his captors for a moment, he soon, having resumed his garment, returned and mingled among the crowd leading Jesus, as if he were one of them, until he reached the high priest's courtyard where he was known, as he himself recounts in his Gospel. But just as Peter, who washed away the sin of his denial with the tears of repentance and completely eradicated it by confessing his love for the Lord, showing the recovery of those who fall in martyrdom, so the other disciples, who avoided the moment of capture by fleeing, teach the caution of fleeing to those who feel themselves less capable of enduring torments.

For it is much safer for them to seek the protection of hiding places than to expose themselves to the danger of contests. Thus also this young man, who, rejecting the linen cloth, fled naked from the impious ones, designates their work and mind who, in order to be more secure from the attacks of the enemies, throw away whatever they seem to possess in this world and learn to serve the Lord naked rather than by adhering to the things of the world, giving the adversaries matter for tempting and recalling them from God: following the example of the blessed Joseph who, leaving his garment in the hands of the adulteress, leapt out, preferring to serve God naked rather than, clothed in the desires of the world, to serve the prostitute.

Mark 14:53

And they led Jesus to the high priest. The high priest means Caiphas, who (as the evangelist John writes) was the high priest of that year. Josephus also testifies in agreement about this, saying that he obtained the high priesthood without merit from the Roman ruler. Therefore, it is not surprising if an unjust high priest judges unjustly. [Mark 14:54] -- But Peter followed from a distance, etc. Deservedly he followed from a distance, who was soon to deny him. For he could not have denied if he had clung closely to Christ. Yet in this, he is most greatly venerable to us with admiration because he did not leave the Lord even when he was afraid. For what he fears is due to nature; what he follows is due to devotion; what he denies is due to deception; what he repents of is due to faith. Another interpretation: Peter following the same Lord from a distance to the passion signified that the Church would indeed follow, that is, imitate the passion of the Lord, but from a far distance. For the Church suffers for itself, but He for the Church.

Mark 14: 54

And he was sitting with the attendants and warming himself at the fire. There is the fire of love, and there is also the fire of desire. Of this it is said: I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled (Luke 12)? But of that: They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker (Hosea 7). This fire, descending upon the believers in the upper room of Zion, taught them to praise God in various languages. That fire kindled by the evil spirit in the courtyard of Caiaphas armed the harmful tongues of the faithless to deny and blaspheme the Lord. For what the malignant council was plotting inside the house of the high priest, this fire materially lit outside in the courtyard amidst the cold of the night, symbolically prefigured. Therefore, whoever extinguishes the evil and harmful fire in themselves can say with the prophet to the Lord: For I am become like a bottle in the frost; yet do I not forget thy statutes (Psalm 119). But those in whom the flame of love has been overwhelmed by the turbulent waters of vices hear from the Lord: Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24). At that cold moment, the Apostle Peter, numb from the cold, wished to warm himself by the coals of Caiaphas' attendants, because he sought the comfort of temporal ease by the company of the faithless.

But soon, remembered by the Lord, he left behind both the physical fire of the wicked and the infidelity within his heart. And after the resurrection of the Lord, revived by the holy fire, he completely purged the sin of his threefold denial by the threefold confession of love. Then, upon that memorable catch of fish, when he came to the Lord with his fellow disciples, soon seeing the coals laid, and the fish laid on it and the bread, he was inflamed with the fire of love in the hidden chambers of his heart.

Mark 14: 58

And some standing up bore false witness against him, saying: We heard him say: I will destroy this temple made with hands, and after three days I will build another not made with hands. How are they false witnesses if they say things which we read that the Lord said? But a false witness is he who does not understand statements in the same sense as they are spoken. For the Lord had spoken about the temple of his body. Yet they slander even the very words, and by adding or changing a few, they seem to create a just accusation. The Savior had said: Destroy this temple. They change it and say: I will

destroy this temple made with hands. He says, you destroy, not I. Because it is unlawful for us to bring death upon ourselves. Then they twist it: and after three days I will build another not made with hands, so that it appears he spoke specifically about the Jewish temple. But the Lord, to show that the living and breathing body is the temple, had said: And I will raise it up in three days. Building is one thing, raising is another.

Mark 14:60

And the high priest, rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Do you answer nothing to what is objected against you by these men? But he was silent and answered nothing. Impetuous and impatient anger, finding no place for slander, shakes the high priest from his seat to show the madness of his mind with the movement of his body. The more Jesus was silent towards the false witnesses and impious priests unworthy of his response, the more the high priest, overcome with fury, provokes him to respond, so that at any chance of speaking he finds a place for accusing. Nonetheless, Jesus remains silent. For he knew, as if God, whatever he had answered, it would be twisted for slander. [Mark 14:61] -- Again the high priest asked him, and said to him: Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed? Jesus said to him: I am. In Matthew it is written that to the high priest asking and adjuring him if he was the Christ, he answered: You have said it (Matt. 26). For which Mark placed: I am, to show that what Jesus says to him: You have said it, is as much as if he had said: I am.

Mark 14:62

And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Therefore, if for you in Christ, O Jew, pagan, and heretic, contempt, weakness, and the cross are an insult, see that through these the Son of Man is to sit at the right hand of God the Father, and, born from the Virgin's womb as a man, is to come in His majesty with the clouds of heaven. Hence, the Apostle also, after describing the rejection of the cross, saying that He humbled Himself, became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, added and said: Therefore God also exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Philipp. II).

Mark 14:63

But the high priest, rending his garments, said: Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. The same fury that had shaken him from the priestly throne provokes him to rend his garments. He rends his garments to show that the Jews had lost priestly glory and had an empty seat of the high priest. It is also a custom among the Jews, when they hear something blasphemous and seemingly against God, to rend their garments. We read that Paul and Barnabas did this too when they were honored with divine worship in Lycaonia. However, because Herod did not give honor to God but acquiesced to the excessive favor of the people, he was immediately struck by an angel. But in a higher mystery, it happened that during the Lord's passion, the high priest of the Jews himself rent his garments, while the tunic of the Lord could not be rent by even the soldiers who crucified him. It was prefigured that the priesthood of the Jews would be rent for the crimes of their priests and completely dissolved from its state of integrity; however, the solidity of the holy universal Church, which is often called the garment of its Redeemer, could never be rent. Rather, even if the Jews, the Gentiles, the heretics, or the wicked Catholics despise the humility of the Lord Savior, its inviolate chastity will remain until the end of the age in those whom He finds chosen.

Mark 14:65

And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say to him: Prophesy. And the officers struck him with the palms of their hands. The prophecy was fulfilled here which says: I gave my cheeks to the smiters, and I did not hide my face from confusion and spitting (Isaiah 50:6). But he who was struck then with buffetings from the Jews is now also struck by the blasphemies of false Christians. He who was then spat upon with the saliva of the unbelievers is now even to this day dishonored and provoked with insults by the frenzied only in name faithful. They covered his face, not so that he would not see their crimes, but so that they themselves, as they once did to Moses, might hide from themselves the grace of his knowledge. For if they believed Moses, they might perhaps also believe in the Lord. That veil remains until this day upon their hearts not revealed. But it has been taken away for us who believe in Christ. For it was not in vain that the veil of the temple was torn in two at the moment he died, and the things that had

been hidden throughout the whole time of the law, and had been concealed from the carnal Israel, were made manifest to the worshippers of the New Testament in the sanctum sanctorum secrets. But what they say to him: Prophesy, and according to other evangelists: Prophesy who is the one who struck you; they do this as if in scorn of him who wished to be considered a prophet by the people. But he himself arranging what he suffers, everything is done for us, as Peter exhorts: Since Christ suffered in the flesh, let us arm ourselves with the same thought, and be prepared to endure the mocking insults for his name.

Mark 14:66

And while Peter was in the courtyard below, one of the maidservants of the high priest came. And when she saw Peter warming himself, looking at him she said: You also were with Jesus of Nazareth, etc. What does it mean that the maidservant first betrayed him, when surely men could have recognized him more? unless it is that this sex might also appear to have sinned in the death of the Lord and that this sex might also be redeemed through the passion of the Lord. And therefore the woman first receives the mystery of the resurrection, and keeps the commandments to abolish the ancient error of transgression. [Mark 14:68] -- And he went out before the courtyard, and the cock crowed. Of this crowing of the cock, the other evangelists are silent, though they do not deny that it happened, just as many others pass over in silence many things which others recount.

Mark 14:69

Again, when the maid saw him, she began to say to those standing around: This man is one of them. But he denied it again. The one accusing him now should not be believed to be the same as before. For Matthew says very clearly: When he went out to the gate, another saw him and said to those who were there (Matthew 26), etc. From this denial of Peter, we learn not only that Christ is denied by someone who says He is not Christ, but also by someone who, when He is, denies that he himself is a Christian. However, the Lord did not say to Peter: You will deny my disciple, but: You will deny me. So he denied Him when he denied being His disciple. [Mark 14:70] -- And after a little while, those standing by said to Peter again: Truly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean. Not that Galileans spoke a different language than the Jerusalemites, for both were Hebrews, but that every province

and region has its peculiarities, and it cannot avoid the native accent. Hence, in the Acts of the Apostles, when those upon whom the Holy Spirit had descended spoke in the languages of all nations, among others who had come from different parts of the world, even those living in Judea are reported to have said: Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each in our own language in which we were born (Acts 2)? And Peter, speaking to the brothers in Jerusalem, said: And it became known to all those inhabiting Jerusalem, so that that field was called in their own language Haceldama (Acts 1). Why in their language, unless it was because they pronounced the same name differently, that is, the Galileans differently from those in Jerusalem?

Mark 14:71

But he began to curse and to swear: "I do not know this man you are talking about." And immediately the rooster crowed again. Scripture is wont to designate the mystery of events by the state of times. Hence Peter, who denied in the middle of the night, repented at the crowing of the rooster. He who even after the resurrection of the Lord professed by daylight equally thrice to love Him whom he had thrice denied. For surely, what he erred in the darkness of oblivion, he corrected by the remembrance of the hoped-for light, and by the acquisition of the presence of the true light, fully raised all that had faltered. I think this rooster is to be understood as some teacher, who, awakening us supine and rebuking the sleepy, says: "Awake to righteousness, and do not sin." [Mark 14:72] -- And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he began to weep. How harmful are the colloquies of the wicked? Peter himself among the faithless denied even knowing a man, whom among his fellow disciples he had already confessed to be the Son of God. But neither could he, held in the courtyard of Caiaphas, perform penitence. He went outside, as the other evangelists narrate, so that, secluded from the council of the ungodly, he might wash away the filth of his fearful denial with unrestrained weeping.

CHAPTER 15

Mark 15:1

And immediately, forming a plan, in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole council, binding Jesus, led Him away and

delivered Him to Pilate. He was led not only to Pilate but also to Herod, so that both might mock the Lord. And observe the priests' diligence in evil. All night they stayed awake to commit murder, and they handed over the bound one to Pilate. For they had this custom, that whoever they sentenced to death, they handed over bound to the judge. Nevertheless, it should be noted that they did not bind Him for the first time then, but as soon as He was apprehended in the night in the garden, as John declares, they bound Him and thus brought Him first to Annas. [Mark 15:2] -- And Pilate asked Him: "Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate, asking no other crime except whether He was the king of the Jews, the Jews are accused of impiety, because they could not find even falsely something to charge against the Savior.

Mark 15: 2

But he, answering, said to him: You say it. He answered in such a way that he both spoke the truth and his speech could not be accused of calumny. And note that to Pilate, who was reluctantly passing judgment, he responded in part, but to the priests and leaders, he did not want to respond and judged them unworthy of his speech. [Mark 15:4] -- Pilate, however, again asked him, saying: Do you not answer anything? See in how many things they accuse you. But Jesus no longer answered anything. Although it is a Gentile who condemns Jesus, he attributes the cause to the Jewish people: See in how many things they accuse you. Jesus, however, did not want to answer, lest, by dispelling the accusation, he would be released by the governor, and the benefit of the cross delayed. [Mark 15:11] -- But the chief priests stirred up the crowd that he might rather release Barabbas to them. To the Jews to this day remains their request, which they obtained with such effort. For given the choice, they chose a thief over Jesus, a murderer over the Savior, the taker of life over the giver of life, and deservedly lost both salvation and life, and submitted themselves so much to robbery and sedition that they lost both their country and kingdom, which they loved more than Christ, and have not yet deserved to regain that liberty of either soul or body which they sold.

Mark 15: 12

But Pilate again, answering, said to them: What then do you want me to do with the king of the Jews? But they again shouted: Crucify him. However, Pilate was saying to them: What evil has he done? Pilate gave many opportunities to free the Savior: first, comparing him to the thief, then saying: What

then do you want me to do with the king of the Jews? And when they answered, "Crucify him," he did not immediately comply, but, according to the suggestion of his wife who had sent word to him, as Matthew writes: Have nothing to do with that just man (Matthew 27), he himself also seriously responding: What, he said, has he done wrong? By saying this, Pilate absolved Jesus. [Mark 15:14] -- But they cried out more: Crucify him. That it might be fulfilled which was said in the twenty-first psalm: Many dogs surrounded me, the assembly of the wicked enclosed me (Psalm XXI); and that from Jeremiah: My heritage is become to me as a lion in the forest, they have given forth their voice against me (Jeremiah XII). Isaiah also agrees in this sentiment: And I looked for judgment, but behold iniquity and not righteousness, but a cry (Isaiah V).

Mark 15:15

But Pilate, willing to satisfy the people, released Barabbas to them and delivered Jesus, after having him scourged, to be crucified. Jesus, however, is understood to have been scourged not by another, but by Pilate himself. For John writes openly: They all cried again, saying: Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him (John XVIII). And then he adds: And the soldiers, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on his head, etc. (John XIX). Indeed, he is believed to have done this and to have delivered him to the soldiers to be mocked, so that, satisfied with his pains and insults, they might willingly stop desiring his death. This was done, for it was written: Many are the stripes of the wicked (Psalm XXXI), he was scourged so that we might be freed from beatings, the Scripture saying: The scourge shall not approach your tabernacle (Psalm XC).

Mark 15:16–18

But the soldiers led Him into the courtyard of the praetorium, and called together the entire cohort, and they clothed Him in purple, and after weaving a crown of thorns, they placed it on Him, and began to salute Him: Hail, King of the Jews. The soldiers did this because He had been called the King of the Jews, and because the scribes and the priests had accused Him of seizing power in the Israelite people for Himself. They did this in mockery, stripping Him of His former clothes, dressing Him in purple, which ancient kings used, placing a crown of thorns on Him instead of a diadem, giving Him a reed instead of a royal scepter, as Matthew writes, and worshipping

Him as though He were a king. But let us understand all these things mystically. As Caiaphas said: It is expedient that one man should die for the people (John XVIII), not knowing what he said (Luke IX); so whatever they did, although they did it with a different intent, nevertheless, for us who believe, they were administering the sacraments.

Mark 15:17

It is to be noted, however, that for what Mark says: And they clothed Him in purple, Matthew puts it thus: And stripping Him, they put on Him a scarlet robe (Matthew XXVII). From which it is understood that what Matthew says: They put on Him a scarlet robe, Mark states as: Clothed in purple. For that scarlet robe was used in mockery as royal purple, and it is a kind of red-purple similar to scarlet. It is also possible that Mark mentioned purple, which the cloak had, although it was scarlet. Mystically, therefore, in the purple with which the Lord is clothed, His very body, which He subjected to sufferings, is indicated. Concerning this, prophecy had already said: Why then is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one treading in the winepress? (Isaiah LXIII).

Mark 15:17

In the crown of thorns He wore is shown the taking up of our sins, for which He deigned to become mortal. As His forerunner bearing witness to Him said: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John I). For the Lord Himself bears witness that thorns are customarily placed as a sign of sins, who said to the first man fallen into sin: Your land will bring forth thorns and thistles for you (Genesis III). Which is to say openly: Your conscience will constantly generate for you the stings and thorns of vices. But according to the Gospel of Luke, the Lord is clothed in a white robe before Herod, while in the other Gospels He is mocked by the soldiers of Pilate under a scarlet or purple garment. Comparing both narratives, in one the innocence and chastity of the assumed humanity are expressed, while in the other, the truth of the passion through which He was to attain the glory of the immortal kingdom is expressed. For just as purple mimics the color of the blood shed for us, so also the habit of the kingdom, into which He entered after the passion and which is open to us to enter, is insinuated. But since the Apostle says: For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have

put on Christ (Galatians III); and Isaiah instructs the Lord about all the elect:

These, he says, will be clothed as with an ornament (Isaiah XLI), in this double attire of the Lord, contemptible indeed in the view of enemies but most glorious in the election of the Lord Himself, the entire multitude of His elect, divided into the venerated martyrs and the remaining faithful, can be most aptly designated. For He is clothed in a white robe when He is surrounded by the pure confession of the righteous. He is dressed in purple or scarlet, when he glories in the triumph of victorious martyrs.

Mark 15:19

And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. And kneeling down, they worshipped him. These things then the soldiers of Pilate did, these things up to today the heretics and pagans do, indeed the soldiers of the devil. For since Christ's head is God, they strike his head who deny that he is true God. And because Scripture is usually written with a reed, they strike the head of Christ as it were with a reed, who, denying his divinity, try to confirm their error with the authority of Sacred Scripture. They spit in his face, who reject his presence of grace with execrable words conceived from the insanity of a blinded mind, and deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. [Mark 15:19] -- And indeed the soldiers, as if he had falsely claimed to be God, mocked and adored him. But today there are those, with greater madness, who adore him with firm faith as true God, but by perverse actions soon despise his words as if fanciful, and place the promises of his kingdom far behind worldly allurements.

Mark 15:20

And they led him out to crucify him. And they compelled a certain passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. Simon seems to have been of great repute then, as his sons also are named as already known to all. But it must be avoided lest anyone thinks contrary to what John writes, that the Lord himself carried his cross; for the other evangelists relate that this Simon of Cyrene carried it. [Mark 15:21] -- Firstly, it was carried by the Lord, and then it was imposed on Simon, whom they happened to meet as they were going out. And this is in a fitting order of mystery. For he undoubtedly suffered for us, leaving us an example that we might follow in his footsteps. [Mark 15:21] -- And because this

Simon is said to be not from Jerusalem but a Cyrenian (for Cyrene is a city of Libya, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles), it is rightly by him that the peoples of the Gentiles are designated, who once were strangers and foreigners to the covenants, now by obeying are citizens and household members of God, and, as it is said elsewhere, heirs indeed of God, but co-heirs of Christ (Romans VIII). Thus fittingly Simon the obedient, Cyrene, is interpreted as heir. And it should not be overlooked that the same Simon is reported to have come from the country. The country in Greek is called πάγος. From this, we call pagans those whom we see as alien to the city of God and almost devoid of urban conversation. But Simon, coming out of the country, carries the cross after Jesus, as the people of the nations, having abandoned pagan rites, obediently embrace the footsteps of the Lord's passion.

Mark 15: 22

And they bring him to a place called Golgotha, which is interpreted as the place of the Skull. Outside the city gate are places where the heads of the condemned are cut off, and they have taken the name Calvariae, that is, of those beheaded. For this reason, the Lord was crucified there, so that where there was once the ground of the condemned, the banners of martyrdom might be raised. And just as for us, He became the curse of the cross, and was scourged and crucified, so for the salvation of all, He is crucified as a guilty one among the guilty. [Mark 15:23] -- And they gave Him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, and He did not accept it. God speaks to Jerusalem: I planted you, my true vineyard; how have you turned into a bitter wild vine (Jeremiah II)? The bitter vine produced bitter wine: which is offered to the Lord Jesus, so that what is written may be fulfilled: They gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink (Psalm LXVIII). But when it is said: And He did not accept it, or according to Matthew: When He had tasted it, He did not want to drink (Matthew XXVII), this indicates that He indeed tasted the bitterness of death for us, but on the third day He rose again.

Mark 15: 23

For what Mark says: he did not take, it is understood: he did not take to drink. However, he tasted, as Matthew is a witness, so that what the same Matthew says, He did not want to drink, Mark says He did not take, but he is silent on the tasting. And what Mark says, Wine mixed with myrrh, it is to

be understood Matthew said with gall mixed (Matthew 27). For Matthew indeed uses gall to signify bitterness. And wine mixed with myrrh is very bitter, although it might be that both with gall and myrrh the wine is made very bitter. [Mark 15:24] -- And crucifying him, they divided his garments, casting lots upon them, who should take what. This the evangelist John explains more fully: namely, that the soldiers divided the rest into four parts, according to their number, casting lots for the tunic, which was seamless, woven from the top throughout.

Mark 15: 24

The fourfold garment of the Lord, therefore, prefigured His fourfold Church, spread throughout the whole world (which consists of four parts) and equally, that is, harmoniously, distributed in all those parts. But that tunic, acquired by lot, signifies the unity of all the parts, which is preserved by the bond of charity. For if charity, according to the Apostle, has both a more excellent way and surpasses knowledge, and is above all precepts, rightly the garment by which it is signified is said to be woven from the top. In the casting of lots, what else is commended but the grace of God? Thus it reaches all in one, as the lot pleased all, because God's grace reaches all in unity. And when the lot is cast, it is believed not to be due to any person's merits, but to the hidden judgment of God. And because, as the Apostle says, our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Rom. VI), as long as our works are aimed at destroying the body of sin and as long as the outer man is being corrupted so that the inner man is renewed day by day, it is the time of the cross. These also are good works, yet still laborious, whose reward is rest. But it is said, Rejoicing in hope (Rom. XII), so that we work with cheerfulness in labors for the future rest.

This cheerfulness is signified by the width of the cross in the transverse wood where the hands are fixed. For by the hands we understand works, by the width, the cheerfulness of the worker, because sadness causes narrowness. By the height, to which the head is attached, we understand the expectation of the reward from the sublime justice of God, who will repay everyone according to their works (Matt. XVI), to those indeed according to the endurance of good work, seeking glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life. Hence also the length, by which the whole body is extended, signifies endurance itself, whence those who endure are called long-suffering. The depth,

however, which is fixed in the earth, prefigures the secret of the sacrament. You may remember, if I am not mistaken, that the words of the Apostle are expounded in this description of the cross, where he says: Rooted and grounded in charity, that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length, width, height, and depth (Eph. III).

Mark 15: 25

It was the third hour, and they crucified him. There are those who believe that the Lord was crucified at the third hour, but that darkness came from the sixth hour until the ninth, so that the three hours from when He was crucified until the darkness came are understood to have passed. And this could indeed be very rightly understood, except that John says that Pilate sat on the judgment seat in a place called the Stone Pavement, in Hebrew Gabbatha, at about the sixth hour (John 19). He continues: "It was the Day of Preparation of the Passover, about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews: 'Behold your King,'" etc. Therefore, if at about the sixth hour, when Pilate was seated on the judgment seat, He was handed over to the Jews to be crucified, how was He crucified at the third hour, as some have misunderstood the words of Mark? For Mark had surely said: "And when they crucified him, they divided his garments. Therefore, if he wanted to mention the time when the event took place, it would suffice to say: "And it was the third hour"; why did he add: "And they crucified him," unless he wanted to signify something by recapitulating, which would be found upon investigation, since the Scripture was read at a time when the whole Church knew at what hour the Lord was hung on the wood, from which either this error could be corrected or the lie refuted?

But because he knew that the Lord was crucified by soldiers and not by Jews, he wanted to reveal secretly that those who shouted for Him to be crucified were more responsible for the crucifixion than those who performed their service according to the duty assigned by their ruler. Therefore, it is understood that it was the third hour when the Jews cried out for the Lord to be crucified. And it is very rightly shown that they crucified Him when they cried out, especially since they did not want to appear to have done it, and therefore they handed Him over to Pilate, as their words clearly indicate according to John. Thus, what they especially did not want to appear to have done, Mark shows they did at the third hour, very rightly indicating that the

tongue of the Jews was more the killer of the Lord than the hands of the soldiers.

Mark 15:26

And the inscription of the charge against Him read: King of the Jews. The inscription placed above His cross, in which it was written: King of the Jews, showed that even by putting Him to death, they could not make it so that they did not have Him as a king, who, with manifest and most eminent power, was going to repay them according to their deeds. Hence it is sung in the psalm: But I am established king by Him over Zion, His holy mountain (Psalm II). Who, fittingly, since He is both king and priest, when He was offering the extraordinary sacrifice of His flesh to the Father on the altar of the cross, also exhibited the dignity of the king with which He was endowed, so that He might suggest to all who wished to read, that is, to hear and believe, that through the gibbet of the cross He did not lose His dominion, but rather confirmed and strengthened it.

Mark 15:27

And with Him they crucified two robbers, one on His right, and the other on His left. The robbers who are crucified with the Lord signify those who, under the faith and confession of Christ, undergo either the struggle of martyrdom or any other practices of stricter continence. But whoever undertakes these solely for the eternal and heavenly glory, these are undoubtedly identified by the merit and faith of the right-hand thief. But those who, either in view of human praise or any less worthy intention, renounce the world, they justly imitate the mind and actions of the blasphemous and left-hand thief. Of whom the Apostle says: If I give my body so that I may be burned, if I give all my resources to feed the poor, if I seem to do many other works of piety or to have received spiritual gifts, but do not have charity, it profits me nothing (I Cor. XIII). Blessed are those who leave their own things for the Lord, and for the Gospel. Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. V).

Mark 15:31

Similarly, the chief priests, mocking, said to one another with the scribes: He saved others, etc. Even unwillingly, the scribes and priests confess that He saved others. Therefore, your own judgment condemns you. For He who saved others could indeed, if He willed, save Himself. [Mark 15:32] -- Christ,

King of Israel, descend now from the cross, so that we may see and believe. False promise. What is greater, to descend from the cross while still alive, or to rise from the tomb when dead? He rose, and you do not believe; therefore, even if He had descended from the cross, you similarly would not believe.

Mark 15: 32

And those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him. How were those who were crucified with Him insulting Him, when indeed one of them insulted Him, according to the testimony of Luke, the other rebuked him and believed in God? Unless we understand that Matthew and Mark, summarizing briefly, used the plural number for the singular in this place, as we read it is said in the plural in the Epistle to the Hebrews: They shut the mouths of lions (Heb. 11), when it is understood to mean Daniel alone. And it is said in the plural: They were sawn in two (Ibid.), though it is traditionally said of Isaiah alone. But what is more common, for example, than for someone to say: The peasants insult me, even if only one insults? For it would be contradictory to what Luke clearly stated about one, if they had said both thieves insulted the Lord, when one could not be understood under the plural number. When it is said thieves, or, those who were crucified with Him, without adding both, not only if both had done it could this be said, but also because one did it, it could be expressed using the plural number in the usual way. With Luke testifying that one thief blaspheming the Lord said: If you are the Christ; save yourself and us (Luke 23), the other, however, rebuked him with fitting reproach, and prayed to the Lord with faithful supplication saying:

Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom (Ibid.), we see this still happening today in the Church, when those touched by worldly afflictions, both true and false Christians, indeed those who bear the sacraments of the Lord's Passion with a feigned mind, wish to be liberated by the Lord for the joys of this present life. But those who with sincere intention do not glory except in the cross of our Lord with the Apostle, rather desire to be delivered from present troubles in such a way that they commend their spirit into the hands of their Creator, and desire to be partakers of the heavenly kingdom with Him. Hence well did he who prayed to the Lord with doubtful faith was utterly scorned by the Lord and deemed worthy of no response. But indeed, the prayers of him who sought eternal salvation from Him, the Lord was soon pleased to receive with pious hearing. Because clearly, whoso-

ever placed in tribulation seeks only temporal comfort from the Lord, deprives himself equally of both temporal and eternal joys. But those who sincerely long for the good things of the heavenly homeland, come to them without any doubt, Christ granting mercy.

Mark 15:33

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. The most brilliant light of the world withdrew its rays, lest it see the Lord hanging, or the impious blasphemers enjoy its light. And it is to be noted, that the Lord was crucified at the sixth hour, that is, when the sun was about to withdraw from the center of the world; but at dawn, that is, when the sun was rising, He celebrated the mysteries of His resurrection. For He marked with the hour of time what He showed by the effectiveness of the work. Because He died for our sins and rose for our justification. For it is written of Adam sinning that he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen. III). In the cool of the day, namely with the light of faith declined; and in the cool, with the fervor of charity cooling. He was heard walking because He had withdrawn from sinful man. Therefore, the order of reason, or rather of divine piety, demanded that at the same time in which He had then closed to the transgressing Adam, now the Lord might open the gates of paradise to the penitent thief, and at the hour at which the first Adam had brought death to this world by sinning, at the same hour the second Adam might destroy death by dying.

Mark 15:34

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: "Heloi, Heloi, lama sabachthani?" which is interpreted, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" He used the beginning of the twenty-second psalm. That which is read in the middle of the verse: "Look upon me," is superfluous. For in Hebrew it is read, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Do not marvel at the humility of the words, the complaints of the forsaken, when, knowing the form of a servant, you see the scandal of the cross. For just as to hunger, and to thirst, and to be fatigued were not proper to divinity, but bodily passions, so also what is said, "Why have you forsaken me?" was proper to the bodily voice, because it is natural for the body not to wish to be deprived of the life joined to it. For although the Savior himself said this, he properly showed the fragility of the body, remaining the power and wisdom

of God. Therefore, as a man, he speaks, carrying my emotions, that in perils we think we are forsaken by God; as a man he is troubled, as a man he weeps, as a man he is crucified.

Mark 15:35

And some of those standing by, hearing this, said: "Behold, he calls Elijah." Not all, but some. I think these were Roman soldiers, not understanding the Hebrew language, but from what he said "Heloi, Heloi," thinking Elijah was being invoked by him. But if you prefer to understand Jews saying this, they also do it as is their custom, to dishonor the Lord with weakness, who is seen as seeking Elijah's help.

Mark 15:36

But running, one of them, and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it around a reed, offered him a drink, saying: Wait, let us see if Elijah will come to take him down. For which cause the Lord was given vinegar for drink, John shows more fully, saying: Afterward Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, says: I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar. So they filled a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon hyssop, offered it to his mouth. Seeing then that all things were accomplished which were necessary to be done, before he received the vinegar and gave up the ghost, and that this also might be fulfilled which he said: And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink (Psalm 118), he says: I thirst. As though he said: This you have left undone; give what you have. Certainly, the Jews themselves were the vinegar, degenerate from the wine of the patriarchs and prophets; as it were, from a full vessel, filled with the iniquity of this world, having a heart like a sponge, in a way crooked and deceitful with hollow and tortuous cavities. The hyssop, around which they put the sponge full of vinegar, since it is a lowly herb and cleanses the flock, we fittingly take to mean the humility of Christ himself, which they surrounded, and thought they had circumvented. Whence it is said in the Psalm:

Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean (Psalm 50); for we are cleansed by the humility of Christ, since unless he had humbled himself, made obedient to the Father even unto death of the cross (Philippians 2), surely his blood would not have been shed for the remission of sins, that is, for our cleansing. But by the reed upon which the sponge was placed, Scripture is signified, which was fulfilled by this act. For just as a tongue is said to

be either Greek, or Latin, or any other, signifying the sound which the tongue utters, so a reed can be said to be the letter which is written with a reed. Yet we more commonly call the sounds of the human voice tongues; but for Scripture to be called a reed, though less usual, is more mysteriously symbolic.

Mark 15:37

But Jesus, having cried out with a loud voice, expired. What the Lord said with this loud voice, Luke clearly indicates, saying: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. And having said this, he expired (Luke 23). What John writes, however, that when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said: It is finished, and bowing his head, gave up his spirit (John 19), between that which he said: It is finished, and that: And bowing his head, gave up his spirit, the loud voice was emitted, which John kept silent about, but the other three mentioned. [Mark 15:38] -- And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The veil of the temple is torn, so that the ark of the covenant and all the sacraments of the law, which were covered, may appear and pass on to the people of the nations. For it had been said before: God is known in Judah, his great name in Israel (Psalm 76). But now: Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and your glory over all the earth (Psalm 66). And previously in the Gospel, he said: Do not go into the way of the gentiles (Matthew 10). But after his passion, he said: Go and teach all nations (Matthew 28).

Mark 15:39

But the centurion, who stood opposite, seeing that he had expired in such a way, said: Truly this man was the Son of God. The clear cause of the miracle concerning the centurion is explained: seeing that the Lord had expired in this way, that is, having given up his spirit, he said: Truly this man was the Son of God. For no one has the power to give up the spirit, except he who is the creator of souls. And it should be considered that the centurion, before the cross, in the very scandal of the passion, confesses truly the Son of God, and Arius in the Church proclaims a creature. Hence, deservedly, through the centurion, the faith of the Church is designated, which, with the veil of the heavenly mysteries revealed through the death of the Lord, immediately confirms Jesus as both a truly just man, and truly the Son of God, while the Synagogue remains silent.

Mark 15:40

There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome. And when he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him. James the Less is said to be James the son of Alphaeus, who was also called the brother of the Lord, because he was the son of Mary, the Lord's aunt, of whom John makes mention in his Gospel, saying: Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas (John 19). He seems to call her Mary of Cleophas, either from her father or from her kinship. James was called the Less to distinguish him from James the Greater, the son of Zebedee, who was called among the first apostles and chosen by the Lord. It was the Jewish custom, and not considered blameworthy by the ancient custom of the people, that women provided food and clothing for teachers from their substance; Paul recalls having renounced this in case it could cause scandal among the Gentiles: Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles do (1 Cor. 9)? They ministered to the Lord from their substance, so that he reaped their carnal things, of which they reaped spiritual things. Not that the Lord of creatures needed food, but to show a pattern for teachers, that they should be content with food and clothing from their disciples. But let us see what companions he had. Namely, Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven devils, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, his aunt, and others, which we read of in the other Gospels.

Mark 15:42

And when evening had already come, because it was the day of preparation, which is before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a noble councillor, came. He is called a councillor because he is from the order of the council and administers the office of the council. He is also usually called a curial by handling civic duties. Arimathea itself is Ramathaim, the city of Elkanah and Samuel in the region of Thamna near Diospolis. Παρασκευὴ in Greek is called preparation in Latin. By this name, the Jews who lived among the Greeks used to call the sixth day of the Sabbath, because on that day they were accustomed to prepare what was necessary for the rest of the Sabbath. According to what was once commanded about manna: On the sixth day you will collect double, etc. Because man was made on the sixth day, and the

whole creation of the world was completed, and on the seventh, the Creator rested from His work, hence He wished to call it the Sabbath, that is, rest. The Savior, rightly crucified on the same sixth day, fulfilled the mystery of human restoration. Therefore, when he received the vinegar, he said: It is finished, which means, on the sixth day, what I have undertaken for the world's restoration, the whole work is now completed. And resting in the tomb on the Sabbath, He awaited the event of the resurrection which was to come on the eighth day.

Here shines the example of our devotion and blessed reward, that in this sixth age of the world we must suffer for the Lord and as if be crucified to the world. In the seventh age, that is, when someone pays the debt of death, the bodies indeed rest in graves, but the souls remain in secret peace with the Lord and must rest after good works, until finally, when the eighth age comes, even the bodies themselves, glorified by the resurrection, with the souls receive the incorruption of the eternal inheritance.

Mark 15: 43

Joseph of Arimathea, a noble councilor, who also awaited the kingdom of God, came and boldly approached Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. This Joseph indeed is praised for his great standing in the world but is lauded even more for his merit with God. For it was fitting that such a man should exist who would bury the body of the Lord, one who by his righteousness of merits would be worthy of such a ministry, and by the nobility of his secular power would have the capacity to obtain the ability to minister. For not just anyone, unknown or of moderate status, could approach the governor and request the body of the crucified. [Mark 15:46] -- Joseph then bought a linen cloth, and taking Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth. And by the simple burial of the Lord, the ambition of the rich is condemned, who cannot even do without riches in their tombs. We can, however, understand this spiritually to mean that the body of the Lord should not be wrapped in gold, gems, or silk, but in pure linen, although this also signifies that he who wraps Jesus in clean linen has received Him with a pure mind. Hence the custom obtained in the Church that the sacrifice of the altar is celebrated not in silk, nor in dyed cloth, but in plain linen, just as the body of the Lord was buried in a clean linen cloth, as we read it was decreed in the pontifical acts by the blessed Pope Sylvester.

Mark 15:46

And they laid him in a tomb, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. Those who have come from Jerusalem to Britain in our age report of the Lord's tomb, that it was a round house hewn from underlying rock, of such height that a man standing inside could scarcely touch the top with an outstretched hand. It has an entrance from the East, to which that great stone was rolled and placed. In the northern part of this tomb, the actual sepulcher, that is, the place of the Lord's body, was made from the same rock, being seven feet long and measuring three palms higher than the surrounding floor. The place indeed is not open from above, but from the southern side it is open throughout, from where the body was brought in. The color of this same tomb and the coffin is said to be a mix of reddish and white.

Mark 15:47

But Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. In Luke, we read that all his acquaintances and the women who followed him stood at a distance. Therefore, with Jesus' acquaintances returning to their own homes after his body was laid down, it was only the women who loved more fervently who cared to observe how he was placed, so they might offer him a fitting gift of devotion at an appropriate time. Likewise, until now, holy women on the day of Preparation, that is, the day of Preparation for the Sabbath, do the same, diligently following the footsteps of his passion in this world, where the future rest is to be prepared. And if they might perhaps be able to imitate with pious curiosity, they consider in what order the same passion was completed.

CHAPTER 16

Mark 16:1

And when the Sabbath had passed, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke, it is written that returning from the tomb, they prepared spices and ointments, and on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. Therefore, the commandment of the law was that the silence of the Sabbath be maintained from evening to evening; and so the devout women, after the Lord was buried, as long as they were allowed to work, that is, until sunset, were occupied in preparing the ointments, as

Luke writes. And because then, due to the shortness of the time, they were unable to complete the work, they hurried soon after the Sabbath had passed, that is, at sunset, when the permission to work had returned, to buy spices, as Mark recounts, so that coming early they might anoint his body. For neither did they wish to visit the tomb in the evening of the Sabbath, with the approach of nightfall already impending.

Mark 16: 2

And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb, the sun having already risen. The first of the Sabbath is the first day after the Sabbath, that is, the days of rest, which now the ecclesiastical custom calls the Lord's Day because of the resurrection of the Lord Savior. It is the same when we read of the "one of the Sabbaths" or "one of the first of the Sabbaths," which means the first day after the Sabbath, that is, the days of rest which were observed among the Sabbaths. The holy women, who had followed the Lord, came to the tomb with spices, and even in death, they showed the devotion of their humanity to Him whom they had loved while alive. So, we too, believing in Him who has died, if we seek the Lord filled with the fragrance of virtues, with the reputation of good works, we indeed come to His tomb with spices. But that the women came very early to the tomb with the rising of the sun, that is, when the sky began to brighten from the eastern part, which surely does not happen except by the proximity of the rising sun, indeed, according to history, shows the great fervor of love in seeking and finding the Lord. According to the mystical understanding, an example is given to us, with an enlightened face, having dispelled the darkness of vices, to offer the fragrance of good works and the sweetness of prayers to the Lord.

Mark 16: 3–4

And they said to each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. For it was very large. How the stone was rolled away by the angel, Matthew explains sufficiently. But the rolling away of the stone mystically suggests the uncovering of the mysteries of Christ, which were covered by the veil of the legal letter. For the law is written on stone, whose covering having been removed, the glory of the resurrection is shown, and the abolition of

the ancient death and the eternal life to be hoped for by us began to be proclaimed throughout the whole world.

Mark 16:5

And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed. Entering from the east into that round house carved in the rock, they saw an angel sitting on the southern part of that place, where the body of Jesus had been laid, for this was indeed on the right side. For surely the body, lying supine with its head towards the west, must have its right side towards the south. Matthew writes that they first saw the angel who rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb sitting upon the stone, who commanded them to enter the place where the Lord had been laid and to see that He had already risen from the dead. Luke writes that entering the tomb, they found two angels standing there. Therefore, the women who came with spices saw the angels, for indeed those minds see the heavenly citizens who, with virtues, travel to God through holy desires. We must note, indeed, what it means that the angel is seen sitting on the right hand. For what is signified by the left but the present life? And by the right but eternal life? Hence it is written: "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me. (Cant. II). For the Church places the left hand of God, namely the prosperity of the present life, as under the head, which it presses with the intention of supreme love.

But God's right hand embraces it, because under its eternal bliss it is wholly contained with devotion. Therefore, because our Redeemer had already passed beyond the corruption of the present life, rightly did the angel who came to announce His eternal life sit at the right. He appeared clothed in a white robe because he announced the joys of our festivity. For the whiteness of the garment signifies the splendor of our festivity. Let us say ours or his? But to more truly confess, let us say both his and ours. For the resurrection of our Redeemer was both our festivity because it restored us to immortality, and the festivity of angels, because by bringing us back to the heavens, it fulfilled their number. Therefore, in his and our festivity, the angel appeared in white garments, because as we are led back to heaven through the resurrection of the Lord, the losses of the heavenly homeland are repaired. But now, let us hear him who addresses the women who come.

Mark 16:6

Do not be afraid, you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified; he has risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. Do not be afraid, he says. As if he clearly states: Let those who do not love the coming of the citizens of heaven be afraid. Let those who are burdened by carnal desires and despair of being able to reach their company be afraid. But why are you afraid, who see your fellow citizens? Hence also Matthew, describing the angel who appeared, says: His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow (Matthew 28). For there is fear in lightning, but there is comfort in the whiteness of snow. Because Almighty God is both terrible to sinners and gentle to the righteous, the angel, witness of his resurrection, is rightly shown both in the lightning of his face and in the whiteness of his clothing, that he might terrify the reprobate by his appearance and console the pious. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus, in the Latin language, is interpreted as "savior." Indeed, many could be called by this name at that time, not substantively, but nominally. Therefore, the place is added to clarify which Jesus is being spoken of: the Nazarene; and the reason is immediately added, who was crucified, and he added, he has risen, he is not here. He is not here in the presence of the flesh, though he is never absent in the presence of majesty.

Mark 16:7

But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. We must ask why Peter is specifically named when mentioning the disciples. But if the angel had not explicitly named him, he who had denied the Master would not have dared to come among the disciples. Therefore, he is called by name so that he may not despair because of his denial. In this matter, we must consider why Almighty God allowed the one whom he had planned to place over the entire Church to fear the voice of a maid and deny himself. We recognize that this was done with a great disposition of mercy, that he who was to be the shepherd of the Church might learn from his own fault how he ought to be merciful to others. Therefore, he first revealed himself to him, and then placed him over the others, so that from his own weakness he might understand how mercifully he should bear the weaknesses of others. It is fittingly said of our Redeemer: He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see him, just as he told you. For Galilee is interpreted as 'transmigra-

tion.' For indeed our Redeemer had already migrated from passion to resurrection, from death to life, from punishment to glory, from corruption to incorruption. And he is first seen by the disciples in Galilee after the resurrection, because we will joyfully see the glory of his resurrection if we now migrate from vices to the height of virtues. Therefore, he is announced in the tomb and shown in the 'transmigration,' because he who is recognized in the mortification of the flesh is seen in the migration of the mind.

Mark 16:8

But they went out and fled from the tomb (for trembling and amazement had seized them) and they said nothing to anyone. For they were afraid. It rightly raises the question of how Mark writes: And they said nothing to anyone. Whereas Luke says: And returning from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Similarly, Matthew: And they departed quickly from the tomb, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples (Matthew 28). Unless we understand that they dared not say anything to anyone about the angels themselves, that is, to respond to what they had heard from them; or certainly the guards whom they saw lying down. For that joy which Matthew mentions does not contradict the fear of which Mark speaks. For we must understand both to have happened in their minds, even if Matthew himself did not speak of fear.

Mark 16:9

Now, rising early on the first day of the week, Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene. How and where this appearance of the Lord took place, John teaches most fully. But the Lord rose early from the tomb, in which he had been laid late the day before, so that what was written in the Psalms might be fulfilled: Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning (Psalm 30). Therefore, having been buried on the sixth day of the week, which is called Preparation Day, around the evening hour, he was placed in the tomb on the following night and day of the Sabbath with the subsequent night, and thus on the third day, that is early on the first day of the week, he rose. Further, he did not lie in the tomb for one day and two nights only justly, because he deliberately joined the light of his singular death to the darkness of our double death. For he came to us, who were held in death of both the spirit and the flesh. He endured his own death, that is, of the flesh, and dissolved the double death that he found in us. For if he had borne both,

he would have freed us from neither. But he mercifully accepted one, and justly condemned both. He joined his singular death to our double death, and by dying he conquered our double death.

Mark 16:9

He appeared first, he says, to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had expelled seven demons. She went and announced it to those who had been with him and were mourning and weeping. Just as at the beginning the woman was the author of sin for the man, and the man the executor of error, so now she who first brought and tasted death, saw the resurrection first. And lest she who had transferred guilt to the man should bear perpetual reproach among men, she also transferred grace. Hence, rightly, this woman who first announced to the mourning and weeping men the joy of the Lord's resurrection, is remembered to have been cured of seven demons, so that it is marked that she was full of all sins, but by divine gift was cleansed from all of them, and where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more. For the number seven is customarily mystically placed for entirety. Therefore, she who was cured of seven demons, that is, was liberated from all sins, first saw the Lord rising from the dead, so that no one who repents worthily might despair of the pardon for their misdeeds, seeing her who was once subject to so many and great vices being suddenly advanced to such a pinnacle by the merit of faith and love, that she first evangelized the miracle of the accomplished resurrection to the very evangelists and apostles of Christ.

Mark 16:11

And they, hearing that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe. Because the disciples were slow to believe in the Lord's resurrection, it was not so much their infirmity as our (so to speak) future firmness. For that very resurrection was shown to them, who doubted, through many proofs, which we, recognizing while reading, are otherwise solidified by their doubt. For Mary Magdalene, who believed sooner, rendered me less a service than Thomas, who doubted longer. For by doubting he touched the scars of the wounds, and removed the wound of doubt from our heart.

Mark 16:12

After this, however, he was shown in another form to two of them, as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them. How this happened, Luke explains more fully. But

what Mark says, he was shown in another form, Luke says more plainly, because their eyes were held, so that they should not recognize him, until, coming to the village where they were going and setting a meal for him as for a stranger, they finally recognized him in the breaking of bread (Luke 24). As the same Luke adds subsequently, they rose up that same hour, returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them saying, the Lord has truly risen, and appeared to Simon. And they recounted the things that happened on the way, and how they recognized him in the breaking of bread (Ibid.). But as Mark says, they reported it to the others, and they did not believe them, while Luke says that they were already speaking, that he had truly risen and had appeared to Simon. What is to be understood, if not that there were some among them who did not want to believe it? Who, however, does not see that Mark left out what Luke narrated in detail? That is, what Jesus had spoken to them before they recognized him, and how they recognized him in the breaking of bread.

Since as soon as he said that he appeared to them in another form as they went into the country, he immediately added: And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them. As if they could report what they did not recognize, or recognize what appeared to them in another form. How then did they recognize him to be able to report it, Mark undoubtedly omitted. Which is worth recording so that we may become accustomed to noticing the habit of the evangelists, of omitting what they do not mention, and joining what they do mention, so that for those who do not have the practice in this consideration, no other error mainly arises, by which they think that they do not agree with each other.

Mark 16:14

Last of all, as they were reclining at the table, he appeared to the eleven and reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen him risen. How "last of all," as if they would no longer see him? For it is the last time that the Apostles saw the Lord on earth when he ascended into heaven, which happened on the fortieth day after his resurrection. Would he then reproach them, for not having believed those who had seen him risen, when by that time they had themselves seen him so many times after the resurrection? Therefore, let us understand this: after many demonstrations of himself, during which he was presented to his disciples over forty days, he also lastly appeared to those eleven while they were

reclining at the table, that is, on the very fortieth day. And because he was about to ascend to heaven from them, he wanted especially to reproach them on that day, because they had not believed those who had seen him risen before they themselves saw him, while certainly after his ascension, the nations, which had not seen him, were to believe through their preaching of the Gospel. After that reproach, as Marcus follows:

Mark 16:15

And he said to them: Go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Therefore, when you preach that whoever does not believe will be condemned, since he certainly does not believe what he has not seen, should not they themselves first be reproved, because they did not believe those to whom the Lord appeared before they had seen the Lord? But when he said to them, Go into the entire world, preach the Gospel to every creature, surely the holy Gospel was not meant to be preached to senseless things or brute animals, so that it would be said to the disciples, Preach to every creature? But under the name of every creature, every nation of the Gentiles can be designated. It had been previously said: Do not go into the way of the Gentiles; but now it is said, Preach to every creature, so that the preaching of the apostles, first repelled by Judea, would then assist us, since Judea had proudly repelled it to its own damnation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Perhaps each one says to himself: I have already believed, I will be saved. He says the truth if he holds faith by works. For true faith is that which does not contradict in behavior what it says in words.

From this comes what Paul says about certain false believers: They confess to know God, but in works they deny him (Titus 1). Here John says: He who says he knows God and does not keep his commandments is a liar (1 John 2). But when it is said, He who does not believe will be condemned, what do we say about infants who cannot yet believe because of their age? For with regard to adults, there is no question. Therefore, in the Church, infants believe through others on behalf of the Savior, just as they have derived the sins from others, which are remitted to them in baptism.

Mark 16:17

And these signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. Should it be said that because we do not perform these signs we do not believe at all? But these were necessary at the beginning of the Church. For as faith was to grow, it had to be nurtured by miracles. For when we plant young trees, we water them until they seem to have taken root in the ground. But if they have once fixed their roots, the watering will cease. Hence it is that Paul says: Tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers (1 Cor. XIV). Do we not have of these signs and virtues what we should more subtly consider? The holy Church indeed daily spiritually performs what it did physically through the apostles. For when its priests lay hands on believers through the grace of exorcism, and deny the evil spirit dwelling in their minds, what else do they do but cast out demons? And faithful ones who have already renounced the secular words of the old life, but sound out the holy mysteries, and narrate, as far as they can, the praises and power of their Creator, what else do they do but speak in new tongues?

When they remove malice from others' hearts by their good exhortations, they take up serpents. And when they hear pestilent suggestions but are not led into evil action, indeed it is deadly what they drink, but it will not harm them. Whenever they see their neighbors weakened in good work and run to help them with all their strength, and strengthen their life by the example of their actions, who waver in their own deeds, what else do they do but lay hands on the sick, that they may recover? These miracles are indeed all the greater as they are more spiritual. They are all the greater as by these not bodies, but souls are raised.

Mark 16:19

And indeed the Lord Jesus, after having spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God. We must consider what it is that Mark says: He sits at the right hand of God, and Stephen says, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts VII). What is it that Mark says he sees sitting, while Stephen testifies he sees standing? But we know that to sit pertains to one who judges, and to stand to

one who fights or helps. Therefore, because our Redeemer, taken up into heaven, now judges everything and will come as the judge of all at the end, Mark describes him as sitting after the ascension, because he will be seen as the judge in his glory at the end. But Stephen, positioned in the struggle of toil, saw him standing, whom he had as a helper. Because he, in order to overcome the unbelief of the persecutors on earth, was fought for by the grace of him from heaven. It follows:

Mark 16:20

But they, having departed, preached everywhere, with the Lord working with them and confirming the word with the accompanying signs. What is to be considered in this, what to be commended to memory, except that they followed the command with obedience, and obedience was followed by signs? Among these, it is notable that Mark, although he began his Gospel later than the others, extended it to longer times in his writing. For he neither mentioned the birth of the Lord himself or his forerunner, nor any account of their infancy or childhood, nor did he write in depth about the birth of the Savior, except that he called him the Son of God at the beginning of his Gospel. He began from the start of the evangelical preaching, which happened through John, and continued narrating up to the time when the apostles disseminated the entire Gospel word by preaching around the world.

Mark 16:7

There remains indeed a not insignificant question, how the same evangelist wrote that the angel said to the women, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you into Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you," yet did not report that the Lord was seen by the disciples in Galilee at any point after this in his Gospel. And indeed, Matthew says that the disciples went to Galilee, saw and worshipped the Lord there, and received the command from him to go, teach, and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. However, considering the writings of the other evangelists, it shows that he was seen by the disciples several times before in Jerusalem, and in the village of Emmaus, especially on the day of his resurrection. Why then did he specially predict that he would go ahead of them to Galilee and be seen by the disciples there, when he was seen neither first nor only there? Let us examine for what mystery he rising

said, according to Matthew and Mark, "I will go ahead of you to Galilee, there you will see me. And even if this was accomplished, it was after many other things were completed, since the command was such (though not by necessity) that it might have been expected that either this alone, or this first, should have happened.

Therefore, without doubt, since this is the voice not of the evangelist narrating what happened, but of the angel by the command of the Lord, and of the Lord himself, narrated by the evangelist as it was said by the angel and the Lord, it must be accepted as a prophetic statement. For Galilee is interpreted either as "transmigration" or "revelation". So first, according to the meaning of "transmigration", what else occurs to be understood? He will go before you into Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you, unless the grace of Christ was destined to be transferred from the people of Israel to the Gentiles, to whom the apostles would in no way be believed when preaching the Gospel, unless the Lord himself prepared the way in the hearts of men for them? And we understand this: He will go before you into Galilee. But what they joyfully marvel at, with difficulties being broken and conquered, that the door is opened for them in the Lord through the enlightenment of the faithful, is understood thus: there you will see him, that is, there you will find his members. There you will recognize his living body in those who receive you. According to that which Galilee is interpreted as revelation, it is not now to be understood in the form of a servant, but in that in which he is equal to the Father, which he promised to his beloved in John, when he said: I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (John XIV).

Certainly not according to that which they now saw, and which, even resurrected with scars, he afterwards showed not only to be seen but also to be touched: but according to that ineffable light, which illuminates every man coming into this world: according to which he shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend him (Ibid.). He has gone before us there, from where, coming to us, he did not precede us, and to where, going before us, he did not abandon us. That will be a revelation, as it were the true Galilee, when we will be like him, there we will see him as he is. That will also be the more blessed migration from this world to that eternity, if we embrace his precepts so as to deserve to be gathered at his right hand. For then the wicked will go into eternal fire, but the righteous into eternal life. From here they will migrate there, and there they will see him as the wicked do

not see. For the wicked will be taken away so as not to see the glory of the Lord, and the wicked will not see the light. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (Ibid. XVII), just as he is known in that eternity, where he will lead his own through the form of a servant, so that they may freely contemplate him through the form of the Lord.

PART TWO

Commentary on Luke

Bede's long exposition of Luke, with the letters of Acca and Bede.

Commentary on Luke

The Venerable Bede

AD 673–735

Bede's long commentary on the Gospel of Luke, in six books, written for Acca, bishop of Hexham. It is printed here in one piece, with the letters between Acca and Bede that stand at the front: Acca asks Bede to write it, and Bede answers. The commentary explains the Gospel verse by verse, the literal sense first and the lessons for the Church after it.

letter from bishop acca to bede

To the most revered brother in Christ and fellow priest, Bede the presbyter, Acca offers perpetual greetings in the Lord. Indeed, I have often suggested to your holy fraternity, both in writing while absent and in conversation when present, that after expounding the Acts of the Apostles, you also deign to write on the Gospel of Luke. Which you, up to now, have preferred to defer with modest excuses rather than to undertake, asserting that you were deterred from attempting this work chiefly for two reasons: namely, because the task itself is arduous, and because it has been preempted by the most holy and learned bishop Ambrose. Nor did you dare undertake a task that exceeds your strength, indeed deeming it unnecessary for anyone to repeat a work that has been completed most excellently by the highest genius, and considering it a superfluous labor to either reiterate stronger pronouncements of so great a man in different words as a mere compiler, or to subject weaker points as someone less learned. And you greatly fear, lest you be thought to establish new things in reproach of the study of the ancients, and it be said to you that ancient proverb: "Why cast fish into the sea, or waters into the rivers? Pour out abundant gifts in unworthy places. But to this objection of yours, I briefly reply, for as the comic poet says:

"There is nothing said that has not been said before," and because charity endures all things, nor has it ever been the custom of the saints to envy one another, but rather to provoke one another, and each offered what he could

to adorn the house of the Lord according to his abilities. Neither did the blessed Pope Gregory fear to offend the Fathers, from whom he himself revisited many expositions of the Gospel in his homilies; nor did Augustine, nor any other of the Fathers fear, on account of preceding treatises, to explain the Psalms or other things they were asked to, or to write whatever seemed right to them, withdrawing their hand out of fear. Moreover (as Augustine also says), it is necessary for many books to be written by many people in different styles, but with no different faith, even on the same questions, so that the matter itself may reach many, thus to some in one way, to others in another. However, there are certain passages in the exposition of the blessed Ambrose on Luke that are so eloquent and sublime (which I do not doubt your holiness has also seen), that they can only be understood by scholars, but are despised by unlearned or impatient readers (of which you will find many in the present age) because of the difficulty in comprehending what is eloquent or penetrating what is profound, and they consider them not worthy to be sought, assuming them to be beyond them or unworthy of scrutiny because they seem too strong.

The very learned Father Augustine showed no small discernment, who, writing to the servant of God Paulina about seeing God, thought it proper to use the testimonies of the blessed Ambrose taken from this little work, and judged that they ought not only to be simply placed but also explained, so that from very few sentences of the mentioned commentator he composed a not small volume by revisiting. I thought it necessary to mention this so that both your holy brotherhood and the readers might simultaneously recognize it. For I wish that once you complete the work I request with God's help, you would place this letter at the beginning, stating that you wrote about Luke not for any other reason than the grace of fraternal condescension, so that those who, due to the tenderness of their minds, cannot grasp sublime or difficult things, might more easily understand these things when explained in a simpler style. Therefore, most beloved one, diligently apply yourself to the aforementioned work, and expound on blessed Luke with clear speech. And because Saint Ambrose passed over certain matters, which seemed clear and not worthy of inquiry to him as a man of the highest learning, also endeavor to explain these matters more diligently, whether using your words or those of others, after examining the works of other Fathers.

I also believe that through your vigilant study, you, who remain awake day and night meditating on the law of God, will discern in some places what should be understood where they have been left incomplete, as the author of light will reveal. It is indeed just and in accordance with the measure of heavenly piety and equity, that you, who pursue the eternal and true light of wisdom with an indefatigable mind, neglecting entirely the affairs of the world, should obtain here the fruit of purer understanding, and in the future you may contemplate the King, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, in his own beauty with a pure heart. I deemed it necessary to inform your sanctity that it concerns some why, in the exposition of the Apocalypse, where it comes to the four animals, you designated a new interpretation: Matthew in the lion, Mark in the man. While some others assign Matthew to the man, because he begins to write about the Lord, and Mark to the lion, in which the voice of one crying in the wilderness is heard. I also request that you fully explain in this work what you consider to be more accurate about these matters. May God, the God of love and peace, preserve your holy brotherhood and always enlighten you to consider the wonders of His law.

LETTER FROM BEDE TO BISHOP ACCA

To the most blessed and exceedingly desired lord Bishop Acca, Bede, humble priest, in the eternal Lord greeting. Truly marvelous and marvelously true is the opinion of the excellent teacher: because love believes all things, hopes all things (1 Cor. XIII). For you say in your letters that you ask me to write something to you, and in asking, even without receiving my consent response, you enclose the preface seal for the yet inquired, as if already acquired and perfectly completed works. Not yet the foundation laid, not even the material brought forth, you yourself, as if the building of such a labor is already completed, direct the keys by which entrance is fortified, so that one may be ashamed not quickly to undertake the work which friendly faith presumes is quickly to be undertaken, more quickly to be completed. Truly this is made by no other than the undoubted mutual confidence of love, which from a friendly mind (as it was said) believes all things, hopes all things whatsoever only which can be done. Whence I too, immediately upon reading your sweetest holiness's little pages, subjected myself to the toil of the work imposed, in which (lest I pass by innumerable bonds of monastic ser-

vitude) I would exist myself as both dictator and at the same time notary and scribe.

And gathering from here and there almost the most distinguished and most worthy craftsmen of such an office, the works of the fathers, what the blessed Ambrose, what Augustine, what finally Gregory the most watchful (according to his name) apostle of our nation, what Jerome the interpreter of sacred history, what the other fathers have thought or said on the words of Luke, I diligently endeavored to inspect: and I immediately produced the command in small sheets as you ordered, either in their very syllables, or surely in my own words for the sake of brevity, as it seemed. Because it was laborious to insert their names one by one, and to indicate by name what was said by which author, I thought it convenient to print the first letters of their names from afar at the side, and through these individually to intimate where each father's words begin and where the discourse which I translated ends, being solicitous in all things, lest I be said to steal the sayings of the elders, and to compose them as if they were my own. And I obsecrate much, and implore by the Lord the readers, that if perhaps any should consider these my works, however they may be, as worthy of transcription, they also remember to affix the mentioned signs of the names as they find them in our exemplar. Also some things which (to speak with the words of your holiness) the author of light opened to me, I annexed as indications of my own labor where it seemed appropriate.

Although in the meditation of the divine law, though I am not able (as you wrote) to lead days and nights constantly awake, yet I do not doubt that I have expended not a little study in the Scriptures, and that I have been able to see those things alone which the author of light has deigned to open to me, not only in this work but in all reading altogether, that is to correctly discern by right understanding. [Luke 13:22] -- However, you say that some are moved to inquire why in the Apocalypse, in the new interpretation, I have assigned Matthew to the lion and Mark to the man; they should have considered, whoever is moved by this, that I did not proclaim this as something new, but as something handed down in the ancient explanation of the fathers. For it did not appear to me from my own insight but I recalled that it had been explained in this way by the blessed Augustine, and I briefly mentioned also from where he affirmed this. It is not without reason that we present his very words, showing what he thought about the evangelists and

their typified animals, by which our work may be saved from unjust criticism and this may be confirmed by the authority of such a great doctor.

When, therefore, after many things beautifully and excellently preambulated about the evangelists in the first book on their harmony, he continues among other things, saying: "And although each one seems to have maintained a certain order of narration, it is not found that each one of them wished to write unaware of the predecessor, or omitted unknown things which another is found to have written, but as it was inspired to each, they added no superfluous cooperation of their labor. For Matthew is understood to have taken up the incarnation of the Lord according to the royal lineage, and many things done and said by Him according to men's present life. For Mark seems to have followed like a footman and abridger. For with John alone he said nothing, he said very little alone, with Luke alone less, with Matthew truly very many almost the same words, either alone or consonant with the others. Luke, however, appears more occupied with the priestly lineage and person of the Lord. For he also ascends to David, not following the royal lineage, but through those who were not kings, he reaches Nathan, the son of David, who also was not a king. Not as Matthew, who descending through Solomon the king, also pursued the other kings in order, maintaining in them (which we speak of later) the mystical number. For the Lord Jesus Christ, the one true King and the one true Priest, has demonstrated that He partook of these two persons handed down individually from the fathers to govern us by the former and to expiate us by the latter.

And shortly after: Christ according to man (he said) was made both king and priest. To whom God gave the throne of David his father, that his kingdom might not have an end, and he might be the mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus. But Luke did not have a companion as an abridger like Matthew had Mark, and this perhaps not without some mystery, because it is the kings' way not to be without the obedience of companions. Whence he who undertook to narrate the royal person of Christ had as it were an attendant joined to him who followed in his footsteps in a certain manner. But the priest, because he entered alone into the Holy of Holies, therefore Luke (whose intent was concerning the priesthood of Christ) did not have one following as a companion, who in a way would abridge his narration. These three evangelists, however, differ mainly in those things which Christ temporally performed in human flesh. John, on the other hand,

aimed mainly at the very divinity of the Lord, by which He is equal to the Father and sought to commend it especially through his Gospel as much as he believed to suffice among men. Therefore, he is carried far above these three, so that you see those in a manner living on earth with the man Christ, while he transcended the cloud which covers all the earth and reached the clear heaven, whence with the keenest and firmest eye of the mind he saw the Word of the Lord in the beginning with God, through whom all things were made, and recognized Him made flesh that He might dwell among us.

And a little later: Whence it seems to me (he said) that those who interpreted the four animals from the Apocalypse to understand the four evangelists paid more probable attention to those who understood the lion in Matthew, the man in Mark, the calf in Luke, the eagle in John, than those who attributed the man to Matthew, the eagle to Mark, the lion to John. For they wished to understand from the beginnings of the books more than from the whole intention of the evangelists, which should have been examined more carefully. For it is much more fitting that he who commended most of all the royal person of Christ is indicated by a lion. Whence even in the Apocalypse, with the royal tribe itself, the lion is mentioned, where it is said: "The lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered" (Apoc. V). For according to Matthew, the magi are said to have come from the East seeking the king, and worshipping him, who appeared to them by a star when he was born, and King Herod fears the infant Christ as king, and in order to kill him, slaughters so many infants. But that Luke is indicated by the ox because of the greatest victim of the priest is doubted by neither. For there the account begins with the priest Zechariah. There the relationship of Mary and Elizabeth is mentioned. There the sacraments of the first priesthood in the infant Christ are narrated.

Whatever other things can be diligently noticed, whereby it appears that Luke had an intention around the person of the priest. But Mark, who neither wished to narrate the royal nor the sacerdotal lineage, or relation or consecration, and yet is shown to dwell on those things which Christ as man did, seems to have signified only the figure of man in those four animals. Now these three animals, whether a lion, a man, or an ox, walk on the earth. Whence these three evangelists were primarily occupied with those things which Christ performed in the flesh, and the precepts he handed down for the exercise of mortal life to those bearing flesh. But John flies above the

clouds of human infirmity like an eagle, and gazes with the keenest and most steadfast eyes of the heart upon the light of unchangeable truth. These few testimonies of the blessed Augustine, taken from many, I have inserted in the preface of this letter to repel the calumny of the querulous, which may also (as mentioned) provide protection for our old work, and may affix not an ignoble seal to the present one. May your holy paternity, praying for us, deign to preserve with the grace of the heavenly helper, and always strengthen for the defense of His holy Church.

The blessed evangelist Luke, intending to write about all the things that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up, first took care to refute the boldness of those who falsely wrote about Him. Quietly admonishing the reader, he implied that not only should what he preaches be followed, but also that anything sounding different should be utterly detested. And to prevent any possibility of errors arising among the weak, he strongly advised avoiding the superfluous writings of others. For it could not be said generally about everyone, but about certain individuals endowed with special virtue of faith or knowledge; "And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mark XVI). Thus, Luke begins.

CHAPTER 1

Luke 1:1–4

Prologue. Since many have undertaken to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. This most clear prologue indicates that the chief reason for writing his Gospel was to prevent false evangelists from having the opportunity to preach falsely, who, as their memorials even today testify, tried to introduce sects under the name of the apostles. Indeed, some ascribed their writings falsely to Thomas, others to Bartholomew, some to Matthias, and even some under the title of the twelve apostles. But also Basilides and Apelles, one of whom taught of 365 heavens, the other of two opposing gods among other vile doctrines, have left Gospels defiled with their errors under their own names. Among these is to be noted what is called the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which should not be counted among the apocryphal but rather ec-

clesiastical histories. For Jerome, the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures himself, used many testimonies from it, and he translated it into Latin and Greek. False Gospels, however, Luke refuted with his very first preface. "Since many," he says, "have undertaken to compile a narrative.

He counted many, not so much by numbers but by the varied diversity of heresy, who not endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit but rather with empty labor more so attempted to arrange a narrative than to weave the truth of history, and therefore left others to complete the work in which they wasted their efforts in vain. They, indeed, who, although there are four of them, did not publish four Gospels but one consonant with the most beautiful variety of four. They published as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered to them. By this sentence, not only Luke and Mark, who did not see the Lord present in the flesh and therefore had to learn by hearing what they wrote, but Matthew and John the apostles also are designated. For they too, in many things which they wrote, needed to hear from those who could know his infancy, childhood, and genealogy and participate in the acts. And when he says it seemed good to him also to write, he means not as if it seemed to himself by himself, but signifying it also seemed to him by the urging of the Holy Spirit. Just as the apostles in their letter say: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us. Whose grace indeed is that what is good may also seem good to us. He then says he followed not a few things but all things carefully.

Yet, though he followed all things, it seemed good to write not everything but all those things he believed suitable for confirming the faith of the readers; for even the world itself, if all were written, could not contain them (John 21). Therefore, he intentionally omitted some things said by others, so that the diverse grace of the Gospel might shine, and each book by its own particular miracles of mysteries and deeds might stand out. Theophilus is interpreted as "lover of God" or "beloved by God. Therefore, whoever loves God or desires to be loved by God should consider the Gospel written to him, and keep it as a gift given and entrusted to himself. So that the money of the word received would not be wasted by the moth of heretical corruption or the rust of filthy greed. Not, however, of any new or unknown things does he promise to unfold the account to this same Theophilus, but to express the truth of the words in which he was instructed. Of course, so he might recognize the order in which whatever was done or said by the Lord

or about the Lord. For he who wishes to be perfect ought not only to believe in Christ but also to understand the order of his eternal divinity and his temporary dispensation.

Luke 1:5

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. The most sacred noble lineage of the forerunner of the Lord is celebrated not only from his parents, but also from his ancestors, so that the faith in his advent, conceived not by sudden inspiration, but rather received by ancestral propagation, might be more freely proclaimed. And since indeed the dignity of Aaron, the first high priest in the law, is known to all, we should speak briefly of Abijah. When King David and the prophet sought with great devotion to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob, the Lord determined that this should be done by Solomon instead, and therefore David prepared all the expenses for the house for Solomon and gave him the measurements and description of the house, so that as the external state of cultivation increased, the peak of inner devotion might also grow. He also distributed the division of the priestly and Levitical orders among all the works of the house of the Lord. For there were leaders of the sanctuary and leaders of God, that is, high priests, from both the sons of Eleazar and the sons of Ithamar. Their courses, according to their ministries, for entering the house of God, were divided into twenty-four lots, in which the course of Abijah, the family from which Zechariah was descended, fell by lot to the eighth.

He divided the families by lots, one house which was presided over by Eleazar, and the other house which had the rest under it, Ithamar. Read the Words of the Days and also the seventh book of Josephus' Antiquities, where it is mentioned that each generation served God according to the order of lots for eight days from Sabbath to Sabbath. There too he asserts that from the tribe of the Levites, twenty-four parts were made so that they also, by lots, served for eight days according to the custom of the priests. And it is not for nothing that the first herald of the New Testament is born in the course of the eighth lot, because just as the Old Testament is often expressed by the number seven because of the Sabbath, so the New is sometimes expressed by the number eight because of the sacrament of either the Lord's or our resurrection. Hence, because the court of the heavenly kingdom is not penetrated

otherwise than by the observance of both Testaments, it is rightly said that there was a mystical ascent of fifteen steps in the temple of Solomon. And he who, calling to the Lord in tribulation, is heard, is led to the heights by the same number of psalms of steps, so that, placed at last in the courts of the house of God, he may hear: May the Lord bless you out of Zion (Psalm 133). The time of Herod, the foreign king, also attests to the coming of the Lord.

For it had been foretold that a ruler would not fail from Judah, nor a leader from his loins, until he who is to be sent shall come (Genesis 49). For since the fathers came forth from Egypt, judges of their nation ruled until Samuel the prophet, and then kings until the Babylonian captivity. After the return from Babylon, the chief affairs were managed by high priests until King Hyrcanus, who was also a high priest, being vexed by many calamities out of the envy of his brother, and ultimately killed by the deceit of Herod (whose father he had raised from an ignoble foreigner, that is, from the Idumean stock, making him a citizen and exalted), the kingdom of Judea was entrusted to Herod to govern by the command of Caesar Augustus. In the thirty-first year of his reign, according to the aforementioned prophecy, he who was to be sent came.

Luke 1:6

They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. Truly righteous before God: for not everyone who is righteous before men is righteous before God. Men see differently, God sees differently. Men see the face, God sees the heart. And therefore, it can happen that someone appears just to me with an affected popular goodness, but before God, he is not just if justice is not formed from the simplicity of the mind, but is simulated with flattery. But blessed is he who is righteous in the sight of God. Blessed is he of whom the Lord deigns to say: Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit. For a true Israelite who sees God, and knows himself to be seen by the Lord, reveals to Him the secrets of the heart. [Luke 1:6] -- Walking (he says) in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. First is the commandment, second is the statute. For when we obey the heavenly commandments, we walk in the commandments of the Lord. When we judge, and judge rightly, we seem to hold the statutes of the Lord. Therefore, it is a full commendation that encompasses lineage, morals, office, deed, and judgment. Lineage in the ancestors, morals in fairness, office in the priesthood, deed in the commandment,

in the statute judgment. And what he added: Without blame, this is what the Apostle says: Providing good things, not only in the sight of God but also in the sight of men (Rom. XII). And Ecclesiastes: Be not overly just (Eccl. VII). Because often a harsher justice provokes the complaint of men. But one which is tempered, by the grace of its own sweetness, avoids the resentment of envy.

Luke 1:7

And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in their days. It was divinely ordained that John would be born to parents of advanced age and long deprived of the fruit of marriage, so that the sudden birth of offspring might make the gift more precious to them, and the amazement of the miracle might prepare others to hear the future prophet. Hence, all who heard laid it up in their hearts, saying, What then will this child be? [Luke 1:8] -- Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood. Indeed, through Moses the Lord appointed one high priest, who, after his death, commanded one to succeed in turn, and this was observed until the times of David, from whom it was decreed that there should be several (as we have said), nevertheless by the Lord's action, who, ministering in turns, during the time of their division, each would dedicate themselves to chastity, and would not touch their household at all. Thus now Zechariah is declared to have served in the priesthood in the order of his division.

Luke 1:10

By lot he was chosen to burn incense when he entered the temple of the Lord; and the whole multitude of people was praying outside at the hour of incense. He was not chosen by a new lot, for it was the incense to be burned, but he had been chosen by an ancient lot when first in the order of his priesthood he succeeded in the division of Abijah. But it was commanded that incense be carried into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, while all the people were waiting outside the temple, on the tenth day of the seventh month. And this day of atonement, or which they call the day of propitiation, which among us, due to the varied course of the moon by which the Hebrews compute their months, sometimes falls in the month of September, sometimes in October; because the month in which Passover is held, both by

the ordained order and by the decree of the law, holds the beginning of the year, as the Lord said to Moses: "This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. On the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb, etc. (Exodus XII). But of this day the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, thus mentions: "Into the first tabernacle the priests always entered, performing the duties of the sacrifices;

but into the second, the high priest alone once a year, not without blood which he offers, etc. (Hebrews IX). Expanding the mystery of this day, he shows that Jesus is true high priest, who, having completed the days of his office, that is, having fulfilled the dispensation of the flesh with his own blood, entered the secrets of heaven, to make the Father gracious unto us, and to intercede for the sins of those who are still waiting outside, praying and loving his coming. Therefore, fittingly, his descent on that day is announced by an angel, on which his ascension by the law was figured. For he who descended is the same also that ascended. (Ephesians IV): And, as the Psalm says, "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his meet is unto the end of it. (Psalm XVIII).

Luke 1:11

But an angel appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. An angel appears well, and in the temple, and beside the altar, and on the right side, because clearly it proclaims both the coming of the true priest, and the mystery of the universal sacrifice, and the joy of the heavenly gift. For just as often the presence by the left portends evils, so by the right eternal goods are predicted. As it is sung in the praise of wisdom: Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and glory. [Luke 1:12] -- And Zacharias was troubled when he saw, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, etc. The angel comforts the trembling Zacharias, because just as it is of human frailty to be troubled by the vision of a spiritual creature, so it is of angelic kindness to soothe mortals, frightened by its presence, by immediately offering reassurance. On the contrary, it is of demonic ferocity always to shake those who are terrified by their presence with even greater horror, which is better overcome by no other reason than unwavering faith.

Luke 1:13

And your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; and you shall call his name John. By saying the prayer is heard, he immediately promises the birth of his

wife. Not that he who had entered to sacrifice for the people could have prayed for obtaining children, especially since no one prays for what he despairs of receiving. But so much did he despair of having children, remembering his own old age and his barren wife, that he did not believe the angel promising this; but what he says, your prayer has been heard, signifies for the redemption of the people: And your wife will bear you a son, unfolds the ordinance of that same redemption, namely that the son born to Zechariah would make way by proclaiming for that redeemer of the people. A sign of singular merit is given whenever a name is either imposed or changed by God upon men. Thus Abram, because he was to be the father of many nations, was called Abraham. Thus Jacob, because he saw God, deserved to be called Israel. Thus King Josiah, on account of the summit of his exceptional virtue, was named by God long before he was born. Therefore John is interpreted: in whom is grace, or the grace of the Lord. By this name it is declared that first, the grace is given to his parents, to whom a son would be born in their old age; then to John himself, who would be great before the Lord, and would be enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb; finally also to the sons of Israel, whom he would turn to the Lord their God.

Luke 1:14

And there will be joy to you and exultation, and many will rejoice at his birth. The father rightfully rejoices because either born in old age or has received a son of such grace. Others also rejoice, to whom he will preach the hitherto unheard entrance of the kingdom of heaven. And it should be noted that many rejoice at the birth of the forerunner, but at the birth of the Lord, the angel announces great joy which will be for all the people. For evidently, this one comes to preach salvation to many, that one to grant it to all who wish.

Luke 1:15

For he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. It is a great virtue before the Lord to scorn earthly delights entirely while preaching heavenly joys in the desert. But also this stands out greatly before the Lord, even though it seems to be despised by men, that he, of whom no one among those born of women is greater, was beheaded by

the whim of a wanton girl. The angel, who proposed his rank of greatness, explained afterwards, "And he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." Sicera signifies drunkenness, a term used by the Hebrews for any drink that can cause inebriation, whether made from fruits, grains, or any other material. It was a specific rule in the law of the Nazarenes to abstain from wine and strong drink during the time of consecration. Thus, John, Samson, and Jeremiah, and others like them, strive to abstain from these things always, so that they may remain perpetual Nazarenes, that is, holy. For it is fitting that a vessel dedicated to heavenly grace be restrained from worldly enticements and not be inebriated with wine, in which is debauchery, but rather be filled with the new wine of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, correctly, as the inebriation of wine is taken away, the grace of the Spirit is accumulated. He showed himself to be filled with this grace (as it was foretold), when he leapt in the womb of his mother at the entrance of the blessed Mary, recognizing his office of forerunner and, as much as he could, proclaimed the coming of the Lord.

Luke 1:16

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah. When John, who bore witness to Christ, was baptizing people in his faith, he is said to have turned the children of Israel to the Lord their God; it is indeed clear that Christ is the Lord God of Israel. If, however, Christ is, or rather, since Christ is the Lord God of Israel, let the Arians cease from denying that Christ is the Lord God. Let the Photinians blush for giving Christ a beginning from the virgin. Let the Manicheans stop believing that there is one God of the people of Israel and another of the Christians. And because John is said to go before him, let them see that the eternal God before the ages was born as a man in time, and therefore is named by his precursor now as a man coming after him, now as the Son of God. He is well said to go before in the spirit and power of Elijah, for just as that one was the herald of the coming judge, so this one became the herald of the Redeemer. Whence both, following a very similar way of life, pursued the desert, lived frugally, were dressed simply, and were regarded with contempt. Both tolerate the madness of king and queen. That one divided the Jordan when he was about to seek heaven, this one converted men to the saving bath by which heaven may be sought. This

one is associated with the Lord on earth, that one is manifested with him in glory.

Luke 1:17

And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient, etc. To turn the hearts of the fathers to their children means to infuse the spiritual knowledge of the holy ancients into the people through preaching. But the wisdom of the just is not to presume righteousness from the works of the law but to seek salvation through faith. So that although they observe the commands of the law, they may understand that they are saved by the grace of God through Christ. For the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1). And Peter spoke of the yoke of the law: "Which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, just as they (Acts 15)." Because this wisdom is long imparted to the unbelievers through John and through Elijah, it is rightly said about Elijah by Malachi in almost the same words as it was said about John by the angel: "Prepare a perfect people for the Lord." For because it was said that Zacharias was heard when supplicating for the people, it teaches in what order that people ought to be saved and perfected, namely by the preaching of John in repenting and believing in Christ.

Luke 1:18

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in her days." Hesitating because of the magnitude of the promises, he seeks a sign by which he might be able to believe, to whom the mere vision or address of the angel should have been sufficient for a sign. Therefore, he suffered the deserved punishment of silence for his disbelief, where the same silence was both the sign of the faith he sought and the punishment for the unbelief he deserved. [Luke 1:19] -- And the angel answered him, saying: I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words. It should be understood that if a man were to promise such things, it would be permissible to demand a sign with impunity; but since it is an angel who promises, it no longer becomes appropriate to doubt. And he gives a sign that is requested, so that he who spoke in disbelief may now learn to believe by remaining silent. It is to be

noted here that the angel declares that he stands before God and has been sent to announce the good news to Zechariah. Because even when angels come to us, they fulfill their ministry outwardly, yet they are never absent inwardly through contemplation. And so they are both sent and present, because although an angelic spirit is circumscribed, the highest spirit himself who is God is not circumscribed. Therefore, angels are both sent and stand before Him, because whenever they come sent, they run within Him.

Luke 1:21

And the people were waiting for Zechariah and were wondering at his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them. And they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple, and he was making signs to them and remained mute. And it happened that when the days of his service were completed, he went home. This is what I said: that during their turn of duty, priests, being engaged solely in the temple's duties, not only refrained from the embrace of their wives but also from entering their own homes. From this, an example of maintaining perpetual chastity is given to the priests of our time, who are always commanded to serve at the altar. For since in those days the priesthood succession was sought from the line of Aaron, it was necessary to provide for a time to produce offspring. But because now it is not a carnal succession but a spiritual perfection that is sought, consequently, priests are commanded to always abstain from wives and always maintain chastity, so they can always serve at the altar.

Luke 1:24

After these days, Elizabeth, his wife, conceived. Specifically, after the days of Zacharias' duty were completed. John, the bishop of the city of Constantinople, mentioning this most holy conception, said: "These events occurred in the month of September, on the eighth day before the Kalends of October, when the moon was beginning its eleventh day, at the time when it was necessary for the Jews to celebrate the fast of Scenopegia. And it was found that the same day, the eighth day before the Kalends of October, was the equinox, on which the beginning of the night is longer than the day. For he must increase, but I must decrease," (John 3). Indeed, the light had been diminished by the darkness, when the Jews, according to the law and prophecy, offered sacrifices to God; in which time John was conceived. For these are the things that were offered for the people's sins, which were to

cease when John, the Baptist, was conceived. And therefore, Zacharias, his father, a priest of the Jews, became mute, because their sacrifices, which were offered for the people's sins, had to cease and fall silent. For the only priest was coming, who from his own lamb offered as a sacrifice, would offer the sacrifice to God for the sins of all. From the words of the Blessed John, we are taught that on the first day after the day of atonement, the change of the priestly order was celebrated, and therefore on this day the conception of the Lord's forerunner occurred. This day, not by chance, is a day of fasting and affliction foretold by the angel, because through him affliction of repentance was to be preached to men.

Luke 1:25

And she hid herself for five months, saying, "Thus has the Lord dealt with me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." How much care the saints take to admit nothing shameful that should make them blush is shown by Elisabeth, who is even embarrassed by the gifts she desired to receive. And although she rejoices in the removal of the reproach of sterility, she is modest regarding the birth in her advanced age. But the burden of motherhood is a cause of shame only as long as the honor of having a child remains hidden. For she who concealed herself because she had conceived a son, when the blessed Mother of God came in, joyfully exclaimed, because she was about to bear a prophet.

Luke 1:7–8

Allegorically, through Zacharias, the priesthood of the Jews is signified; through Elizabeth, the very law can be indicated, which, exercised by the teachings of the priests as if supported by a manly strength, ought to beget spiritual sons to God, but because of the insult of sterility, it was hardly able. Not that there were not many, both before the law and under the law, of the most perfect life, but because the law brought no one to perfection, which could not unlock the kingdom of heaven unless preceded by Christ. It is well said that both were righteous before God, because just as the law is good, and the commandment holy and just and good, so also the legal priesthood for the dispensation of that time is holy, good, and just. And what follows, that both walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, may be so explained, that the legal devotion flourished, as if in the adolescence or youth of its time, from the periods of Moses and afterwards: but

in the oncoming of the Savior, severe old age bowed it down, when both the order of the priesthood was confused by the ambitions and contentions of the high priests, and the law itself, torn by the traditions of the Pharisees, became less able to beget sons to God.

Luke 1:9

Therefore, Zacharias enters the temple because it is the duty of priests to enter the sanctuary of God and to understand the deep mysteries of the heavens. The multitude prays outside, because they cannot penetrate the secrets and mysteries, they must humbly attend to the teachings of the more learned. But while Zacharias places incense on the altar, he learns of the birth of John; for while teachers burn with a greater flame of divine reading, they find that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is to come and emerge from within the depths of scriptures, as from the womb of Elizabeth. And this rightly through an angel, because the law is ordered by angels in the hand of a mediator. [Luke 1:20] -- But he who pretends not to believe what he has heard is punished with the penalty of silence, because he is mute who does not understand the spiritual sense within the letters. Nor does such a one know how to give words to the people like a teacher, but, lacking the word and reason, he, so to speak, makes silent gestures. Such was then the priesthood of the Jews, when they did not care to understand the reason for sacrifices or the declarations of the prophets. While Zacharias remains mute, Elisabeth conceives John, because although the priests may not understand the distinction of faith, and the Pharisees and Scribes lose it, so that neither themselves enter nor permit their listeners to enter, yet the interior of the law abounds with the sacraments of Christ.

Luke 1:24

And Elisabeth rightly hides her conception for five months, whether because the lawgiver Moses in five books mystically designated the mysteries of Christ, or because the entire series of the Old Testament prefigures that same dispensation of Christ through the deeds or words of saintly people in the five ages of the world. And therefore, because the incarnation of Christ would happen either in the sixth age of the world or to fulfill the law, it is rightly in the sixth month of Elisabeth's conception that the angel was sent to Mary to announce that the Savior would be born, as the following lesson in order explains.

Luke 1:26

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. Therefore, angels are called by private names so that it may be understood by the names even in their activities what they are capable of. For neither in that holy city, which He perfects with full knowledge of the vision of Almighty God, do they thus receive proper names, nor can their persons be unknown without names: but when they come to minister something to us, they also take names from their ministries among us. To Mary the virgin, then, Gabriel is sent, who is named the strength of God. For he was indeed coming to announce Him who deigned to appear humble to wrestle down the airy powers. Of whom the Psalmist says, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (Psalm 24). And again, "The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory" (ibid.). Therefore, by the strength of God He was to be announced, who is the Lord of powers and mighty in battle, coming to war against the airy powers. Understand the sixth month as March, on the twenty-fifth day of which our Lord is said both to have been conceived and to have suffered, just as He is said to have been born on the twenty-fifth day of the month of December.

Because whether we believe that the vernal equinox happens today (as some think) or that the winter solstice occurs at that time, it is surely fitting that He who illuminates every man coming into the world should be conceived or born with the increase of light. But if someone should prove that before the time of the Lord's nativity and conception, light either increased or overcame the darkness, we also say that John then preached the kingdom of heaven before His face and now too, preachers are commanded, "Prepare the way for him who ascends above the sunset" (Psalm 68). Why John was conceived around the autumn equinox and born around the summer solstice, he himself teaches either from his own or from the persona of the Old Testament (as many claim); "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3).

Luke 1:27

To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. For many reasons, the Savior wished to be born not of a simple virgin, but of one betrothed. Firstly, evidently, so that through Joseph's lineage, to whom Mary was a relative, Mary's origin could also be known. For it is not the custom of Scripture to trace the genea-

logy of women. For it can be understood from both that it is said of the house of David. Next, lest she should be stoned by the Jews as an adulteress, preferring that some should doubt her origin rather than the chastity of the parent. At the same time, it removes the occasion for impudent virgins, lest they say the mother of the Savior was defamed by false suspicions. Thirdly, so that while fleeing to Egypt and then returning, she would have the solace of a husband, who would exist equally as a protector and witness of her intact virginity. Fourthly, lest her birth be exposed to the devil; who if he knew he was born of a virgin, might perhaps fear to hand him over to death as eminently as other men. But Mary is called in Hebrew the star of the sea, and in Syriac lady; and rightly so, because she deserved to give birth to the Lord of the whole world, and the perpetual light for the ages.

Luke 1:28

And the angel entered to her and said, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women. It is rightly that she is called full of grace, because she obviously attained the grace that no other had merited, that she would conceive and bear the author of grace himself. [Luke 1:29] -- When she heard this, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of salutation this might be. Learn the virgin by her manners, learn the virgin by her modesty, learn the virgin by her prophecy, learn the virgin by her mystery. It is the nature of virgins to be startled and to fear every man's approach, to revere every man's speech. Let women learn to imitate the resolve of modesty. Alone in her innermost chambers where no men might see her, the angel alone found her, alone without a companion, alone without a witness, lest she be corrupted by any degenerate affection, she is greeted by the angel. Learn, virgin, to avoid the wantoness of words. Even Mary feared the angel's salutation. Nevertheless, she was thinking, he said, what manner of salutation this might be. And so with modesty, because she was afraid; with prudence, because she marveled at the new formula of blessing, which had been nowhere read, nowhere before discovered.

Luke 1:30

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. Having seen that she was troubled by an unusual greeting, as it were, which was kept for her alone, calling her more familiarly by her name, he bids her not to fear. And because he had called her full of grace, he further

establishes that grace and explains it more abundantly, saying: [Luke 1:31] -- Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. Jesus is interpreted as savior or saving. The angel addressing Joseph explained the sacrament of this name: For he, he said, shall save his people from their sins. He did not say the people of Israel, but his people, that is, called into the unity of faith from among the uncircumcision and the circumcision, where, gathered from different parts, there might be one shepherd and one flock.

Luke 1:32

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. It is said of John that he will be great, but he as a great man, this one however as a great God. For he will be great before the Lord, but this one, it says, will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. Therefore, the same Son of the Most High who was conceived and born in the virginal womb. The same man in time, created from the mother, who is God born from the Father before all times. But if the same man who is God, Nestorius must cease to say that only a man was born from a virgin, and that he was received by the Word of God, not into the unity of person, but into an inseparable association. Otherwise, he is found to assert not one Christ, true God and man, but two (which is impious to say), and thus to preach not the Trinity, but a quaternity. However, the Catholic faith rightly confesses one Christ as one man of both flesh and soul, just as the angelic words signify, which had asserted that the throne of David his father was to be given to him. For he who would have the same father David, whom he declares will be called the Son of the Most High, demonstrates one person of Christ in two natures. He received the throne of David, so that certainly he might call to the eternal kingdom the people to whom David once and his sons provided temporal rule, which has been prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Luke 1:33

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Isaiah said: His empire will be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it in judgement and in justice (Isa. IX). He did not say in the acquisition of earthly glories and treasures, not in the victory

over many nations or the subjugation of proud cities, but in judgment and justice. For by these the kingdom of Christ is multiplied and established, both in each of the faithful and in the universal Church throughout the earth. For he calls the whole Church the house of Jacob, which, whether born from a good root or grafted in, although it was a wild olive, is rightfully grafted into a good olive tree by faith. After the triumph of his passion, the Savior addressing it says: "You who fear the Lord, praise him; all you offspring of Jacob, glorify him" (Psal. XXI). However, Jesus is not said to be great in future words and to be called the Son of the Most High, to accept the scepter of David, and to reign over the house of Jacob, because, as the heretics senselessly think and fall away from the truth, Christ did not exist before Mary, but that the man assumed into God was glorified by that glory which the Word of God had with the Father before the world was; that is, the same name of the Son would mean the same person of Christ, man with God, full of grace and truth.

Luke 1:34

But Mary said to the angel: How will this be, since I do not know a man? She reverently expressed the purpose of her mind, that is, that she had decided to lead a virginal life. Because she was the first among women to devote herself to such great virtue, she rightfully deserved, by unique merit, to excel in blessedness above other women. How, she said, will this be? She did not say: How will I know this; but, How will this be, she said, since I do not know a man. She inquired about the order of obedience to which she should submit, not asking for a sign to believe. For it did not befit the virgin chosen to bear God to exist in doubtful mistrust but in cautious prudence, since man could not easily know the mystery that was hidden in God through the ages. Therefore, because she had read, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, but had not read how it could happen, rightfully believing in what she had read, she asked the angel about what she did not find in the prophet (Isaiah VII).

Luke 1:35

And the angel, responding, said to her: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Not by the seed of man, which you do not know, he said, but by the work of the Holy Spirit by which you are filled, you will conceive. There will be conception in you, de-

sire will not be. There will be no heat of lust, where the Holy Spirit makes a shadow. Indeed, in that he said, And the power of the Most High will overshadow you, both natures of the incarnate Savior can also be indicated. For a shadow is usually formed by both light and a body. And to whom it is overshadowed, indeed by the light or heat of the sun it is refreshed as much as is sufficient, but the heat of the sun itself, lest it be unbearable, is moderated by an intervening light cloud or some other body. Therefore, to the Blessed Virgin, because as a pure human she could not fully contain all the fullness of the divinity bodily, the power of the Most High overshadowed, that is, the incorporeal light of divinity assumed a body in her of humanity. Of which the prophet beautifully says: Behold, the Lord, he says, ascends upon a light cloud, and will enter Egypt (Isaiah 19), which is to say: Behold, the Word of God coeternal with the Father, and light from light born before the ages, will assume flesh at the end of the ages and a soul not weighed down by any burden of sin, and from the virginal womb, as a bridegroom from his chamber, (Psalm 18) will come forth into the world.

Luke 1:35

Therefore, the holy one to be born from you will be called the Son of God. In distinction from our holiness, Jesus is asserted to be uniquely holy in his birth. For we, even if we are made holy, are not born holy, because we are constrained by the condition of corruptible nature itself. Rightly, then, we each lament with the Prophet, saying: "Behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 50). But He alone is truly holy who, to overcome the condition of corruptible nature itself, was not conceived from a commingling of carnal union. "The holy one," He says, "will be called the Son of God." What do you say here, Nestorian, who denies the blessed Mary to be the Mother of God, trying to attack the clearly open truth? Behold, It said that God will come, the Son of God will be born. How, then, either is the Son of God not God, or the one who bore God, how can she not be Θεοτόκος, that is, the Mother of God?

Luke 1:36

And behold, your cousin Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month for her who was called barren, for with God, nothing will be impossible. Lest the Virgin doubt her ability to give birth, she receives the example of the barren old woman who is to give birth,

in order to learn that all things are possible with God, even those that seem contrary to the natural order. If anyone is troubled by how he calls Elizabeth the cousin of Blessed Mary, since one comes from the house of David and the other from the daughters of Aaron, let him note that their ancestors of both tribes could have joined in marriage by children given to each other. And if this explanation is not sufficient for one arguing more contentiously, as though this could not have happened contrary to the interdiction of the law, let him read Exodus, where it is written: "Aaron took Elizabeth, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, as a wife, and she bore him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar" (Exodus 6). And let him see that before the law's decree, by divine providence, the priestly and royal lineage had already been joined. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the flesh was to be a true King and Priest, would take this flesh from both lineages, namely David and Aaron. Hence, in this dual lineage, the mystical chrism was celebrated according to the law, a foretelling of both the name and generation of Christ. And David himself, entering the house of God, received the holy bread and the sword as a king and priest. He was prefiguring the one who would come from his seed, who would fight for our freedom by the right of a king, and for our absolution would offer the bread of his flesh.

Luke 1:38

But Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word. How great the humility with devotion, who wishes for the angel's promise to be fulfilled, and calls herself, though chosen to be the mother, the handmaid. She most explicitly insinuates that she claims no merit for herself in that she complies with the Lord's commands. Let it be (she says), conceived without a man's seed in the virgin, let it be born of the Holy Spirit in full flesh, let the Holy one be born from a mother woman without a human father, let him be called the Son of God. [Luke 1:38] -- And the angel departed from her. Rising in those days, Mary went into the hill country with haste to a city of Judah. With the virgin's consent granted, the angel soon returned to the heavens, she sought the mountains. She hastens to visit Elizabeth, not as one who is incredulous about the oracle, nor doubtful about the example, but joyful for the vow, and devout for the duty. At the same time, she provides a typical example, that every soul which has conceived the word of God in the mind immediately ascends the lofty peaks of virtues with the step of love, so as to penetrate the city of Judah, that

is, of confession and praise, and to be able to dwell as it were for three months in it, up to the perfection of faith, hope, and charity.

Luke 1:40

And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. Learn, O virgin, the humility of Mary, so that you may be chaste in body and devout in heart. The younger visits the elder, the virgin greets the wife. For it is fitting that the more chaste the virgin, the more humble she should be, and by deferring to elders, she may commend the habit of chastity with the testimony of humility. Alternatively: Mary to Elizabeth, the Lord came to John, so that this one might be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that one might consecrate baptism. The humility of the greater is indeed the exaltation of the lesser. Consequently, it follows: [Luke 1:41] -- And it happened when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. See the distinction and the proprieties of each word. Elizabeth heard the voice first, but John felt the grace first. She heard by the order of nature, he leaped by the reason of the mystery. She sensed the coming of Mary, he sensed the coming of the Lord. These speak of grace, those inwardly work, and they undertake the mystery of piety by the progress of the mothers, and with a double miracle, the mothers prophesy by the spirit of the little ones. The infant leaped, and the mother was filled. The mother was not filled before the child, but as the child was filled with the Holy Spirit, he also filled the mother.

Luke 1:42

And she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. It should be noted that the prophecy about Christ mentioned previously is fulfilled not only through the miracles of events but also through the specificity of the words. For this is the fruit that is promised to the patriarch David under oath: From the fruit of your womb, I will place someone on my throne (Psalm 131). At the same time, it should be observed that Mary is blessed by Elizabeth with the same voice as by Gabriel, showing that she is to be revered by both angels and humans and rightly preferred above all other women. [Luke 1:43] -- And how has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? She does not inquire as if she does not know what she indeed recognizes to be of the Holy Spirit, namely, that she is blessed by the mother of the Lord for the ad-

vancement of her offspring, but, struck by the novelty of the miracle, she confesses that this is not of her own merit but of divine gift.

Luke 1:44

For behold, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the child leaped for joy in my womb. Elizabeth was embarrassed by the burden of pregnancy as long as she did not know the mystery of the religion. But she who hid herself because she had conceived a son began to boast because she was bearing a prophet. And she who was previously embarrassed now blesses, and she who doubted before is now affirmed. For behold (she says), as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the child leaped for joy in my womb. Therefore, she cried out with a loud voice when she sensed the Lord's coming, because she believed the birth to be religious. For there was no cause for shame where faith in the given birth of the prophet newly ascended, not affected.

Luke 1:45

And blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord. You see that Mary did not doubt, but believed, and therefore attained the fruit of faith. Blessed (she says) is she who believed. And indeed she is truly blessed, who is more excellent than the priest. While the priest doubted, the virgin corrected the error. Nor is it surprising if the Lord, about to redeem the world, began His work with His mother, so that she through whom salvation was being prepared for all, might receive the first fruit of salvation from the pledge. And it is equally noteworthy how much grace adorned the soul of Elizabeth when Mary entered, whom she enlightened simultaneously concerning the past, present, and future by the spirit of prophecy. For by saying, Blessed is she who believed, she clearly indicates that she recognized by the spirit the words of the angel that were spoken to Mary. And by adding: For there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told you by the Lord, she also foresaw what would follow in the future. And naming her the mother of her Lord, because she understood that she was carrying the Redeemer of the human race in her womb.

Luke 1:46

And Mary said: My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. The Lord has raised me up to such and such an unheard-of

honor, which cannot be explained by the service of any language, but can barely be comprehended by the feeling of the innermost heart, and thus I offer all the strength of my soul in praiseful thanks, I joyfully devote whatever I live, feel, and know in contemplation of His greatness, which has no end, because my spirit rejoices in the same Jesus, that is, the Savior, in whose eternal divinity my flesh rejoices in temporal conception. Similar to this is what the Psalmist says: And my soul shall exult in the Lord, and shall be delighted above His salvation (Psalm 35). For he indeed venerated the Father and the Son with equal love. [Luke 1:48] -- Because He has regarded the humility of His handmaid. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. She whose humility is regarded rightly rejoices, named blessed by all, just as on the contrary, she whose pride is condemned with disdain, Eve, that is, woe, or by the name of calamity, punished, languishes. For it was fitting that just as by the pride of our first parent death entered the world, so again by the humility of Mary the entry of life might be opened.

Luke 1:49

Because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. This refers back to the beginning of the hymn, where it is said: My soul magnifies the Lord. For indeed, the soul to which the Lord deigns to do great things usually magnifies Him with fitting praises, and can exhort her companions of the same vow and purpose saying: Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together (Psalm 33). For whoever neglects to magnify the Lord, whom he has known, and to sanctify His name, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. His name is called holy because, by the peak of His unique power, He surpasses all creation and is far separated from all that He has made. This is better understood in the Greek expression in which the word itself, ἅγιον (hagion), signifies being beyond the earth. By imitation of this, we also, to the extent of our ability, are commanded to be separated from all that is not holy or dedicated to God. The Lord said: Be holy, for I am holy (Leviticus 11). For whoever consecrates himself will rightly be seen as beyond the earth and beyond the world. Such a one can also say, while walking on the earth, we have our conversation in heaven.

Luke 1:50

And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. Turning from His special gifts to the general judgments of God, he describes

the state of the entire human race and explains alternately what the proud deserve, what the humble deserve, what the children of Adam have by free will, and what the children of God are by grace. Therefore, he says, He who is mighty has not done great things only for me, but also in every nation and generation, he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. [Luke 1:51] -- He has shown strength with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. By His arm, He signifies the Son of God Himself. Not that God the Father is determined by the form of human flesh, and that the Son adheres to Him as a member of the body, but because all things were made through Him, therefore, He is called the arm of the Lord. For just as your arm is called by which you work, so the arm of God is called His Word, because through the Word He made the world. For why does man extend his arm to achieve something, except because what he says is immediately done? But if he had such great power that without any movement of his body what he said was done, his arm would be his word. Therefore, when we hear that the arm of God the Father is the Son of God, let not the carnal custom obstruct us, but let us consider as much as we are able the virtue and wisdom of God by which all things were made.

Luke 1: 52

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. What He said with His arm, and what He promised from generation to generation, must be connected to these verses from common source, because through all the generations of the age it is evident that the proud perish and the humble are exalted by the pious and just dispensation of divine power. [Luke 1:54] -- He has taken up Israel, His servant, remembering mercy. He beautifully calls Israel the servant of the Lord, who has been taken up by Him for salvation, namely obedient and humble, as Hosea says: "For Israel is a child, and I loved him" (Hosea XI). For whoever refuses to be humbled cannot indeed be saved, nor say with the Prophet: "Behold, God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul" (Psalm LIII). But whoever humbles himself like a little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew XVIII).

Luke 1:55

As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever. The seed of Abraham signifies not the carnal, but the spiritual, that is, not only those born of his flesh, but those who follow his footsteps in faith, whether in circumcision or uncircumcision. For he believed when in uncircumcision, and it was counted to him as righteousness. And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the same faith, so that he might thus become the father of both peoples through faith, as the Apostle most fully explains to the Romans. Therefore, the coming of the Savior was promised to Abraham and his seed forever, that is, to the children of the promise, to whom it is said: "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Galatians III). It is fitting that the births of either the Lord or John are foretold by mothers prophesying, that just as sin began with women, so too should good begin with women, and that which perished through the deception of one woman, life might be restored to the world through two women proclaiming in agreement.

Luke 1:56

But Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home. Mary stayed so long until, with the completion of Elizabeth's pregnancy, she saw the birth of the precursor of her Lord, especially for whom she had come. It has been said above that every pure soul which has conceived the spiritual desire of the word must soon undergo the high yoke of heavenly exercise, and remain there almost for a period of three months, until it shines with the perfect light of the chief virtues. Describing these months of the most perfect brightness, the Apostle says: "And now these three remain: faith, hope, love. But the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. XIII). [Luke 1:57] -- Now Elizabeth's time had come to give birth, and she bore a son. Holy Scripture is accustomed to use the term "fulfillment" only in the birth, or condition, or action of good things, which signifies the perfection of life. Hence it is said, "Elizabeth's time to give birth was fulfilled." "The days were fulfilled for Mary to give birth" (Luke II). "Solomon completed building the house of the Lord" (II Chron. III). "Abraham, or another of the fathers, died, full of days." And, "when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son" (Gal. IV). But on the contrary, the days of the wicked are empty and void. For men of blood and deceit will not live out half their days (Psalm LIV).

Luke 1:58

And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. The birth of the saints brings joy to many because it is a common good. For justice is a communal virtue. Therefore, at the birth of a just person, a sign of future life is foretold, and the grace of the forthcoming virtue is prefigured with the joyful exultation of neighbors. [Luke 1:59] -- And it happened on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. And his mother answered and said: Not so, but he shall be called John. The holy evangelist thought it well to mention beforehand that many thought the child should be called by the name of his father, Zacharias, so that you might note that the mother did not dislike the name of some relative, but that this name was infused by the Holy Spirit, which had been foretold by the angel to Zacharias before. Indeed, he, being mute, could not intimate the name of the son to his wife, but Elizabeth learned the prophecy, which she had not learned from her husband.

Luke 1:61

And they said to her: There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name. They signaled to his father, etc. "John is his name," he said, that is, we do not impose a name on him who has already received a name from God. He has his own name which we acknowledge, not which we chose. Do not be surprised if a woman asserted the name, which she had not heard, when the Holy Spirit who commanded the angel revealed it to her, nor could she be ignorant of the announcement of the Lord, who had prophesied of Christ. And it is well added that there is no one among his kindred who is called by this name, so you may understand that the name is not one of kin, but of a prophet.

Luke 1:64

His mouth and his tongue were immediately opened, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came upon all their neighbors. Because the voice of one crying in the wilderness was born, rightly was the father's tongue loosened. For it was not fitting that the father remain silent from praises, who rejoiced in the birth of the herald of the Word. Indeed, the lips bound by unbelief were now loosened by faith. But if anyone desires to scrutinize closely, these things also allegorically point to the celebrated nativity of John, the initiating sublimity

of the grace of the New Testament. The neighbors and relatives preferred to name the father rather than John, because the Jews, who were connected to him by the observance of the law as if by kinship, rather desired to follow the justice that is from the law than to accept the grace of faith. But John, which means the grace of God, the mother strives to make known by words, the father by writing, because even the law itself, the psalms, and the prophets proclaim the grace of Christ with clear utterances, and the old priesthood testifies to him with the shadows of ritual ceremonies and sacrifices. And fittingly, Zacharias speaks on the eighth day after the child was born, because through the resurrection of the Lord, which happened on the eighth day, i.e., after the seventh of the Sabbath, the hidden secrets of the legal priesthood were revealed, and the tongue of the Jewish priests, which was bound by the chains of distrust, was loosened by the voice of rational understanding.

Luke 1:65

And these words were spread over all the mountains of Judaea. And all those who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying: What will this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. Great are the works of the Lord, exquisite in all his desires (Psalm 110). Behold, the silence of Zacharias alone, given to him as a punishment for disbelief and as a sign of belief, not only benefits him when it is taken away, but it also astounds all his neighbors with the miracle and fear. The fame of the born prophet spreads throughout all the surrounding mountains; it stirs up all who can hear to diligently inquire about the manner and state of the child who is born, so that by this and similar auspices, the future prophet of Christ is commended, and, so to speak, it provides signs for the herald of the forthcoming truth. And Zacharias his father was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and wrought the redemption of his people. How great is the abundance of the heavenly gift, if the piety of our faith is ready to receive it. Behold, the speech that was taken away for disbelief is restored with the spirit of prophecy to the believer. The Lord has visited his people, as if wasting away from a long infirmity, and as if sold under sin, he has redeemed them by the blood of his only son.

Because blessed Zacharias knew this was about to be done soon, he narrates it as though it were already accomplished in a prophetic manner. And it should be noted that it is said he visited and redeemed his people, not because

he came and found them as his own, but because by visiting them, he made them his own. Similar to this is what is sung in the conclusion of the Proverbs about the same people: Who shall find a valiant woman (Proverbs 31)? For he did not find that same woman, namely the Church, strong, that is, devoted in faith, but by betrothing her to himself, he made her strong, because he perfected her by the sublimity of his faith.

Luke 1:69

And he has raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of David his servant. A horn of salvation signifies a firm eminence of salvation. Indeed, all bones are covered with flesh, the horn surpasses the flesh, and therefore the horn of salvation is called the kingdom of Christ the Savior, whereby by which the spiritual and what is of the flesh joys are surpassed, height is proclaimed. In figure of which David and Solomon were consecrated with the horn of oil to the glory of the kingdom. [Luke 1:70] -- As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. From of old, he says, because the whole Scripture of the Old Testament proceeded as a prophecy about Christ. Not only Jeremiah, Daniel, and Isaiah, and others like them, who are specifically called prophets and spoke manifestly about his coming, but even father Adam, Abel, and Enoch, and other Patriarchs, by their own deeds bear witness to his dispensation. Whence the Lord himself, rebuking the hardness of the Jews, said: If you believed Moses, you might perhaps believe me also. For he wrote of me (John 5).

Luke 1:71

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us. It must be joined from the previous verse, "he raised up for us," that is, he raised up for us salvation from our enemies. For when he had briefly stated earlier: "And he raised up a horn of salvation for us," continuing as if explaining more openly what he had said: "Salvation," he says, "from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us." But all who hate us signify either perverse men or unclean spirits. From whose hand, both in the present with hope we have been saved, and in the future, in reality, we will be saved.

Luke 1:72

To show mercy to our fathers and to remember His covenant. The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, etc. The Lord had said through the words of the prophets that He would be born in the house of David; He says

the same to fulfill the covenant which He arranged with Abraham, that He would liberate us. For it was especially to those patriarchs that either the gathering of nations or the incarnation of Christ was promised from their seed. Which Matthew also briefly indicated when he began his Gospel in this way: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Where it should be noted that in both evangelists, David is preferred to Abraham. For although later in the order of time, he is greater by the gift of promise. For to Abraham, who, although still in circumcision, left his homeland, knew God, and earned the testimony of faith, only the faith of the nations and the holy assembly of the Church was promised, with the Lord saying to him: And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. XXVIII). But to David, by a more exalted oracle, it was heard that Christ would be born from him according to the flesh: When your days are fulfilled and you go to your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall be one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me (I Chron. XVII).

Luke 1:75

In holiness and righteousness before Him, all our days. Clearly and briefly, he designates how the Lord is to be served; namely, in holiness and righteousness, and before Him, and all our days. For he who either departs from His service before death, or pollutes the sincerity of his faith with any uncleanness or injustice, or strives to appear holy only before men and not also before the Lord; and just, is not yet perfectly liberated from the hand of spiritual enemies to serve the Lord, but, following the example of the ancient Samaritans, attempts to serve both the gods of the nations and the Lord. [Luke 1:76] -- And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High. For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. He spoke beautifully about the Lord, and suddenly turned his words to the prophet, to indicate that this too was a benefit of the Lord. It is indeed asked how he can speak to the infant of eight days. But how would the infant, who heard Mary's greeting while still enclosed in the womb, not hear his father's voice? Unless perhaps Zacharias ought to be considered as instructing those present, wanting to proclaim the future duties of his son, which he had learned long ago through an angel, as soon as he could speak. Let the Arians hear and be ashamed: let the meek hear and rejoice, that Christ the Lord, whom John

preceded as a prophet, is called the Most High. As also the Psalmist, praising God and perfect man in one person, says: Mother Zion will say, a man, and a man was born in her, and the Most High himself founded her (Psalm 86). The one who founded is the same who was made, the same man whom he calls the Most High.

Luke 1:77

To give the knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. As if desiring to expound and commend the name of Jesus, that is, Savior, he frequently mentions salvation, recalling to be raised the horn of salvation, salvation to come from enemies, knowledge of salvation to be given to His people. But lest you think a temporal and carnal salvation is promised, he says, in the remission of their sins. Indeed, the Jews for this reason do not receive Christ Jesus but prefer to wait for the Antichrist, because they wish to be saved not inwardly but outwardly, not from the dominion of sin, but from the yoke of human servitude. [Luke 1:78] -- Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dawn from on high has visited us. And the prophet speaking of the Lord says: Behold, a man, his name is the Dawn (Zech. VI). He is rightly called the Dawn, who opening the rise of true light for us, made the children of night and darkness into children of light, as Blessed Zacharias consequently explains, saying:

Luke 1:79

Illuminate those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace. Indeed, to illuminate those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death is for the Lord to infuse the rays of His recognition and love into those who have lived in the blindness of sin and ignorance. To such the Apostle says: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Our feet, however, are directed into the way of peace when the path of our actions in all things agrees with the grace of our Redeemer and Illuminator. It is in a fitting order, indeed, that the first thing testified is to illuminate the hearts, and then the works are to be directed, because no one is able to work peace unless they have first learned it. Hence rightly the Psalmist says: Seek (he says) peace, and pursue it (Psalm 33). Which is to say: Illuminate you who sat in darkness, and enter the way of peace from which you have long been exiled.

Luke 1:80

But the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the deserts till the day of his showing to Israel. It is appropriate and just that he who is to be a future preacher of repentance follows the harshness of solitude; and so that the young man may more freely lift his listeners by instructing them from the allurements of the world, he himself also passes his early life squalid in deserts.

CHAPTER 2

Luke 2:1

Now it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. The Son of God, about to be born in the flesh, chose for Himself His parents as He willed, and the place of His birth as He willed, and brought them to that place before He was born as He willed. Thus, also, at the time which He willed, indeed, which He, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, had decreed from ages, and had foretold through the mouths of the prophets, He entered the world to save it. For, just as He was born of a virgin mother, demonstrating that the glory of virginity and the angelic honor of purity was most pleasing to Him, so also, born at the most peaceful time of the world, He showed that He sought and loved peace greatly. He indicated that He would always deign to visit the followers of peace and love. Concerning this, He Himself promised to the faithful, saying: For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. XVIII). For what greater sign of the most perfect kingdom, and the most beautiful, as far as men are concerned, could there be of peace than that the whole world is encompassed by a single census, and that all the farthest reaches of the world are comprehended in the same monetary declaration?

Whose author and ruler, Augustus, according to the faith of histories, reigned in peace for twelve years around the time of the Lord's birth, so that, with both foreign and civil wars being quieted throughout the whole world, he may be seen to have fulfilled even to the letter the spiritual prophecy of the prophet. The prophet indeed proclaimed with mystical voice the dispensation of Christ, saying: And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it (Micah IV). Shortly after, he

also took care to describe the state of that most sacred time: And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord (Ibid.). Not only did this new census of the world testify to the advent of that supreme king who would enroll His chosen ones, gathered from all directions of the world, in the book of eternal happiness, but it also aided the leaders of his kingdom with the peace of his governance.

For surely, with the nations subdued by the storm of wars, the shadow (so to speak) of the Roman name, terrible at that time, protected the disciples of Christ, who were to preach to the world, from the fervor of arising seditions wherever they might wish to go for the sake of the word. Therefore, the decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled, for the decree of Christ the King was impending, by which all the world would attain salvation. He who fulfilled the name of Augustus most perfectly, desiring his own to grow and himself sufficient to increase them, commanded that the censors sign those subject to his expedition not with the removal of money, but with the offering of faith. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark XVI).

Luke 2:2

This first census was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own city. This census taken during the time of Cyrenius is also mentioned by the illustrious Hebrew historian Josephus, in the eighteenth book of Antiquities, as follows: "Cyrenius, a man who through the consent of the Roman Senate ascended through various magistracies to the rank of consul, distinguished in other respects, came to Syria with a few companions, sent by Caesar to give law to the nations and also to be the censor of patrimonies. Therefore, the phrase: "This first census was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria," indicates that this census was either the first of those which encompassed the entire world, because many parts of the lands are often recorded to have been described, or certainly the first it began then, when Cyrenius was sent to Syria. And as then, under the reign of Augustus and governance of Cyrenius, everyone went to be enrolled, each to his own city, so now under the rule of the Church presiders, that is, the teachers, indeed persuaded and promised rewards by Christ, let us all go,

no one being excluded from the census of justice. Let us come to Him, who toil and burdened, and He will give us rest. Let us take His yoke upon us, and learn from Him for He is gentle and humble in heart, and we will find rest for our souls (Matt. XI).

For this is our city and fatherland, namely the blessed and heavenly rest of souls, to which we were created by God Christ at the beginning of this nascent age, and to which we have been re-created by the man Christ at the end of the ages. To which, indeed, the city of peace and quietness we strive to go and offer treasures to our King, growing daily in the progress of virtue and faith, to behold the eternal joys of the heavenly light, and to despise both the prosperous and adverse things of the world for acquiring these, and having acquired them, to offer to God as a precious gift, cleansed from all defilement of flesh and Spirit (II Cor. VII). But if we more diligently inspect the type of coin that was paid to Caesar, we will also prove ourselves not lacking in devotion to purify it, which we can better search for and find from the Gospel itself, where, being tested about rendering tribute to Caesar, the Lord said: Show me the coin for the tribute. And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them: Whose is this image and inscription? They said to him, Caesar's. Then he said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Luke XX). First, it must be noted that the denarius, which had ten coins, was paid to Caesar, titled with his image and inscription, which is even evident from the name.

Next, it must be inferred that, by the Lord's command, things that are Caesar's should be rendered to Caesar, and things that are God's to God, diligently showing us also that we must offer to God our King the decalogue of the law in the likeness of the royal denarius, that is, with an entire heart to keep the love of God and neighbor, of which one, perceived by three, encompasses the other seven. In this sacred denarius of Scripture, marked with the ten heavenly commandments like gold coins, whoever knows to gaze upon the face and name of the eternal King, that is, the recognition of the divine will, will find it. Whatever one perfectly believes, hopes for, loves in the tablets of one's heart, is inscribed by the pen of diligent correction. And we carry this denarius with us, as if closed in a purse on the way, knowing how to say with the Psalmist: The light of your face is signed upon us, O Lord, you have given gladness in my heart (Psalm IV), yet we preserve that

seal of faith and joy of hope and charity in our hidden meditation of conscience stored with God as witness.

But arriving in the homeland to our King whose vision we thirst for, to behold him in his beauty with all the effort of virtue and the entire intention of the mind, we hasten to bring forth the good gifts of our good conversation, which were hidden on earth and shall be crowned in heaven, when what we said in the dark shall be spoken in the light, and what we spoke in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops (Matt. X).

Luke 2:4

Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judah, to the city of David, etc. By divine arrangement, the census registration was decreed in such a way that everyone was ordered to go to their own homeland. Not only for the mystery we spoke of, but also so that the Lord, conceived elsewhere, born elsewhere, could evade the fury of Herod more easily. If He had been born to parents from Bethlehem, a cunning pursuer might have suspected their sudden flight, especially since everyone knew they were of the lineage of David, from whom Christ was to come. David himself bears witness to this with his name, homeland, and office. David, for his name means "hand of the strong" or "beloved. The name is derived both because he courageously struck down the giant and because he was handsome in appearance and had a pleasing face; but in a deeper mystery, prefiguring Him who was to be born of his house and family, who would singularly conquer the prince of this world, beautiful beyond the sons of men (Ps. 44), and He Himself born in Bethlehem and a shepherd of intellectual sheep, that is, the simple souls. We must particularly observe this great and benevolent humility of Him who consented not only to incarnate for us, but also to be born at a time when He would be registered in Caesar's census and thus subject Himself to servitude for our liberation.

Peter suggests this to us as a path of His humility (for He did not come to change conditions, but minds): "Be subject," he says, "to every human creature for God's sake, whether to the king as the superior, or to governors as sent by him" (1 Peter 2). His co-apostle Paul also says: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. 13).

Luke 2:6

It came to pass while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered, etc. Well, the Lord is born in Bethlehem not just for the indication of the royal lineage but also for the sacrament of the name. For Bethlehem indeed means "house of bread. He himself is the one who said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (John VI). Therefore, the place where the Lord was to be born was called "house of bread" beforehand, because it was surely destined that he would appear there in the material of the flesh, who would refresh the minds of the elect with inward satisfaction. But up to this day, and until the end of the world, the Lord ceases not to be conceived in Nazareth and to be born in Bethlehem, whenever any of the listeners, having received the flower of the word, makes himself the house of eternal bread. Daily he is conceived in the virgin womb, that is, in the minds of the believers through faith, born through baptism. Daily the Church, Mother of God, following her master teacher, from the wheel of worldly conversation—which Galilee signifies—ascends to the city of Judah, namely, confession and praise, and pays the tribute of its devotion to the eternal king.

Which, in the example of the ever-blessed virgin Mary, being both wedded and immaculate, conceives us a virgin from the Spirit, gives birth to us a virgin without a groan, and, as if assigned to another, but made fruitful by another, is joined visibly to the Pontiff assigned over her, but is filled invisibly with the virtue of the Holy Spirit. Whence also Joseph is well interpreted as "increased". This name clearly indicates that the earnestness of the speaking master avails nothing if it does not receive the increase of heavenly assistance to be heard. But that Mary is described as having given birth to her firstborn son is not to be taken according to the Helvidians, as though she also begot other children, as if he cannot be called firstborn unless he has brothers, just as he is usually called only-begotten who lacks brothers. Because both the testimony of the law and clear reason declare that all only-begottens can also be called firstborns, but not all firstborns can be called only-begottens. This means not only being firstborn after whom others come, but also everyone before whom no one else has issued from the womb. Hence, because every male that opens the womb is commanded to be called holy to the Lord, whether brothers follow or do not follow, what is first born from the womb is rightfully to be consecrated as firstborn.

Truly by a higher reason, the Son of God appearing in the flesh, both according to the excellence of divinity the only-begotten of the Father, and according to the brotherly fellowship the firstborn of all creation. Concerning this it is said: For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. VIII). Concerning that he said: And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father (John I). Therefore, he is the only-begotten in the substance of the Deity, the firstborn in the assumption of humanity. Firstborn in grace, only-begotten in nature. Hence he is called brother and Lord. Brother, because firstborn; Lord, because only-begotten.

Luke 2:7

And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.—What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me? For what is greater than all praise: A little child is born to us, so that we might become perfect men? He who clothes the whole world in varied attire is wrapped in cheap swaddling clothes, so that we might be able to receive the first robe. By whom all things were made, his hands and feet are bound in the crib, so that our hands might be freed for good works, our feet directed into the path of peace. To whom heaven is a seat, he is contained in the narrowness of a hard manger, so that he might open up the joys of the heavenly kingdom for us. He who is the bread of angels, is laid in a manger, so that we, like holy animals, might be fed with the grain of his flesh. He who sits at the right hand of the Father needs a place in the inn, so that he might prepare many mansions for us in the house of his Father. Although the fact that he is born not in his parents' house but in an inn and on the way can be understood more deeply through its meaning. For he himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14). Therefore, he who remains truth and life by the essence of divinity, by the mystery of the Incarnation became the way, by which he might lead us to the homeland where we could enjoy truth and life.

Luke 2:8

And there were shepherds in the same region, watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of God shone around them. With the most beautiful reason, with the Lord born, the shepherds watch, and by guarding their

flock from the dangers of the night, they protect it. To show indeed also through this that that time has arrived, which the true and only good Shepherd once promised, saying: "Behold, I myself will seek out my sheep, and I will visit them, just as a shepherd visits his flock, and I will rescue them from all places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And a little later: "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will feed them, and I will make the evil beasts cease from the land" (Ezekiel 34), etc. What was wondrously foretold by the prophet, we see more wondrously fulfilled by the Lord. The prophet Micah also remembers this time and place, saying: "And you, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come, and the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Zion" (Micah 4).

For the Tower of the Flock, which is called the Tower of Eder in Hebrew, is about a thousand paces east of the city of Bethlehem, foretelling these shepherds long before by the prophecy of its name, to which the angelic powers indeed came, appearing to the shepherds. Therefore, with the Lord born, let the shepherds watch over their flock of sheep, signifying by his clear dispensation, shepherds in the Church will keep watch over pure souls. To whom it is said: "Feed the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter 5). But with the shepherds watching well, an angel appears, and the glory of God shines around them, because those who deserve to see sublime things before others are those who know how to diligently watch over the faithful flocks, and while they piously watch over the flock, divine grace shines more abundantly upon them. Similarly, an angel instructs Mary, an angel instructs Joseph, an angel instructs the shepherds. And the citizens of heaven testify to the Lord to be conceived, conceived, and born, so that they may sufficiently instruct mortals and ceaselessly offer their service to their author. For in the subsequent events—when He was tempted, when He was to suffer, to rise again, and to ascend to heaven—they are always reported to be present.

Luke 2:9

And they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Do not be afraid. Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Not for all the people of the Jews, of whom many were rebellious, but for all the faithful people gathered into one Church of Christ from all tribes, nations, and tongues, eternal and great joy is proclaimed.

Luke 2:11

For today a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. This is the first power, this is the kingdom of the daughter of Zion, which by the testimony of the aforesaid prophet was promised to come in the tower of the flock. Where it is noteworthy that the angel who indeed speaks to the shepherds in the watches of the night, did not say: This night but Today a Savior has been born to you. Indeed, for no other reason, but because he came to proclaim great joy. For where sorrow is signified to have been done or to be done at night, there often the night either is joined, or even alone is named. As it is said: All of you will fall away because of me this night (Matthew 26). And elsewhere: Truly I tell you, today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times (Mark 14). For it is not without reason that the angel appeared surrounded by such great light, so that it is said that the glory of God shone around the shepherds, that is, rays of light shone from every part of them, which is never added in the entire series of the Old Testament as so often when angels appeared. But mystically, he forewarned what the Apostle later openly warned, saying: The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light, let us walk properly, as in the day (Romans 13).

Luke 2:12

And this will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The infancy of the Savior and the proclamations of angels and the testimonies of the evangelists have often been impressed upon us, so that it might be firmly fixed in our hearts what He became for us. For He was wounded for our iniquities, and He was made weak for our sins (Isaiah 53). And it should be noted more carefully that the sign of the born Savior is given, a baby not clothed in Tyrian purple, but wrapped in shabby clothes, not found in gold-adorned bedding, but in a manger. This is that not only the appearance of humility and mortality, but also of poverty, He took on for us. Because although He was rich, He became poor for us, so that through His poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8). Although He was the Lord of the heavens, He became poor on earth, so that He might teach the earthly ones that through the poverty of the Spirit the kingdom of heaven can be acquired.

Luke 2:13–14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will. When one messenger announced that God was born in the flesh, immediately a multitude of the heavenly host flew down, breaking forth with one mouth in praise of the Creator, so that they may offer their service and devotion to Christ as usual, and at the same time instruct us by their example, whenever any of the brothers resound the words of sacred teaching, or when we ourselves recall to mind things read or heard that are of piety, we should diligently render praises to God with mouth, heart, and deed. And appropriately the arriving chorus of angels receives the title of the heavenly host, who humbly obey that mighty leader in battle, who appeared to overthrow the powers of the air, and themselves vigorously drive away those opposing powers with heavenly weapons, so that they may not be able to tempt mortals as much as they wish. For just as all places are fortified against hostile invasion by the provision of the finest emperor's hand, so too God, since unclean spirits everywhere aim to overturn peace, has established the armies of angels for our protection, whose presence both breaks the audacity of demons and bestows upon us the grace of peace. And because God and man is born, rightly is peace sung to men and glory to God.

The angels glorify God incarnate for our redemption, because while they see us being received, they rejoice that their own number may be replenished. They wish peace to men, because those whom they previously despised as weak and outcast, with the Lord being born in the flesh, they now venerate as companions. They proclaim peace to men, especially to men of good will, that is, to those who receive the born Christ, and not to Herod, the priests, and Pharisees, and other antichrists, who were troubled upon hearing of His birth and pursued Him with swords as much as they could. For there is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord. But great peace is given to those who love Your name, O Lord, and nothing prevents them (Isaiah 48). To whom fittingly applies what follows: I hoped for Your salvation, O Lord (Psalm 118), that is, I longed for the coming Advent of Christ with the prolonged expectation of my desires.

Luke 2:15

And it happened that as the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds spoke to one another. Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this word that has happened, which the Lord has made and shown to us. Consider carefully how reasonable are the words of the shepherds, and worthy of the pastors of the Church. For indeed, as if keeping watch, they did not say: Let us see the child, let us see what is said, but: Let us see the word that has happened: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh (John 1). Let us see the Word that has always been, how it has been made for us, what the Lord has made and shown to us. This Word, it made itself: inasmuch as this very Word is the Lord. Let us see, therefore, how this very Word, that is, the Lord himself, made himself, and showed his flesh to us. For what we could not see while it was the Word, let us see made because it is flesh. It is similar to what John says: What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the word of life, and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you eternal life which was with the Father, and appeared to us (1 John 1).

Luke 2:16

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. The shepherds hasten to Christ whom they recognize, desiring with all the intent of their mind to see His coming. For Christ's presence is not to be sought with idleness. And therefore, perhaps some seeking are not worthy to find because they seek Christ sluggishly. Therefore these shepherds found Him without delay because they ran to Him with unfeigned faith, to whom hastening to go is not to quicken the steps of the feet, but to advance always in faith and virtue. They found, it says, Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. But also the shepherds of the Lord's flock, as they are more frequently and sweetly elevated by the heavenly oracle amid the darkness of this life, so more fervently they approach the sublime life of the preceding fathers, in which the bread of life is always preserved and refreshes, as contemplating they enter the gates of Bethlehem, and they find nothing else in it than the virginal beauty of the Catholic Church, as Mary, the virile company of spir-

itual teachers, as Joseph, and the humble coming of the Mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ, inserted in the pages of Holy Scripture, as a babe lying in a manger, Christ in the first vision they encounter.

From the manger of the holy Scriptures that eminent animal and most sacred host was fed, which exultingly proclaimed: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures (Psalm 23). And a little later: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies (Ibid.). And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child, because it is indeed of just order that, having known, loved, and celebrated with worthy honor the Incarnation of the Word, by the sharpness of a prolonged exercise of the mind more capable, one may eventually attain to behold the glory of the Word Itself.

Luke 2:18

And all who heard were amazed at what was spoken to them by the shepherds. By the shepherds, the people are driven to the reverence of God. Do not consider this example of faith to be trivial, nor the person of the shepherds to be insignificant. Certainly, the less they are esteemed for their prudence, the more precious they are for their faith. The Lord chose not the wise but the simple, who would not know how to embellish what they heard, to be His heralds; He appointed fishermen, not orators, to evangelize. Indeed, even in the Old Testament, He ordained shepherds as the primary messengers of His dispensation. The first martyr Abel, who dedicated the innocent conduct of his pastoral duty with his own blood and whose blood, in the figure of the Lord's passion, cries out from the ground, offered the first fruits of his flock to the Lord as a devoted shepherd. Abraham, the father of faith, who rejoiced to see the day of Christ and saw it and was glad, is described not as seeking gold mines to obtain ornaments for his worship but as digging to find water sources to water his flocks. Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, was tormented by heat and frost for twenty years while tending the flocks, a figure of the true shepherd who, with the variety of his virtues shown between the waters of salvific doctrine, was elevated to a higher state.

Moses, the lawgiver, who first, as a type of the sevenfold Church, defended seven sisters who were pasturing from the outrage of the shepherds until they could water their flock, and later, in the pastures of the desert, earned the privilege of seeing and speaking with the Lord, performing signs with

the pastoral staff, and liberating God's people. David himself, whom our Lord deigned to be called and to be the son of, by rescuing his father's ram from the hand of the bear or the lion, showed that from his stock and city the one would be born who, unrivaled, would rescue the poor from the hand of the stronger one, and the needy and poor from those who prey upon them. Therefore, the witness of the shepherds should not be considered of little value, who then were worthy not only to see but also to hear the hymn of angelic exultation, when, leaving the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, the Good Shepherd appeared to seek the hundredth sheep. The whole flock of the faithful, always longing for His coming, implores: I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, Lord (Psalm 118).

Luke 2:19

But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. What does it mean when it says, "pondering"? It should have said, "considered in her heart," and "kept in her heart," but because she had read the holy Scriptures, and knew the prophets, she compared those things that happened to her regarding the Lord with those things she knew were written by the prophets about the Lord, and having compared them with each other, she recognized as the cherubim of heaven the unity of her own vision. For Gabriel had said: "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son" (Luke 1). Isaiah had foretold: "Behold, a virgin will conceive, and bear a son" (Isaiah 7). Micah had foretold the daughters of Zion coming to the tower of the flock, and that the first dominion would then come. The shepherds said that the cohorts of the heavenly city appeared to them in the tower of the flock, who were singing that Christ was born. Mary had read: "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib" (Isaiah 1). She saw in the manger the Son of God as a baby crying, who saves both men and animals; and in these individual things and such, she compared what she had read, and compared with what she heard and saw.

Luke 2:20

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. The shepherds glorify and praise God for all the things they had heard from the angels, and seen in Bethlehem, as it was told unto them, that is, they glorify also in this, that upon coming they found nothing else than what had been told unto them;

or as it was told unto them, they give glory and praise to God. For indeed the angels commanded them to do this, not with commanding words, but offering the form of their devotion, when they resonated with unanimous exultation "Glory to God in the highest." For he who says: "I bring you good news of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Here above), indeed provokes to glorify and praise God. But also the shepherds of spiritual flocks, while the others are sleeping, sometimes ascend by contemplation of the heavens, sometimes go around surveying the camps of the faithful and seeking examples of virtue, and sometimes return to the public duties of the pastoral office by teaching, so that they may proclaim to their neighbors the memory of the abundance of the sweetness of God, which they had tasted by a fleeting vision (Psalm CXLV).

Luke 2: 21

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. The rite and religion of circumcision took its beginning from the blessed patriarch Abraham. Since he, still being in uncircumcision, believed perfectly in God, it was accounted to him as righteousness, and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith while in uncircumcision. From him also arose the custom that on the day of circumcision, a name would be given to infants. For he himself, when he received the covenant of circumcision from God, on that very day, along with his wife, merited an augmentation of his name: he who was originally called Abram, which means 'exalted father,' would henceforth, on account of the merit of his faith, be called Abraham, which means 'father of many nations;' likewise, Sarai would be called Sarah.

Luke 2: 21

Circumcision was also a type and figure of many things. For it was a seal (as stated) of the righteousness of the faith of Abraham and his seed, an indication for chastening those who belong to this seed and faith, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, a prophecy of the Savior who would be born from this seed, who would both in the present purify us from all pollution of deadly action through baptism and in the future liberate us from all corruption of death itself through resurrection forever, and it especially - pleased the Grace and Law-giver to administer the gift of remission, which would release from

the sin of Adam's transgression at that time. For he who now says, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3), also then said, "The soul that has not had the flesh of his foreskin circumcised will be cut off from his people, for he has broken my covenant" (Genesis 17). Surely not the covenant of circumcision, which not an infant, who could not yet discern this, but elders, who knew how to observe it, could and should have kept unbroken; rather, the covenant which God made with the first man, which every man who has lived even one day on earth is found to have transgressed, and therefore, it is evident that everyone is in need of some remedy for salvation.

For those who became faithful from foreign nations either before the time of circumcision or even after the giving of circumcision, such as the example of Job's patience and his friends and children, they saved themselves and theirs from original sin, either by sacrifices of victims or certainly by faith alone, because "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. I), and "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. XI). But these remedies are needed by those who are propagated by the lineage of sin, conceived in iniquities, and born in pleasures. However, our Redeemer, who came into the world without sin to take away the sins of the world, not only provided remedies for us by his baptism, that is, consecrating the waters of which he underwent the washing for cleansing our crimes, but also by the circumcision which he received, he did not purify his own sins (since he had none), but taught that the old nature in us should be renewed, and now visibly it should be purged from vice through him, and on the last day signifying that it will be completely restored from the pest of varied mortality and death. Hence, it is fitting that Jesus is said to have been circumcised on the eighth day, which we hardly read about anyone being done in the Old Testament, although it was often commanded to all, except only Isaac, who is reported to have received circumcision on the eighth day as the first son of promise.

Well, I say, Jesus is circumcised on the eighth day. Because evidently, this refers to both the renewals we mentioned, that is, both the present and future, both of spirit and flesh, which were prefigured in his resurrection and are to be accomplished in ours someday. Indeed, concerning our first resurrection, which is meanwhile celebrated by a reformation of life and faith, the Apostle says: "For as many of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the

glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. VI). Regarding the second, which is hoped for at the end, he says: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so too God will bring with him those who sleep through Jesus" (I Thess. IV). It is clear almost universally that the number eight corresponds to the glory of resurrection. For the Lord also rose on the eighth day, that is, after the seventh of the Sabbath, and we ourselves will rise after the six ages of this world and the seventh Sabbath of souls, which now in the meantime is carried out in another life, almost as in the eighth time, then truly circumcised, that is, stripped of all the vices and corruptions of carnal desire, in which lust mostly reigns, truly the foreskin is cut off. For, as the Lord says: "The children of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are accounted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection" (Luke XX).

Luke 2:21

His name was called Jesus, said he, which was named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. Jesus means Savior, a name in which the faithful and elect rejoice to participate in each of their circumcisions, as has been sufficiently said, so that as Christians are named from Christ, so also are those who are saved named from the Savior; now indeed saved in hope through faith, but then in reality through the vision of the glory which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, a name which was given to them by God not only before they were conceived in the womb of the Church through faith, but also before the secular times. The sacred name's etymology and the numerical value it carries are redolent of the mysteries of our perpetual salvation. For it is written with six letters in Greek Ἰησοῦς, namely ι, η, σ, ο, υ, ς, whose numbers are 10, 8, 200, 70, 400, and 200, which together make 888. This number, which signifies the figure of resurrection, has been sufficiently discussed above. For what eight simply placed means, the same also multiplied by ten or a hundred signifies. Or certainly, the perfection of numbers believed to indicate firmness. We can also say that the name of the Savior contains the number eight completed, because he provided the example of resurrection to mortals by rising on the eighth day.

It also contains the number tenfold, because the Decalogue of the law, as it should be fulfilled, is instituted and helped by the figures of his resurrec-

tion. Just as he, rising from the dead, dies no more, death no longer has dominion over him, so we also must consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. VI). It also contains the number a hundred times, because showing the glory of his resurrection, which follows us in the future, portends retribution. The number one hundred, which after so many on the left side of the course of numbers first seeks the right, aptly fits the depiction of the joys of that age when the last enemy, death, will be destroyed (1 Cor. XV), when we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with those who have risen, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. IV). Hence beautifully, in the type of all the elect, the first son of promise, born and circumcised to a hundred-year-old father, was called, according to the Lord's prediction, Isaac, which means laughter or joy, prefiguring in all respects the right hand felicity of that time of which the Lord said: I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you (John XVI).

But because the discussion is about circumcision, it is pleasing to inquire why Moses himself, who presents the law of circumcision both as given by God to the fathers and repeatedly impressed upon himself, did not wish anyone to be circumcised during the entire time of his leadership, except only one, his own son, whom his mother circumcised with a sharp stone to prevent him from being struck by the Lord, and left all who were born in the wilderness to be circumcised by Joshua; evidently, a divinely commanded custom, observed for four hundred and six years and handed down by ancestral succession, he discontinued for forty continuous years. I would not believe this was done in vain, but rather with great mystery. About this, preserving the understanding of the elders, I will briefly say what I think. Moses preaches circumcision, but Joshua fulfills it, because the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ (John 1). And the letter that commands is of no benefit unless the grace that helps is present. With Moses preaching, the foreskin grows, because, as the Apostle says, by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3). And elsewhere: For until the law, sin was in the world. But sin is not imputed when there is no law (Rom. 5). And again: The law came in so that the offense would increase.

For I would not have known coveting if the law had not said, "You shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, pro-

duced in me coveting of every kind (Rom. 7). But Joshua, having led the people into the promised land, cuts off with stone knives the foreskin that had grown while Moses was alive. Because where sin abounded, grace abounded much more (Rom. 5). For anyone who reads understands why Joshua uses stone knives for circumcision, because the rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10), and upon this rock, He says, I will build My church (Matt. 16). For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8). But this grace of Christ not only justifies the faithful of the New Testament but also all those who were made perfect under the law, not by works of the law, but by the same grace of Christ who was to come in the flesh, they were saved through faith.

And these people circumcised by Joshua represent those who with the severity of the law forced themselves to learn to implore the grace of Christ, as if avoiding the impending sword of the Lord, they avoided circumcision by the stone, with Peter attesting who, speaking of the yoke of the law, says: Which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15). And the Psalmist, who, as though enclosed in the custodial prison of the law and finding no way of escape except in the grace of Christ, exclaims: When my heart was overwhelmed, You led me to the rock that is higher than I. You have been a refuge for me, a tower of strength against the enemy (Psalm 61). Surely no one who hears of circumcision preaching would think that only one part of the body is commanded to be continent, as if it were sufficient to exist safe from fornication, temperate in lawful marriage, or glorious in virginity, without adding other virtues, but rather that the chastisement of all our senses, both of the heart and the body, is commanded. For even Moses, receiving the most pure words of God, complained that he was uncircumcised in lips, and Stephen, saying to the disbelieving Jews, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears; you always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts VII).

Therefore, he is cleansed by true circumcision, who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed (Isaiah XXXIII), and shuts his eyes so as not to see evil, who guards his ways so as not to sin with his tongue (Psalm XXXVIII),

and keeps himself vigilant so that his heart is not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness (Luke XXI), who, as long as breath is in him and the Spirit of God is in his nostrils (Job XXVII), does not speak iniquity with his lips (Ibid.), who washes his hands in innocence (Psalm XXVI), and refrains his feet from every evil way (Psalm CXVIII), who disciplines his body and brings it into subjection in all things (I Cor. IX), and with all diligence keeps his heart because from it flow the issues of life (Prov. IV). He, after circumcision, is brought to Jerusalem and presented to the Lord, who, according to the one who says: "Turn from evil and do good" (I Pet. III), after ceasing from sins, begins to abound in good works. Who can say: "My eyes are ever toward the Lord, and I will go about your altar, O Lord, that I may hear the voice of your praise" (Psalm XXVI). Who says: "We are the aroma of Christ to God" (II Cor. II), and "I have lifted my hands to your commandments, and have turned my feet to your testimonies" (Psalm CXVIII). Who, whether he eats, or drinks, or does anything else, does everything to the glory of God (I Cor. X), and says:

"How sweet are your words to my taste" (Psalm CXVIII); and finally: "My heart and my flesh exult in the living God" (Psalm LXXXIII). But even his good action, which is hidden, no less needs circumcision, so that when I fast, pray, give alms, I seek glory from within. For if I stand on the street corners, disfiguring my face, sounding a trumpet before me to be seen and praised by men (Matt. VI), I appear circumcised outwardly, but remaining impure in heart, I incur the penalties of feigned holiness. As an example indeed, the Shechemites, who appeared to imitate the circumcision of the patriarchs, but not for the covenant of the Lord, but for the sake of lust, did not gain any reward. Rather, on the third day when the pain of their wounds was most severe, they perished among the ruins of their city. Such people, having forgotten the prophetic warning: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and remove the foreskins of your hearts" (Jer. IV), when the time of resurrection comes, having been stripped of the virtues in which they trusted, will be cast into eternal death. Therefore, the Apostle also diligently commends the hidden circumcision in the heart, whose praise is not from men, but from God (Rom. II).

Luke 2:22

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. It was

indeed a decree of the law that a little one, on the thirty-third day after his circumcision, be brought to the temple of the Lord and an offering be given for him; and that the firstborn male be made holy to the Lord. Mystically, as we have said, implying that no one except one circumcised from vices is worthy of the Lord's view, and no one except one released from the bonds of mortality can perfectly enter the joys of the heavenly city. For it is said: "The wicked will not dwell near you; the unjust shall not remain before your eyes" (Psalm V). And the Apostle: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor will the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Cor. XV). Truly, if you inspect the words of the law more diligently, you will surely find that not only the incarnate Lord was free from the contamination of sin and the condition of the law, which he condescended to take upon himself more precisely to prove that it was holy, righteous, and good, and to free us from its servitude and fear by the grace of faith, but also that the Mother of God herself, being free from male involvement, was also immune from the legal requirement. For Moses says:

"If a woman has conceived seed and borne a male child, she shall be unclean seven days, according to the days of her menstruation separation, and on the eighth day the infant shall be circumcised. She shall then remain thirty-three days in the blood of her purification. She shall touch no holy thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed, etc. (Leviticus XII), which concerns the rite of the childbirth woman. Note therefore that not every woman who gives birth, but she who has conceived seed and borne, is designated unclean, and is taught by the law to be cleansed, to distinguish thus the one who conceived as a virgin and bore a son, and called his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted "God with us" (Isa. VII). Therefore, the Son who is God with man, and the Mother who bore by the working of the Holy Spirit, did not need the offerings of sacrifices for purification, but that we might be freed from the bond of the law, as the Lord Christ, so also the blessed ever-virgin Mary was willingly subject to the law.

Luke 2:23

As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. Which means: Every male that opens the womb, including the firstborn of both man and beast, because both are called holy to the Lord, and therefore it is commanded that they belong to the priest.

Specifically, he should take a redemption price for the firstborn of man, and redeem every unclean animal. Its redemption, he says, shall be one month old for five shekels of silver (Leviticus 27). Here, without delving into a more detailed discussion, it should be briefly indicated that all those firstborn were either a figure of Him, who, though He was the only-begotten Son of God, deigned to become the firstborn of all creation, truly and singularly holy to the Lord, because He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth (Isaiah 53), or they were surely a sign of our devotion, who ought to attribute all beginnings of good action, which we as if give birth in our hearts, to the grace of the Lord, and redeem those actions done ill, offering worthy fruits of repentance for each of the five senses of body or soul. Therefore, the phrase "that opens the womb" follows the usual manner of speaking of birth.

It does not imply that our Lord, who sanctified the sacred womb He entered, should be believed to have despoiled it when He exited, as heretics claim, who say that blessed Mary was a virgin until childbirth but not after childbirth, but rather, according to the catholic faith, that He emerged from the closed womb of the virgin as a bridegroom proceeding from his chamber. Concerning which the Prophet beautifully says: And He turned me towards the way of the sanctuary's outer gate, which looked to the east, and it was closed, and the Lord said to me: This gate will be closed, it will not be opened, and no man will pass through it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered through it; and it will be closed for the prince, the prince shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord (Ezekiel 44). Although it can also be mystically understood that no one besides the Lord can open the virgin womb of the Church through water and the Holy Spirit for generating children to God, and hence this male is called holy to the Lord with incomparable dignity.

Luke 2:24

And to offer a sacrifice, according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. It is said in the law that for a child, if it is a male, as I have said before, on the fortieth day, if it is a female, on the eightieth day of birth, a year-old unblemished lamb for a burnt offering, and a turtledove or a young pigeon will be offered for a sin offering. However, if his hand cannot find it or he is unable to offer a lamb, he shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering (Leviticus XII). Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, although

He was rich, became poor for us and desired a poor sacrifice to be offered for Him. That by His one poverty He might make us wealthy in faith here and heirs of the kingdom there, which God has promised to those who love Him. Morally, whether someone has performed valiant works or created weak ones, which are distinguished by the names male and female, so that these might legitimately be consecrated to the Lord, it is necessary to offer a lamb of innocence and equally a turtledove or a pigeon of compunction. For since these birds have moaning instead of singing, they rightfully signify the tears of the humble, by which we greatly need even in our good works.

For although we know that our works are good, we do not know with what strictness they must be examined by the Lord or with what perseverance they must be completed by us. But whoever does not have the wealth of virtues, about which the Apostle said to the Corinthians: "For you have been made rich in everything in Him, in all speech and in all knowledge" (1 Corinthians 1), if he does not find in the flock of his deeds a lamb of innocent life, let him at least offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons, that is, let him seek the aid of tears. And rightly two, one for sin and one for a burnt offering (Leviticus XII). For a burnt offering is called wholly burnt; because there are surely two kinds of compunction. The soul longing for God is first pricked by fear, then by love. First, it is moved to tears because, recalling its evils, it greatly fears to suffer eternal punishments for them. But when the anxiety of prolonged sorrow has consumed the fear, a certain security of presumed forgiveness is born, and the soul is inflamed with the love of heavenly joys. The mind contemplates what those choirs of angels are, that very assembly of blessed spirits, the majesty of the eternal vision of God, and weeps more because it is deprived of eternal goods, than it wept before when it feared eternal evils. Therefore, he who at first wept not to be led to punishment offered a turtledove for sin;

of the other, he makes a burnt offering when afterward he begins to weep bitterly because he is deferred from the kingdom. He offers a dove for sin who labors in his groaning, washes his bed every night, that is, in each darkness of striking guilt, with good works, in which he should rest, he does not cease to wash with tears. They bring the young of doves as a burnt offering, who lamenting the absence of the heavenly fatherland say: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered you, Zion" (Psalm 137). For as doves delight to sit beside the flowing waters, so that they might

foresee and evade the advent of the hawk in the shadow's swift flight over the waters: thus indeed, thus the souls of the poor in spirit, surpassing the waves of the world in their minds, the more they are nourished by their lamentations in this Babylon, the more they see the examples of the wicked enemy, the more frequently they raise their wings to the eternal of their desire. Certainly, there is this difference between the signification of the turtledove and the dove, that the dove, which is accustomed to associate, fly, and coo in flocks, demonstrates the frequency of active life: of which it is said: "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4).

But the turtledove, which delights in solitude, so much so that if it loses its mate by chance, it remains alone thereafter, signifies the heights of contemplative life, because this virtue is for the few, and attributed to them individually. Isaiah alone sees the Lord of hosts, contemplates the praises of the Seraphim, and because he has spoken ill, he groans like a solitary turtledove. Moses, when the people are trembling afar, ascends alone to the Lord, and lest the same people be struck, he obtains by tearful prayers. Daniel is alone among the angels when his companions flee. Ezekiel alone marvels at the chariots of the Cherubim and the lofty buildings of the celestial city. Paul alone is caught up to the delights of paradise and to see the secrets of the third heaven. Likewise, when I enter the chamber, closing the door, I pray to the Father in secret, I offer the turtledove. But when I seek companions of the same work, by singing with the Prophet: "Come, let us worship and bow down before the Lord, who made us" (Psalm 95), I offer doves on the altar. And because both sacrifices are equally acceptable to the Creator, Luke wisely does not say whether turtledoves or young pigeons were offered for the Lord, lest he prefer one form of living to another, but teaches both are to be followed, both to be offered in divine worship.

Therefore, since the discourse on purification has been extended, what the number of days of purification contains of mystery, and why the same is ordered to be doubled in the purification of the woman who has given birth will be more suitably explained in Leviticus.

Luke 2:25

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy

Spirit was upon him. When the Lord was born in the flesh, not only did angels from heaven, but also every age of mortals and both sexes, bear witness. For it was fitting that the Savior of all, as he was to come in the flesh, be foretold by the deeds or words of all the faithful throughout the ages, and thus also coming, be proclaimed by the common praise of all, fulfilling the prophecy which says: Praise the Lord from the heavens (Psalm 148), etc., up to where it says: Young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted. His majesty is above heaven and earth. Just, it says, and devout (Ibid.), because justice is difficultly kept without fear. I do not refer to that fear which under penal law dreads the loss of temporal goods, which perfect love is accustomed to cast out, but the holy fear of the Lord which remains forever, by which the just man, the more ardently he loves his God, the more diligently he avoids offending Him.

Luke 2: 26–27

And he had received a response from the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ; and he came in the Spirit into the temple. Observe the expressions of the Scriptures: he said to see death. How is it seen, and with what eyes, that thing which, upon coming, closes the very eyes so that they may see nothing? But to see death signifies to experience it. And very fortunate is he who will see the death of the flesh, whoever first strives to see the Lord's Christ with the eyes of the heart, having his conversation in the heavenly Jerusalem, frequently visiting the thresholds of God's temple, that is, by following the pious examples of the saints in whom the Lord dwells, yearning with the Psalmist: One thing I have asked of the Lord; this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may behold the Lord's delight (Psalm 26). For thus he will also be worthy to receive in his hands the word of God, and to embrace it with the arms of his faith and charity. But when he says: And he came in the Spirit into the temple, it signifies that through the same grace of the Spirit by which he had previously known beforehand that he would come, he also now recognized that he himself was coming and was now about to see the Savior.

Luke 2:27

And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also took him into his arms. Indeed, the power of the Lord is great, but his humility shines no less, so that he who is not contained by heaven and earth is carried wholly in the arms of an aged man. But Simeon also tropically takes Christ, the old man the infant, to teach us to put off the old man who is corrupted by his deeds, and to be renewed in the spirit of our mind to put on him who, according to God, is created in righteousness and holiness and truth (Ephesians 4), that is, putting away lying, to speak the truth, and to perform the rest of what pertains to the state of the new man, by mouth, heart, and deed. The righteous and devout elder according to the law takes the child Jesus into his arms to signify the justice of the works that was from the law (For who does not know that works are always represented by the hands and arms?), indeed humble, but to be changed by the grace of the salvific faith of the Gospel. The elder takes the infant Christ to suggest that this age as if already worn out and fatigued by long life, will return to the innocence and (if I may say so) infancy of Christian conduct, and like the youth of an eagle, his youth will be renewed.

Luke 2:29

And he blessed God and said: Now you dismiss your servant, Lord, according to your word in peace. You see that not only the just of the New, but also of the Old Testament had the desire of future life in hope, to be released from the body, indeed they considered the way of peace to be laying down the earthly burden, as they did not doubt that they would have perpetual rest in the bosom of Abraham. Finally even Idithun, that is, the one who leaps over secular desires, after he had long silently contemplated many evils of the world, and had become fervent with internal meditation of the heart, finally spoke with his tongue, disclosing what he had done inwardly: Make known to me, O Lord, my end, and the number of my days, what it is, that I may know what is lacking in me. Behold, you have made my days old (Psalm 38). With these words, without a doubt, he reveals how greatly he hopes to attain solace in the end from the present calamities, which he desires to arrive as soon as possible.

Luke 2: 30–31

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples. Blessed are the eyes that see what Simeon saw: blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed (John 20). That very thing, he says, which you have prepared to be beheld with mind and faith by all nations, peoples, and tongues afterward, and which you foresaw was to be sought with hope and love, I now contemplate your salvation, long desired, with the eyes of both flesh and heart. [Luke 2:32] -- A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. Light indeed for both the peoples, God's salvation, that is, Christ prepared by God the Father. Who is rather the glory of Israel, long hoped for by them, from whom pre-announced he has come, but he is said to be the revelation for the Gentiles, whose eyes of mind sunk in deep blindness and raised by no hope of the Lord's coming, he himself has deigned to visit, reveal, and illuminate alike. And it is well that the revelation of the Gentiles is preferred to the glory of Israel, because when the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, then all Israel will be saved. As the Psalmist also says: The Lord hath made known his salvation; he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the nations (Psalm 97); he joined on and says: He hath remembered his mercy to Jacob, and his truth to the house of Israel (Psalm 98).

Luke 2: 33

And his father and mother were marveling at what was said about him, and Simeon blessed them. He calls Joseph the father of the Savior, not that he was truly his father according to the Photinians, but since he was considered by all to be the father for the preservation of Mary's reputation. Nor did the Evangelist forget that he told she had conceived by the Holy Spirit and given birth as a virgin, but expressing the opinion of the people, which is the true law of history, he calls Joseph the father of Christ. Although in that way, he can rightly be called his father, as he is rightly understood as the husband of Mary without physical union, by the marriage bond itself, much more closely united indeed than if he had been adopted from elsewhere. For neither should Joseph be called the father of Christ because he had not begotten him through intercourse, since he would rightly be the father even if he had adopted someone not born from his wife elsewhere.

Luke 2:34

And he said to Mary his mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that will be spoken against. Blessed indeed in the rising for he is the light, the glory of the people of Israel, as he said: I am the resurrection and the life: he who believes in me, though he were dead, shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die (John XI). But how is he set for the fall, except that he is also a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense? That is to say, a downfall to those who stumble upon the word and do not believe. Of whom he himself says: If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin (John XXII). He is set not only in himself, but also in his preachers for the fall and rising of many, as the Apostle testifies who says: For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one, we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life (II Cor. II). For whoever hears the word preached by the Apostle and follows it in love rises with a good aroma and is saved. Whoever follows it in hatred falls and perishes by the same aroma. But the sign that will be spoken against, understand as the faith in the Lord's cross. Of which the Apostle Paul says Jews: For as concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere (Acts XXVIII). And the Apostle himself: For we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness (I Cor. I).

Luke 2:35

And a sword shall pierce through your own soul also. No history teaches that blessed Mary departed from this life by the sword's killing, especially since it is not the soul, but the body that is usually killed by iron. Hence it must be understood that this sword, of which it is said: And a sword is in their lips (Psalm LVIII), passed through her soul, meaning the sorrow of the Lord's passion. Even though she knew Christ to be the Son of God and thus would not doubt he would overcome death, she, however, could not without sorrow witness her flesh and blood being crucified. For the iron that is said to have transpierced Joseph's soul is best understood as severe mental tribulation.

Luke 2:35

That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. It was uncertain once who among the Jews would accept the grace of Christ, which they surely

knew was to come, and who would rather reject it. But upon hearing of His birth, with the thoughts of hearts soon revealed, King Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. The shepherds, with fear and joy, resounded praises to God, announced the message of peace to men. With His teaching and power being spread abroad, some flocked to Him as a teacher of truth, others fled from Him as a deceiver. With His sign of the cross raised, some mocked blasphemously as if justly condemned to death, others mourned bitterly as if the author of life were dying. And even to this day, and to the end of the present age, the sword of most severe tribulation does not cease to pierce through the soul of the Church, while it considers many hearing the Word of God and rising with Christ, but many more falling away from belief. With the thoughts of many hearts revealed, where the best seed of the Gospel is sown, there the weeds of vices either prevail more than they should or, gravely to say, alone germinate and reign.

Luke 2:36

And there was Anna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher; she had advanced in many days, etc. According to the history of her devout conversation and equally venerable age, and worthy in all aspects to bear witness to the incarnate Lord, Anna is taught to have been. According to the mystical understanding, because she signifies the Church, which in the present is as if widowed by the death of her spouse and Lord, the number of her years of widowhood also designates the time of the Church, when established in the body, she journeys as a pilgrim away from the Lord, and with the affection of great devotion, keeping the thresholds of the heavenly temple, awaits that daily coming of the Lord. Concerning this He says: We shall come and make our abode with him (John 14). For seven times twelve make eighty-four. And indeed seven refers to the course of this world, which revolves in seven days. Twelve, on the other hand, pertains to the perfection of apostolic doctrine. Therefore, whether it is the universal Church, or any faithful soul who cares to dedicate the entire span of their life to apostolic institutions, it is praised as if multiplying seven by twelve, and serving the Lord in the figurative eighty-four years. Also as the time of seven years, during which she stayed with her husband, most fittingly corresponds to the time of the Lord's incarnation. For by the number seven (as I said), the perfection of time is usually indicated.

But there, due to the privilege of the Lord's majesty by which He taught in the flesh, the simple number of seven years is expressed. Here, on account of the apostolic summit of dignity, seven years are multiplied by twelve. However, it pleases the mysteries of the Church that Anna is interpreted as grace and that she is the daughter of Phanuel, which means face of God, singing with the Psalmist: The light of your face, O Lord, is signed upon us (Psalm 4). And she descends from the tribe of Asher, which means blessed, which among the twelve patriarchs is the eighth in the order of birth. About which number, because it is sacred to the New Testament, it has been repeatedly emphasized.

Luke 2:38

And coming up at that moment she gave thanks to the Lord and spoke about him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. [Simeon prophesied, the one joined in marriage prophesied, the virgin prophesied, and the widow should also prophesy, so that no state of life or sex should be wanting. And therefore, Anna is introduced with the merit of widowed life and such behavior that she is plainly believed to be worthy to announce that the Redeemer has come for all. [Luke 2:39] -- And when they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their city Nazareth. In this place, Luke omitted what he knew to be sufficiently explained by Matthew, namely that the Lord, after these things, so that he would not be found and killed by Herod, was taken by his parents to Egypt, and after Herod's death, he thus returned to Galilee, and began to inhabit his city Nazareth. For the evangelists individually are accustomed to omit certain things that they either saw were mentioned by others, or foresaw would be mentioned by others in the spirit, so that in the continuous series of their own narrative, they appear to have omitted nothing. Nevertheless, a diligent reader can find out at what point omissions were made by considering the writing of the other evangelist.

Luke 2:40

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. The distinction of the words is notable, because the Lord Jesus Christ, in that he was a child, that is, had assumed the condition of human frailty, had to grow and become strong. But in that he was also the Word of God and the eternal God, he did not need to become strong nor did

he need to grow. Hence, he is very rightly said to be full of wisdom and grace. Wisdom because in him dwells all the fullness of deity bodily. Grace because to the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, great grace was given, so that from the moment he began to be man, he might be perfect and God. Similar to this is what John writes, that he is full of grace and truth, he himself setting forth that same excellence of divinity of truth, which Luke commends under the name of wisdom.

Luke 2: 41

And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of Passover. You see this evangelist, among the four creatures, not without reason compared to the calf, which, as if designated for sacrifices, revolves around the temple and Jerusalem with the course of his narrative. For indeed at the beginning he places a priest praying at the altar, establishes a multitude of people in the courts of the temple, soon sends Mary, having conceived the Lord, to Jerusalem, introduces her into the house of the High Priest. There he recounts the birth of the Baptist, and immediately after the birth, transfers the Lord with an offering. He leads him there every year with his parents, and at the age of twelve inserts him into the choir of doctors in the temple. Where among other things, he says astonishing things to the wise: Because it behooves me to be in the things of my Father (Luke 2). And after such things, he concludes his Gospel with the disciples praising God in the temple.

Luke 2: 42

And when he was twelve years old, as they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast day, and having completed the days as they returned, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem. The one who, from birth, indeed from human conception, was approved by clear signs of miracles showing that he is God, even then, as soon as the time of age was appropriate, began reverently to reveal and open both his natures, namely, what in truth of divine majesty belonged to the Father, and what, according to the frailty of human assumption, belonged to the mother. Nor without foresight did he reveal the first rudiments of his faith at twelve years old, which by the ministry of the twelve apostles was to be revealed and elucidated throughout the world. We can also say this, that as with the number seven, similarly the number twelve, which consists of the multiplied parts of seven, may designate the totality and perfection of things or times. And for this reason, that it is fitting for all

places or times to be occupied, the light rightly takes its beginning from the number twelve. Therefore, it is not idly said that he appeared to have been unmindful of his parents, but that he instructs us, because not only before his own parents, but even before Abraham was made, he is, he delights rather to reside in the city and temple of God, as if by paternal right.

Luke 2:43

And his parents did not know. But assuming that he was in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought him among relatives and acquaintances, and not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem searching for him. Someone might ask how the Son of God, reared with such care by his parents, could have been forgotten and left behind as they went away. To this, it must be answered that it was the custom of the sons of Israel that during festive times, whether they converged on Jerusalem or returned to their own places, the men and women would walk separately in choruses, and infants or children could go with either parent indifferently. And thus, the blessed Mary or Joseph might have thought by turns that the boy Jesus, whom they did not see accompanying themselves, had returned with the other parent. [Luke 2:46] -- And it happened after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, listening to them and asking questions. As a fountain of wisdom sits in the midst of the doctors, but as an example of humility, he first seeks to listen and ask questions of the doctors rather than to teach the unlearned. So that the little ones may not be ashamed to learn from their elders, and he himself, for the sake of human age appropriateness, is not ashamed to listen to men, though he is God. So that the weak may not dare to teach, he, as a boy, wished to be taught by asking questions, who by the power of divinity provided the word of knowledge to his very doctors.

Luke 2:47

And all who heard him were astonished at his wisdom and answers, and seeing him, they were amazed. Note the distinction of words, and diligently examine the mysteries of your salvation and faith. They were astonished at what they heard from him, and seeing him, they were amazed. And they were all the more astonished at the wisdom of his answers, the more they despised the fewness of his years seeing it. His tongue revealed divine wisdom, but his age pretended human infirmity. Truly, let these things astound the

doctors of the Jews as if they were new, and let them be disturbed by a doubtful amazement among the high things they hear and the weak things they see. But let us, knowing that this is he of whom the Prophet once rejoiced, saying, "A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God" (Isaiah 9); let us in no way wonder at him, who has been made a little child and yet has always remained what he was, namely, God and mighty, displaying at times signs of his divinity, at times signs of his humanity to those he wished to instruct. But let us give thanks to him with faith, hope, and charity, because he who was great and exceedingly praiseworthy, though we did not know him, was born as a little child for us, so that by growing and advancing among the little ones, he might gradually lead them to embrace the secrets of his virtue and greatness.

Luke 2:48

And his mother said to him: Son, why have you done this to us? Behold, your father and I, sorrowing, have been seeking you. And he said to them: Why were you seeking me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? Not Joseph, who provided nothing for his generation except service and affection, whence he is called father both by the evangelist and by Mary herself for his faithful service; Christ does not deny him as his parent, but simply and openly indicates who is his true Father, equally to us and to them. He does not reproach them for seeking him as a son, but rather compels them to raise the eyes of their mind to what is owed to him who is the eternal Son. For as he is both God and man, he now exhibits the heights of divinity, now the depths of human frailty. As a man, he questions the elders, as God he responds to matters which astonish the elders and the learned. As the Son of God, he dwells in the temple of God, and as the son of man, he returns with his parents where they command.

Luke 2:50

And they did not understand the word that he spoke to them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. How much an example of piety and humility in the Lord! His parents did not understand the word that he spoke to them about his divinity, and yet he, not ungrateful for their human diligence towards him, descended to where they commanded, and was subject to them. For what would the teacher of virtue

be if he did not fulfill the duty of piety? What else among us than that he would do what he wanted us to do? He deferred to a man, he deferred to a maidservant. For she herself says: Behold the handmaid of the Lord (Luke 1). He deferred to the simulated father, he deferred to the true father who is God. And indeed he had preserved his mother, born of a virgin, as a virgin and chaste; indeed, he did not differ from the father by will, by act, or by time. In order that, being admonished by his example, we might recognize what we owe to our parents, who suffer so much for us. The Arians are wont to say that the Son was imperfect because he said, The Father is greater than I (John 14). But what marvel if from human reception he asserts himself lesser than the Father in heaven, from which he was also subject to his parents on earth?

Luke 2:51

And his mother kept all these words in her heart. Whether what she understood, or what she could not yet understand of the words of the Gospel, she kept all in her heart to be pondered upon and diligently examined. Let us then learn the chastity of the holy virgin in all things, who, no less modest in speech than in body, kept the arguments of faith in her heart. And if she kept silent before the apostolic precepts, why do you, after the apostolic precepts, more desire to teach than to learn? [Luke 2:52] -- And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. This passage refutes both the Manichaeans and the Apollinarians alike, showing that the Lord truly had flesh and a true soul. For as stature pertains to the body, so wisdom and favor pertain to the soul. And indeed, it would not have increased in wisdom if it did not have the natural understanding that was granted to humans for the sake of reason. Not because the God who assumed this needed it, especially since He is described above as having been full of wisdom even as a child, but because He chose this as part of the remedy for our salvation, through the effect of a loving assumption, so that while flesh and a rational soul were assumed by God, both would be equally saved.

CHAPTER 3

Luke 3:1

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias

tetrarch of Abilene. Herod, Philip, and Lysanias, who governed Judea with the Roman prefect Pilate, were the sons of that Herod under whom the Lord was born, among whom also their brother Archelaus reigned for ten years. He was accused by the Jews before Augustus because of his intolerable cruelty, and he perished in eternal exile at Vienna. Augustus took care to divide the kingdom of Judea into tetrarchies so that it would become less powerful. Moreover, Pilate, in the twelfth year of Tiberius Caesar, was sent to Judea and took over the administration of the nation, and he continued there for ten consecutive years until almost the very end of Tiberius's reign.

Luke 3:2

During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the desert. Both indeed, at the beginning of John's prophecy, that is, Annas and Caiaphas were the chief priests; but Annas held the office for that year, while Caiaphas administered it in the year when the Lord ascended the cross, and indeed with three others in between completing the pontificate, but especially with those mentioned by the evangelist who were related to the passion of the Lord. For at that time, legal precepts having ceased through force and ambition, the honor of the pontificate was conferred neither on account of life nor lineage, but by Roman authority it was conferred upon some now, and again upon others. Indeed, Josephus reports in this manner, saying: Valerius Gratus, having removed Annas from the priesthood, appointed Ismael, son of Fabo, as high priest. But soon after rejecting him as well, he substituted Eleazar, son of Ananus, to the high priesthood. After one year, he also removed him from office and bestowed the ministry of the high priesthood upon one Simon, son of Camith. He too fulfilled the office scarcely for the breadth of a year and then received Joseph, whose name was also Caiaphas, as a successor. And thus, the whole time in which our Lord is described as teaching on earth is confined within a span of four years. In this time, the four successions of high priests that Josephus mentions are described, scarcely ministering for individual years.

Because John was coming to preach about Him who would redeem some from Judea and many from the Gentiles, the times of his preaching are designated by the king of the nations and the princes of the Jews. Because the Gentiles were to be gathered, and Judea, for its fault of unfaithfulness, was to be scattered, the very account of earthly authority also shows that in the Ro-

man republic one is described as presiding, and in the kingdom of Judea, many ruled by quarters. For our Redeemer's voice says: "Every kingdom divided against itself will be desolate" (Matthew XII). Therefore, it is clear that the kingdom of Judea had come to an end since it was subjected to division under so many kings. It is fittingly demonstrated not only by which kings, but also by which priests the events took place. So that because John the Baptist was to preach about Him who would also be king and priest at the same time, Luke the evangelist designated the times of his preaching by the kingdom and the priesthood.

Luke 3:3

And he went into all the region around Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. To all readers it is clear that John not only preached the baptism of repentance, but also gave it to certain people, yet he could not grant his baptism for the remission of sins. For indeed, the remission of sins is granted to us by the baptism of Christ alone. It should be noted, therefore, what is said, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, since he could not give a baptism that would absolve sins, he preached it. Just as he preceded the incarnate Word of the Father with the word of preaching: so the baptism of repentance, by which sins are absolved, would precede his baptism, by which sins cannot be absolved. [Luke 3:4] -- As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: The voice, etc. The same John the Baptist, being asked who he was, answered, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, who is therefore called a voice by the prophet because he preceded the word; who also cries in the wilderness, because he announces the comfort of redemption to the abandoned and destitute Judea. What he cried out is made clear when it is added: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Whoever preaches true faith and good works, what else is he doing but preparing the way for the Lord to come to the hearts of the listeners? That the power of grace may penetrate these, and the light of truth may illuminate, making straight paths for God, by forming pure thoughts in the mind through the word of good preaching.

Luke 3:5

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low. What else is meant by the term valley in this place but the humble; what else by mountains and hills but proud men? At the coming of the Redeemer,

therefore, the valleys were filled, and the mountains and hills were made low. Because according to his word, everyone who exalts himself will be humbled: and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 14). For a valley filled grows, but a mountain and a hill made low decrease. Because in the faith of the mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, both the gentiles received the fullness of grace, and Judea through the error of perfidy, lost that by which it was arrogant. [Luke 3:5] -- The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth. The crooked are made straight when the hearts of the wicked, twisted by injustice, are guided to the rule of justice. The rough ways are made smooth when harsh and irascible minds are brought back to gentleness through the infusion of heavenly grace. For when the word of truth is not received by an irascible mind, it is as if the roughness of the path repels the steps of the one advancing. But when the irascible mind, corrected through the grace of gentleness, receives the word of reproof or exhortation, the preacher finds a smooth way there, where previously he could not step forward due to the roughness of the path, that is, where he could not engage in the steps of preaching.

Luke 3:6

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Because "all flesh" is understood as every human being, but not every human being could see Christ, the salvation of God, in this life. So where does the prophet direct the prophetic eye in this sentence if not toward the day of the final judgment? When the heavens are opened, the angels minister, and the Apostles are seated, and Christ appears on His throne of majesty, all will see Him, the wicked equally with the just, so that the just may rejoice forever in the reward of their recompense, and the unjust may eternally groan in the punishment of vengeance. For this sentence intends that He will be seen by all flesh at the final judgment, and rightly it is added. [Luke 3:7] -- He said therefore to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him: "Brood of vipers," etc. For the coming wrath is the judgment of final retribution. The sinner will not be able to escape this judgment who now does not turn to the laments of penance. And it is to be noted that the offspring of the wicked, imitating the actions of their evil parents, are called a brood of vipers. Because by envying the good and persecuting them, by repaying evil to others, by seeking to harm their neighbors, in all these things they follow the ways of their carnal predecessors, as if venomous offspring born of venomous parents. But since we

have already sinned, since we are entangled in the habit of evil custom, let him tell us what we must do to be able to flee from the coming wrath.

Luke 3:8

Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance. In these words, it is notable that he advises not only producing fruits of repentance but also those worthy of repentance. For it is one thing to produce a fruit of repentance and another to produce one worthy of repentance. Indeed, the fruit of good work ought not to be equal for one who has sinned less and one who has sinned more, or for one who has not fallen into any sins and one who has committed certain crimes. Therefore, by the phrase "produce fruits worthy of repentance," each person's conscience is addressed, so that one seeks greater gains of good works through repentance, to the extent that they have brought upon themselves greater losses through their faults. But the Jews, boasting in the nobility of their lineage, refused to acknowledge themselves as sinners because they were descended from Abraham's lineage. To them, it is rightly said:

Luke 3:8

And do not begin to say, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones. For what were stones, if not the hearts of the Gentiles, insensible to the knowledge of the Almighty God? Just as it is said to some Jews: 'I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh' (Ezekiel 36). And it is not unreasonably that the Gentiles are signified by the name of stones, as they worshipped stones. Whence it is written: 'Let those who make them become like them, and all who trust in them' (Psalm 113). Indeed, from these very stones children of Abraham have been raised up, for as the hard hearts of the Gentiles believed in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, they became his children, united to his seed. Hence, it is said to these same Gentiles by the valiant preacher: 'And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed' (Galatians 3). So, if we through faith in Christ now exist as the seed of Abraham, the Jews, due to their unbelief, have ceased to be Abraham's children.

Luke 3:9

The ax is already laid at the root of the tree. The tree of this world is the entire human race. The ax, however, is our Redeemer, who is held, as it were, by a handle and iron from humanity, but cuts from divinity. This ax is

already laid at the root of the tree, because although He awaits patiently, it is evident what He is about to do. [Luke 3:9] -- Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. For every perverse person quickly finds the prepared burning of hell, who here scorns to bear the fruit of good work. It should be noted that the ax is said to be laid not next to the branches, but at the root. For when the children of the wicked are taken away, what else is it but the branches of the unfruitful tree being cut off? But when the whole progeny is taken away together with the parent, the unfruitful tree is cut off at the root, so that there no longer remains any source from where the wicked offspring could sprout again. In these words of John the Baptist, it is evident that the hearts of the listeners are disturbed, when it is immediately added:

Luke 3:10

And the crowds asked him, saying: What then shall we do? For they were struck with terror, seeking advice. [Luke 3:11] -- And he answered them, saying: He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise. Because a tunic is more necessary for our use than a cloak, it pertains to the fruit worthy of repentance. That we ought not only to share our exterior and less necessary things but also those very necessary to us with our neighbors, namely either the food by which we live carnally or the tunic by which we are clothed. For it is written in the law: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mark XII), he is convicted of loving his neighbor less who does not share with him in his necessity even in those things that are necessary to himself. Therefore, the command is given to share two tunics with a neighbor because this could not be said of one since if one tunic is divided, no one is clothed. For in a half tunic, both he who receives and he who gives remain naked. Among these things, it must be known how much the works of mercy avail, since they are particularly commanded as worthy fruits of repentance. Hence also Truth itself says: Give alms, and behold all things are clean for you.

Luke 3:12

Then publicans also came to be baptized and said to him: Master, what shall we do? And he said to them: Do nothing more than what is appointed to you. The great power that the word of the blessed Baptist had and how much it stirred the minds of the hearers is proven here, as it compelled even the

publicans and soldiers to seek counsel for their salvation. To whom he, no differently than to the crowds, advises the practice of mercy according to their appropriate situation. He commands the publicans not to exact more than what is prescribed. Publicans, as their name suggests, are those who collect public taxes, or who are contractors of the treasury's revenues or public properties. Additionally, those who pursue the profits of this world through trading are also so called. He restrains all of them equally in their respective statuses from engaging in fraud so that while first refraining from the desire for what belongs to others, they may at last reach the point of sharing their own goods with neighbors.

Luke 3:14

But soldiers also questioned him, saying: What shall we do? And he said to them: Do not accuse anyone falsely, etc. The most just teacher, of exceptional moderation, advises that they should not extort money by falsely accusing those they ought to benefit by defending. He teaches that the wages of military service are therefore established so that one does not become a plunderer while seeking sustenance. No office, no type of activity should be exempt from showing mercy, which is the fullness of virtues, and alone liberates from death and confers eternal life. The judge himself attests, who promised to say: Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom. For I was hungry, and you gave me food, etc. [Luke 3:15] -- But as the people were expecting, and all were pondering in their hearts about John, whether perhaps he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying. How did he respond to those who were considering him, and secretly in their hearts were thinking that he might be Christ? Except that they not only were thinking but also, as another Evangelist declares, they sent priests and Levites to him to inquire if he was Christ. From this, it is evident that at that time the Jews were very much aware from the Scriptures that the time of the Lord's incarnation was at hand. But a marvelous blindness, that what they believed willingly in John, they did not believe in the Savior, approved by so many signs and virtues, and testified to by John himself.

Luke 3:16

I indeed baptize you with water. However, one mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie. John does not baptize with the spirit, but with water, because he, being unable to absolve sins, washes the

bodies of the baptized with water but does not wash the mind through forgiveness. So why does he baptize who does not remit sins through baptism? Except that by maintaining the order of his forerunning, he who was born before Christ by birth would also be a forerunner to the Lord by baptizing Him, and thus he who was made the forerunner of Christ by preaching would also become His forerunner by baptizing in imitation of the sacrament. It was a custom among the ancients that if anyone did not wish to take as his wife the one who was properly his to take, the one who came as a suitor by the right of kinship would untie his sandal. What, then, was Christ among men except the bridegroom of the holy Church? About whom the same John also says, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom" (John III). But because people thought John to be the Christ, which John himself denies, it is proper that he declares himself unworthy to untie His sandal strap. As if he said openly: I cannot lay bare the feet of the Redeemer, because I, unworthy, do not usurp the name of the bridegroom. However, this can be understood in another way:

for who does not know that sandals are made from dead animals? When the Lord incarnate came, He appeared as if shod, who in His divinity assumed the mortality of our corruption. But the mystery of this incarnation the human eye is not able to penetrate. For it cannot at all be investigated how the Word is made flesh, how the supreme and life-giving Spirit is animated in the womb of the mother, how He who has no beginning both exists and is conceived. Therefore, the sandal strap is the binding of the mystery. Thus, John cannot untie the strap of His sandal, because the mystery of the incarnation he also cannot sufficiently investigate, he who recognized it through the spirit of prophecy.

Luke 3:16

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. This is both the cleansing of sanctification and the testing of tribulation. However, the same Holy Spirit can also be understood as signified by the name of fire. Because He both enkindles through love and illuminates the hearts which He fills with wisdom. Hence, to those to whom it was said, "John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts XI), the same baptism of the spirit is perceived in the vision of fire. Some explain it in this way, that in the present we are baptized in the spirit, and in the future we will be baptized in fire. Namely, just as now we are reborn in the remission of all sins

from water and the spirit, so also then, from certain light sins which have adhered to us as we go from here, we are cleansed by the baptism of purgatorial fire before the final judgment. As the Apostle says: "If anyone builds on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will be made clear by fire. If anyone's work remains which he has built on it, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, though as through fire" (I Corinthians III).

Although this can also be understood of the fire of tribulation applied to us in this life, yet if anyone takes this as referring to the fire of future purification, it should be carefully considered, because he said that he can be saved through fire, not someone who builds on the foundation of Christ with iron, bronze, or lead, that is, greater and harder sins which are already unresolvable, but with wood, hay, and straw, that is, the smallest and lightest sins, which fire easily consumes. Nevertheless, it should be known that no one will obtain any purification even from the smallest sins there, unless he has acted with good deeds in this life so that he may deserve to obtain it there.

Luke 3:17

His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor. By winnowing fork, that is, openly, the discernment of just judgment is meant; by the threshing floor, the present Church is prefigured. In which undoubtedly, which is sorrowful enough, many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew XX). Few grains are to be received into the heavenly mansions, in comparison to the weeds, which are to be consigned to perpetual flames. The purification of this threshing floor is also carried out now individually, when any perverse person is either cast out from the Church by priestly censure for manifest sins, or condemned after death by divine strictness for hidden sins, and it will be universally completed in the end, when the Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all scandals. Therefore the Lord has the winnowing fork in hand, that is, the discernment of judgment in his power, because the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.

Luke 3:17

And he will gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. And the Lord himself ended the parable of the good seed,

upon which the enemy man sowed tares, by saying: And in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: Gather first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn (Matthew XIII). Clearly teaching that the impious and sinners will be delivered to the fire of Gehenna, while the holy will be crowned with heavenly glory. Indeed, this differs between the chaff and the tares: for the chaff comes forth from no other seed than the wheat, although it degenerates from the nobility of a good root. However, the tares differ not only by their fruit but are also generated from entirely different origins. The chaff are those who are imbued with the mystic rituals of the same faith as the elect, but they differ from their solid perfection, either by the lightness of their works or by the emptiness of their faithlessness. The tares, however, are those who are not even worthy to hear the words of faith, and thus, they are separated from the lot of the good, both in deeds and profession.

And so, in this world's field, one is of the elect, and two are the fruits of the reprobate, since all that the enemy sows is subject to flames, and what is graver, many of those things which the good sower casts are either snatched by birds, dried out by the sun, choked by thorns, or certainly turned into chaff and perish. Only the wheat, created of good soil and proven worthy by patience, will be stored in the heavenly barn of the elect. Similarly, according to another parable, not only the fishes that decline the nets of Apostolic faith reside in the deep darkness of sinners, but many, dragged to the shore of extreme discretion among the good, then deserve to be sent to outer darkness because of their wickedness. He calls the fire of Gehenna unquenchable in two ways: that it can never be extinguished, nor will it ever cease to torment those whom it punishes, but will inflict (so to speak) an immortal death. This is in distinction to that most sacred fire, which he had earlier mentioned the elect of Christ would be baptized with. Concerning this, the Psalmist also says: You have tested us by fire, as silver is tested by fire (Psalm LXV). And a little later: We did not stay in that state forever, but we passed through fire and water, and you brought us into refreshment.

I will enter into your house with burnt offerings (Ibid.), that is, the distresses of pressures conquered, I will penetrate the courts of your heavenly kingdom with thanksgiving.

Luke 3:19

However, Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and concerning all the evil deeds which Herod had done, added this above all, and shut John up in prison. These matters are more fully recounted by Matthew and Mark, who narrate that John, by the schemes of Herodias, was not only bound but also beheaded. This is to be understood as not having occurred at that time but, according to John's Gospel, after some signs had been performed by the Lord and his baptism having already become widely known, yet mentioned here by this Evangelist to emphasize Herod's wickedness. For while the unlearned populace thronged to John's preaching, the soldiers believed, the publicans repented, and the whole populace received baptism in general, on the contrary, he not only despised him but did not hesitate to kill him. Through the deeper understanding of the mystery, because John the Evangelist undertook to write about the divinity of Christ, while the other three about his ministry in humanity, John the Baptist, indeed holding the type of the old law (which is the precursor of grace), beautifully attesting that while John the Evangelist was still preaching and baptizing as the precursor of the Lord, the Lord himself made and baptized more disciples. Mystically teaching him to have been the eternal God throughout the ages and the teacher of the faithful peoples through the law before he was born in the flesh. Beautifully also do the other Evangelists begin the Lord's preaching after John was handed over to prison, whose role it was, after the law corrupted by the Jews and defiled as if by the darkness of prison's ignorance and the savage tradition, to reveal the heavenly doctrine of the Lord appearing in the flesh and acting through the flesh, as if coming into Galilee.

Luke 3:21

It happened, however, when all the people were being baptized, and Jesus having been baptized and praying, heaven was opened. The Lord was baptized not to be cleansed by the waters himself, but desiring to cleanse the waters themselves, which having been washed by his flesh, of course ignorant of sin, might assume the right of baptism, and what so many baptisms under the law could not do against the evil of transgression, might conceive the power of regenerative sanctification. Hence, when he said the entire people had been baptized, he added nothing great. But having said that Jesus was

baptized and praying, he stated heaven was opened. Because while the Lord descended into the waters of the Jordan in the humility of the body, by the power of his divinity, he opened the gates of heaven for us. And while the innocent flesh was dipped in the cold waters, the fiery sword, once opposed to the guilty, was extinguished. For indeed, was heaven opened to Him at that time, whose eyes beheld the innermost parts of the heavens? But the power of baptism is shown there, from which anyone who emerges, the gate of the heavenly kingdom is declared to him.

Also as that which Jesus, whose are all things that are of the Father, is remembered to have prayed when baptized, it is not doubted that it was done to instruct us, for whom after the bath of baptism, so that the hall of heaven may be opened, it is necessary to live not idly but to persevere in fasting, prayers, and almsgiving. For although all sins are released in baptism, yet the frailty of the flesh is not yet strengthened. For as after crossing the Red Sea we indeed rejoice over the Egyptians slain, but in the desert of worldly conversation, other enemies come upon us who, with the leading and cooperating grace of Christ, are conquered by our efforts until we reach the promised country of eternal life.

Luke 3:22

And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon him. Truly in bodily form, because in the nature of divinity it could not be seen by mortals. Truly like a dove, because the spirit of discipline will flee deceit, nor will it dwell in a body subjected to sins. And because some, after the example of Simon, persist in the bitterness of gall and in the bond of iniquity, they can have no part or share in it. Hence, when the world's crimes were once purged by the flood in the figure of baptism, not by a raven, but by a dove bearing the olive branch in its mouth was peace announced as restored to the world. Mystically teaching that the anointing of the Holy Spirit will be present only to those who have been baptized in the simplicity of heart. For no one should think that the Lord after baptism was first anointed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, or that anyone has achieved progress in divine nature over time, but rather should know that from the very moment of human conception, the one who is true man, the same exists as true God. However, with the arrival of the dove, it was shown that in his body, that is, the Church, those especially who are baptized receive the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:22

And a voice came from heaven: You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased. Rightly John is second to none among those born of women, to whom Christ showed himself to be baptized, the invisible Spirit appeared to be seen, and the Father commended his Son from heaven. For it was not revealed to the Son himself what he already knew well, but it was shown to John or to the others who were present, what they might know. From this it is to be noted that the same John, who until then proclaimed a man stronger than himself and Christ, henceforth being admonished by the descent of the Spirit or the Father's attestation, openly preached the Son of God: He is, he says, of whom I said, after me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me, and I did not know him (John 1). And again about the dove: And I saw, and I testified that this is the Son of God (ibid.). Thus the mystery of the Trinity is shown in the baptism of the Savior, that we too may be taught to be baptized in his name. And what is said: In you I am well pleased, is as if he says: In you I have established my good pleasure, that is, to do through you what pleases me. But what is said according to Matthew: In whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3) is thus explained:

That everyone who, by repenting, corrects what they have done, by that very fact indicates that they have displeased themselves by repenting, who amends what was done. And because the Almighty Father, as he could be understood by men, spoke in a human manner about sinners saying: It repents me that I have made man on the earth (Genesis 6), as if he displeased himself in the sinners whom he created. But he was well pleased in his only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ alone. For it did not repent him to have made this man among men, in whom he found no sin at all, thus it is said of him through the Psalmist: The Lord has sworn and will not repent; you are a priest forever (Psalm 110).

Luke 3:23

And Jesus himself was beginning to be about thirty years old, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph. Jesus is baptized at thirty years of age, and then finally begins to perform signs and teach, thereby showing the legitimate and mature time of age, to those who think any age, whether for a priest or for teaching, is appropriate. Who also, as was read above, at the age of twelve, sitting in the midst of the teachers in the temple, not teaching but asking

questions, wanted to be found. For so that men would not dare to preach in an immature age, he at twelve years old asks people on earth, who by his divinity always teaches angels in heaven. Nor should anyone be moved against these things, that Jeremiah and Daniel received the spirit of prophecy as boys, because miracles are not to be drawn as examples of operation. For Almighty God makes even the tongues of infants eloquent, and out of the mouth of infants and sucklings perfected praise. But what we say with the practice of teaching is one thing, what we know from a miracle is another. However, the forty-year-old age of the baptized Savior can also intimate the mystery of our baptism, for the faith, namely of the Holy Trinity and the operation of the legal Decalogue. For the Decalogue indeed, with the grace of faith revealed, the more sublimely it is understood, the more devoutly it is fulfilled.

For as some kind of sacred triennial time, he taught those to be baptized who said: Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. XXVIII). As if he ordered this same triennium to be multiplied by ten when he added: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Ibid.). In whose figure also the brazen sea, in which the priests about to enter the temple washed, is said to have been encompassed outwardly by a thirty cubit cord, and inwardly to hold three thousand baths. Because (with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. This sense is supported by the apostles baptizing three thousand souls first after receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit. And because the mention of the brazen sea has arisen, it is pleasing to also inquire how the rules of baptism agree in other respects. From lip to lip (it says) ten cubits (3 Kings VII), because it is fitting for us not to be constrained by earthly anxiety, but to be expanded by the expectation of the heavenly denarius. Its lip is as the lip of a cup or an unfolded lily leaf: with one of which the cup of the Lord's passion is expressed, with the other the brightness of his resurrection is revealed. For that the Apostle says: Whoever is baptized into Christ Jesus is baptized into his death (Rom. VI), pertains to the lip of the cup.

But that he adds: That as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Ibid.), looks to the flower of the unfolded lily. Its thickness is of three fingers, so that the strength of all baptized is solidified by the perfection of faith, hope, and

charity. It had a height of five cubits, because whatever is sinned by sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch, is all washed away by the water of regeneration. The oxen that bear it look in threes to each quarter of the sky so that the whole world is baptized in the faith of the Holy Trinity. It stood on the right side of the priest's court facing east towards the south, because with the grace of the New Testament standing, it was given by him who visited us the day spring from on high (Luke I). But also in countless places of Holy Scripture, the number thirty is found fitting for the sacraments of Christ and the Church. For even Joseph, who in the figure of resurrection and of the New Testament defended the Egyptians from famine for eighty years, took up the government of the kingdom purified of the filth of the dungeon at thirty years, and David at the same age began the kingdom, which he completed as a seventy-year-old, that is, worthy of perpetual rest, and Ezekiel received the gifts of prophecy with the heavens opened at thirty years.

And because by faith both adversities should be patiently borne, and rewards should be highly hoped for, both the height of the ark or the temple and the length of the tabernacle are measured by thirty cubits.

Luke 3:23

As was supposed (he says) the son of Joseph. He placed this phrase on account of those who thought he was born from Joseph like other men are born. Hence, if it troubles anyone that since Mary conceived Christ by the Holy Spirit, and Joseph is called his father not truly, but supposedly, why not rather is Mary's lineage described than Joseph's, who seemed to have no relation to him, let them first know that it is not customary in the Scriptures to set forth the order of women in genealogies. Next, Joseph and Mary were from one tribe, whence the law compelled him to take her as a relative. And that they are registered together in Bethlehem indicates they are born from one stock, and thus through Joseph's genealogy, the origin of Mary is also shown. Certainly, Luke beautifully begins the genealogy of Christ by introducing the Father speaking: You are my beloved Son (Mark 1), so that by divine testimony he confirms the same as the true Son of God, whom by the order of human succession he proves to be the true son of man.

Luke 3:23

Who was Heli, who was Mathat, who was Levi, who was Melchi, etc. It rightly raises the question of how Joseph could have had two fathers coming

from different lines of ancestors, one whom Luke mentions and the other whom Matthew mentions. For Matthew says: "And Mathan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary. But this knotty question, Africanus explained very clearly when writing about the harmony of the Gospels. He said, "Mathan and Mathat, at different times, each fathered children from the same wife named Estha. Because Mathan, who descended from Solomon, had first taken her as his wife, and upon leaving behind a son named Jacob, died. After his death, since the law does not forbid a widow from marrying another man, Mathat, who was descended from Nathan and of the same tribe but not of the same lineage, took the widow of Mathan as his wife, from whom he also fathered a son named Heli. Through this, Jacob and Heli are brothers, though from different fathers. Of these, Jacob, following the law, took the wife of his brother Heli, who died childless, and begot Joseph, who is naturally his son, which is why it is written: 'And Jacob begot Joseph.' But according to the law, Joseph is also considered the son of Heli, since Jacob, as his brother, had taken Heli's wife to raise up seed for him, as mandated by the law.

Thus, both genealogies, Matthew's saying 'And Jacob begot Joseph', and Luke's with the proper observation stating 'He was supposed the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli,' are validated and intact. Moreover, Africanus conveyed these same ideas in these very words, except he wrote 'Melchi' instead of 'Matthat,' because either his copy had it so, or in the history where he learned these things, he found the same Matthat had two names. Since Matthew established the royal persona of the Lord, and Luke the priestly persona, where the strongest of the beasts, the lion, signifies the former, and the calf, the offering of priests, signifies the latter, both maintained their purpose in tracing the genealogy of the Savior. Thus, it has been observed that Matthew, who set forth the royal persona in Christ, listed forty men in his genealogical series, excluding Christ Himself. Now this number signifies the time in which we ought to be ruled by Christ in this world and on this earth according to a laborious discipline, by which God chastises (as it is written) every son whom He receives (Heb. XII). For there are not forty-two generations, which make up thrice fourteen, but due to Jeconiah being counted twice, there are forty-one generations, if we also include Christ, who presides over our temporal and earthly life to be rightly governed by the number forty.

For since the number is a sacrament of this laborious time, during which we fight under the discipline of Christ the King against the devil, it is also signified by the fact that He consecrated the fast of forty days, which is the humiliation of the soul. Both the law and the prophets through Moses and Elijah, who fasted for forty days, and the Gospel through the fast of the Lord Himself, who was also tempted by the devil for forty days, what else do they prefigure but the temptation of our flesh throughout all the time of this world, which He deigned to assume from our mortality? Therefore, this number signifies this temporal and earthly life because the times of the years run in fourfold seasons, and the world itself is bounded by four parts. Forty, however, contains ten four times. Furthermore, the number ten is completed by progressing from one to four. And because Matthew wished to signify Christ descending to partake in our mortality, he therefore recounted the generations from Abraham to Joseph and up to the nativity of Christ by descending from the beginning of his Gospel. Luke, however, did not recount the generations from the beginning of his Gospel, but from the baptism of Christ, not by descending but ascending, assigning Him more as a priest in expiating sins, where a voice from heaven declared Him, where John himself bore witness, saying: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

By ascending, however, he passes from Abraham and arrives at God, to whom we are reconciled, purified and expiated. Rightly, he also took up the origin of adoption, because we are made sons of God by adoption through believing in the Son of God. But by carnal generation, the Son of God rather made the Son of Man. But he sufficiently demonstrated that he did not call Joseph the son of Heli because he was begotten from him, but because he was adopted by him, since he also called Adam the son of God, even though he was made by God, but by the grace which he later lost by sinning, he was constituted as a son in paradise. Therefore, in the generations of Matthew, the acceptance of our sins by the Lord Christ is signified: in the generations of Luke, the abolition of our sins by the Lord Christ is signified. Therefore, he recounted them descending, and the latter ascending. For what the Apostle says: He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. VIII), this is the acceptance of sins. But what he adds: In order to condemn sin in the flesh by means of sin, this is the expiation of sins. Hence Matthew descends from David through Solomon, in whose mother he sinned. But Luke

ascends to David through Nathan, through whose name the prophet God expiated his sin.

Luke 3:32

Who was (he says) Mathan, who was David, who was Jesse. This number which Luke follows certainly indicates the abolition of sins, about which you will see in its place. Do not be surprised if Luke lists more successions from David to Christ, and Matthew fewer: that is, the former forty-three, the latter twenty-eight, admitting that the generation runs through different persons. For it can happen that some lived a long life, while men of another generation died prematurely, since we see many old men living with their grandchildren, but other men die as soon as they have begotten sons.

Luke 3:36

Who was Sela, who was Cainan, who was Arphaxad. The name and generation of Cainan, according to Hebrew truth, is found neither in Genesis nor in the Words of the Days; but it is claimed that Arphaxad begat Sela or Sale as a son without any intermediary; for it is written: Now Arphaxad lived thirty years and begot Sale (Gen. XI). And likewise in Chronicles: Arphaxad begot Sala, who also begot Heber (1 Chronicles I). Therefore, understand that blessed Luke took this genealogy from the edition of the seventy interpreters, where it is written that Arphaxad at the age of one hundred and thirty-five begat Cainan, and Cainan, when he was one hundred and thirty years old, begat Sela. But which of these is true, or if both can be true, God knows. We simply remind the reader that such a great discrepancy exists between the two codes in the series of time that from the flood to the birth of Abraham in Hebrew truth there are found to be 292 years, but in the translation of the seventy interpreters, 1,077 years are comprehended. And some chronographers, taking a middle course, removing only the generation of Cainan, and without correcting the other years according to the Hebrew example, describe 942 years of the same period.

Luke 3:37

He was Methuselah, he was Enoch. Beautifully the order of generations ascending from the baptized Son of God to God the Father, in the seventieth degree holds Enoch, who, with death delayed, was translated to paradise, to signify those who, regenerated in the grace of adoption of sons by water and the Holy Spirit, will in the meantime, after the absolution of the body, be

received into eternal rest (since the number seventy, on account of the seventh Sabbath, most fittingly signifies the rest of those who, aided by the grace of Christ, have fulfilled the Decalogue of the law) and at the time of the resurrection, will be shown to be joined to the immutable wisdom of God, contemplating through the ages.

Luke 3:38

Who was Seth, who was Adam, who was of God. Because no iniquity of Christ, who had none, is of course joined with the iniquities of men, which he took upon himself in his flesh; therefore, the number according to Matthew, except for Christ, is forty. But because he unites us, cleansed and purged from all sin, to his own righteousness and that of his Father, as the Apostle says: "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. VI), therefore in that number according to Luke, both Christ himself, from whom the enumeration begins, and God, to whom it leads, are included, and the number becomes seventy-eight, signifying the complete remission and abolition of all sins. For the Lord also made mention of this number when Peter asked him about forgiving a brother's sins. For he said: not only seven times, but seventy times seven must be forgiven (Matt. XVIII). Whence it is rightly believed that by the mention of this number, he ordered all sins to be forgiven. Nor did the Lord come in the seventieth and seventh generation to abolish all sins without reason or in vain, except because something lies hidden in that number which pertains to the signification of all sins. This is to be considered in the number eleven and seven. These numbers, when multiplied by each other, reach such an amount. For eleven times seven, or seven times eleven, make seventy-seven. But eleven signifies the transgression of ten.

And if in ten is signified the perfection of blessedness, whence also it is that all those hired to the vineyard are rewarded with a denarius (Matt. XX), which happens when the seven-fold creature is joined to the Trinity of the Creator, it is clear that the transgression of ten signifies sin, by the proud desire of having something more and losing the integrity and perfection. This is multiplied by seven because that transgression made by the movement of man is signified. For the incorporeal part of man is signified by the number three. Whence it is that we are ordered to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind (Mark XII). But the body is four; for many ways the nature of the body is found fourfold. Therefore, man, consisting of

these combined, is not absurdly signified by the number seven. And movement is not expressed in numbers when we say one, two, three, four, etc., but when we say once, twice, thrice, four times. Accordingly (as I said), not seven and eleven, but seven times eleven signifies the transgression, made by the movement of the sinning man, that is, overstepping the stability of his perfection by the desire for having more. Therefore, suitably by multiplying eleven by seven, all sins reach the number seventy-seven.

In which number also is found the full remission of sins, atoning us by the flesh of our priest, from whom this number now begins, and reconciling us to God, to whom this number now extends, through the Holy Spirit who appeared in the form of a dove in this baptism, where this number is mentioned. But if anyone wishes to dispute the exposition given above, by saying that Matthew listed not forty-one but forty-two generations, because, according to the account of the Chronicles, Jechoniah should be counted for two persons, namely father and son, let him understand that the same number nonetheless intimates the present time of the Church, which, with the Lord's cooperation, labors in the hope of the future Sabbath. For seven times six makes forty-two. And it is rare to find anyone who doubts that six pertains to work and seven to signaling rest. Wherefore, rightly, the people saved from the land of Egypt remained forty years in the desert, but because they diligently strove under the hope of entering into rest, they camped in forty-two exceedingly narrow paths. At the last of these, when they received Jesus as leader, immediately through the opening of the Jordan, they entered the promised seats, having conquered their enemies. Just as the Lord Jesus, in the forty-second generation, coming in the flesh since the world dispelled the shadows of ancient blindness with Abraham believing, opened to us the gates of heaven through the washing of baptism.

And we ourselves, through the perfected course of virtues, in which we wait with patience, hoping for what we do not see (Romans VIII), under the sacrament of the same number (as has been said), will arrive at the promised kingdoms of the heavenly homeland, joyfully crossing the river dried up by Christ as leader. And since by that same baptism which He began at thirty, He is about to cleanse the stains of the entire Church, the mystical connection of these numbers also reveals this. Because, evidently, the number thirty, computed with its equal parts, adds up to twelve, which is the number of patriarchs and apostles, and becomes forty-two. For its equal parts are: thirty

one, one; fifteenth, two; tenth, three; sixth, five; fifth, six; third, ten; half, fifteen. Which, joined together, make forty-two. Where mystically (as we said) it is indicated that the entirety of the Church's perfection consists in the faith and grace of Christ, which was first recognized by the patriarchs and more widely proclaimed by the voice of the apostles. Nor is there any other name under heaven in which we must be saved (Acts IV), just as in forty-two there is no part that is not contained in the parts of the number thirty. Therefore, the number thirty, with its parts, completes forty-two, because the Lord, through the sacraments of His baptism, both presently fortifies the Church laboring temporally and, after the labors are finished, leads it to eternal rest.

CHAPTER 4

Luke 4:1

Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days. This, immediately after the baptism of the Lord, Matthew and Mark designate. One of them, after describing His baptism, immediately subjoined: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil (Matthew IV). The other wrote thus: And immediately the Spirit drove him into the desert, and he was there for forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan (Mark I). Indeed, lest anyone should doubt by which spirit he was led or driven into the desert, Luke prudently wrote first that Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and then added, and was led by the Spirit into the desert, so that nothing might be thought to have prevailed against Him from an unclean spirit, who, full of the Holy Spirit, walked as He willed and did what He willed. For even later, where it is clearly stated that He was taken up or set up on high by the devil, it reflects not on His weakness, but on the enemy's arrogance who thinks to impose necessity on the Savior's will. Therefore, Jesus is not driven into the desert by the power of any evil spirit, but by the will of His own good Spirit, He enters the place of combat, certain of victory, to defeat the adversary. Here He also rightly shows us the order of virtuous living, so that after receiving in baptism the remission of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may gird ourselves more tightly against new snares of the ancient enemy, withdraw our mind from the world, and, like the manna in the desert, learn to hunger only for the joys of eternal life.

Luke 4:2

And he ate nothing during those days, and when they were ended, he was hungry. The forty-day fast has authority both in the old books from the fast of Moses and Elijah, and from the Gospel, because the Lord fasted for the same number of days, demonstrating that the Gospel does not dissent from the law and the prophets. For the law is perceived in the person of Moses, and the prophets in the person of Elijah. Among them, he appeared gloriously on the mountain, so that it might more clearly stand out what the Apostle says about him: "Having a witness from the law and the prophets" (Romans 3). But in which part of the year is it more fitting that the observance of Lent should be established, if not adjacent and contiguous to the Lord's Passion, because in it is signified this laborious life, which requires continence, to fast from the friendship of this world. Otherwise: the Lord fasted while he was tempted before death, still needing food. However, he ate and drank after the resurrection, already not needing food. For here he was showing our labor in himself, but there his consolation in us, defining both in forty days. For this number seems to signify the course of this age, in those who are called by grace, to him who did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5).

For there are ten commandments of the law, now diffused by the grace of Christ throughout the world, and the world is fourfold, and ten times four makes forty. Because those redeemed by the Lord, he has gathered from the regions. From the East, and the West, and the North, and the sea. Thus fasting for forty days before the death of the flesh, as if he were crying out: Abstain from the desires of this world (1 Peter 2). But eating and drinking for forty days after the resurrection of the flesh, as if he were crying out: Behold, I am with you until the end of the age (Matthew 28). Fasting is indeed in the tribulation of struggle, because he who is in the contest abstains from everything. But food is in the hope of peace, which will not be perfect until our body, whose redemption we await, puts on immortality, which we do not yet attain by glory, but are nourished by hope. The Apostle shows that we engage in both together, saying: Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation (Romans 12). As if that were in food, this in fasting. For simultaneously, as we tread the Lord's way, we fast from the vanity of the present age, and are refreshed by the promise of the future, not setting our hearts here, but feeding our hearts above.

But the fact that the Lord was hungry after the days of fasting were ended, whereas nothing of the sort is written of Moses or Elijah when they fasted, happened so that he, fearing the temptation, would not flee away sad, whom he saw proclaimed with so many heavenly signs, and equal to the most excellent men in abstaining. For the humble God-man was hungry, so that he might not reveal to the enemy the sublime man-God.

Luke 4:3

The devil said to him: If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread. The ancient enemy recognized that the redeemer of the human race had come into the world, his conqueror, and thus said through a possessed man: What have we to do with you, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? (Matt. VIII). However, when he first saw Him as vulnerable, observed Him able to endure mortal things due to His humanity, everything he suspected about His divinity came into doubt out of the pride of his arrogance. For nothing wise, except for the proud, doubted that He was God when he saw Him humble. Therefore, he turned to the means of temptations. But not like us who are pure humans, often shaken by attacking temptation, was the soul of our Redeemer troubled by the necessity of temptation. For our enemy, even if he was permitted to take Him to a high mountain, even if he proclaimed he would give Him the kingdoms of the world, even if he showed stones that could be turned into bread, still he could not shake the mind of the Mediator between God and men with temptation. For He graciously endured all these things outwardly, such that His mind inwardly, remaining attached to His divinity, remained unshaken. Even when it is said that He was troubled in spirit and groaned, He Himself divinely arranged how much He would be troubled humanly.

Luke 4:4

And Jesus answered him: It is written that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. The Lord replied in this way because it was his purpose to conquer the devil with humility, not with power. It should also be noted that the devil would not have had the occasion to tempt unless the Lord had begun to fast. According to that: Son, when you come to serve God, prepare your soul for temptation (Ecclesiasticus 2). But also, the very response of the Savior indicates that it was a man who was tempted: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Therefore, if anyone does

not feed on the word of God, he does not live. Otherwise: Our enemy, while we are still placed in this life, the more he sees us rebelling against him, the more he strives to conquer us. For he neglects to strike those whom he feels he possesses in quiet right. Against us, however, he is incited all the more violently, because he is driven out of our hearts as if from the right of his own dwelling. For the Lord figured this in Himself under a certain dispensation, who did not allow the devil to tempt Him except after baptism, to indicate to us a certain sign of the future course of life, that His members would bear the sharper snares of temptations once they had progressed to God.

Luke 4:5

And the devil led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. When God, made man, is said to be led by the devil, the mind recoils, human ears shudder to hear this. Yet we recognize these things are not incredible, if we consider other deeds in him. Certainly the devil is the head of all the wicked, and all the wicked are members of this head. Therefore, what wonder if he allowed himself to be led by him to a mountain, who also endured being crucified by his members? It is not unworthy of our Redeemer, who willed to be tempted, having come to be killed. For it was just that he should overcome our temptations with his own temptations, just as he came to conquer our death with his death. But indeed, worldly and temporal things are shown in a moment of time. For it does not so much indicate the speed of sight, as it expresses the fragility of fleeting power. For in a moment all these things pass away, and often the honor of the world departs before it arrives. For what can be long-lasting in the world, when even the ages themselves are not long-lasting?

Luke 4:6

And he said: I will give you all this power and their glory, for they have been delivered to me, and I give them to whom I will. Therefore, if you will fall down and worship before me, all will be yours. Arrogant and proud, he even speaks this out of boastfulness, not that he holds power over the whole world, such that the devil could give all kingdoms, since we know that many holy men were made kings by God. He says, if you will fall down and worship before me. Therefore, he who will worship the devil has already fallen.

Luke 4:8

And Jesus answered him, saying: It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. The devil said to the Savior: If thou wilt fall down and worship me, but hears in return that he ought rather to worship Him, the Lord and his God. Perhaps someone might ask how it agrees that here it is instructed that the Lord alone is to be served, with the Apostle's word which says: But by love serve one another (Galatians V). But this is easily resolved by considering the origin of the Greek language from which the Scripture is translated, in which servitude is named in two ways with different meanings. It is called λατρεία, and it is called δουλεία. However, dulia is understood as common servitude, that is, whether offered to God or to anyone in the order of nature. From which also, servant, that is, δούλος, takes its name in Greek. Latria, however, is called that servitude which is due only to the worship of divinity, and is not to be shared by any creature. Hence also idolaters are named who spend vows, prayers, and sacrifices which were owed to God alone, upon idols. Therefore, we are commanded to serve one another by love, which is in Greek δουλεύειν. We are commanded to serve only God, which is in Greek λατρεύειν. Hence it is said: And Him only shalt thou serve, which is in Greek λατρεύσεις. And again: For we are the circumcision, serving the Spirit of God (Philippi. III), which is in Greek λατρεύοντες.

Luke 4:9

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple. So that whom neither gluttony nor avarice could overcome, he might tempt with vain glory, if perhaps by boasting of his victory he might cast him down. [Luke 4:9] -- And he said to him: If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence. In all temptations, the devil aims to understand if he is the Son of God, but the Lord so moderates his answer that he leaves him uncertain. Cast thyself down. The voice of the devil, by which he always desires all to fall downwards. Cast thyself, he says: he can persuade, but he cannot precipitate. [Luke 4:10-11] -- For it is written that he has commanded his angels concerning you, to keep you, and that they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. We read this in the ninetieth Psalm. Indeed, the prophecy there is not about Christ, but about a holy person. Therefore, the devil interprets the Scriptures

wrongly. Certainly, if he had truly known it was written about the Savior, he should have quoted what follows in the same Psalm against himself: "You will tread on the asp and the basilisk, and you will trample the lion and the dragon" (Psalm XC). He speaks of the help of angels as if to a weak person, but he is silent about the trampling of himself, like a trickster.

Luke 4:12

And Jesus answering said to him: It is said: You shall not tempt the Lord your God. The devil's false arrows from the Scriptures, he breaks with the true shields of the Scriptures. And it is to be noted that he brought forth necessary testimonies only from Deuteronomy, to show the sacraments of the second law. You shall not tempt, he says, the Lord your God. For it was suggested to him as if to a man, that he should test by some sign how great he was, that is, how much he could do with God. This is done wrongly, when it is done. For it pertains to sound doctrine, when a man has something to do, not to tempt the Lord his God. For the Savior himself could indeed protect his disciples, to whom he said: If they persecute you in one city, flee to another (Matt. X). He provided an example of this beforehand. For though he had the power to lay down his life, and would not lay it down except when he wanted, yet as an infant he fled to Egypt with his parents carrying him. And he went up to the feast not openly, but secretly, while at other times he spoke openly to the angry Jews and to those listening with the most hostile intention, who yet were unable to lay hands on him because his hour had not yet come. So he who, by teaching and rebuking openly, and yet not allowing the rage of his enemies to have any effect on him, demonstrated the power of God, but by fleeing and hiding, he also taught the weakness of man, so that man should not dare to tempt God, when he has something to do to escape what must be avoided.

Luke 4:13

And when all temptation was finished, the devil departed from him for a time. You see, the devil himself is not persistent in effort, but usually yields to virtue. And although he never ceases to envy, he fears to persist, because he often flees from being triumphed over. Therefore, hearing the name of God, he departed (he says) for a time. Later, he came not to tempt, but to openly fight. Although often the ancient enemy, after he has inflicted the struggle of temptations on our mind, retreats temporarily from his own contest, not

to end the malice he has inflicted, but so that, returning suddenly, he may burst in more easily and unexpectedly on hearts made secure through peace. It should be noted, however, that after the three deceptions of the tempter were exposed, he says that all temptation was finished. Because indeed, in these are embraced the origins and sources of all vices. With John attesting who said: For all that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2). And in the gospel parable, only three affairs of the reprobate exclude them from the feasts of eternal life. The first (he says) said: I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

The desire for a wife, like gluttony, concerns the lust of the flesh. The purchase of a villa, which is not devoid of greed, pertains to the pride of life. The trial of five yokes, that is, curiosity about physical things, which is vain glory, is related to the lust of the eyes. For curiosity prevails mostly through the eyes, and the Lord Himself is indeed tempted face to face as if by a stronger one. But we, having received the grace of the Spirit in baptism, enter the desert of virtues, when we undertake the Lenten fast, that is, determining to abstain from worldly enticements throughout our life, we are either tempted by hidden snares or sometimes even struck closer. He who, persuading, says: You are a strong man, eat and drink, and remain the same, should be guarded against, lest he unknowingly offers us the serpent's old poison. And it must be said: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God. Indeed, many who have overcome the lust of the flesh are immediately tempted by greed and are often also overcome, so much so that they do not fear to worship the devil for the gifts offered.

When many praise their continence, and even greater persons honor them, giving gifts, it happens that the victors over pleasures are conquered by love of money, and with growing madness over time, they not only do not refrain from consorting with the demon-filled rich whom they recognize through blatant crimes, but also bow their heads in worship and embrace them. Hence the Apostle says that greed is idolatry. If, following the Savior's example, they triumph over this by worshiping the Lord, their God, and serving Him alone for eternal joys, the third pestilence of vain glory will come, which exalts the victors over the previous vices because of their own strength, presuming that those placed on the height of virtues can no longer

fall. And this is clearly to tempt God with curious eyes, boasting of one's merits. Against this, the Lord, increasing the disciples' faith, said: When you have done all that is commanded you, say: We are unworthy servants; we have done what we ought to do (Luke XVII). For when He elsewhere commanded that we do not perform our righteousness before men, He added only fasting, almsgiving, and prayer in the same definition, opposing three weapons of defense against the triple weapon of the enemy: that fasting may drive away the lust of the flesh, almsgiving may drive away greed, and prayers may drive away the boast of merits. It is sufficient to have said these things about the principles of the gospel dispensation in one book;

however, considering both our own peace and the benefit of the readers, let us look at the following deeds or words of the Savior more attentively from another beginning. For, as Augustine says, in some way the reader's concentration is refreshed at the end of a book, like the traveler's strength at a hostel. BOOK TWO. The ecclesiastical history relates that the most blessed Apostle John, up until almost the last moment of his life, preached the Gospel without any written indicators. But when, it says, knowledge of the three Gospels came to him, he is said to have approved the faith and truth of what was said, yet saw that some things were lacking, especially those that the Lord had done at the beginning of His preaching. For it is certain that in the first three Evangelists these seem to contain only those things which were done in that year when John the Baptist was either imprisoned or punished. Indeed, if you observe, immediately at the beginning of their narratives, after Matthew reports about the forty days of fasting and His temptation, he immediately added, saying: "But after John was delivered up, Jesus withdrew into Galilee" (Matthew 4:12). Similarly, Mark says: "After John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee" (Mark 1:14). And even Luke, before he begins to report any of Jesus' actions, says that Herod added this to all his other evils and shut John up in prison (Luke 3:20). Because, I say, these things seemed omitted by them, the Apostle John is said to have been asked to describe those things omitted before John's imprisonment by the Savior. And thus he says in the Gospel: "Jesus did this beginning of signs" (John 2:11). And again in another place indicating it, he says: "For John had not yet been cast into prison" (John 3:24).

And it is clear that he describes those things that were done by Jesus before John was handed over. With the sayings of this recalled history, we took

care to provide the prologue of this second book of ours, that is, to Luke, so that none of the readers would think that the things to be expounded in order were done immediately after the eleven days of fasting, but rather would understand that they followed after some miracles performed by the Lord, either in Judea or in Galilee.

Luke 4:14

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding region. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. The power of the Spirit here means the signs of miracles. As also elsewhere, the Jews marveled. "Whence," they say, "does this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?" (Matt. XIII). That is, they refer wisdom to teaching, and power to deeds. Both are equally combined in this passage, as it declares that Jesus, having entered in the power of the Spirit, also taught in their synagogues. Hence, deservedly, he was magnified by those present and his fame spread through the absent ones. This could not happen unless by the evidence of his deeds or words manifest to those present. But anyone searching for the time and order of these events will find it in the Gospel of John, as has been mentioned. Setting aside other details, I will quote one testimony: "When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast" (John IV). It should be noted that first Jesus demonstrated the power of the Spirit and later dispensed the grace of doctrine; he recalls that first fame spread because of the miracles, and then the teaching was magnified. According to the order briefly commended in the Acts of the Apostles: "Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts I). For he first began to do, and then to teach, lest any teacher should presume to command his hearers things which he himself has not yet accomplished.

Luke 4:16

And He came to Nazareth, where He was brought up, and, according to His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Synagogue, in Greek, means congregation in Latin, which term was used to mean not only the assembly of many people, but also the house where the Jews gathered to hear or speak the word of God. Hence the Lord said to the high priest Annas: I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. Just as we also call the churches of the faithful both places and

choirs. However, there is a difference between synagogue, which means congregation, and church, which means convocation, in that the people of the Old Testament were known by both terms, but the people of the New Testament are called only church. For, evidently, even animals and inanimate things can be gathered into one, but only those using reason can be called together. Therefore, it seemed proper to the apostolic writers and teachers that the people of the new grace, endowed with greater dignity, be called into the unity of the faith, rather than gathered, namely, to be referred to as the Church, and not the Synagogue. They would gather on the Sabbath in the synagogues, so that, as the Lord commanded: Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46), they would set aside worldly affairs and rest with a quiet heart to meditate on the teachings of the law.

To this day, the indication of this devotion endures in the Church, which in some places, in memory of the ancient religion, is accustomed to recite on the Sabbath the song of Deuteronomy in which is contained the entire state of the ancient people, what they deserved when God was offended, and what when He was appeased. Otherwise, it would be out of order to recite the last song of Moses on the earlier days of the week after the sayings of the prophets. Therefore, Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day to complete the rite of the Mosaic law with the fullness of heavenly grace.

Luke 4:17

And he stood up to read, and the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Indeed, it is a sign of the most humble dispensation, by which God had come among men to serve, not to be served, that he did not disdain to take up the office of the reader. But with a higher providence, Luke began the account of the Lord's deeds with the reading and explanation of the prophet, because all the Scriptures of prophecy reaching up to him were to be revealed through him to us, and in him were to be fulfilled. Wherefore he also explains both of these more clearly at the end of his Gospel, when, after first setting down the saying of the Savior: "For it is necessary that all things written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms about me be fulfilled" (Luke 24); then he immediately added: "Then he opened their understanding, so that they might understand the Scriptures" (ibid.). Therefore, Jesus stood up to read, in order to correct those whom he had not converted by the new operation of signs, with the testimony of prophetic reading.

Luke 4:17

And as he unrolled the book, he found the place where it was written. Beautifully does he receive the closed book of the prophet, but he reads it unrolled, for the mystery of his Incarnation was foretold by the voice of the prophets, and he first undertook to exhibit it and afterward opened it to be understood by mortals.

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, etc. Speaking previously about the calling of the Gentiles and the confirmation of the Church through the prophet, the Savior, among other things, said: I am the Lord, in its time I will do this swiftly (Isaiah 60), and immediately he added this, which has been read here: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Not because the Lord God has a Lord God, but because, according to the dispensation of the assumed flesh, He says those things which are humble. To whom the Psalmist had already said: You loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions (Psalm 45). For when companions are mentioned, understand it to mean the nature of the flesh, by which God has us as companions of His substance. And because it was a spiritual anointing, and by no means of a human body, as it was with the priests of the Jews, therefore He is remembered as having been anointed above His companions, that is, other saints. This anointing was fulfilled at that time when He was baptized in the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and remained on Him. Therefore, He was anointed with the oil of the spirit and heavenly power, so that He might enrich the poverty of human condition with the treasure of the eternal resurrection, remove the captivity of the mind, and enlighten the blindness of souls. Blessed are the poor, he says, because yours is the kingdom of God (Luke 6). And again: If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8). And again: Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (ibid.).

Luke 4:18

Release the broken into forgiveness. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of retribution. The sacrifice, he says, to God, is a broken spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 50). And therefore he calls himself sent or anointed to heal the broken or con-

trite of heart; as also the Psalmist says of him: He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147). Or certainly to release the broken into forgiveness, to relieve those who had been oppressed by the heavy and unbearable weight of the law, and to admit them into the remission of spiritual grace. And this is to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Then indeed the true year of Jubilee, that is, the year of liberty, was at hand, the time, namely, of the Church, which journeyed as a pilgrim in the body away from the Lord. About which the Psalmist sings: You crown the year of your goodness (Psalm 65). For it was not only that year in which the Lord preached that was acceptable but also this one in which the Apostle preaches saying: Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6). After the acceptable year of the Lord, he also proclaims the day of final retribution, saying: For the Son of Man is going to come in his glory with his angels, and then he will render to each according to his work (Matthew 16). Therefore, to evangelize all these things, he says he is sent because the Spirit of the Lord is upon him.

Luke 4:20

And when he had folded the scroll, he gave it back to the minister, and sat down. The Lord read the scroll aloud to all those present, and having read it, gave it back to the minister. For as he testifies elsewhere, when he was in the world, he spoke openly to the world, always teaching in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews were accustomed to gather. But as he was about to return to heaven, he entrusted the duty of preaching to those who from the beginning had seen him and had been ministers of the word. And it is right that he read while standing, but after returning the book, he sat down. For standing is the posture of one who is working; sitting is the posture of one who is resting or judging. For the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to make known to us the way of knowledge that was written about him, deigned to work in the flesh for a time. But after completing the duty of his holy dispensation, he chose disciples to follow his teaching, and restored himself to the throne of heavenly rest, from where he now dispenses all things with hidden judgment, and will appear as the manifest judge at the end of the whole age. At the same time, he mystically sets forth an example, that each preacher of his word should also be a doer of the same. Let him rise, read, and sit down:

that is, let him work, preach, and thus expect the rewards of rest. And it is to be noted that he himself read the unfolded book, but gave it back to the minister closed. For he also taught his Church, through the Spirit of truth sent from the Father, in all truth, and yet admonished by his own example that not everything is to be said to everyone, but the word is to be dispensed by the teacher according to the capacity of the listeners, when he said: "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

Luke 4:20

And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. And he began to say to them: "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Indeed, it was fulfilled in that, as it had predicted: "And the Lord did great things, and preached even greater things." What greater testimony do we seek, therefore, than that he, who spoke in the prophets, confirmed with his own voice that he was the one? Removing the sacrileges of the faithless, who say there is one God of the Old Testament, another of the New, or who say that Christ began from the Virgin. For how could he begin from the Virgin, who spoke before the Virgin? [Luke 4:22] -- And all bore witness to him and marveled at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth. They bore witness to him, attesting truly, as he had said, that he was the one whom the prophets had sung about, truly anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that they themselves, the poor, the blind, the captives, and the broken, needed his gifts in every way.

Luke 4:22

And they said: Is this not the son of Joseph? What blindness of the Nazarenes, who, though they recognize him by his words and deeds to be the Christ, despise him solely on account of his lineage. However, their error is our salvation and the condemnation of heretics. For they saw Jesus Christ so much as a man, that they called him the son of Joseph, and according to other evangelists, the carpenter, or the son of the carpenter. Among these things, it should be observed why Christ, appearing in the flesh, wanted to be called the son of a carpenter, or rather the carpenter himself. It is to be understood with sound intellect that even by this he taught that he was the son of the one who, before the ages, created God, who in the beginning made the heaven and the earth. For even if human things cannot be compared to divine things, it is still a perfect symbol because the father of Christ

works with fire and spirit. Wherefore his precursor said of him as the carpenter's son: He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke II). He who in this great house of the world makes vessels of different kinds. Indeed, he transforms vessels of wrath into vessels of mercy by softening them with the fire of the spirit. Hence Malachi rightly said, speaking in the person of the Father:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me, and suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple, and then he added shortly after: And he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and silver. But the Jews, ignorant of this sacrament, despise the works of divine power by contemplating his carnal lineage, as is evident not only from their preceding actions but also from the Lord's subsequent words, when it is added:

Luke 4:23

And he said to them: Certainly you will quote me this proverb: Physician, heal yourself: whatever, etc. Their insane perfidy, although ignorant of sound faith, confesses it, calling the Lord Christ both a craftsman and a physician. For he is indeed the true craftsman, because all things were made through him. He is a physician, because all things were restored through him in heaven and on earth. And as he himself testifies about himself: Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick (Mark II). And since we have said by what instrument he works as a craftsman, let us also say by what method he heals. Passing by, he saw a man blind from birth, he spat on the ground, and made mud with the saliva, and applied it to his eyes, and said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which means Sent. So he went and washed, and came back seeing (John IX). Recognize then the greatness of his healing method, and rejoice because through this you have deserved to be enlightened. The mud from the earth is the flesh of Christ. The saliva from the mouth is his divinity, because the head of Christ is God. The saliva mixed with the mud enlightens us when baptized in the pool of Siloam, because the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory (John I), which we could not comprehend before, being hindered by darkness.

Therefore, you were created through the craftsman Christ, so that you might exist. You were recreated through the physician Christ, so that after wounds you might be healthy. Although he is advised by the scornful cit-

izens to heal himself, that is, to perform miracles in his own country, he is not excused in vain by another Evangelist, because he could not perform any miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. Lest anyone should think that a lesser affection should be given to one's own country. Therefore, he loved the citizens, but they themselves deprived themselves of the love of their fatherland through spite.

Luke 4:24

He said: Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. That the Lord Christ is called a prophet in the Scriptures, Moses is a witness, who said: God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers like me (Deut. XVIII). Not only he who is the head and Lord of the prophets but also Elijah, Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophets were held in less regard in their own country than in distant cities. For it is almost natural that citizens always envy their fellow citizens. For they do not consider the man's present works, but remember his fragile childhood, as if they themselves had not reached mature age through the same stages of life.

Luke 4:25

Truly I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elijah in Israel when the sky was closed for three years, etc. It is not (he says) that I withhold divine benefits from the disdainful citizens, contrary to the deeds of the prophets. For just as when famine once afflicted the whole land, no one in Judea was found worthy of hospitality to Elijah, but a widow of a foreign nation was sought, who, by the grace of faith, should be visited by such a great prophet. And just as among the many lepers there, only Naaman the Syrian, because he sought devoutly, deserved to be cured by the prophet Elisha, so here you will be deprived of the heavenly gift for no other reason than envy and faithlessness. If you were to critically examine the deeds of the prophets, and now allegorically study them, you would indeed find that the Lord, in the faithlessness and arrogance of His own homeland, from which He was not received, has noted the pride of the Jews. But by the name of Capernaum, which is interpreted as the field of consolation, He foretold the salvation of the Gentiles, where greater signs are daily performed by the apostles and the successors of the apostles, not so much in the healing of bodies as in the healing of souls.

Therefore, the widow to whom Elijah was sent represents the Church of the Gentiles, which, long deserted by its Maker, nurtured with meager provision, that is, taught with the word devoid of fruit, the people ignorant of the true faith—as if it were a poor son—until the prophetic word came, which, when the fleece of Israel was dried up, with the door of heaven closed, was in danger of famine in Judea, would be nourished there and would simultaneously nourish, and thus, received by those who believed, would both refresh the believers and be refreshed by them. Hence, it is fittingly said that this same widow lived in Sarepta of Sidon. Sidon means useless hunting; Sarepta, on the other hand, denotes fire or famine of bread. For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5). Where efforts were directed to acquiring superfluous things, like a concern for hunting, where there was a dire thirst and a famine of spiritual bread, there the flour and oil are blessed by the prophetic word, that is, the fruit and joy of charity, or the grace of the Lord's body and the anointing of chrism, were enriched by the inexhaustible gift of the heavenly word. So far the oil of spiritual joy and the flour of blessing in the vessels has not run out, while the rest of the nations who do not believe are in misery for the lack of divine bread, and are devoted to useless hunting.

For she herself, wonderfully intending to make a mystical bread before she died, testified that she wished to gather two sticks, expressing the sign of the cross not only by the name of the wood but also by the number of the woods, by which the bread of eternal life was prepared for us.

Luke 4:27

And there were many lepers in Israel under Elisha the prophet, and none of them were cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian. Because the story is well-known, it is necessary to disclose a few things about the mystery. And thus Naaman the Syrian, who is interpreted as "beauty," represents the people of the nations, once stained by the leprosy of unbelief and sins, but purified from all foulness of mind and body through the sacrament of baptism. Advised by a captured girl, which is the grace of divine inspiration, which the Jews could not keep but the Gentiles seized, he was urged to hope for salvation and to be washed seven times. Because obviously, the only type of baptism that regenerates by the Holy Spirit saves. Hence it is rightly remembered that his flesh appeared like the flesh of a small child after the washing. Either because grace as a mother begets all baptized in Christ to a

single infancy, or more likely he is to be understood as the child of whom it was said: A child is born to us, a son is given to us (Isaiah 9). By whose body through baptism the whole offspring of believers is united. And so that you may know all the prefigured sacraments of baptism here, in which we are commanded to renounce Satan and to confess faith, Naaman declares that he will no longer make offerings to foreign gods, but will serve the Lord alone in all things.

He also rejoices to take with him a portion of the Holy Land, because the baptized must also be confirmed by participation in the body of the Lord. Therefore, worthily, Naaman, whose body is washed by water while his heart is washed by faith, that is, the people of the nations, is preferred to the Jews, who are sullied by the leprosy of obstinacy. Worthily, the widow of Zarephath, that is, the Church, desiring to be renewed by the wood of the cross, is refreshed with the bread of the holy body and the anointing of the life-giving Spirit, while the Jews perish from the famine of the word. And it is proven that the Lord denied the gifts of virtues to His fellow citizens not because of His inability, but because of their envy, and by this example the whole nation was ultimately forsaken by Him, not because they were not loved, but because they themselves did not desire to be loved, evidently, as the teachers dispersed throughout the whole world for the salvation of the nations. But what the Lord declared about the Jews, they themselves testified by deed about themselves. For it follows:

Luke 4:28

And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue upon hearing these things, and they rose up and drove Him out of the city. Indeed, the sacrileges of the Jews, which the Lord had foretold long before through the prophet, saying: "They repay me evil for good" (Psalm 35), He teaches in the Gospel to have been completed. For while He was spreading benefits among the people, they inflicted injuries. Nor is it surprising that they lost salvation, who drove the Savior out of their borders. For the Lord is moral, and He who taught His apostles by His own example to become all things to all men, neither rejects the willing, nor binds the unwilling, nor resists those who cast Him out, nor fails those who ask. Thus, elsewhere, He left the Gerasenes, as they could not bear His powers, as if they were weak and ungrateful. At the same time, understand that it was not out of necessity but a voluntary passion of the body; not captured by the Jews, but offered by Himself. For indeed, when

He wills, He is captured; when He wills, He escapes; when He wills, He is suspended; when He wills, He is not held.

Luke 4:29

And they led him, it says, to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way. O inheritance worse than the disciples' teacher! The devil tempts the Lord with words, the Jews with deeds. The former says, Throw yourself down; the latter attack to throw him down. Indeed, the Lord had ascended to the brow of the hill to be thrown down, but through the midst of them, with the mind of the furious suddenly changed or stunned, he descended, for he preferred to heal rather than to destroy them, so that seeing their wicked attempts frustrated, they might desist from demanding his death henceforth. For the hour of his passion had not yet come, which was not to be on any Sabbath, but on the Preparation of the Passover. Nor had he yet approached the place of passion, which was not in Nazareth, but prefigured in Jerusalem by the blood of sacrifices. Nor had he chosen the kind of death, which was proclaimed from the beginning as crucifixion. Therefore, he wished not to be thrown down by the Nazarenes, not to be stoned by the Jerusalemites, not to be killed among the Bethlehemite children by Herod, nor to be consummated by any other death. For what sign of regal power would shine forth in such a death, whereby the forehead of the faithful might be armed?

But only the banner of the cross was awaited, the figure of which could be traced with the swiftest motion of the right hand against the temptations of the malignant enemy, and the same figure could also be considered a type of singular monarchy. As the Apostle, expounding the triumph of the cross, says: At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth (Philippians 2). For this is why the peaks of the same cross extend to the heavens, the depths reach the underworld, and the arms cover the earth.

Luke 4:31

And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath. Behold the mercy of the Lord the Savior: neither moved by indignation, nor offended by wickedness, nor violated by injury, he does not abandon Judea; rather, forgetting the injury, but mindful of mercy, some-

times teaching, sometimes liberating, sometimes healing, he soothes the hearts of the faithful people. But that he especially grants the gifts of his healing and teaching on Sabbaths, shows that he is not under the law, but above the law, who also came to fulfill the law, not to dissolve it, choosing not the Jewish Sabbath, on which it is not lawful to light a fire or move hand and foot, but the true Sabbath and the rest beloved to the Lord, if, caring for the salvation of souls, we abstain from servile work, that is, from all illicit things.

Luke 4:32

And they were amazed at his teaching, because his word was with authority. The word of the teacher is made with authority when he performs the things he teaches. For he who destroys his own words with deeds is scorned. Whom, on the contrary, the Apostle instituting against the teacher says: Let no one despise your youth (1 Tim. 4). But uniquely the Lord and principally alone spoke from good authority, because he committed none from bad weakness. For from the power of divinity he had that which he ministered to us through the innocence of his humanity. In another way, his word was with authority, or as another evangelist says, he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Because the scribes were giving the people the precepts they learned through the law. But he, as the author and fulfiller of the law, either by changing or by augmenting what seemed less, acting freely, substituted them.

Luke 4:33

And in the synagogue there was a man having an unclean demon. Rightly in the synagogue was the man who had the unclean spirit, because he had lost the Holy Spirit. For the devil had entered where Christ had left. As even now some say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. [Luke 4:34] -- And he cried out with a loud voice saying: Leave us alone; what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Pause a little (he said), cease tormenting me, to whom there is no fellowship with our deceit. And indeed: For what partnership has light with darkness? Or what fellowship has Christ with Belial? (II Cor. VI.) [Luke 4:34] -- Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God. This is not a confession of will, for which the reward of confessing follows, but an extortion of necessity which compels the unwilling. And just as if runaway slaves, after much time, see

their master, they plead for nothing but to be spared the lashes, thus also the demons, seeing the Lord suddenly dwelling on earth, believed that he had come to judge them. The presence of the Savior is torment for the demons.

Luke 4:35

And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Be silent, and come out of him. Since by the envy of the devil death entered into the world (Wisdom II), therefore against the very author of death, the remedy of salvation had first to operate: firstly, the serpentine tongue, so that no longer might it spread its venom, had to be stopped; and then the woman who was first deceived, to be cured from the fever of carnal desire; thirdly, the man who listened to the words of the deceitful wife, to be chastised from the leprosy of his error. That there might be the same order of restoration in this gospel as there was of the fall. [Luke 4:35] -- And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, it came out of him, and did not harm him at all. By divine permission, the man to be liberated from the demon is cast down in their midst, so that the power of the Savior shown might invite more to the faith and to the way of salvation. But as it is said, it did not harm him at all, it seems to contradict Mark, who says: And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him (Mark I). Unless we understand that Mark said convulsing him, which Luke said: And when it had thrown him in the midst, that what follows: And it did not harm him, is understood to mean that this throwing about of his limbs and torment did not weaken him, as demons are accustomed to leave even with some limbs cut off or torn out. Hence those who were present, trembling at such integral restoration of health, though not yet believing, rightly said to one another:

Luke 4:36

Because he commands unclean spirits with authority and power, and they depart. For holy men also can expel demons, but they do so by the word of God, whereas the Word of God itself performs miracles by its own power. [Luke 4:38] -- Rising from the synagogue, he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a severe fever. If we say that a man delivered from a demon signifies a mind morally cleansed from unclean thoughts, it follows that the woman afflicted with a fever, but cured by the command of the Lord, represents the flesh restrained from the fervor of its own desires by the precepts of continence. For all bitterness, wrath, anger,

clamor, and blasphemy are the fury of unclean spirits. And fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Eph. IV), represent the fever of enticing flesh. [Luke 4:38] -- And they asked him concerning her. Standing over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. Now the Savior, being asked, sometimes cures the sick voluntarily, showing that he always responds to the faithful for the passions of sins by prayers, and grants understanding in things they least comprehend in themselves, or even absolves the things not understood. As the Psalmist requests: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults" (Ps. XVIII).

Luke 4:39

And immediately she rose and served them. It is natural for those recovering from fever, as health begins, to feel faint and sense the discomfort of their illness, but the health granted by the Lord's command returns fully at once. Not only does it return entirely, but it comes with such strength that she immediately serves those who had aided her. And, according to the laws of allegory, the members that served impurity unto iniquity to bear fruit unto death should now serve righteousness unto eternal life (Rom. VI). [Luke 4:40] -- When the sun was setting, all those who had sick people with various diseases brought them to him. And he, laying hands on each of them, cured them. The setting of the sun signifies the passion and death of the one who said: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." And as the sun sets, more demoniacs than before, more sick are healed. Because he, living temporally in the flesh, taught few of the Jews, but having trampled the kingdom of death, he transmitted the gifts of faith and salvation to all the nations throughout the world. Of which ministers, as if heralds of life and light, the Psalmist sings: "Prepare the way for him who rides upon the sunset." (Psalm 67). Indeed, the Lord ascended upon the sunset, because from where he lay down in the passion, from there he manifested his greater glory by rising again.

Luke 4:41

Demons also went out from many, crying out and saying: "You are the Son of God." And rebuking them, he would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. Demons confessed the Son of God, and, as the evangelist bears witness, they knew he was the Christ. For the devil, having recognized a man exhausted by fasting for forty days, and being unable to

tempt him, even to find out if he were the Son of God, now, through the power of signs, either understood or rather suspected that he was the Son of God. Therefore, he did not persuade the Jews to crucify him because he thought he was not Christ or the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that he would be condemned by his death. Indeed, about this mystery hidden from ages, the Apostle says: "None of the rulers of this age understood it; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2). And why the Lord forbids demons to speak about him, the Psalmist reveals, who says: "To the sinner, however, God said: Why do you recount my ordinances?" (Psalm 49) and so on: lest anyone, while hearing the preacher, follow the one who errs. For the devil is an unworthy teacher, who often mixes falsehood with truth, to cover the testimony of fraud with the appearance of truth. But at other times, not only demons who unwillingly confessed are commanded to be silent about Christ, but also those who willingly wanted to confess after being healed by him. Indeed, even the apostles, who were to preach about him throughout the whole world after the resurrection, were absolutely commanded to be silent about him before his passion, lest, once his divine majesty was proclaimed, the dispensation of the passion be deferred, and, with the passion delayed, the salvation of the world, which was to come through this, be denied.

Luke 4:42

But when the day came, he went out to a deserted place, and the crowds sought him, and came to him. If the death of the Lord is expressed by the setting sun, why is not his resurrection indicated by the returning day? The light revealed by which he is sought by the crowds of believers, found in the desert of the nations, is detained, lest he go away. Especially since this happened on the first day of the Sabbath, on which the resurrection was celebrated, the departure, the search, and the finding occurred.

CHAPTER 5

Luke 5:1

Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing upon Him to hear the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. The lake of Gennesaret is said to be the same as the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias. But it is called the Sea of Galilee from the adjoining province, the Sea of Tiberias from the nearby city, which was formerly called Chinnereth, but restored by

Herod the tetrarch and named Tiberias in honor of Tiberius Caesar. Furthermore, Gennesar is said to derive from the nature of the water itself, as it is reputed to generate a breeze for itself with its rippling waves, being almost called in Greek "generating breeze for itself." For the water is not spread out as in the manner of a pond, but is stirred by frequent winds, sweet to drink, and suitable for drinking. But by the custom of the Hebrew language, any gathering of waters, whether sweet or salty, is called a sea. This lake, with the Jordan flowing through it, extends one hundred forty stades in length and forty in width. Therefore, since the present age is designated by the lake or the sea, the Lord stands by the sea, after overcoming the mortality of the fleeting life, having attained in the same flesh in which He suffered the stability of eternal rest. The gathering of the crowd to Him is a type of the nations running together in faith. Concerning which Isaiah says: "And all nations will flow to Him, and many peoples will go and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Isaiah 2).

Luke 5:2

And He saw two boats standing by the lake. The two boats placed by the lake symbolize the circumcision and the foreskin. It is well said that Jesus saw them, for the Lord knows who are His in both peoples. And He leads their heart from the waves of this world to the tranquility of future life, as if to the solidity of the shore, by living, that is by mercifully avoiding. [Luke 5:2] -- But the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. The fishermen are the teachers of the Church, who, having caught us in the net of faith and raised us from the depths to the moon, bring us to the land of the living like fish to the shore. For just as the nets are entwined, so are the words of the preachers, which do not lose those they have caught in faith. Hence, the nets are called "retenia" as if they are retaining. But these nets are sometimes let down for a catch, sometimes washed and folded, because not every time is suitable for teaching, but now the teacher's tongue must be exercised, now he must take care of himself.

Luke 5:3

But ascending into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And sitting down, he taught the crowds from the boat. Simon's boat is the early Church, about which Paul says: "For he who worked through Peter for the apostleship of the circumcised worked also

through me for the Gentiles" (Galatians II). It is aptly called one, because the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one (Acts IV). From which he taught the crowds, because he teaches the nations today through the authority of the Church. [Luke 5:4] -- But when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon: Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. That he first asked Simon to put out the boat a little from the land signifies either to use the word cautiously with the crowds, so that neither earthly things are prescribed to them nor they are removed so deeply from earthly things into the depths of the sacraments that they do not understand them at all, or first to preach to the nearby regions and peoples, so that when he later says again to Peter, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch," it pertains to the more distant nations to whom the preaching was later extended.

Luke 5:5

And responding, Simon said to him: Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. But at your word, I will let down the net. --Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalm CXXVI). Unless the Lord illumines the hearts of the listeners, the teacher labors in the night. Unless the instruments of discourse are let down through the word of divine grace, the preacher casts the javelin of his voice in vain. Because the faith of the peoples is not produced by the wisdom of composed words, but by the gift of divine calling. [Luke 5:6] -- And when he had done this, they enclosed a large multitude of fish. However, their net was breaking. By the great number of fish, the net was breaking, for now even reprobates, together with the elect, enter in such a number at the confession of faith, who also tear the Church itself with heresies. The net breaks, but the fish do not slip away, for the Lord preserves his own even among the scandals of persecutors.

Luke 5:7

And they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. The other boat (as we have said before) is the Church of the Gentiles, which also, with one little boat not being sufficient, is filled with elect fish, because the Lord knows who are his, and with him the number of the elect is certain. And when he did not find as many in Judea as he knew to be predestined to faith and eternal life, as if seeking receptacles for his fish in another boat, he also fills the hearts of the Gentiles with the grace of faith. And it is well that, with the net being broken, the partner boat is called, for before Judas the be-

trayer, before Simon Magus, the abominable fish, were caught, before Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceitfully enter the net of faith, as John testifies, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him (John VI). And then Barnabas and Paul were set apart for the apostleship to the Gentiles (Acts XIII).

Luke 5:7

And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. The filling of these boats increases up to the end of the age. But that being filled they begin to sink, that is, they are pressed down in submersion (for they are not submerged, but are, however, endangered), the Apostle explains, saying: In the last days perilous times will come, and men will be lovers of themselves, etc. (II Tim. III). For boats sinking means that people, having been lifted up through faith, fall back into corrupt behavior in the world. This is also demonstrated by Peter himself in this place, still in a state of weakness. Hence it follows: [Luke 5:8] -- When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For the carnal ones in the Church somehow repel the governance of the spiritual ones in whom the persona of Christ clearly shines. They do not say this with the voice of the tongue to the good ministers of God, to repel them, but they advise with the voice of their morals and deeds to withdraw, lest they be governed by the good ones, and the more vehemently as they show them honor. Yet, they admonish with their deeds to withdraw, just as Peter signified this honor falling at the feet of the Lord; but showed the morals in what he said: Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man. However, since the Lord did not do this – He did not depart from them but led them to the shore with the drawn-up boats – it signifies that in good and spiritual men there should not be this will, to be so disturbed by the sins of the crowds that, to live as if more securely and peacefully, they abandon the ecclesiastical duty.

Luke 5:10

And Jesus said to Simon: Fear not. The Lord strengthens the fear of the carnal ones and uplifts the spirits of the frail. By giving comfort, He raises them, lest anyone, trembling at their own consciousness of guilt, or stunned by the innocence of others, fears to undertake the path of holiness. But what follows, [Luke 5:10] -- And from now on you will be catching men, pertains specifically to Peter himself. For the Lord explains to him what this catching

of fish signifies. Namely, just as he now catches fish with nets, so someday he will catch men with words. And the whole order of this action shows what is daily done in the Church, of which he holds the figure. What is added:

Luke 5:11

And having drawn the ships to land, leaving everything behind, they followed him, which can signify the end of time, during which those who cling to Christ will entirely depart from such a sea. However, it should be known that this reading is not the same as the one in which Matthew and Mark narrate that two fishermen from their boats, first Peter and Andrew, then the sons of Zebedee, were called by the Lord. For Luke does not now suggest that they were called by the Lord, but only indicates that it was foretold to Peter that he would catch men. This was not said in such a way as if he would never catch fish again. For even after the resurrection of the Lord, we read that they went fishing. Whence it is given to understand that they returned to fishing as usual, so that what Matthew and Mark narrated would happen later, when he called them two by two. For then, not drawing their ships to land as if concerned with returning, but thus they followed him, as one who was calling and commanding them to follow.

Luke 5:12

And it came to pass, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man full of leprosy. And seeing Jesus, and falling on his face, he besought him, saying, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Well, where the leper is cleansed, the specific place is not expressed, to show that it was not one people of a specific city, but the people of all nations that were being healed. And since the Lord said: I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5), he who was excluded by the law, presuming to be cleansed by the power of the Lord, judged that grace to be above the law, which could wash away the leprosy. Indeed, just as the authority of power is in the Lord, so in him the constancy of faith is declared. He fell on his face, which is a sign of humility and shame, so that each one may blush at the stains of his own life. But shame did not suppress his confession; he showed his wound, asked for a remedy. And this very confession is full of religion and faith. If you are willing (he said), you can make me clean. He attributed power to the will of the Lord. Concerning the will of the Lord, however, he did not

doubt as if unbelieving in his mercy, but, aware of his own filth, he did not presume.

Luke 5:13

And extending his hand, he touched him saying: I am willing; be cleansed. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. There is nothing between the work of God and the command, because in the command is the work. For he said, and they were made. You see therefore that it cannot be doubted because the will of God is power. If therefore his will is power, those who assert one will, certainly assert one power. Therefore, as having the power to heal, and the authority to command, he did not avoid the testimony of working. For he says "I am willing" because of Photinus; he commands, because of Arius; he touches, because of Manichaeus. And indeed the law prohibits touching the leprous, but he who is the Lord of the law does not obey the law, but makes the law. Therefore he did not touch because he could not cleanse without touching, but to prove that he was not subject to the law, nor did he fear infection as men do, but because he who could not be contaminated and freed others, the leprosy was driven away by the touch of the Lord, which used to contaminate the one touching. Likewise, it is miraculous that he healed in the manner in which he was beseeched: If you wish, you can cleanse me. "I am willing," he said, "be cleansed." You have the will, you also have the effect of piety.

Luke 5:14

And he commanded him to tell no one. Why is he commanded to tell no one, unless to teach that our benefits are not to be made public, but kept hidden? So that we may abstain not only from the reward of money, but also of grace.

Luke 5:14

And go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them, etc. He is ordered to show himself to the priest, so that the priest might understand that he was cured not by the order of the law, but by the grace of God above the law; however, to offer a sacrifice, so that the Lord might show that he did not abolish the law, but fulfilled it: for walking according to the law, he healed those above the law whom the remedies of the law had not healed. And well he added, As a testimony to them, that is, if they believe in God, if the leprosy of impiety de-

parts. But if it moves someone how the Lord seems to approve a Mosaic sacrifice, as the Church has not received it, let them remember that the holy sacrifice of sacrifices, which is his body, had not yet begun. For he had not yet offered his own holocaust in the Passion. But it was not fitting to remove the significant sacrifices before that which was signified was confirmed by the witness of the preaching apostles and the faith of believing peoples. Because this man typically designates the languid human race by sins, rightly he is described not only as a leper but also as full of leprosy. For all have sinned and need the glory of God (Rom. III).

That is, so that, with the Savior's hand extended, that is, with the incarnate Word of God, and touching human nature, they might be cleansed from the diversity of the ancient error, and might be able to hear with the apostles: Now you are clean, because of the word that I have spoken to you (John XV); and those who were separated from the camp of God's people as abominable for a long time, might once again be rendered to the temple and offered to the priest, of course to the one to whom it is said: You are a priest forever (Psalm CIX), hearing from the Apostle: For the temple of God is holy, which you are (I Cor. III); and they might offer for their cleansing as Moses commanded, that is, they might present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God (Rom. XII).

Luke 5:15

The word about him spread all the more, and great crowds came together to hear him and to be cured of their infirmities. The complete salvation of one urges many crowds to the Lord. For, in order to show that he was healed both outwardly and inwardly, he by no means keeps silent about the benefit received or about the one from whom he received it. Rather, as Mark the Evangelist narrates, having fulfilled the duty of a herald, he immediately began to proclaim and spread the word, so much so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a city, but stayed outside in deserted places; yet people came to him from every direction (Mark 1). Therefore, it is rightly asked why the Lord commanded some things he did to be kept hidden, and they could not be hidden even for a moment. Did the eternal Son, co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, desire something that he could not accomplish in this matter? But it should be noted that our Redeemer, through his mortal body, provided us with an example in all that he did. For when performing a miracle, he ordered silence, and yet it could not be kept silent.

He thereby indicated that his chosen followers, by following his examples of teaching, should indeed wish to remain hidden in their great deeds, but be revealed against their will for the benefit of others: so that it may be an example of great humility to desire their works to be hidden, and an example of great exaltation that their works cannot be hidden. Therefore, the Lord did not wish to do anything that he could not achieve, but he provided an example of what his members ought to desire and what should be done about them even against their will, by the teaching of his example.

Luke 5:16

He himself would withdraw to the desert and pray. Do not attribute his withdrawal to pray to the nature that says, "I will, be cleansed," and healed from infirmities, but to the nature that stretched out its hand and touched the leper: not that, according to Nestorius, there are two persons of the Son, but that the same person has two natures and thus also two operations. Alternatively: because he performs miracles in the city but spends the night praying in the desert or the mountain (as it is later read), he offers to us examples of both lives, the active and the contemplative, so that no one, engrossed in contemplation, neglects the care of his neighbors, nor someone overly bound by the care of his neighbors abandons the pursuit of contemplation: so that neither the love of neighbor impedes the love of God, nor the love of God, which transcends, rejects the love of neighbor. For to pray on the mountain is, having forsaken the cares of weak thoughts, for anyone to hasten with the whole mind to the eternal joys of highest contemplation. To withdraw to the desert and pray is to suppress the rising internal clamor of earthly desires, and to seek a certain secret place with the Lord within oneself, where, with external tumult ceasing, one silently speaks to him through inner desires.

Luke 5:17

And it happened on one of the days, and he was sitting teaching, and there were Pharisees sitting, etc. Where the Lord, sitting and teaching, cured the paralytic when the scribes and Pharisees were sitting, Luke omits for brevity's sake, but Matthew and Mark, who narrate it, seem to question it. Since indeed Matthew testifies that he did this in his own city, and Mark in Capernaum. Which would be more difficult to resolve if Matthew also named Nazareth. Now, however, either Galilee itself, where Nazareth was, should be

understood as the city of Christ, in distinction from the region beyond the sea of the Gerasenes, from which, crossing over, as Matthew writes, he came to Galilee. Or certainly Capernaum itself is called the city of Christ, which he made his own not by being born there, but by illuminating it with his miracles. [Luke 5:18] -- And behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Him. The healing of this paralytic indicates the salvation of a soul sighing for Christ after a long period of carnal indolence. First of all, it needs ministers to lift it and bring it to Christ, that is, good teachers who offer the hope of healing and the help of intercession. These, according to Mark, are found to be four, either because the strength of all preachers and every word is confirmed by the four books of the Gospel, or because there are four virtues by which the confidence of the mind is uplifted to obtain healing. About which it is said in praise of eternal wisdom: "For she teaches temperance and prudence, justice and courage, which are more profitable than anything in life for men" (Wis. 8). Some refer to them with other names: prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice.

Luke 5:19

And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof through the tiles. They desire to offer the paralytic to Christ but are excluded on all sides by the interposed crowd. Often, a soul, after the sloth of the lowly body, turns back to God and desires to be renewed by the remedy of heavenly grace but is delayed by the obstacle of old habit. Often, amidst the sweetness of secret prayer and a seemingly pleasant conversation with the Lord, a crowd of thoughts intervenes, blocking the gaze of the mind so that Christ is not seen. What should be done in such instances? Surely not remain in the lower parts where the crowds tumultuously gather, but ascend to the roof of the house where Christ teaches, that is, strive for the sublimity of Holy Scripture, and meditate on the law of the Lord with the Psalmist day and night. For how indeed does the young man correct his way? By keeping, he says, your words (Psalm 119).

Luke 5:19

And they let him down with the bed into the midst before Jesus. When the roof was opened, the sick man was let down before Jesus, because with the mysteries of the Scriptures revealed, one arrives at the knowledge of Christ,

that is, one descends to His humility through the piety of faith. And well is the house of Jesus described as covered with tiles, because under the contemptible covering of letters, if there is one who uncovers this, the divine spiritual power of grace will be found. But the fact that he is let down with the bed signifies that Christ must be acknowledged by a man still established in this flesh. [Luke 5:20] -- When He saw their faith, He said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." The Lord, about to cure the man of paralysis, first dissolves the bonds of sins, to show that he was condemned to the loosening of his limbs by the bonds of faults, and that the members could not be restored to health unless these were relaxed. Likewise, to that paralytic who long awaited the stirring of the water by the pool of Bethesda in vain, when he was healed by the Lord, it is said: "Behold, you are made well; sin no more, lest something worse happen to you" (John 5). And well is he whose sins are forgiven called a man, for by this very thing that he was a man, he could not say, "I have not sinned," and at the same time so that He who forgave the man might be understood as God. Indeed, we must consider how much each one's own faith is worth before God, when the faith of another was worth so much that the whole man, that is, being saved externally and internally, suddenly arose, and by the merit of others, the errors of others were forgiven.

Luke 5:21

And the scribes and Pharisees began to consider, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" The scribes speak the truth, because no one can forgive sins except God, who also forgives through those to whom He has granted the power to forgive. And therefore Christ is proved to truly be God, because He can forgive sins as God. They truly bear witness to God, but by denying the person of Christ, they are deceived. Thus, the Jews err, who believe that Christ is both God and capable of forgiving sins, but do not believe that Jesus is the Christ. But the Arians err much more foolishly, who, though conquered by the words of the Gospel that Jesus is the Christ and is able to forgive sins, do not dare to deny it, yet nevertheless do not fear to deny that He is God. But He, desiring to save the unfaithful, and by the knowledge of hidden things and the power of His works, manifests that He is God.

Luke 5:22

For He said, answering them, "Why do you think in your hearts?" For to the same God who says, "I am, I am He who blots out your iniquities" (Isaiah 43), the wisest speaker says, "For You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men" (1 Kings 8). Therefore, He said, by the same majesty and power with which I observe your thoughts, I can also forgive men's sins. Understand from yourselves what the paralytic receives. [Luke 5:23] -- What is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Rise and walk"? Whether the paralytic's sins were forgiven, only He who forgives them knows. But "rise and walk," both he who rises and those who see him rising can confirm. Therefore, a physical sign is performed to prove the spiritual one. [Luke 5:24] -- But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. If He is also God, according to the well-known testimony of Isaiah, who blots out our iniquities (Psalm 50), and the Son of Man has the power on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9), therefore He Himself is both God and the Son of Man, so that Christ as man by the power of His divinity can forgive sins, and the same Christ as God can die for sinners through the frailty of His humanity.

Luke 5:24

He says to the paralytic: I say to you, rise; take up your bed, and go into your house. Spiritually to rise from the bed is to draw the soul away from carnal desires, where it lay sick. To take up the bed is to deprive the flesh itself, thus corrected by the reins of continence, of earthly delights by the hope of heavenly rewards. For the same bed that is washed every night by David, that is, chastised with a worthy flood of penitence for the stains of each sin. But taking up the bed and going to the house is to return to paradise. For that is the true home, which first received man, not lost by right but by fraud, and finally restored by Him who owed nothing to the fraudulent enemy. Alternatively, the one who was sick returns home with the bed when the soul, having received the remission of sins, returns with the body itself for the inward custody, lest after forgiveness it commits something for which it might justly be struck again.

Luke 5:25

And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay, and went to his house glorifying God, etc. Wondrous is the power of divine

potency, where no delay of time intervenes, the health commanded by the Savior follows swiftly. Rightly those who were present, condemning the darts of blasphemy, converted their astonished hearts to the praise of such great majesty.

Luke 5:27

And after these things, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and he said to him: Follow me. The same Levi who is Matthew, but Luke and Mark, out of respect and honor for the evangelist, did not want to use the common name. However, Matthew himself, according to what is written, "A righteous man accuses himself" (Prov. XVIII), at the beginning of his own discourse calls himself Matthew and a tax collector: so that readers understand that no one who has been converted should despair of salvation, since he himself changed suddenly from a tax collector into an apostle, from a toll collector into an evangelist. And leaving everything behind, he arose and followed him. Understanding truly what it means to follow the Lord, Matthew leaves everything and follows him. To follow is to imitate. Therefore, that he might follow poor Christ not so much in step as in affections, he left behind his own goods who used to seize others' property, and giving us the perfect example of renouncing the world, not only did he leave the profits of the tax office, but also disregarded the danger that could come from the rulers of the world, because he had left behind the incomplete and disorganized accounts of the taxes. For he was so driven by the desire to follow the Lord, that he did not retain for himself any regard or thought for this life. Because of this, deservedly, while diligently abandoning human affairs, he earned the reward to be a faithful steward of the Lord's talents.

Luke 5:29

And Levi made him a great feast in his house. He who receives Christ within his home is nourished with the greatest joys far surpassing pleasures. Thus the Lord gladly enters and reclines in the affection of the one who has believed, and this is the spiritual feast of good works, which the rich crowd lacks, and the poor one feasts on. [Luke 5:29] -- And there was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them. They had seen a tax collector converted from sins to better things, finding a place of repentance, and because of this they too do not despair of salvation. [Luke 5:30] -- And

the Pharisees and their scribes murmured, saying to His disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners? While publicans were dining with the Lord, the Pharisees murmuring boasted about fasting. Here is first declared how great is the distance between the law and grace. Because those who follow the law endure the eternal hunger of a fasting mind. But those who have received the word in the innermost parts of the soul, being refreshed by heavenly nourishment and the abundance of the fountain, cannot hunger and thirst. Then the type of future retribution is prefigured, when the perfidy of the proud will be tormented by fasting, while the chosen are feasting with Christ. To whom it is said, Prostitutes and publicans will precede you in the kingdom of God (Matt. XXI). And if through the election of Matthew the faith of the gentiles is expressed, who previously were greedy for worldly gains, but now refresh the body of Christ with diligent devotion, it undoubtedly indicates the arrogance of the Pharisees, the jealousy of the Jews, tormented by the salvation of the gentiles.

Luke 5: 31

And Jesus, answering, said to them: Those who are well do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He castigates the scribes and Pharisees, who, considering themselves just, avoided the company of sinners. For he calls himself a physician who, by a marvelous method of healing, was wounded for our iniquities, and by his bruises we are healed (Isa. LIII). He calls those healthy and righteous who, ignorant of God's righteousness and wanting to establish their own, are not subject to the righteousness of God, who, presuming from the law, do not seek the grace of the Gospel. On the other hand, he calls sick and sinners those who, defeated by the consciousness of their own frailty, and seeing that they cannot be justified by the law, submit themselves to Christ's grace by repenting. Here it is shown at the same time that publicans have come to Jesus performing repentance, not remaining in their former sins, as the Pharisees and scribes murmured: and Jesus himself also deigned to go to the feasts of sinners to have the opportunity of teaching and offering spiritual food to his hosts. Finally, while it is frequently described that he went to banquets, nothing else is reported except what he did there, what he taught, so that both the humility of the Lord in going to sinners and the power of his teaching in the conversion of penitents might be shown.

Luke 5:33

But they said to him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make supplications, likewise also the Pharisees; but yours eat and drink?" Matthew reports that the disciples of John themselves said this to the Savior, whence it is clear that both groups combined to question him with this. Here, the disciples of John are especially to be reproved, not only for the boastfulness of their fasting but also because they malign what they knew to be taught by their master, and they joined with the Pharisees who they knew were condemned by him. Spiritually, however, the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but the disciples of Christ eat and drink, because whether one follows the works of the law or the traditions of men, or even receives the preaching of Christ with the ear of the body alone, abstaining from spiritual goods, they waste away with a fasting heart. But he who faithfully incorporates with the members of Christ out of love cannot fast, because he feasts on his flesh and blood.

Luke 5:33

Alternatively: John drinks neither wine nor strong drink; the Lord eats and drinks with publicans and sinners, because he increases merit through abstinence, where there is no strength of nature. The Lord, however, to whom it naturally belonged to forgive sins, why would he avoid those whom he could make purer by the abstainers? But Christ also fasted, so that you might not avoid the commandment. He ate with sinners, so that you might see grace and recognize power.

Luke 5:34

To whom he himself said: Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? But days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days. The bridegroom is Christ, the bride is the Church. From this holy and spiritual union, the apostles were created. Hence, Mark the evangelist rightly calls them children of the wedding, not only of the bridegroom but also of the bride, wishing it to be understood that through the baptismal regeneration, they were taken into the right of divine generation. They cannot fast or mourn as long as they see the bridegroom in the chamber and know that he is with the bride. But when the wedding is over, and the time of the passion and resurrection arrives, then the children of the bridegroom will fast. However, Luke did

not say like the others: Can the children of the bridegroom or the wedding fast or mourn, but can you make the children of the bridegroom fast (Luke 5)? He elegantly hinted that those who were speaking were the ones who would make the children of the bridegroom mourn and fast, since they were the ones who would kill the bridegroom. It is to be noted that this mourning of the absence of the bridegroom is not only now, that is, after the death and resurrection of the same bridegroom, but before his incarnation throughout the whole time of this age.

For the early times of the Church, before the birth of the Virgin, had saints who desired the advent of the incarnation of Christ. But these times, since he ascended into heaven, have saints who desire his manifestation to judge the living and the dead. Nor did this desirable mourning of the Church rest somewhat, except as long as he was here with the disciples in the flesh. According to the laws of tropology, it is to be known that as long as the bridegroom is with us, we are in joy, and neither can we fast nor mourn. But when he has departed and fled from us because of sins, then fasting is to be proclaimed, then mourning is to be received.

Luke 5:36

He also spoke a parable to them: No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. When the Lord was asked why his disciples did not fast, he replied that those still carnal, not yet strengthened by the faith in his passion and resurrection, could not bear the stricter fasting and continence commands, lest through excessive austerity, they lose even the faith they seemed to have. Therefore, he refers to his disciples as old garments, to which a new patch is sewn inappropriately, that is, any part of the doctrine that pertains to the moderation of a new life. Because if this is done, even the doctrine will somehow be torn, whose part about the fasting of food is inappropriately given. That doctrine teaches general fasting, not only from the desire for food but from all delight in temporal joys, the patch of which, that is, a part concerning food, he says should not be imparted to men still given to old habits. Because it seems that there would be a tearing, and it does not match the old.

Luke 5:37

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new skins, and both are preserved. He also compares them to old wineskins, which, with new wine—that is, spiritual precepts—would burst more easily than they could contain it. But they will be like new wineskins, when after the Lord's ascension, they are renewed with the desire for his consolation by praying and hoping. Then they received the Holy Spirit, which filled them to speak in all tongues; from the Jews who did not understand, it was truthfully attested: These men are full of new wine. For new wine in new wineskins meant the fervor of the Holy Spirit filling spiritual hearts. Alternatively. A teacher must beware not to commit the secrets of the new mysteries to souls not yet renewed, but persisting in the old malice.

Luke 5:39

And no one having drunk old wine, immediately desires new, for he says, "The old is better." This signifies the Jews, to whom, being steeped in the dregs of an old way of life, the precepts of new grace had become tainted. For indeed, being defiled by the traditions of their ancestors, they were by no means able to perceive the sweetness of spiritual words.

CHAPTER 6

Luke 6:1

And it happened on the second-first Sabbath, as he was passing through the cornfields, his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands, and did eat. This is what Mark says, that because of the great number of those who came to be healed, the disciples did not even have time to eat, and thus were as hungry men. But that they plucked the ears of the crops with their hands, and comforted their hunger, is an indication of a more austere life, not seeking prepared feasts, but simple food. And note that the first apostles of the Savior break the letter of the Sabbath, against the Ebionites, who, while accepting the other apostles, reject Paul as a transgressor of the law. Wherefore Luke properly calls this day, when the letter of the Sabbath began to be dissolved, a second-first Sabbath, wishing to intimate that the observance of the legal Sabbath ought henceforth to cease, and the freedom of the natural Sabbath, which was similar to the other days up to the times of Moses, ought to be restored. So that just as the Church is

saved not by circumcision or the ceremonies of the law, but by the faith of Abraham, who was justified while uncircumcised through love working, so also this ought to be commended as nothing other than a spiritual Sabbath, in which even Abraham always rested from servile, that is, sinful action, through the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit to God.

Therefore, the Sabbath of this time, in which it is lawful to do useful things as on the other days, to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath, on which it was not allowed to travel, to gather wood, or to do other necessary things, is called second-first. Namely, this is preferred to the first in the order of time, because it was observed by the fathers in countless ages before the law, as it is now. Or certainly it signifies by the grace of the gift that nothing else is meant by second-first than that the superior Sabbath is understood to be above the inferior. For the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven, heavenly. Nor is it wrong to call the Lord Jesus Christ the second-first Adam, who by merit and grace certainly preceded the first Adam by no human birth order, according to what his precursor said of him: "He who comes after me is preferred before me, for he was before me" (John 1). It can also be understood that the second-first Sabbath, the same Sabbath of the New Testament, is both the second and the first. Second, because it is observed by us after the legal Sabbath. First, because it was observed by the ancient just ones before the decrees of the law. Mystically, the disciples pass through the cornfields, those of which the Lord said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields;

for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages" (John 4). And it is better to hunger for this than to understand it as the salvation of men, for whom the foremost of the reapers, once hungering in prayers, shortly heard, upon the dishes being shown which he desired, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat" (Acts 10). And the wonderful concord of the sacrament is that there, beasts are ordered to be killed and eaten, and here the ears of corn are reported to be rubbed and nonetheless eaten. This means: Mortify your members which are upon the earth, and put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3). For no one otherwise transitions into the body of Christ, nor does a teacher otherwise feed on the fruits of his advancement. Thus, to pluck the ears of corn is to remove men from an earthly intention, where they had only fixed the root of their mind, as it were. To rub them with hands is to strip the purity of mind from carnal concupiscence, like

husks and chaff. To eat the grains is for each person cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit to be incorporated into the members of the Church through the mouths of preachers. And it is well reported that the disciples did this before the Lord in Mark, preceding him, for it is necessary that the preacher's word precedes, and thus illuminates the heart of the listener by the grace of heavenly visitation.

Luke 6:2

But some of the Pharisees said to them: "What are you doing that is not lawful on the Sabbaths?" Other Evangelists narrate that this was rather objected to the Lord Himself. But whether these words were said to them, or to His disciples, or by many accusing both here and there (for no Evangelist could write falsely), nevertheless, because whatever is done by the disciples, reflects upon Him whose teaching they follow in acting, He immediately, according to what Isaiah says, "And He shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. XI), overcomes the false defenders of the law with true examples of the saints. For He says:

Luke 6:3

Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God and took the showbread, and ate, and gave it to those who were with him, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests alone? The history of the Kings recounts that blessed David, avoiding Saul's traps, came to the priest Abimelech in Nob and asked for food for himself and his followers. But finding no common bread, and only after learning that the young men had been clean from women since the day before yesterday, the priest did not hesitate to give the consecrated bread, deeming it better, in the prophet's words: I desire mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. IX), to save men from the danger of hunger than to offer a sacrifice to God. For the sacrifice pleasing to God is the salvation of men. Therefore, the Lord opposes the calumniating Pharisees and says: If David is holy and Abimelech the high priest is not reproached by you, but each is excused with a plausible explanation for breaking the command of the law, and hunger is the reason, why do you not approve the same hunger in the apostles as you approve in others? Although there is much difference in this too, these rub the ears of grain with their hands on the Sabbath, those eat the Levitical bread and approached the Sabbath solemnity.

For the showbread was baked before the Sabbath and laid on the sacred table on the Sabbath morning, twelve in pairs facing each other, with two golden bowls full of incense placed on top. They remained until the next Sabbath, and then others were brought in their place, and those were given to the priests. With the incense burned in the sacred fire where all holocausts used to be made, more incense was added on top of the other twelve loaves. Thus, when David arrived and took the consecrated loaves, it figuratively showed that the priestly food was to be transferred to the use of the people. Whether because we all ought to imitate the priestly life, or because all the children of the Church are priests. For we are anointed into a holy priesthood, offering ourselves as spiritual sacrifices to God.

Luke 6:5

And he said to them, because the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. If, he said, King David who was fed with priestly food is excusable, and according to the faith of another Gospel, the priests violating the Sabbath through temple service are without crime, how much more the Son of Man, who is the true King and true Priest, and therefore the Lord of the Sabbath, is not held liable for the offense of plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath.

Luke 6:6

And it came to pass on another Sabbath, as he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man whose right hand was withered. The Lord taught particularly on the Sabbaths in the synagogue, and performed miracles, not only to insinuate the spiritual Sabbath, but also because of the more celebrated gathering of the people on that day. Then it was the custom from the ancient institution of the Fathers, which was commanded by the law to rest from labor, to give time to reading and listening to the Scriptures. According to what James speaks in the Acts of the Apostles. For Moses from ancient times has those who preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every Sabbath. For just as those whose art is hunting, where they have learned that wild animals, fish, and birds abound, they set their nets there the most: so also the Lord always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews gathered, wishing all to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Surely the man who had the withered hand signifies the human race shriveled by the barrenness of good work, but cured by the Lord's mercy. Whose right hand, which in the first parent withered while plucking

the fruit of the forbidden tree, is restored to the health of good works by the grace of the Redeemer, while he stretched his innocent hands on the tree of the cross. And it is well that the hand was withered in the synagogue, because where the gift of knowledge is greater, there the danger of the inexcusable sin is more serious.

Luke 6:7

But the scribes and Pharisees watched whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find something to accuse him of. Because the destruction of the Sabbath which they accused in his disciples, the teacher excused by a probable example, now they want to censure the teacher himself by observing him, that if he heals on the Sabbath, they might accuse him of transgression; if he does not heal, of cruelty or weakness. [Luke 6:8] -- He himself knew their thoughts, etc. This is what we read: The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain (Psalm XCIII). And what follows: Blessed is the man whom you instruct, Lord, and teach him out of your law (Ibid.). This is said about those who have learned that the law fulfilled through Christ, not to be a carnal commandment for us, but a spiritual Sabbath. [Luke 6:9] -- But Jesus said to them: I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath? The Lord, anticipating the calumny of the Jews which they had prepared for him with a treacherous mind, reproached them because they violated the commandments of the law with a twisted interpretation, thinking that even good works should be refrained from on the Sabbath, whereas the law commands to abstain from evil works saying: You shall do no servile work on it (Levit. XXIII), that is, sin: For everyone who commits sin is a servant of sin (John VIII). By the same commandment, at the same time foreshadowing the form of the future age, where those who have done good through the six ages of this world, in the seventh rest, will have holidays only from evil, but not also from good. For although secular works rest, nevertheless the act of good work is not idle in resting in the praise of God.

Luke 6:9

To save a soul, or to lose it? This is to care for a man, or not. It is the same as what was previously stated: To do good, or to do evil. Not that God, supremely good, could be the author of evil or destruction for us, but because His not saving, according to the custom of Scripture, is said to destroy. As it is said that He hardened Pharaoh's heart, not that He hardened a soft one,

but that He, not mercifully softening what was already hardened by preceding merits. And when we pray, lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6), immediately adding: but deliver us from evil (ibid.), we are plainly taught that His not leading into temptation is nothing other than delivering from evil; His destroying a soul is not to save it from destruction. If anyone is moved by the question of why the Lord, when He was going to heal the body, asked about the salvation of the soul, let him understand either that the soul is put forth for the man by the manner of the Scriptures, as it is said: these are the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob (Exodus 1); or that those miracles were performed for the health of the soul, or that the healing of the hand itself signified the health of the soul, which seemed to have a certain dry right hand, ceasing from good works (as I have foretold).

Luke 6:10

And looking around at all of them, He said to the man: Stretch out your hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The dry hand to be healed is commanded to be stretched out, because the barrenness of an unfruitful soul is cured by nothing better than the generosity of almsgiving. Hence John the Baptist, when asked by the crowds what they should do so as not to be cast into fire like barren trees, only gave this command: He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise (Luke 3). And in Ecclesiasticus, it is said: Son, let not your hand be extended to receive, and shut when it should be giving (Ecclesiasticus 4). For in vain does one stretch out his hand to God to pray for sins, who does not extend it to bring benefit to a begging widow.

Luke 6:11

But they themselves were filled with foolishness and conversed among themselves about what they might do to Jesus. Great foolishness indeed, consorting about the death of the Savior, when they themselves were in great need of salvation. Their devotion to wickedness is shown when they consider it a crime that a person restored his withered hand at His word. As though not each of them committed greater tasks on the Sabbath, by carrying food, extending a cup, and performing other necessary acts for sustenance. For neither could He who spoke and they were made be proven to have labored on the Sabbath. [Luke 6:12] -- But it happened in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray. Not everyone who prays ascends to the moun-

tain. For there is a prayer that brings about sin. But he who prays well, who seeks God in prayer, ascends from earthly things to higher things, reaching the peak of higher concern. But he who earnestly prays about riches, or worldly honor, or even about the death of an enemy, he, lying in the depths, sends vile prayers to God. The Lord, however, prays not for Himself, but to intercede for me. For even if the Father has put all things in the Son's power, the Son still deems it necessary to beseech the Father on our behalf because He is our advocate. For He says, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ" (1 John 2). If He is an advocate, He must intervene for my sins. Therefore, He pleads not as a weak person, but as a pious one. Do you want to know how capable He is of accomplishing everything He wishes? He is both advocate and judge. In one, the function of piety; in the other, the symbol of power.

Luke 6:12

And He was spending the night in prayer to God. A model is prescribed for you to emulate. What should you do for your own salvation when Christ spends the night in prayer for you? What should you do when you wish to undertake an office of piety, when Christ ensured to pray first before sending the apostles? Do you want to know how, He prayed for me, not for Himself? [Luke 6:13] -- And when day came, he says, he called his disciples, and chose twelve of them. It should be noted here that the Gospel and Apostolic Scripture not only calls those twelve the disciples of Christ, but also all who, believing in him, were instructed by his teaching toward the kingdom of heaven. For disciples are called so from learning, from whose multitude he chose those whom he himself wanted.

Luke 6:13

Whom he also named apostles. Apostles in Greek, in Latin means sent. Whose sacrament the evangelist Mark explains by name, saying: "And he made twelve to be with him, and to send them out to preach the Gospel." And the Lord himself says: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." The twelve are well chosen, in order to mystically commend also by their number the salvation of the world which they would preach by word. For three times four is twelve, a noble computation. Hence it is that, as I also said above, when Solomon built a temple to the Lord in the typology of the Church, he made a bronze sea in which the priests would wash, and placed it on the

backs of twelve oxen, three of which faced north, three west, three south, and three east, figuratively indicating that the apostles and their successors would cleanse all the regions of the world with the faith and confession of the Holy Trinity from the stain of sins.

Luke 6:14

Simon, whom he surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother. Not now for the first time did he give Simon the surname Peter, but long before, when, having been brought to him by his brother Andrew, he looked at him and said: "You are Simon, son of Jonah, you shall be called Cephas," which is translated as Peter (John I). But when Luke, wanting to enumerate the names of the twelve apostles, had to mention Peter, he wished to briefly note that he was not previously called by this name, but the Lord surnamed him thus, even though it was not then, but when John recorded the very words of the Lord, evidently making the listeners attentive. For if he had been previously called this, you would not see the mystery of the rock in the same way, thinking he was so named by chance, and not by God's providence. Therefore, he wished him to be called by another name first, so that through the very change of name, the liveliness of the sacrament might be commended. Therefore, in Latin it is Peter, in Syriac Cephas, and in both languages, the name is derived from rock, undoubtedly that which Paul said: "The rock was Christ" (1 Cor. X). For just as Christ, the true light, granted the apostles to be called the light of the world, so also to Simon, who believed in Christ the rock, he granted the name Peter. Referring to another etymology, he said:

"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. XVI). Hence, some violently seeking a Hebrew etymology for the Latin or Greek name say that Peter is interpreted as "one who loosens," or "one who takes off his shoes," or "one who recognizes," although both the exposition of John's Gospel, which I recalled, and the Hebrew language itself, which does not sound the P letter at all, testify that this name is not Hebrew. For those who abusively write Fetrum for Peter, as well as Faulum for Paul, and Filatum for Pilate, violently attach a false interpretation to a fictitious name. Simon, however, is interpreted as obedient. Moreover, Andrew is a Greek name, derived from ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρός, that is from "man," meaning manly. These names rightfully adorn the first of the apostles, who soon recognized the Lamb of God from John and took care to see and hear him. But the fact that Simon is interpreted as "putting aside sadness" or "hearing sorrow," fits that time

when, after the resurrection, having seen the Lord, he put aside the sadness of his death or his denial, but immediately heard the sorrow of his own death, with the Lord saying: "But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and lead you where you do not wish to go" (John XXI).

Luke 6:15

James, and John, Philip, and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. Luke fittingly and reverently, in the catalog of apostles, uses the name Matthew, but in the account of the calling from the tax office, as I previously noted, he preferred to call him Levi. He indeed is Matthew himself, as it is written: "Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified"; and he clearly calls Matthew from the tax office, and classifies himself as a publican in the order of apostles, but he also places himself under his fellow Thomas, though he is placed before him by the other evangelists. Certainly, James and John, who for their eminent virtue and spirit's peak, were called the sons of thunder, that is, Boanerges, or more correctly written, Banereem, by the Lord. Not in vain. One of whom, thundering from above, issued that theological voice, which none had known to utter before: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," etc. (John 1). Which he left filled with such power, that if he had chosen to thunder more, even the world itself could not have contained it. Yet both frequently separately, and led up the mountain by the Lord, sometimes deserved to hear the terrible voice from the cloud: "This is my beloved Son. They also bore ancient names most fitting to their merits. For James means supplanter. John, in whom there is grace, or is called the grace of the Lord.

For he joyfully supplanted the care of the flesh, when called by the Lord, and rejoiced to disdain the flesh itself when murdered by Herod. He, for the grace of unique love deserved by virginal glory, reclined on the breast of his Redeemer at the supper. Philip is interpreted as the mouth of the lamp. And rightly so, because when called by the Lord, having found Nathanael he immediately proclaimed the light he had recognized, saying: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. (John 1). And later, feeling his knowledge of the light was less, he earnestly asked: "Lord, show us the Father, and it will suffice us. (John 14). Bartholomew is a Syrian name, not Hebrew, and means the son of one who suspends the waters, that is, Son of God. Who suspends the minds of his

preachers to contemplate heavenly things, so that the higher they freely fly, the more richly they inebriate the hearts of earthly things with the drops of their words. Hence well does Moses speaking mystically of the Church say: "For the land to which you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where when seed is sown water is led in irrigation, but looking up for rains from heaven, which God visits at all times. For worldly wisdom crawls like a serpent on the ground, but divine wisdom thunders from above.

Matthew is called given, namely, because by the great gift of the Lord he was delegated from being a tax collector and publican to the office of an apostle and evangelist. Thomas, meaning abyss or twin. Thus, he is called Didymus in Greek, because by doubting longer than the others, he learned more deeply the truth of the Lord's resurrection. About whom Paulinus the Bishop of Nola beautifully sang: This Thomas, doubtful and named Didymus, lay down, Christ allowed him to doubt with a trembling mind, For our faith, so that, strengthened by this guide, And trembling, we may confess that the true Jesus Lives after death, showing the wounds on his living flesh.

Luke 6:15

James of Alphaeus, and Simon who is called the Zealot. These he placed with an addition, to distinguish them from James of Zebedee and Simon Peter, or even Judas the traitor. For John also shows that this Simon was called, who said: And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot. And James indeed of Alphaeus, he is the one who in the Gospel is called the brother of the Lord, because Mary, the wife of Alphaeus, was the sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord, whom John the Evangelist also calls Mary of Cleophas. Perhaps because Alphaeus was also called Cleophas, or Mary herself, after the death of Alphaeus, married Cleophas after James was born. The ecclesiastical history records that she gave birth to a son Simeon, who being the cousin of the Lord, because Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, ruled the church in Jerusalem after James; whether this apostle Simon, or any other Simeon it may have been. Because indeed James, deservedly called the son of Alphaeus, that is, the learned one, the apostles testify, who immediately made him bishop of Jerusalem after the Lord's passion. Because even before the shedding of blood, he himself is also shown to be a true supplanter of carnal desire, attested by Hegesippus, the historian

near the times of the apostles. He says, James was received by the church of Jerusalem after the apostles, the brother of the Lord, surnamed the Just.

Many indeed are called James, but this one was called holy from his mother's womb, he drank no wine or strong drink, ate no flesh, was never shaved, nor anointed with oil, nor used a bath. To him it was customary to enter the Holy of Holies. Indeed, he did not wear woolen clothes, but linen, and he alone entered into the temple, and with knees fixed, he prayed for the people. So much so that his knees were believed to have acquired the hardness of camels. But Simon the Zealot, he is also Simon the Canaanite from the village of Cana in Galilee, where the Lord turned the water into wine. For Cana indeed means zeal, and Canaanite interprets as Zealot.

Luke 6:16

Judas of James, and Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor. And for the sake of distinction, he doubled the names. One of whom, as he himself writes in the catholic Epistle, is the brother of James, who was also called Thaddaeus. The other took his name either from the village in which he was born, or from the tribe of Issachar as a premonition of his condemnation. For Issachar, which means "reward," hints at the price of betrayal. But Iscariot, which is interpreted as "memory of death," shows that he did not suddenly decide, but meditated longer on committing the sin of betraying the Lord. He was chosen among the apostles not by imprudence but providence. How great is the truth, which even an adversarial minister cannot weaken? How great is the morality of the Lord, who preferred to risk His judgment among us rather than His affection? For He had taken on human frailty, and therefore did not refuse even these parts of human weakness. He wanted to be deserted, wanted to be betrayed, wanted to be handed over by His own apostle, so that you, deserted by a companion, betrayed by a companion, might bear your misjudgment and lost benefit with moderation.

Luke 6:17

And he descended with them and stood on a level place, and a crowd of his disciples, and a great multitude of people. The Lord went up into the mountains to choose the apostles, but he returned to the plains to teach the crowds, for the crowds can only see Christ in humility. For this is the standard which the Apostle followed when he said: I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as carnal ones. As infants in Christ, I fed you with milk,

not solid food. For you were not yet able, but even now you are not able (I Cor. III). However, the apostles themselves, according to Matthew, being more perfect, are said to have been taught both on the mountain and with the mouth of the Savior open. Where, if anyone wishes to examine both evangelists more carefully, it can be understood that when on the mountain he chose the twelve disciples from among the many, whom he also named apostles, which Matthew omitted, then he delivered the address which Matthew included and Luke omitted, that is, on the mountain. And then when he descended, in the level place he delivered another similar address, about which Matthew was silent, but Luke was not, and both addresses concluded in the same way.

Luke 6:17

From all Judaea and Jerusalem and the maritime regions, and Tyre and Sidon, etc. I consider the maritime multitude not to be from the nearby Sea of Galilee (for he would not place this among miraculous locations), but from the great sea, in which even Tyre and Sidon could be included. Truly, because they are cities of the Gentiles, given indeed to the Jews by lot, but not possessed by them, since the enemies could not be exterminated, they are specifically mentioned by name, so that the fame and power of the Savior may be hinted at, which summon even foreign cities to obtain health and doctrine. It should be noted here that although the Lord had mercy on the Gentiles coming to him, as he healed the centurion's boy and the daughter of the Canaanite woman upon approving their faith, he is not found to have entered their cities, lest he provide a reason for complaint to the fault-finding Jews, but he rather reserved the perfect salvation of the Gentiles for the time of his passion and resurrection. When that time was imminent, and the Gentiles sought to see him, he said: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit (John XII).

Luke 6:19

And all the crowd sought to touch him, because power went out from him and healed all. And before, the leper was cleansed by the Lord's touch, and here, the whole crowd that could touch him is healed by the power of his spirit. The touch of the Savior, therefore, is the work of salvation. To touch him is to believe in him faithfully. To be touched by him is to be

strengthened by his gift. But each person abounds in their own understanding. The crowds that come from afar to hear are cured by the touch of the Lord descending into the plain. The disciples who are already trained in lesser things are brought to greater things upon the mountaintop. From these, there are also chosen those who will secretly witness his transfiguration on the mount. One above all, as if to be inebriated from the fountain of higher wisdom, rests upon the master's chest. And you will rarely find either crowds following the Lord to higher things, or anyone sick being cured on the mount, but with the fever of lust extinguished, and the light of knowledge kindled, each one gradually climbs to the pinnacle of virtues. For in the Old Testament, Moses alone ascended the mountain of God with Joshua; to govern the people in the plain until they returned, he appointed Aaron and Hur. Aaron, indeed, who is interpreted as "mountain of strength," signifies the unparalleled excellence of the Lord's Incarnation. Hur, who is called "fire," represents the gift of the Holy Spirit. For many in the Church, though they cannot accompany the teachers to penetrate the mysteries of the highest Divinity, can nonetheless be redeemed by the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation and be marked by the fervor of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 6:20

And he, lifting his eyes towards his disciples, said, Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. And although he speaks generally to all, yet he more specifically lifts his eyes towards the disciples, so that to those who perceive the word with the attentive ear of the heart, he may more broadly reveal the light of inward savor. This is similar to what Matthew says: And when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. V). For those to whom he opens his mouth while sitting on the mountain to hear lofty things, he directs his eyes standing in the plain, so that they may plainly understand what they have heard. Therefore, blessed are the poor. Certainly not all, but only those who regard all the heights of the present age as nothing, even if they may seem lofty. Who are rightly deemed worthy of the gift of the heavenly kingdom, because they are found to be stripped of the desire for human delight. Such poverty as King David, declaring the poverty he endured, said: But I am poor and needy. And elsewhere, not only considering earthly things as trivial, but even the heavenly ones for the Lord's sake, saying: For what is there for me in heaven, and what have I desired on earth be-

sides thee (Psalm LXXII)? Soon, when he had fixed the anchor of his hope, he manifests by adding: But for me it is good to cling to God, to put my trust in the Lord God. Otherwise, some in the most wretched condition of poverty, both here lack the joys of the world due to the scarcity of things, and there lack the kingdom of God due to the wickedness of their deeds.

Luke 6:21

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Matthew explains what it means to hunger, that is, to thirst for righteousness. He teaches us very clearly that we should never consider ourselves sufficiently righteous, but should always love and even burn for daily progress in righteousness. The Psalmist, burning with desire for heavenly things, shows that perfect satisfaction cannot come in this age but in the future, saying: As for me, I shall appear in righteousness before your face; I shall be satisfied when your glory is revealed (Psalm 17:15). It can also simply be understood: Blessed are you who hunger now, who discipline your body and make it a slave (1 Corinthians 9:27), who give yourselves to the word in hunger and thirst (2 Corinthians 11:27), because you will then enjoy the fullness of heavenly joys.

Luke 6:21

Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Those who weep not for the losses of temporal goods but for the detriment of spiritual virtues will be consoled by eternal bliss. Here we are commanded not only to weep for our own sins but also for the sins of our neighbors. If we love them as ourselves, we must consequently rejoice at their progress and grieve at their failings; and not only grieve but be moved to tears. Thus Samuel and David mourned the sin and death of Saul. Thus the Lord Himself wept over the sinful city, and, moved with compassion for the grieving sisters, wept over Lazarus, whom He was to resurrect by His divine majesty, showing human pity first. Mystically, this signifies that those who are dead in sin should be mourned by their neighbors so that they may revive. The promise that those who weep now will laugh should not be understood childishly; in the language of Scripture, laughter signifies inner exaltation and joy of the mind. As Sarah said: God has brought me laughter (Genesis 21:6). And in Job it is said: The lips of the truthful shall be filled with laughter. By these names, as I said, the inward joy of the soul is depicted.

Luke 6:22

Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they separate you, and reproach you. He who for the sake of the wealth of the inheritance of Christ in the saints, for the sake of the bread of eternal life, and for the hope of the heavenly joys, desires to suffer weeping, hunger, and poverty, is blessed. But much more blessed is he who does not fear to keep these virtues amidst adversities. For although men may hate with a wicked heart, they cannot harm the beloved heart of Christ. Let them separate and expel from the synagogue, Christ will find and strengthen. Let them reproach the name of the Crucified, He Himself raises the dead with Him and makes them sit in the heavenly places (Ephesians II). [Luke 6:22] -- And they will cast out your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. The name he says signifies the name of Christians, which, as far as their memory goes, has very often been erased and cast out by the Gentiles and Jews, with no longer any cause for hatred except for the Son of Man, because, evidently, believers would want to make the name of Christ their own surname; and therefore the persecutors of the highest name are, not unjustly, marked by the name of men. Blessed (He says) are you when men hate you, teaching them that they will be harassed by men, but will be blessed beyond men.

Luke 6:23

Rejoice in that day, and exult. For behold, your reward is great in heaven. This command can be fulfilled not by anyone suffering, but by him who suffers solely with a view to the heavenly reward. Thus, amidst the hatred of hearts, amidst the insults of tongues, amidst the very hands of persecutors, one can remain with an equally, or even more joyful heart. Not to this are those like us capable, but those who went rejoicing from the presence of the council, because they were deemed worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus (Acts V). Therefore, whoever endures many adversities on earth for Christ, will receive many gifts in heaven from Christ. However, how many javelins of words did the false prophets endure from Elijah, who, mocking them, said: Shout with a louder voice: For Baal is a god, perhaps he is talking, or he is in an inn, or on a journey, or certainly he is sleeping, so that he must be awakened (1 Kings XVIII). What a great massacre did those who were eight hundred and fifty in number suffer when they were all killed! But be-

cause Baal and not Christ was the cause, neither did the mocked ones rejoice, nor did the slain ones deserve a palm, but an eternal punishment.

Luke 6:23

For such things their fathers did to the prophets. He encouraged well by example, because those who speak the truth usually suffer persecution. Nevertheless, the ancient prophets did not fail in their preaching of truth out of fear of persecution. It should be noted indeed that just as Matthew, through the eight beatitudes he set forth, insinuates the eighth as the perfection of our hope dedicated to the glory of the resurrection, so Luke embraces the four cardinal virtues. For blessed are the poor, who are restrained from the enticements of the world through temperance. Blessed are the hungry, who, reminded by their own hunger, show mercy to the hungry, and themselves show mercy through justice as much as they can. For the alms which we give to Christ, not out of our own, but as His, the Psalmist rightly testifies as being called justice, saying: He has distributed to the poor; his justice endures forever (Psalm 111). For it is justice when we give what is rightfully due to each, owing no one anything except to love each other. Blessed are those who, through prudence, discern good from evil, who mourn for what is transitory, and long for what is eternal. Blessed are those who, through fortitude of faith, are able to endure all hardships. Thus, those who are not yet able to ascend the pinnacle of consummate virtue, are to be cherished with the blessedness of general perfection.

So that, progressing gradually from good to better, while they willingly listen to the Lord who stands on the plain, they may someday ascend to Him who sits on the mountain in sublimity. For those whose hearts He is still taming and instructing, He addresses them as one standing, which is the position of laboring. But those He finds ready and teachable from long spiritual exercise, He, in the freedom and dignity of the teacher, seated as the peaceful Savior, imparts mystical things of the higher realms. This difference in spiritual progress is beautifully expressed in the attire of the Israelite people. Where all the common folk, using whatever garments, are commanded to make for themselves fringes of blue in the four corners of their garments. Priests are to have four garments, distinguished in wonderful variety by as many mystical colors. And high priests are to bear both what the priests have and four other kinds of garments, of the same colors, but with greater dignified grace, interspersed with glittering gold, and bearing the name of the

patriarchs and of the Lord Himself. To explain or even to merely present these details pertains to the diligence of its own work.

Luke 6:24

However, woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. The fact that woe will come to the rich is better understood by contrast, where it is said that the kingdom of God belongs to the poor. Those who seek consolation here in every way alienate themselves from that kingdom, hearing from the just judge: "Children, remember that you received good things in your lifetime" (Luke 16). It should be noted here that it is not so much the riches, but the love of riches that is at fault. For not everyone who has riches, but as Ecclesiastes says: "Those who love riches will not benefit from them" (Eccl. 5), because those who do not know how to disdain temporal things or to give them to the poor, indeed delight in their use for the present, but will lack the benefit that could be obtained by giving in the future. And elsewhere we read: "Blessed is the rich person who is found without blemish, who has not gone after gold, nor hoped in money and treasures" (Eccl. 31).

Luke 6:25

Woe to you who are full now, for you shall hunger (Luke 6:25). The rich man clothed in purple was full when he feasted sumptuously every day, but he endured a dire woe when he was hungry and sought a drop of water from the finger of Lazarus, whom he had despised. Another interpretation is that if those who hunger always for the works of justice are blessed, in contrast, those who are pleased with their own desires, suffering no hunger for the true and steadfast good, must be considered unfortunate, thinking themselves blessed if they are not deprived of their pleasure for the moment. [Luke 6:25] -- Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. And Solomon says: "Laughter will be mixed with pain, and the end of joy is sorrow" (Prov. 14). And again: "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth" (Eccl. 7). Clearly teaching that foolishness is to be assigned to those laughing, and wisdom, as we have taught above, to those who are always weeping.

Luke 6:26

Woe when all men speak well of you. This is what the Psalmist laments, because the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul, and he who does unjust

things is blessed (Psalms Hebr. X). For whom it is not the least part of the punishment that his crimes are not only not censured, but are moreover praised as well done. Hence the Lord prudently does not say: Woe, because men speak well of you, as if the fault should be followed by the punishment at some other time, but woe (he says) when all men speak well of you. Because the flattery itself is the nurse of sin; just as oil to flames, so it is usually the fuel supplied to those burning in guilt, and certainly it is the greatest punishment of sinners. For just as the hungry and weeping poor ought to be weighed down by the wickedness of evildoers, so those indulging in riches, feasts, and laughter are by the anger of a strict judge more fueled by their courtiers to greater punishment.

Luke 6:26

For such things indeed did their fathers do to the prophets. He means false prophets, who are also often called prophets in sacred scripture, because they seek the favor of the people by predicting the future, that is, by attempting to foretell it. Hence Ezekiel says: Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing. Like foxes in the deserts, your prophets were, O Israel (Ezek. XIII). Therefore the Lord on the mount sets forth the blessings only of the good, but in the plain he describes also the woes of the reprobate. Because as yet uncultivated listeners must necessarily be driven to good through threats and fears, but the perfect may be sufficiently invited by rewards. [Luke 6:27] -- But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Because He had said earlier what they might suffer from their enemies, now He shows in what way they themselves ought to act towards these same enemies. Many, however, think it is enough virtue not to hate enemies, but to love them is commanded as more than what human nature can bear, not seeing that Moses, Samuel, and Stephen prayed for their enemies, and David mourned his dead enemies. For the Lord does not command impossibilities, but perfection. Therefore, not faltering while there is time, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Luke 6:28

Bless those who curse you, pray for those who slander you. And the Apostle testifies that he and his like have done this, saying: We are reviled, and we bless. We are persecuted, and we endure it (I Cor. IV). But here the question

arises, how this command of the Lord is not opposed to the fact that many imprecations against enemies, which are considered curses, are found in the prophets, such as: Let their table become a snare before them, and other things said there. The apostle John says: If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death, I do not say that he should pray about that. First, it must be seen that the prophets, by way of imprecation, sang what was to come, not by the will of the one wishing, but by the spirit of foreseeing, who are accustomed to predict future things in the figure of one who is imprecating, just as often they sang of things to come in the figure of past time. Second, it must be understood from the words of the Apostle that there are certain brothers for whom we are not commanded to pray, since the Lord also commands us to pray even for our persecutors. This question cannot be resolved unless we admit that there are some sins among the brothers graver than the persecution by enemies.

That brothers, however, signifies Christians can be proven by many teachings of the divine Scriptures. Therefore, I believe the sin of a brother leading to death is when, after the knowledge of God by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, someone opposes the brotherhood, and against the very grace by which he was reconciled to God, he is agitated with the flames of envy. However, the sin not leading to death is if someone has not alienated love from a brother but has not exhibited the duties of brotherhood due to some weakness of mind. Wherefore the Lord also said on the cross: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke XXIII). For they had not yet become partakers of the grace of the Holy Spirit, nor had they entered the fellowship of holy brotherhood. And blessed Stephen prays for those who were stoning him, because they had not yet believed in Christ, nor were they fighting against that common grace. And for this reason, I believe, the apostle Paul does not pray for Alexander because he was already a brother, and had sinned to death, i.e., oppressing the brotherhood with envy. But for those who had not broken off love but had succumbed out of fear, he prays that they be forgiven. So he says: Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works; you too must beware of him, for he has greatly withstood our words (II Tim. IV). Then he adds, for whom he prays, saying:

At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them (Ibid.). This is the distinction of sins, separating Judas who betrayed from Peter who denied.

Luke 6:29

If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. He does not say, do not strike the one who strikes you, although this is also a great commandment, but he says: prepare yourself to be struck again. This pertains to mercy, as understood especially by those who serve like fathers, or those who serve those dearest to them, such as sick ones, little ones, or the mentally disturbed, from whom they often suffer many things. And if their health requires it, they even offer themselves to suffer more, until the weakness of age or illness passes. Therefore, the Lord, the physician of souls, instructed those who would heal others, what else could he teach them but to bear with the infirmities of those whose health they wish to care for with a calm mind? For all wickedness comes from weakness of spirit, because nothing is more innocent than one who is perfect in virtue. Many know how to offer the other cheek, but do not know how to love the one who strikes them. But the Lord himself, who certainly first fulfilled the precepts he taught, did not offer the other cheek to the servant of the priest who struck him, but moreover said: If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me? (John XVIII). Yet he was not unprepared in heart, not only to be struck on the other cheek for the salvation of all, but even to be crucified with his whole body.

Luke 6:29

And from one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. What has been said about the cloak and tunic is not just about these, but should apply to all things which we say are temporarily ours by some right. For if this has been commanded about necessities, how much more fitting it is to disdain superfluities. [Luke 6:30] -- To everyone who asks of you, give. He says, to everyone who asks, not to everyone requesting everything, but to give that which you can give honorably and justly. For what if he asks for money to oppress the innocent? What if in the end, he asks for a disgraceful act? But without going into many details, which are innumerable, certainly that should be given which neither harms you nor another, as far as can be known or believed by man. And to whom you have justly denied what he

asks for, the justice itself should be indicated, so that you do not send him away empty-handed. Thus, you will grant to everyone who asks of you, though not always that which is requested, you will grant. And sometimes you will grant something better, when you correct one asking for unjust things.

Luke 6:30

And from him who takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. He speaks of clothing, house, estate, beast of burden, and generally of all money. However, whether this should apply to slaves is a great question. For a Christian ought not to possess a slave in the same manner as a horse or silver. Although it may happen that a horse is worth more than a slave, and something golden or silver far more. But if that slave is being educated or governed more correctly, honorably, and in a manner more fitting to God's worship by you the master, than by the one who desires to take him away, I do not know whether anyone would dare say that he should be disregarded like a garment. For a man ought to love his fellow man as himself, upon whom the Lord of all commands also to love even enemies.

Luke 6:31

And as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise. Because charity is patient, kind, it not only bravely endures the injuries of an enemy but also most graciously anticipates the kindness of a friend. For reciprocating the love of a lover, nature taught all. But to compel someone who does not love to love through benefits, only the perfect doctrine of Christ has taught. When He commanded us first to do to others as we would have done to us, He immediately confirmed the same notion more broadly, saying:

Luke 6:32

And if you love those who love you, what grace is it to you? For even sinners love those who love them, etc. If even sinners, publicans, and pagans know how to be kind to their lovers, led by nature, how much more must you (he says) who, as your profession is nobler, so is the necessity that your virtue be more abundant, embrace with broader affection even those who do not love? Whence it seems worthy of inquiry how, when the Lord testifies that those who love only those who love them, do good only to those who do good to them, lend only to friends, not only do not have perfect charity but are

equated with sinners, that beloved disciple who leaned on Jesus' chest, concluding his Epistle on the love of God and neighbor, nowhere admonishes to love enemies, but absolutely says: Because if we love one another, God abides in us, and God's love is perfected in us (1 John 4). And if this troubles anyone, let them know that he did not omit the love of enemies, but also included them under the name of brothers and instructed that they should be loved with the perspective of brotherly love and that prayers should be offered for them. Certainly, that they may not always remain enemies but may come to their senses from the snares of the devil and be united to us in a genuine covenant.

Nor should it seem harsh that we say those who do not yet believe can be called brothers because of the hope that they will believe. For the same John is recorded to call them children of God. Because Jesus (he says) was about to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but that He might gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad (John 11). For as long as they are scattered, they are not yet children of God, but by coming together in one, they are made children.

Luke 6:35

Nonetheless, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. For the love and benefit of mutual sinners, which is fruitless, now shows how these should be fruitfully done by the faithful. Indeed, anyone who receives borrows, even if he himself is not to repay. For when God restores more to the merciful, everyone who offers a benefit lends. Or if it is not pleasing to accept the borrower, except him who is to repay, it is to be understood that the Lord has embraced these two kinds of giving. For we either give as a gift what we give benevolently or we lend to someone who will repay. Because many (as it is written) have considered interest a gain and have made a nuisance of themselves to those who help them, many have not lent out of wickedness but feared to be defrauded without charge. The divine authority also remedies this weakness, saying: And lend, expecting nothing in return (Luke VI). That is, not fixing the hope of reward on man. For whether he repays what you have lent, or God repays what you did at His command, your inheritance will be eternal. For the sinner borrows and does not repay, but the righteous is merciful and lends (Psalm CXI). For those who bless him shall possess the land (Psalm XXXVI). And elsewhere when he

said: The man who is gracious and lends, he shall be remembered forever (Psalm CXI).

Luke 6:35

And your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. No greater reward can there be than for the sons of men, born of the earth, to become the sons of the Most High, who is in the heavens. Therefore, what he says: And you will be sons of the Most High, is to be understood from that rule by which John also says: He gave them power to become children of God. For there is one who is naturally the Son, who does not know sin at all. But we, having received the power, are made sons, to the extent that we fulfill those things commanded by him. Hence the apostolic discipline calls it adoption, by which we are called into eternal inheritance, so that we might be co-heirs. Therefore, he does not say: Do these things because you are sons, but do these things, and you will be sons. When, however, he calls us to this through the Only Begotten, he calls us to his likeness.

Luke 6:35

Because he himself is kind (he says) to the ungrateful and the wicked, etc. God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked, either by his manifold mercy, by which he even saves animals, granting temporal goods, or by the singular grace of heavenly gifts, by which he glorifies only the elect, inspiring them. But whether you understand this, or that, or both, it is done by the great goodness of God, which is commanded to us to imitate, if we wish to be sons of God.

Luke 6:37

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. I believe nothing else is commanded to us in this place, except that we interpret acts, whose intention is doubtful, in a better sense. For it is written: By their fruits you shall know them, this is said of manifest things, which cannot be done with a good intention, such as debaucheries, or blasphemies, or thefts, or drunkenness, and such things, about which it is permitted for us to judge. However, concerning foods, because any human food can be taken indifferently without fault of concupiscence with a good intention and simple heart, the Apostle prohibits us from judging those who ate meat and drank wine, by those who abstained from such foods. He who eats (he says) should not despise the one who does not eat; and he who does

not eat should not judge the one who eats (Rom. XIV). This also pertains to what he says elsewhere: Do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will also illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts (I Cor. IV). Therefore, there are certain actions, which we do not know with what intention they are done, which can be done with both good and bad intentions, about which it is rash to judge, especially to condemn. The time will come, however, for these to be judged, when the Lord will illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and reveal the counsels of the hearts (Ibid.). There are two things, however, in which we should avoid rash judgment, when it is uncertain with what intention anything is done, or when it is uncertain what someone will become, who now appears either good or evil.

Luke 6:37

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. He commands us to forgive injuries, to give benefits, so that our sins may also be forgiven, and eternal life may be given to us. By this, brief but excellent sentence, he comprehensively concludes all the commands about dealing with enemies that he had given extensively. [Luke 6:38] -- A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. This is similar to what he says elsewhere: That they may receive you into eternal dwellings (Luke 16). For it is not the poor themselves, but Christ who will give the reward to those who have given alms. Nevertheless, they are said to give it into the bosom because they provided the occasion for that merit, either by being pitiable in need or by being harsh in insolence, the stronger enduring them with patience and supporting them with kindness, and sometimes calling them sweetly to the faith.

Luke 6:38

For the same measure you use will be measured to you. And the Apostle, urging the Corinthians to give alms, says among other things: "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9). It can also be understood of all things we do in mind, by hand, or with tongue. "Because you will render to each," he says, "according to their deeds." [Luke 6:39] -- He also gave them this parable: Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? The sense of this saying depends on the preceding, where he instructs

about giving alms and forgiving injury. If (he says) anger against the violent and greed against the petitioner has blinded you, can you cure his fault with your corrupted mind? Or will not only he who committed the injury but also you, who could not endure it, be considered guilty? But if his wickedness finds you gentle and with a tranquil heart, both he will be moved to repentance, and you will be given the reward of patience, because you are endeavoring to lead the blind with a seeing eye—that is, a serene heart—towards the light.

Luke 6:40

A disciple is not above his teacher. But everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. If the teacher, who could almost like God, did not seek to avenge his own injuries but preferred to make his pursuers gentler by enduring them, it is necessary that disciples, who are pure humans, follow that rule of perfection. [Luke 6:41] -- Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye? And this looks back to the previous point, where it was warned that a blind man cannot lead a blind man, that is, a sinner cannot chastise another sinner. For many, out of pride, or hatred, or love of money, or greed, or any other crime, judging these things as trivial or nothing, very harshly rebuke those whom they see disturbed by sudden anger, as if the eye of the mind has changed from its usual state of purity, like a speck suddenly falling in, and forgetful of the Lord's precept, which says: "Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned" (Luke 6), they prefer to blame and condemn rather than amend and correct.

Luke 6:42

And how can you say to your brother: Brother, let me cast out the speck from your eye, when you yourself do not see the beam in your own eye? You do this with your brother if (for example), what he sins by anger, you criticize by hatred. And just as a beam is to a speck, so is hatred to anger. For hatred is anger long-standing, which with the passage of time has so grown that it is rightly called a beam. It can happen that if you are angry with a man, you wish him to be corrected. But if you hate a man, you cannot wish him to be corrected. And therefore it is said to be impossible for one to remove the speck from his brother's eye who carries the beam in his own eye.

Luke 6:42

Hypocrite, first take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. That is, first expel hatred from yourself, and then you will be able to correct the one whom you love. And it is truly necessary and troublesome to beware of the hypocrites, that is, the disguised kind, who take up accusations of all vices with hatred and envy, and also want to seem advisers. And therefore it is necessary to carefully and piously watch so that when necessity begins to blame or reprove someone, we first think whether it is a vice we never had or one from which we have already abstained. And if we never had it, let us think that we too are human, and could have had it. If indeed we had it and do not have it now, let common weakness touch memory, so that the reproof or correction is preceded not by hatred but by mercy. So that whether it works for his correction, for which we do it, or to his confusion (since the outcome is uncertain), we may be secure in the simplicity of our own eye. But if thinking to ourselves we find that we are in the same vice as the one whom we intended to reprove, let us not reprove or correct but rather sigh and invite him to strive together, not so that he conforms to us. Therefore, reproofs should be used rarely and with great necessity, yet in such a way that in these very matters we urge not ourselves but to serve God; for He is the end, to do nothing with a double heart, removing the beam of envy, malice, or disguise from our eye, so that we may see to take the speck out of our brother's eye.

Luke 6:43

For a good tree does not produce bad fruit; nor does a bad tree produce good fruit. He continues against the hypocrite he began with. If you want, he says, to have true and not feigned righteousness, what you show in words also care to compensate with deeds, that being a good tree, you may be adorned with good fruits. For even if the hypocrite pretends, he is not good who does bad deeds. And if he reprehends the innocent, he is not therefore evil who does good deeds. [Luke 6:44] -- For each tree is known by its own fruit. Which fruit it is by which a tree should be distinguished as good or evil, the Apostle shows, saying: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, quarrels, jealousies, wraths, strifes, dissensions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and such like. I forewarn you, as I have forewarned you, that those who do

such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continence (Galatians 5). Furthermore, almsgiving, or prayer, or fasting, are indeed properly fruits of the good, but sometimes are simulated and even usurped by the wicked. About these the Lord says: "For they have received their reward" (Matthew 6). And elsewhere: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7). But for this reason, sheep should not hate their clothing, because wolves often hide themselves with it, showing one thing to deceive, and another to prey upon or kill those who cannot see the wolves under this sheep's clothing. Therefore, it is not this fruit by which he warns the tree should be known, but that which is shown above.

Luke 6:44

For they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they harvest grapes from a bramble. I think thorns and the bramble are the cares of the world and the pricks of vices, about which it was said to the sinful man: Your land will produce thorns and thistles for you (Gen. III). But the fig and the grape, the sweetness of a new way of life which the Lord hungered for in us, and the fervor of love, which gladdens the heart of man. About which, with the Gospel shining, the voice of the turtledove resonates far and wide on the earth, the fig tree has put forth its figs, the flowering vines have given their fragrance (Cant. II). But figs are not gathered from thorns, nor grapes from a bramble. Because a mind still oppressed by the habit of the old man can pretend, but cannot bear the fruit of the new man. But if anyone wishes to object and say that Moses harvested a grape from a bramble when he received useful counsel from a gentile relative, and that they gathered figs from thorns, to whom it was said about the Pharisees: Do what they say, but do not do what they do (Matth. XXIII); let them know that just as a true vine sometimes reclines entangled in a hedge, bearing its fruit, the thorn does not keep its fruit for human use, so the words or actions of the wicked, if they sometimes profit the good, it is not the wicked who make this happen, but it is done by the providence of the supreme plan.

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil. The same treasure of the

heart, which is the root of the tree. And what is brought forth from the heart, is the same as the fruit of the tree. Therefore, he who possesses the treasure of patience and perfect love in his heart, undoubtedly bringing forth the best fruits, loves his enemy, does good to the one who hates him, blesses the one who curses him, prays for the one who slanders him, does not oppose the one who strikes him or takes his things, gives to everyone who asks, does not demand back his own once taken, desires not to judge, not to condemn, corrects the erring patiently and lovingly, and other things which the Savior taught above. But he who keeps an evil treasure in his heart, hates his friend, curses the one who loves him, curses the one who blesses him, and performs other things contrary to the good treasure, as the Lord's word rebukes. So that he may not flatter himself in vain for what follows:

Luke 6:45

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. As if not the fruit of the tree, but leaves, that is, words alone, and not more so deeds, of either the true Christian or the hypocrite are sought, consequently the Lord adds: [Luke 6:46] -- Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? As if he were saying in other words: Why do you boast of producing the leaves of correct confession, you who show no fruits of good works? From which the Apostle, separating the precious from the vile, that is, the good treasure from the bad, the good tree from the bad, the perfect disciple of a good teacher from a hypocrite, the seeing guide from the blind one, said: "But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1 Corinthians 4). Therefore, through the speech of the mouth, the Lord signifies everything that we bring forth from the heart by deed, word, or thought, which are more than what is nakedly and openly said to men before his eyes. For it is also the custom of the Scriptures to put words in place of things. Hence the Psalmist says: "Say to my soul, 'I am your salvation'" (Psalm 35). And Hezekiah: "There was nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them" (Isaiah 39). Surely he revealed to the Chaldeans the secrets of things, not words. Likewise, the Apostle: "And no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12). For as he meant to say, no one perceives the Lord Jesus by understanding, no one embraces him by will, except through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 6:47

Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a house. The Lord has spoken much above about openly good or evil things and has discussed much about truly and hypocritically good things, by which three persons I think the whole class of humans is comprehended. He concludes his whole speech with a simultaneously terrifying and delightful parable, by which he likens some listeners of the word to the devil, others to Christ, each of whom never ceases building his own house in the subjection of men throughout the whole time of this age. Therefore, whoever hears and does Christ's words will be compared to Christ. Because just as Christ builds, instructs, and governs one universal church for himself out of various persons, dedicating it sometime to eternal life, so too does the useful listener, according to his own measure, advance towards the heights through various pursuits of virtues, building for himself a dwelling of eternal habitation, in the present busily working to shape, polish, and bind together the stones with the glue of charity, but in the future rejoicing in the dedication with Christ.

Luke 6:48

He who digs deep and laid the foundation upon the rock. When foundations are given in the plural in the mystery of the Church, they signify the teachers, of whom it is said: "Her foundation is in the holy mountains" (Psalm 86). But when the foundation is given in the singular, Christ Himself is expressed as the teacher of teachers and the foundation of all foundations. Of whom it is said: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3). Therefore, this foundation was laid not upon the earth, but upon a rock by the wise architect because the minds of sublime men were established by Christ, not in earthly desires, but in His invincible faith, hope, and charity. But the rock (he says) was Christ (1 Cor. 10). He who digs deep because by the precepts of humility he tears out all earthly things from the hearts of the faithful, lest they serve God for some lowly or temporal advantage. Morally, the foundations of the house are the intentions of good conversation, which the perfect hearer of the word, having cleared away by Christian humility the debris of vain and fragile thoughts, firmly inserts in the fulfillment of Christ's commandments. This he does, namely, with Christ specially cooperating within himself, which Christ generally does in

the universal Church. Rejoicing with the Psalmist: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, etc." (Psalm 40).

Luke 6:48

However, when the flood came, it struck that house, and it could not move it. For it was founded upon a rock. The flood of the river, which elsewhere he calls the gates of hell, saying: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. XVI); it is the same thing of which he mentioned above: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they separate you, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil" (Luke VI). These firm corners of the Church, although they rush upon them, could not, however, destroy them. Because they rejoiced on that day and exulted, thus encouraging each other against the rage of the waves: "Behold, we bless those who have endured. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord" (James V). And again: "The river's rush makes glad the city of God, the Most High sanctified his tabernacle. God is in her midst; she shall not be moved" (Psalm XLV). But also, according to the laws of tropology, the separate houses of ours are daily beaten by either unclean spirits, or wicked men, or by the very restlessness of their own mind or body, and they are leaned as much as they trust in their own strength. But as much as they adhere to that invincible rock, they cannot be shaken.

Luke 6:49

But he who has heard and not done is like a man building his house upon the earth without a foundation. The house of the devil, the world which is placed in the wicked one, is called not by the dignity of the Creator but by the magnitude of the delinquent. He builds it upon the earth because he drags those who obey him from the heavens to the earthly. He builds without a foundation because every sin does not have a foundation, so that it does not subsist by its own nature. For evil truly is without substance, which however in some way exists, coalesces in the nature of the good. Since the foundation is truly said to be from the bottom, we can also not unreasonably take the foundation as placed for the bottom. Just as hearing is said from the ear, and yet often the very ear itself is designated by the name of hearing. Therefore, just as he who sinks into a well is held by the bottom of the well,

so the soul, as if it were standing in a certain place at the bottom when falling, would, if once fallen, retain itself in some measure of sin. But since it cannot be content with the sin in which it slips, while it is daily cast into worse, it does not find a bottom in the well into which it has fallen, as is figured. Hence it is well said elsewhere:

When the wicked man has come into the depths of evils, he despises (Prov. XVIII). For he feigns to return because he despairs that he can be shown mercy. But when he sins more by despairing, he, as it were, removes the bottom from his well, lest he might find where he could be held. Therefore, he who hears the words of Christ and does not do them, whether initiated into the mysteries of Christ or wholly alien from Christ, because he builds himself badly, is like a foolish man of whom it is said: An enemy has done this (Matt. XIII).

Luke 6:49

Into which the river crashed, and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great. It is clear that with the onset of any temptation, both the truly wicked and the falsely good soon become worse, until at last they slip into eternal punishment. Moreover, it should be said morally that each person is tempted by their own lust, drawn away and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Also, the extreme judgment at the last day can be understood through the rush of the river, when, both houses having been completed, all who exalt themselves shall be humbled, and those who humble themselves shall be exalted; and the wicked shall go, not only people but also angels who belonged to the devil's house, into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25).

CHAPTER 7

Luke 7:1

When he had completed all his words in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. Here it must be understood that, when he had indeed completed all his words in the hearing of the people, Christ entered Capernaum, meaning that he did not enter before these words had been finished, but it is not stated after what interval of time, once he had finished these discourses, he entered Capernaum. Within that interval, that leper was cleansed whom Matthew interposes in his own place, but this one anticipates before-

hand. [Luke 7:2] -- Now a certain centurion's servant, who was sick and about to die, who was precious to him. Someone might ask, either piously to find out or impiously to criticize, on what grounds the evangelist said of a servant who was not dead but was healed that he was about to die. To which a brief response should be given that he truly was about to die if he had not been restored to life by the faith of his beseeching master and the compassion of Christ. In the same way, King Hezekiah was about to die according to a certain manner of human nature, when he heard the words of the true prophet: "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live" (2 Kings 20); but by the hidden judgment of divine providence, which has arranged all things in measure, number, and weight, he was to obtain fifteen more years of life through tears and prayers.

Luke 7:3

And when he heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. By divine dispensation it happened that the elders of the Jews were sent to the Lord, and while they stood by, the one who was ill was healed, so that they would be without excuse if, while a Gentile man believed, they did not believe. However, it is asked how it agrees that Luke says the Centurion sent messengers, but Matthew narrates that he himself approached the Lord. But to those seeking piously, it easily becomes clear that Matthew, for the sake of brevity, said that he himself approached, whose desire and will were truly conveyed to the Lord, even though others were carrying it, also mystically commending to us what is written: Come to him, and be enlightened (Psalm 34). For because the faith of the Centurion, by which one truly approaches Jesus, he praised so much that he said: I have not found such great faith in Israel (Matthew 8), the prudent evangelist wanted to say that he himself rather approached Christ, rather than those through whom he had sent his words. But furthermore, Luke revealed the whole event as it happened, so that from this we might be forced to understand how the other, who could not lie, said he had approached. For just as that woman who suffered from the issue of blood, although she touched the hem of his garment, yet more because she believed, touched the Lord, than those crowds by whom he was pressed, so also the centurion, the more he believed, the more he approached the Lord.

Luke 7:5

For he loves our nation, and he himself built our synagogue. Those who report the synagogue built for them by the centurion clearly show that just as we call the Church, so also they were accustomed to call the synagogue, not only the assembly of the faithful, but also the place where they gathered, as we have also taught above. [Luke 7:6] -- Jesus, however, was going with them. Great is the loftiness of the Lord, who could heal by a word alone, but no less is the humility, who deigned to visit a sick servant. For as a powerful and kind one, he was going to save when asked, and in the midst of the journey, he saved by a word when requested, lest it be thought that he went bodily not due to a lack of power but as an example of humility. Elsewhere, he wished to come to heal the son of a royal official, lest he be seen honoring wealth. Here, lest it be thought he despised a servile condition, he agreed immediately to go to the centurion's servant.

Luke 7:6

And when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying: Lord, do not trouble yourself. For I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. Conscious of his Gentile life, he thought himself burdened more by the Lord's condescension than helped, and he felt he could not host Christ, who, though endowed with faith, was not yet instructed in the sacraments. But because what our weakness does not dare to presume, divine grace knows how to give; and another centurion, who, like him, prefigures a believing people from the Gentiles, received the gift of the Holy Spirit by the merit of great faith and justice before he was baptized. And this one, though not yet catechized, earned both the praise of his faith from the Lord and the salvation of his servant. About whom it is beautifully said through allegory that Jesus was not far from the house, even if he did not dare to invite him under his roof, because salvation is near to those who fear him. And whoever uses natural law rightly, whereby he performs the good he knows, thereby comes closer to him who is truly good. But those who added crimes to the errors of paganism could be applied to what the Lord said elsewhere to the crowds flocking to him: For some of them have come from afar.

Luke 7:7

For which reason I also did not consider myself worthy to come to you. And we, who from the Gentiles have believed, cannot come to the Lord ourselves, whom we are now by no means able to see in the flesh, but whoever has recognized the passions of our servitude, ought now through faith to approach Him who is seated at the right hand of the Father, now to send the elders of the Jews, that is, the chief men of the Church, who have gone before us to the Lord, to earnestly beseech to acquire patrons, who, bearing witness for us, that we love the Church, and as much as it is in us, strive to edify it, interceding with the Lord for our sins and those of ours. [Luke 7:7] -- But say the word, and my servant will be healed. Great is the faith of the centurion, who professes the work of the word in Christ, and apt for the mysteries of our healing, who, if we knew Christ according to the flesh, but now no longer know Him (II Cor. V).

Luke 7:8

For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. He declares himself a man and subject to authority, whether of a tribune or of a governor, yet able to command those lower, so that it is understood all the more that He, who is God, and powerful above all, has an innumerable host of angelic virtue to obey His commands. [Luke 7:8] -- And I say to this one: Go, and he goes, and to another: Come, and he comes, to my servant: Do this, and he does it. He wants to show that the Lord can accomplish what He wills not only through the coming of His body but through the ministry of angels. For either the infirmities of the bodies or opposing forces, to which man is often given over in weakness, must be repelled, both by the word of the Lord and by the ministries of angels. Alternatively. The soldiers and servants who obey the centurion are natural virtues. Many who come to the Lord bring with them no small abundance of these. Of which it is said in the praise of Cornelius the centurion: Because he was a just man and fearing God with all his house, doing many alms to the people, and always praying to God (Acts X).

Luke 7:9

When Jesus heard this, he marveled. He marveled because he saw the centurion understand his majesty. But who had made that faith or understanding in him, except himself, who marveled at it? But if someone else had made it,

what would he marvel at, who was prescient? Therefore, it must be noted that whatever the Lord marvels at, he signifies that we should marvel at, because we still need to be admonished in this way. For all such emotions, when they are said about God, are not signs of a disturbed mind, but of a teaching master. [Luke 7:9] -- And turning to the crowds following him, he said: Amen, I say to you, I have not found such faith even in Israel. He speaks not of all the past patriarchs and prophets, but of the people of the present age. For this reason, the centurion's faith is preferred because they were taught by the warnings of the law and prophets, whereas he, having been taught by no one, believed spontaneously.

Luke 7:10

And when those who had been sent returned home, they found the servant, who had been sick, well. The faith of the master is proven, and the health of the servant is restored. Therefore, the merit of the Lord can also benefit the servants, not only by the merit of faith but also by the zeal of discipline. Matthew explains this more fully when the Lord said to the centurion: Go, and let it be done for you as you have believed (Matthew 8), and the boy was healed from that hour. But it is the custom of blessed Luke to abbreviate what he has seen fully explained by other evangelists, or even intentionally to pass over; what he knows to have been omitted or briefly touched upon by them, he elucidates more diligently. Mystically, as I have said, the centurion, whose faith is preferred to that of Israel, undoubtedly represents those chosen from among the Gentiles, who, as if surrounded by a centenary military contingent, are exalted in the perfection of spiritual virtues and seek nothing earthly from the Lord but only the joys of eternal salvation for themselves and their own. For the number one hundred, which is transferred from the left to the right, is customarily placed in the signification of heavenly life. Hence it is that Noah's ark is built in one hundred years, Abraham received the son of promise at one hundred years; Isaac sowed, and found a hundredfold in that year; the courtyard of the tabernacle is one hundred cubits long; in the one hundredth psalm, mercy and judgment are sung to the Lord, and other things of this kind. Therefore, men of such merit must pray to the Lord for those who are still oppressed by the spirit of servitude in fear, so that as they are gradually advanced to higher things, perfect love may cast out fear (1 John 4).

Luke 7:11

And it happened afterward, he went to a city called Nain. Nain is a city of Galilee in the second mile of Mount Tabor towards the south near Endor, which is a large village in the fourth mile of the same mountain to the south.

Luke 7:11

And his disciples were going with him, and a great crowd. As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother. This deceased, who was being borne out of the gate of the city with many looking on, represents a man lulled by the lethal funeral of sins, and this same death of the soul, no longer hidden in the chamber of the heart, but made known to many by the indication of speech or action, as if disclosed through the gates of his city. He is rightly said to have been the only son of his mother, because, although composed of many individuals, the one perfect and immaculate virgin is the mother Church, and each individual among the faithful rightly acknowledges himself as a child of the universal Church. For any chosen one, when instructed in faith, is a son; when instructing others, a mother. Was he not acting with maternal affection towards the little ones who said: My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you? (Galatians 4:19). The gate of the city through which the deceased was being carried, I believe to represent some bodily sense. For he who sows discord among brothers, he who speaks iniquity in high places, is dragged out dead through the gate of his mouth.

He who looks at a woman to lust after her (Matthew 5:28), produces the marks of his death through the gates of his eyes. He who willingly opens his ear to idle tales or obscene songs or slander, makes this gate of his soul a passage of death, and to those who do not guard their senses, he himself provides the way to death. I beseech you, Lord Jesus, to make all the gates of my city gates of justice, so that entering into them I may confess to your name (Psalm 118:19), and to your majesty, frequently visiting it with heavenly ministers, let not the stench of a decaying corpse meet you, but let salvation occupy its walls, and praise its gates.

Luke 7:12

And this woman was a widow, and a large crowd of the city was with her. Every soul acknowledges the Church to be a widow, which remembers her-

self redeemed by the death of her spouse and Lord. By divine command, a great crowd followed the Lord, and a great crowd the widow, so that upon seeing such a miracle, many witnesses, many would become praisers of God. [Luke 7:13] -- When the Lord saw her, he was moved with compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He said, "Cease to weep, as if for the dead whom you will soon see rising alive." Here, mystically, the doctrine of Novatian is confounded, who proudly boasted about his own purity, tries to nullify the humble purification of penitents, and denies that Mother Church should be consoled by the hope of life to be restored, weeping over the spiritual extinction of her reborn ones. And beautifully, the evangelist testifies that the Lord was first moved with compassion for the mother, and so revived the son, so that in one instance he showed us an example of imitable piety and in the other, confirmed faith in his wondrous power.

Luke 7:14

And he approached and touched the bier. But they who carried it stood still. The bier, on which the dead person is carried out, is the badly secure conscience of a desperate sinner. And those who carry it out for burial are either the unclean desires which drag a person to perdition or the poisonous flatteries of deceitful companions, which indeed augment sins while they elevate them with favors, and bury the sinners under contempt, like a heap of earth. Of these it is said elsewhere: "Let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8). Indeed, the dead bury the dead, when sinners seduce others like themselves with harmful favor, and with a heap of worst flattery, oppress them so that they may never have the hope of rising again. Therefore, the pallbearers stood still when the Lord touched the bier, because the conscience touched by the fear of divine judgment often restrains and returns upon itself, and hastily responds to the Savior calling it to life. Rightly follows:

Luke 7:14

And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And he who was dead sat up and began to speak, and he gave him back to his mother. Indeed, he who was dead sat up when a sinner revives with internal compunction. He begins to speak, showing to all who had lamented the sin the signs of returning life. He is given back to his mother when, by the decree of priestly judgment, he is restored to the communion of the Church. [Luke 7:16] -- And fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet has arisen among

us. The more desperate the death of the soul that is recalled to life, the more numerous are those corrected by the same example. Consider the prophet David, consider the apostle Peter. The higher their rank, the graver their fall. However, the graver the fall, the more pleasing the piety of the one who raises them. And the greater the piety of the Lord appeared in them, the more certain the hope of salvation appeared to all the penitent, so that all who hear may rightly say:

Luke 7:16

Because God has visited his people. Not only by once incorporating his word, but also by always sending it into our hearts, so that we must rise. [Luke 7:18] -- And his disciples reported to John concerning all these things. Not with a sincere heart, I think, but driven by envy, John's disciples reported to him the virtues and miracles of Christ. For elsewhere they are found complaining to him thus: Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, behold, he is baptizing, and all are coming to him (John III). To which John then replied: A man cannot receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven, etc. And he clearly declares both that he is a mere man and that Christ is the Son of God. But since envy and jealousy remained, and could not be expelled, observe what the excellent teacher still did to correct them.

Luke 7:19

And John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord, saying: Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another? Namely, so that at least through this occasion, by seeing the signs he was doing, they might believe in him, and, with the master asking, learn for themselves. Therefore he does not say, Are you the one who has come, but are you the one who is to come? And the meaning is: Command me, because being about to be killed by Herod, and to descend to the underworld, whether I should announce you even in the underworld, as I announced you to those above, or whether it is not fitting for the Son of God to taste death, and you will send another to these sacraments. [Luke 7:21] -- In that very hour, He cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and He granted sight to many who were blind. John had sent his disciples to ask: Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another? Christ demonstrated signs,

not by directly answering what was asked, but to address the concerns of the messengers.

Luke 7:22

"Go," He said, "and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and, which is no less important, the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Either the poor in spirit, or certainly the poor in wealth, so that there is no distinction in preaching between the noble and the common, the rich and the needy. These things display the rigor of the Master and attest to the truth of the Teacher, as all are equal in His sight who can be saved. As He said: [Luke 7:23] -- "And blessed is he who does not take offense at me." He reprimands John's messengers, who did not believe He was the Christ, for their scandal of unbelief, and He explains to John what he had asked, that God brings salvation, and the Lord delivers from death (Psalm 67). For, when so many signs and mighty deeds have been seen, no one could take offense but rather marvel. Yet the mind of the unfaithful bore a great scandal when they saw Him die even after so many miracles. So what does it mean to say: "Blessed is he who does not take offense at me," except to openly indicate the rejection of His death and humility? As if He were plainly stating: "Indeed, I do wondrous things, but I do not disdain to endure contempt. Therefore, since I follow in death, it is greatly necessary for people to be cautious, lest they despise in me the death they revere in signs."

Luke 7:24

And when John's messengers had departed, He began to speak to the crowds about John. Because the surrounding crowd did not understand the mystery of the question and thought that John doubted Christ, whom he had pointed out, to clarify that John had not questioned for his own sake but for his disciples, He added to John's praise. [Luke 7:24] -- Why did you go out into the desert? To see a reed shaken by the wind? He indicated this, not by asserting, but by denying. For a reed is, immediately upon being touched by the air, bent to one side. And what is designated by the reed if not a carnal mind, which, as soon as it is touched by favor or reproach, inclines to any direction? For if an aura of favor blows from a human mouth, it is glad, is exalted, and bends itself entirely to the grace. But if the wind of detraction bursts forth from where the breeze of praise was coming, immediately it inclines this as

if to the other side to the force of fury. But John was not a reed shaken by the wind, for neither did favor make him gentle, nor did anyone's anger make him harsh; neither did he know how to be elevated by prosperity nor to be inclined by adversity.

Luke 7:24

But why did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft garments? Behold, those who are in precious clothing and in luxury are in the houses of kings. For John is described as having been clothed in camel's hair. Therefore, he says, not those who endure hardships for God but those who avoid hardships and give themselves only to exterior things, seeking the softness and pleasure of the present life, do not fight for the heavenly kingdom but for the earthly one. Let no one, therefore, think that there is no sin in luxury and pursuit of clothing because if this were not a fault, by no means would the Lord have praised John for the roughness of his clothing. Although this, that John was said not to be dressed in soft garments, can be understood differently through symbolic interpretation. For he was not dressed in soft garments because he did not indulge the life of sinners with gentleness but rebuked them with the vigor of harsh invective, saying: "Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Luke III).

Luke 7:24

But why did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For the role of a prophet is to tell what is to come, not also to reveal it. Therefore John is more than a prophet, because he not only foretold by running before Him but also announced by showing Him. [Luke 7:27] -- This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way before you." What is called angel in Greek, is called messenger in Latin. Therefore rightly, he who is sent to announce the divine judge is called an angel, so that he maintains the dignity in name which he fulfills in deed. Indeed it is a high name, but the life does not fall short of the name. But also all who are rated by the name of priesthood are called angels, the prophet attesting, who says: "The lips of a priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts" (Malachi II). And indeed every one of the faithful, as much as he is able, as much as he receives the infusion of supernal grace, if he calls back his neighbor from wickedness, if he takes care to exhort to good

works, if he announces the eternal kingdom or punishment to the erring, when he expends the words of holy announcement, he indeed becomes an angel.

Luke 7:28

For I say to you: Among those born of women there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist. Among those born of women, he says. Therefore he is preferred to those men who are born of women and from the intercourse of a man, and not to the one who is born of a Virgin and the Holy Spirit. Although in judgment he preferred John to all other prophets and patriarchs, and to all men, yet he equated the others to John. For it does not immediately follow that if others are not greater than him, he is greater than others, but rather that he has equality with the other saints.

Luke 7:28

Whoever is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. This sentence can be understood in two ways. Either he called the kingdom of God what we have not yet received and in which we are not yet, whence at the end he will say: 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom' (Matthew XXV); and where there are so many holy angels, any one of whom, being the least, is certainly greater than any holy and just man who bears the body which is corrupt and weighs down the soul (Wisdom IX). Or, if he intends the kingdom of God to mean the Church of this time, whose children are all from the foundation of the human race to the present, as many as could have been just and holy, surely the Lord signified himself, who at the time of birth was lesser than John, but greater in the eternity of divinity and the dominion of power. Therefore, according to the former explanation, it is thus distinguished: Whoever is least in the kingdom of God. And then it is added: is greater than he. According to the latter, thus: Whoever is least, and then it is added, in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.

Luke 7:29

And all the people, hearing this, and the tax collectors, justified God, baptized with the baptism of John. God himself is justified through baptism, as men justify themselves by confessing their own sins, as it is written: 'Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified.' And He is justified in that He is not refuted through obstinacy, but His gift is acknowledged by the justice of God. For the Lord is righteous, and He loves justices (Psalm X). Therefore,

the justification of God is in this, that He appears to have transferred His gifts not to the unworthy and harmful, but to those made innocent and just through purification. David also says: 'Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged' (Psalm L). Therefore he who sins and confesses his sin to God justifies God, yielding to Him who prevails, and hoping for grace from Him. In baptism, therefore, God is justified, in which there is both confession and forgiveness of sins.

Luke 7:30

But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not being baptized by him. What it says "for themselves" or "against themselves," signifies that he who rejects the grace of God acts against himself, or the counsel of God sent by themselves is rebuked by the foolish and ungrateful for refusing to accept it. Therefore, the counsel of God is that through the passion and death of the Lord Jesus, He decreed to save the world. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected this, spurning the secret and saving mystery, the beginnings of which had gone before in the preaching and baptism of John, but nevertheless unknowingly and unwillingly serving that same counsel, as the apostle Peter, speaking of the Lord, says to them: "This one, delivered up according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of lawless men, you nailed to a cross and put to death" (Acts 2).

Luke 7:31

To what, then, shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace, calling to one another and saying: We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We wailed, and you did not weep. The generation of the Jews is compared to children sitting in the marketplace because they used to receive the prophets as teachers. Of whom it is said: Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies, you have perfected praise (Psalm VIII). And elsewhere, The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple (Psalm CXVIII), that is, to the humble in spirit. The Lord's marketplace or the synagogue, or even Jerusalem itself is where the laws of heavenly precepts were established. Where these children, according to Matthew, spoke to their equals, because they used to reproach their people daily with their own

voices, they would not listen to the Psalms, first of David, nor after being corrected by the reproaches of the prophets. Whenever victory over the enemy was foretold or commemorated, they did not rise to the works of virtue. For by the word of dance is not meant the bodily gyrations of actors with swaying movements but the devotion of a zealous heart and the piety of agile members. Whenever the prophecies of calamities caused by future or present enemies resounded, and yet the listeners did not care to take refuge in remedies for penitence. The Psalmist sings:

Shout with joy to God our helper, rejoice to the God of Jacob, take up a psalm, and bring the tambourine (Psalm LXXX), and so forth. But what follows? My people did not listen to my voice, and Israel did not attend to me (Ibid.). The prophet cries out: Thus says the Lord: Turn to me with all your heart, in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments (Joel II). And again: My belly, my belly! I writhe in pain. The heart of my thoughts troubles me. I will not remain silent, for my soul has heard the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war (Jeremiah IV). And a little later: For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are senseless children, without understanding (Ibid.).

Luke 7:33–34

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, "He has a demon." The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Behold, a glutton, and a wine-drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Just as (he says) then, so now you will not accept either path of salvation. For when he says, "We mourned, and you did not weep," it pertains to John, whose abstinence from food and drink signified the mourning of repentance. But when he says, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance," it pertains to the Lord himself, who, by partaking in food and drink with others, symbolized the joy of the kingdom. But they wished neither to humble themselves with John, nor to rejoice with Christ, saying he has a demon, and calling this one a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners. But what he adds:

Luke 7:35

"And wisdom is justified by all her children," shows that the children of wisdom understand that righteousness does not consist in abstaining or in eating, but in the equanimity of enduring lack, and in not corrupting oneself

with abundance through temperance, and in suitably partaking or not partaking of those things whose misuse, not their use, is to be condemned. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy. And because people are accustomed to take much pleasure in carnal feasts, he added, "In the Holy Spirit." Otherwise. "Wisdom is justified by all her children," that is, the dispensation and doctrine of God, which resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James IV), is proved just by his faithful. Among their number are those of whom it is said above: "And all the people hearing, and the tax collectors, justified God. Amen."

BOOK THREE. The most holy history of the penitent Mary, which is the third book of our work on Luke, even though it begins anew to lessen the effort of readers, nonetheless reflects the end of the second book in its connection of events. For since it had previously been said either from the perspective of the evangelist or the Lord Savior (as some have thought): And all the people who heard, and the publicans, justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. If you interpret this as being said by the Lord, it is understood to designate the people listening to John. If it was inserted by the evangelist, it remains to be understood as referring to those listening to the Lord Himself disputing about the greatness of John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not being baptized by him. The same Evangelist proceeds to confirm by actions what he had proposed with words, namely the justification of wisdom by all its children, that is, by both the righteous and those repenting after injustice, proving this with a very fitting example.

Luke 7:36

He asked him, he said, one of the Pharisees, to eat with him. And he entered the house of the Pharisee, and sat down. And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner, knew that he was lying down in the Pharisee's house; she brought an alabaster jar of ointment. Alabaster is a type of white marble, marked with various colors, which they usually hollow out for ointment vessels, because it is said to preserve them best incorrupt. It is found around Thebes in Egypt and Damascus of Syria, whiter than others, the best being from India. Some say that this woman was not the same one who, at the approaching Lord's passion, anointed his head and feet with ointment, because this one washed with tears and wiped with her hair, and is clearly called a sinner; about that other one, nothing similar is written, nor could a prosti-

tute immediately be deemed worthy at the Lord's head. However, those who investigate more diligently find this same woman, namely Mary Magdalene, the sister of Lazarus, as John narrates, having been engaged in the same act of service twice. Once indeed in this place, when first approaching with humility and tears, she merits the forgiveness of sins. For John, although he did not narrate how, as Luke did, points out this very Mary, commending her where he begins to speak about her brother raised from the dead. "There was a certain man," he said, "Lazarus, sick from Bethany, from the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

(Mary, however, was the one who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair [John XI]). Secondly, in Bethany (for it happened first in Galilee), she is found not as a sinner now, but as a chaste, holy, and devoted woman to Christ, no longer anointing just his feet but also his head. This also agrees beautifully with the rules of allegory. Because each faithful soul, first humbled at the Lord's feet and freed from sins, bends; then, as merits grow over time, with the joy of fervent faith, it perfumes, as it were, the Lord's head with the scent of spices. And the universal Church itself, in the present indeed, by celebrating the mysteries of his incarnation, which is designated by the name of feet, renders devoted service to its Redeemer. But in the future, perceiving both the glory of his humanity and the eternity of his divinity, because the head of Christ is God, simultaneously with the perpetual praises of confessions, it glorifies him as with genuine nard. Therefore, he said, she brought an alabaster jar of ointment.

Luke 7:38

And standing behind him at his feet, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. And she kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. It is clear to everyone that the woman, previously engaged in illicit acts, had used the ointment for the scent of her own flesh. So what she had previously exhibited shamefully for herself, she was now offering praiseworthily to God. She had coveted earthly things with her eyes, but now, through penitence, she was weeping. She had used her hair for the composition of her face, but now she was wiping her tears with her hair. She had spoken arrogantly with her mouth, but kissing the feet of the Lord, she was now fixing this in the footsteps of her Redeemer. Therefore, as many pleasures as she had in herself, so many holocausts she found of herself. She converted the number of her crimes into a number of virtues, so that

everything she had served in guilt against God, she now served in penitence for God.

Luke 7:39

But when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself: If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what kind of woman she is who is touching him, for she is a sinner. Behold, the Pharisee was truly proud in his own mind, falsely just, reproaching the sick woman for her sickness, and the physician for his assistance, while he, too, suffered from the wound of arrogance and was unaware of it. Hence, it is always necessary that when we see any sinners, we first lament ourselves in their calamity. For perhaps we have similarly fallen, or we can fall if we have not fallen. And although the discipline of masters should always pursue vices with the power of teaching, it is nevertheless important that we carefully discern, because strictness is due to vices, compassion to nature. But now let us hear with what sentence this proud and arrogant one is convicted.

Luke 7:41

Two debtors, he said, were to a certain creditor. One owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. Not having them from where they could repay, he forgave both. Which of them therefore loves him more? Simon answering, said: I suppose the one to whom he forgave more. In which matter it is to be noted that while the Pharisee is convicted by his own judgment, as if a madman, he carries the rope by which he is bound. The goods of the sinful woman are enumerated, the evils of the false righteous are enumerated, when it is said: [Luke 7:44] -- I entered your house, you did not give water for my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss. But she, since she entered, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. After the enumeration, the sentence is added:

Luke 7:47

Therefore I say to you, her many sins are forgiven, for she loved much. What do we believe love to be, if not fire? And what are faults, if not rust? Hence it is said: Her many sins are forgiven, because she loved much. As if it were openly said: She completely burned off the rust of sin, because she burns strongly with the fire of love. For as much as the rust of sin is consumed, as much as the sinner's heart is thoroughly burned with the great fire of char-

ity. Behold, the one who came sick to the physician is healed, but concerning her health others still fall ill; for it follows: [Luke 7:49] -- And those who sat at the table with him began to say within themselves: Who is this who even forgives sins? But the heavenly physician does not regard those who are sick, for he even sees some becoming worse from the medicine. He confirms the one he had healed by the sentence of his compassion, saying:

Luke 7:50

Your faith has saved you; go in peace. Indeed, faith has saved, because she did not doubt she could receive what she asked for, but had already received the certainty of hope from him from whom she sought salvation through hope. She is commanded to go in peace so that she might not be diverted from the path of truth to the way of scandal. These words may be understood historically, but let us now examine the mystical secrets. Whom does the Pharisee, presuming on false righteousness, represent if not the Jewish people? Whom does the sinful woman, coming to the feet of the Lord and weeping, signify if not the converted gentiles? Now, the Pharisee asked the Lord to dine with him because the same people who did not want to believe in His coming never stopped hoping for His arrival, indeed praying fervently that He might come, saying: "Stir up Your power and come to save us" (Psalm 79). To dine with the Pharisee is, for the Lord, to accept the devotion of the believing people. Hence, elsewhere, directing his speech to the believing Samaritans, He says: "I have food to eat that you do not know about" (John 4). And when they were mystified by His words, He explained: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work" (Ibid.).

Luke 7:36

And He entered, it says, the house of the Pharisee and reclined at the table. The house of the Pharisee is the guardianship of the law and the prophets, in which the Jewish people gloried as their continual abode of conversation. The Lord entered it because, appearing in the flesh temporally, He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. He reclined because the one who could not be comprehended in the height of His majesty assumed the humility of the form of a servant, by which He could be seen. [Luke 7:36-50] -- The woman who was a sinner in the city recognized that He was reclining in the house of the Pharisee, for the gentiles, previously bound by unclean deeds in worldly ways, learnt through the preaching of the

apostles that God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law (Galatians 4). And in the house of the Pharisee, it is not the Pharisee but she who is justified, as the Jewish people adhered only to the letter of the law while we follow both the law and the grace of the Spirit. The Pharisee considers Jesus not a prophet because He receives sinners, while we acknowledge this one as even the true God who can justify sinners.

Luke 7:37

But the woman brought an alabaster jar of ointment. What is expressed by the ointment but the aroma of good reputation? Thus Paul says: "We are the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing" (2 Corinthians 2). If we do good works, by which we sprinkle the Church with the aroma of good reputation, what do we pour on the Lord's body except ointment? But the woman stood behind His feet. We stood against the feet of the Lord, when bound in sins, we were held captive by worldly ways. But if after sins we turn to true repentance, we are now standing behind His feet, for we follow the footsteps of Him whom we once opposed. The woman washed His feet with her tears, a true act indeed if we also incline towards the lowest members of the Lord with the affection of compassion, if we share in the sufferings of His saints in tribulation, if we consider their sorrow as our own.

Luke 7:38

The woman wiped the feet she had washed with her hair. Hair naturally abounds on the body. And what is the superfluous earthly wealth but resembles hair? It can be cut off without pain. We wipe the feet of the Lord with our hair when we extend that which is superfluous to us to His saints out of charity, so that our compassion inwardly feels pain, while our generosity outwardly shows it. The woman kissed the feet she had wiped. We also fully accomplish this if we diligently love those we support with our generosity, so that the need of our neighbor does not burden us heavily, nor does their sustained indigence become burdensome, so that when the hand gives what is necessary, the spirit does not grow slack in love. [Luke 7:38] -- The very mystery of his incarnation can also be understood by the feet, by which divinity touched the earth, because it assumed flesh. For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us (John 1). We therefore kiss the feet of the Redeemer when we love the mystery of his incarnation with all our heart. We anoint the feet

with ointment when we praise the very power of his humanity with the good opinion of sacred eloquence. But the Pharisee sees this and envies. For when the Jewish people see that the gentiles preach God, their malice within melts away.

But our Redeemer recounts to him the deeds of the woman, as if listing the good of the gentiles, so that he may recognize in what evil he lies. I entered into your house, you did not give water for my feet. But she has washed my feet with tears. Indeed, water is outside us, the moisture of tears is within us. For that unfaithful people never offered for the Lord even those things which were outside themselves; but the converted gentiles not only poured out the substance of things for Him, but also their blood. You did not give me a kiss. But since she entered, she has not ceased kissing my feet. For a kiss is the sign of love. And that unfaithful people did not give a kiss to God, because they did not want to love God out of charity, to whom they served out of fear. But the called gentiles do not cease to kiss the footsteps of their Redeemer, because they constantly sigh in his love. You did not anoint my head with oil. If we understand the feet of the Lord to signify the mystery of the incarnation, appropriately through his head divinity itself is designated. Hence it is said through the Apostle: the head of Christ is God (1 Cor. 11). For the Jewish people professed to believe in God and not in themselves as in a man.

But it is said to the Pharisee, you did not anoint my head with oil, because he neglected to praise with due glory the very power of divinity in which the Jewish people professed to believe. But she has anointed my feet with ointment. For while the gentiles believed in his mystery of incarnation, they praised with great glory even his lowest parts. Also, the two debtors, about whom the parable of Simon is put forth, designate both peoples, namely the Jews and the gentiles, who, to one lender, that is, to their Creator, owed not material money, but the coin of their own salvation. For our Creator, whom He created to His image and likeness, elevated them almost with a loaned coin to be preserved. For the coin is usually formed with the image and name of the king. But from everyone to whom much is given, much will be required; and from him to whom they much committed, they will ask the more. And indeed, the debt of both peoples is multiplied through the number five. [Luke 12:48] -- For there are evidently five senses, with which, while using them in this life, we must cultivate the image of our Creator that we

have received: but the people to whom the Decalogue of the law was given through a servant ought to cultivate less. Much more, however, those to whom the grace of eternal life has been entrusted through the Son.

And therefore, the gain of this accumulates through the number ten, the gain of that through the number hundred, which no one doubts pertains to the signification of the kingdom of heaven, about to be given to the right. For it is not in vain that, with the same flexure of the fingers, the ten is figured on the left and the hundred on the right. Unless it is because both now the works of the Decalogue, which the letter could not complete, faith perfects, and in the future, it will render to each one according to his works, to those indeed who, according to the patience of good works, seek for glory, honor, and incorruption, eternal life. But, because neither by our own strengths, but by His grace we have been saved through faith, it is rightly said: He forgave both, not having anything whose due they could repay. And indeed, he loves more, to whom more is forgiven. But to whom less is forgiven, he loves less. Because whether you wish to understand the good of the knowledge we received to be perfected, or the foolishness to be avoided that we incurred, much more indeed is granted to the Church than to the Synagogue, which was once defiled by baser, as none of its teachers prohibited it, the filth of idolatry was corrupted, but where sin abounded, grace superabounded (Roman V), and it is now exalted with the higher proclamation of evangelical perfection. To which it is said:

Because many prophets and just men desired to see what you see, and did not see; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear (Matthew XIII). Certainly, in this place, it fits what the history of Numbers recounts, that with the spoils of the Medianites divided equally, those who came from the battle gave the five-hundredth head of their portion to the Lord, while the rest gave the fiftieth to the Lord. Because both he who keeps himself safe from hostile incursion by exercising virtue in the camps offers much, but he who, wielding the sword of the word, strikes down countless hosts of the adversary offers much more.

CHAPTER 8

Luke 8:1

And it happened afterward, that he was traveling through cities and villages, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God, and the twelve were with him. We see in Christ's disciples the fulfillment of what we read said about

that ancient people of the Hebrews. Nor is it surprising, because the same God of both Testaments will give blessing through the Son, who gave the law through the servant. As it says, a (mother) eagle provoking her young to fly, and hovering over them, spreads her wings, takes them up, and bears them on her shoulders (Deut. XXXII). For just as the young birds, newly born, cannot yet conquer the air by flying until they become feathered: so all the faithful, to be able to fly to heavenly things, must first clothe themselves with the wing of virtues in the nest of faith. Thus the apostles themselves, teachers of the faithful, gradually ascend to the heights, so that they can also preside over the teaching of others. First indeed the Lord teaches in synagogues, performs miracles, spreads renown everywhere, receives the crowds coming to him, heals, instructs. Hence he makes disciples, refreshes at the wedding of the bridegroom, leads them through fields, and defends them from the bites of serpentine Pharisees, like the young eagles with the stone brought against the bites of serpents. From these he chooses twelve, whom he names apostles, but he first teaches them in the presence of the crowd, giving to the usual benefits to the wretched along with the threatening crowd.

Afterward, however, as it has been read herein, preaching through cities and villages, he retains only those who might hear him more intimately, explaining to them alone the mysteries of the kingdom of God, which he had spoken to others in parables. As if finally, with the manifestation of his virtues, firm as with the protection of wings, he gives them the power to heal, and sends them out to preach the kingdom of God.

Luke 8:2

And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, who is called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out. Mary Magdalene, she is the one whose silent name the next reading relates as one who repented. For the evangelist, beautifully and reverently, when he mentions her traveling with the Lord and ministering to him from her resources, reveals her by her known name. But when he describes the sinful, yet repentant woman, he generally says "woman"; for otherwise, the name of such great fame, by which she is venerated today in all the Churches, would be stained by the mark of ancient error. Of whom it is reported that seven demons went out, showing that she was full of countless, indeed all, vices. For because the ages proceed by the seven days, the number seven often in

the Scriptures signifies universality. Hence also the prophet embraces the grace of the Holy Spirit with the distinction of seven virtues.

Luke 8:3

And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. If Mary suggests the Church cleansed from the filth of sins among the nations, why should not Joanna designate the same Church, once indeed subject to the worship of idols, but now redeemed by the piety of Christ? For any evil spirit, prompt to deceive the human race, while it acts for the kingdom of the devil, is almost like the steward of most impious Herod.

Luke 8:3

And Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to him from their resources. It was a Jewish custom, nor was it considered blameworthy, according to an ancient custom of the nation, that women should minister food and clothing to teachers from their substance. Because this could cause scandal among nations, Paul mentions that he refrained: "Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as the other apostles do?" (1 Cor. IX). They ministered to the Lord from their substance, that they might reap their carnal things, whose spiritual things they were reaping. Not because the Lord of creation needed food, but to show a type of teachers, that they should be content with food and clothing from their disciples. Susanna is interpreted as lily, or her grace. But better, if the female name is symbolized by the lily, I believe on account of the fragrant whiteness of heavenly faith and the golden ardor of inner love. Joanna, the Lord is her grace, or the Lord is merciful; namely because all that we live is from him. Maria, bitter sea, doubtless because of the implanted wailing of repentance, by which either Mary herself, or each of us, bewails the old vices, that we may deserve to attain eternal grace and splendor. Magdalene, tower; but better, just as from mountain comes montanus, so from tower comes turrensis. That is, to whom the Psalmist sings: "You led me forth, for you have been my hope, a tower of strength from the face of the enemy" (Psalm LX).

Luke 8:4

When a very large crowd was gathering, and people from the cities were coming to him, he spoke by way of a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed." The Lord deemed it worthy to explain this parable himself so that it would be evident that he was speaking figuratively, and to teach that the

meanings of things should be sought even in matters that he did not wish to explain himself. But because the Lord himself revealed that the seed, which represents the word of God, and the various types of soil, which signify the different hearts of the listeners, he left us the duty of identifying the sower. There can be no better understanding than interpreting the sower as the Son of God, who went out to sow his seed, because he came forth from the Father's bosom, which creatures could not access, and came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Therefore, according to other evangelists, he is rightly said to have left the house, gone to the sea, and boarded a ship, indicating this by the movement of his body as well as by the progress of his speech.

Luke 8:5

"And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it." What the Lord explained must be received with pious faith. But those things that he left silent for our understanding must be briefly mentioned. The seed that fell along the path perished due to a double injury: it was trampled underfoot by passersby and snatched away by birds. Thus, the path is a heart worn and hardened by the frequent passage of evil thoughts, so it cannot accept and germinate the word's seed. Therefore, whatever good seed reaches the vicinity of such a path is trampled upon by wicked thoughts and taken away by demons. These are called the birds of the air, whether because they have a celestial and spiritual nature, or because they fly through the air. [Luke 8:6] -- "And some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, it withered because it had no moisture." Here he correctly identifies the rocky ground as a hard and unyielding heart, unpenetrated by the plow of true faith. Moisture at the root of the seed is akin to the oil for the lamps of the virgins in another parable, meaning love and the perseverance of virtue.

Luke 8:8

And others fell on good ground. And it yielded fruit a hundredfold. He speaks of fruit a hundredfold, perfect fruit. For the number ten is always taken for perfection, because the keeping of the law is contained in the ten commandments. For both the active and the contemplative lives are joined together in the mandates of the decalogue, because in it both the love of God and the love of neighbor are commanded to be kept. The love of God

pertains to the contemplative, but truly the love of neighbor pertains to the active life. However, the number ten multiplied by itself rises to one hundred. Hence, a great perfection is rightly designated by the hundred, as it is said of the one who leaves his earthly possessions for the Lord: He will receive a hundredfold and will possess eternal life (Matthew XIX). For whoever despises temporal and earthly things for the name of God, both here receives the perfection of mind, so that he no longer desires those things which he despises, and in the next age he attains the glory of eternal life. Therefore the good ground is enriched with a hundredfold fruit, when a docile heart is endowed with the perfection of spiritual virtues.

Luke 8:8

Saying these things, he cried out: He who has ears to hear, let him hear. As often as this admonition is interposed, either in the Gospel or in the Apocalypse of John, it is shown to us more attentively that what is said is mystical and should be sought out by us more intently. [Luke 8:9] -- But his disciples asked him what this parable might be. No one should think that the disciples immediately asked the Savior about these things as soon as the parable was finished, but as Mark says, when he was alone, those who were with him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. [Luke 8:10] -- But to the rest (He spoke) in parables, so that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Mark says it thus: But to those who are outside, everything is done in parables (Mark 4). Therefore, let us also enter into the sanctuary of God with the disciples of Christ, so that we may understand the final mysteries of the kingdom of God. For those who approach His feet will receive from His teaching, saying with the Psalmist, "Reveal our eyes, and we will consider the wonders of Your law" (Psalm 119). Rightly therefore do they hear in parables and in a riddle, who with closed senses of heart neither care to enter nor to know the truth, having forgotten the Lord's command: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11).

Luke 8:12

But those by the wayside, they are the ones who hear. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, lest they should believe and be saved. Of this seed, Mark writes thus: "These are they by the wayside where the word is sown. But when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes it

away." Matthew says it thus: "Everyone who hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart." From this it is clearly taught that those sown by the wayside are those who hear the word but are not worthy to comprehend it, lacking faith, understanding, or even the attempt at any utility. Furthermore, on rocky ground and among thorns (as the Lord explains), are sown those who indeed approve of the usefulness of the word they have heard and taste desire for it: but so that they may not attain what they approve, the adversities of this life or its prosperities delay them, either by frightening them or by alluring them. Against both these damages, the one who received the seed took care to protect it by saying, "Through the weapons of righteousness on the right and on the left; through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true" (2 Corinthians 6). So know that in these three types of ground are designated all those who do not do the word they have heard. From all these, however, the good ground is the one who keeps the received seed. The Jews and Gentiles, who are not even worthy to hear, are certainly excluded.

Luke 8:14

But that which fell among thorns, these are they who have heard, and going forth are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection. It is remarkable how the Lord interpreted thorns as riches, since thorns prick, and these delight. And yet they are thorns because with the pricks of their thoughts they cut the mind, and when they lead to sin, they wound with inflicted injury. Which in this place, another evangelist witnessing, the Lord does not call riches, but deceitful riches. For they are deceitful, which cannot remain with us for long. They are deceitful, which do not expel the poverty of our mind. Only those riches are true, which make us rich in virtues. It is also to be noted that when the Lord explained, He said that cares and pleasures and riches choke. For they choke, because with their importunate thoughts they strangle the throat of the mind: and while they do not allow the good desire to enter the heart, they as it were kill the entrance of vital breath. It is also to be noted that there are two things which He joins to riches, namely cares and pleasures, because indeed through care they oppress the mind, and through abundance they loosen it: for by contrary action, they make their possessors both afflicted and unstable. But because pleasure cannot agree with affliction, indeed at one time they afflict

through the anxiety of their care, and at another through abundance they soften into pleasures.

Luke 8:15

But that on the good ground, these are they who, having heard the word in a good and excellent heart, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience. Good ground (as we have said before) is contrary to all three varieties of bad ground, both by willingly receiving the seed of the word and by keeping what it receives amidst adversities and prosperities patiently unto the times of fruit. Differently. Good ground yields fruit through patience, because indeed no good things that we do, if we do not even endure the evils of our neighbors with equanimity. For the higher anyone progresses, the more he finds in this world what he must bear more difficultly. For while the affection of our mind withdraws from the present world, the adversity of the same world increases. Hence it is that we see many both doing good and yet sweating under the heavy burden of tribulations. But according to the voice of the Lord, they yield fruit through patience. For when they humbly receive chastisements, they are afterward sublimely received to rest after the chastisements. But that which is said according to Matthew: And bears fruit, and yields some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty, thirty refers to marriage. For even the conjunction of the fingers, as if embracing and uniting with a soft kiss, represents the husband and the wife. Sixty refers to widows, because they are placed in distress and tribulation. Hence they are also pressed down on the upper finger.

And the greater the difficulty in abstaining from the enticements of formerly experienced pleasure, the greater the reward. But the hundredfold number, I ask you, reader, to note diligently, is transferred from the left hand to the right, with the same fingers, but not the same hand, in which on the left hand wives and widows are signified, making a circle, expresses the crown of virginity. Differently. The thirtieth fruit brings forth the word, which builds the faith of the Holy Trinity. The sixtieth, which teaches the perfection of work. For there are six days in which it is necessary to work. The hundredth, which preaches eternal life at the right hand of the kingdom.

Luke 8:16

No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed; instead, they put it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. Because he had previously said to the apostles, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables," he now shows that through them the same mystery would eventually be revealed to others as well, and the hearts of all those who would enter the house of God would be illuminated by the flames of faith. Through these words, he also symbolically teaches the confidence to preach, so that no one would hide the light of knowledge they know out of fear of worldly hardships. For by the name of vessel and bed, he designates the flesh; but by the name of lamp, he designates the word. Whoever conceals it out of fear of worldly hardships, as I have said, indeed places the flesh ahead of the manifestation of truth and thus covers the word which they are hesitant to preach. He puts the lamp on the lampstand, who subjects his body to the service of God, so that the preaching of truth is above and the service of the body is below, and through the very service of the body, the doctrine shines more excellently, which is insinuated in good works through bodily offices, that is, through the voice and tongue and other bodily movements. Therefore, he puts the lamp on the lampstand when the Apostle says: "Thus I do not fight like one beating the air, but I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. IX).

Luke 8:17

For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be known and come to light. Do not (he says) be ashamed of the Gospel of God, but among the darkness of persecutors, lift the light of the word above the lampstand of your body, retaining with a steadfast mind that day of final retribution, when God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will reveal the thoughts of hearts (1 Cor. IV). Then also you will receive praise from God, and punishment awaits the adversary of truth for eternity. [Luke 8:18] -- Therefore, see how you hear. He earnestly teaches us to listen to the word so that we may continuously ponder it in our own hearts and be able to give out to others as well.

Luke 8:18

For to him who has, it will be given. And whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him. With full intention (he says), pay attention to the word that you hear. Because whoever has a love for the word, it will be given to him and the understanding of what he loves. But whoever does not have a love for hearing the word, even if he thinks himself clever by natural talent or literary exercise, will not enjoy the sweetness of true wisdom. And even if it seems to be said particularly about the apostles, to whom, endowed with love and faith, it was given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, and about the faithless Jews, who seeing did not see, and hearing did not understand, that is, they would lose the letter of the law in which they gloried, it can nevertheless be understood generally, because often an ingenious reader, through neglect, deprives himself of wisdom, which a simple but diligent person tastes by striving for it. Therefore, often a lazy person receives talent, so that he may be punished more justly for his neglect, because he despises knowing what he could have obtained without labor. And sometimes a diligent person is burdened with slowness of understanding, so that he finds greater rewards in return, the more he labors in the effort of discovery.

Luke 8:19

However, his mother and brothers came to him and could not reach him because of the crowd. The brothers of the Lord are neither the sons of the blessed ever-virgin Mary according to Helvidius, nor the sons of Joseph from another wife according to some, but rather they should be understood to be his relatives, as we have discussed above. Surely, when the Lord, requested by his mother and brothers, refrains from leaving his duty of preaching the word, he is not rejecting the obligations of maternal piety, for the commandment is, "Honor your father and mother" (Exodus 20); but he demonstrates that he owes more to his Father's mysteries than to maternal affections, recommending to us by example what he commands by word, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10). He does not disdain his brothers out of disrespect, but by preferring spiritual work over carnal kinship, he teaches that the bond of hearts is more religious than that of bodies. Mystically, however, this reading is in harmony with the higher one, where it is said about the Jews who only look at the let-

ter of the law: "And whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." For the mother and brothers of Jesus represent the synagogue from whose flesh he was born, and the people of the Jews: who, while the Savior is teaching within, coming cannot enter because they neglect to understand his spiritual teachings. For the crowd preoccupying indeed enters his house, because while Judea was differing, the gentiles flocked to Christ, and they drank in the internal mysteries of life, the closer in faith, the more capacious in mind. Thus, the Psalm says: "Come to him, and be enlightened" (Psalm 34).

Luke 8:20

And it was announced to him: "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." The word is inside, the light is inside; whence above: "So that those entering may see the light." So if even parents standing outside are not recognized, and perhaps they are not recognized as an example for our sake, how will we be recognized if we stand outside? For those standing outside wish to see the Lord, who not seeking a spiritual sense in the law, have stationed themselves outside in the guardianship of the letter, and as if they force Christ to go out to teach carnal things, rather than consent to enter to learn spiritual things. [Luke 8:21] -- He answered and said to them: My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it. The whole perfection of heavenly life is comprised in these two things, namely, to hear the word of God and to do it. Hence the Lord above, expounding the parable of the sower, said that they who receive the word only by hearing are the bad ground; but the good ground are those who with a good and excellent heart retain the word which they hear and bring forth fruit with patience. Those who are called the mother of the Lord, because they daily give birth to Him either by example or by word in the minds of others, are also his brothers when they also do the will of His Father who is in heaven.

Luke 8:22

And it came to pass on one of those days, that he went into a ship with his disciples, and he said unto them: Let us go over to the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. In this voyage, the Lord deigns to show both natures of His one and the same person, in that He, as a man, sleeps in the boat, but as God, with a word, He calms the fury of the sea. Furthermore, ac-

cording to the allegory, the sea or lake which He desires to cross with His own symbolizes the dark and bitter tides of this present world. However, the boat they board is best understood as the tree of the Lord's passion. By the advantage of which, all the faithful, assisted, having passed through the waves of the world, obtain the habitation of the heavenly homeland as the security of a stable shore. That the Savior Himself boarded a boat with the disciples means elsewhere, as He reveals when He, foretelling the mystery of His passion and resurrection, immediately said to everyone: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Luke 8:23

As they were sailing, He fell asleep. Christ fell asleep while the disciples were sailing because, as the faithful tread the world and contemplate in their minds the rest of the future kingdom, and, either by the favorable breath of the Holy Spirit or by their own arduous rowing efforts, cast behind them with zeal the infidel pomp of the world, suddenly the time of the Lord's passion arrived. Hence, Mark rightly attests that this happened at the imminent hour of night to signify not only the Lord's sleep but also the very hour of the declining light. [Luke 8:23] -- And a storm of wind descended on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. As the Lord was ascending the stern of the cross, where He would embrace the sleep of death, the waves of blasphemous persecutors, stirred by demonic agents, rise up. Yet, it is not His patience that is disturbed by these waves, but the weakness of the disciples is shaken, terrified, and endangered.

Luke 8:24

They approached and woke Him up, saying: Master, we are perishing! The disciples awaken the Lord to prevent them from perishing due to the savagery of the waves while He sleeps, for they who had seen His death sought His resurrection with the greatest of desires, so that if He were to linger longer in the sleep of the flesh, their minds would perish forever in spiritual death. Hence, it rightly follows: [Luke 8:24] -- But He, rising, rebuked the wind and the raging water, and they ceased, and there was calm. Rising, He rebuked the wind, because, having celebrated the resurrection, He struck down the pride of the devil when He destroyed the one who had the power of death through His own death. He also made the raging water cease after

rising, because by emerging from the grave, He quashed the insane rage of the Jews who had shaken their heads crying: If He is the Son of God, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. Here it should be noted literally that all creatures perceive the Creator. For those whom He rebukes and commands perceive the one giving commands, not by the error of heretics who think all things are animated, but by the majesty of the Creator, for what is insensible to us is sensible to Him.

Luke 8:25

But he said to them: Where is your faith? They are rightly reproved who feared with Christ present, since indeed he who clings to him cannot perish. Similar to this is that after the sleep of death, appearing to the disciples, he reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him risen. And again he said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and so enter into his glory (Luke 24)? As if by a metaphor of the ship he were saying: Was it not necessary for the Christ to be asleep, while the waves were tossing the ship in which he was resting here and there, and so with the swelling heaps of the abyss immediately calmed, to reveal to all the power of his divinity?

Luke 8:25

Those who feared were amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the sea, and they obey him?" Matthew writes thus: "But the men were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this?' etc." Therefore, it was not the disciples, but the sailors and others who were on the ship who marveled. However, if anyone contentiously insists that those who marveled were the disciples, we will rightly respond that men are called those who had not yet known the power of the Savior. And we too, when individually imprinted with the sign of the Lord's cross, set out intending to leave the world, undoubtedly board the ship with Jesus, attempting to cross the lake. But He who neither slumbers nor sleeps, always guarding Israel (Psalm 121), although He seems to slumber for us often while sailing amidst the roaring of the sea, when amidst the efforts of virtues, or the repeated assaults of unclean spirits or wicked men, or the very rush of our thoughts, the splendor of faith grows dim, the height of hope fades, the flame of love cools. However, in such storms, it is necessary to flee to that

helmsman, to diligently rouse Him who does not serve but commands the winds. He will soon quell the tempests, restore tranquility, and grant the harbor of salvation.

It is pleasing in these circumstances to briefly examine the variety of apostolic voyages, to see how the mixture of good and bad people either helps to carry out their secret mission or causes disturbance. Behold indeed, to begin with the more perfect ones, after the solemnities of the Lord's resurrection are celebrated, seven chosen disciples board a ship to fish, and because they were not far from the shore of eternal rest, but were, as it were, about two hundred cubits away, that is, they detached their minds from the world as much as double love demanded, since Peter had already stripped himself of secular affairs. They deserved already to see the Lord standing on the shore of mortality, already to dine with Him, already to receive their nets filled with the mystical number of large fish as morning light from above was dawning, yet without them being torn, and to draw them out from the lower waves of the world.

Elsewhere, Peter, as read above, at the Lord's command, lets down the nets for a catch and captures a multitude of fish. But because he himself was still of a fragile mind, so that trembling he would say to Christ, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5), the nets were then torn, and if the companions had not helped, the ships would have even been submerged. Again, in this place, the disciples board a ship with the Lord, they go to the sea, but because Judas was among them, it is said that the Lord slept in the stern, which was the seat of the one steering, and the wind and sea raged outside. For although many merits of the disciples were sailing there, at that time, the treachery of the traitor was still agitating it: and those who were firm by their merits were troubled by the merits of another.

Likewise, Paul, sailing with brothers to Jerusalem, hastening to celebrate there the day of Pentecost and the joys of the Holy Spirit, traverses everything on a straight course. But when relegated from Jerusalem to Rome, because he travels with unbelievers, the sea rages, the winds oppose, the rain threatens, cold wearies, the stars are obscured, land is denied, wheat is thrown into the sea, the ship's equipment is taken away, finally the ship itself, dashed against the sands, is dissolved. Nature, which they do not recognize, they seek swimming to land. And those who had undertaken the waves of the world burdened with desires, with the world itself opposing them,

scarcely escape naked. In accordance with what the same apostle says: "But he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). [Luke 8:26] -- And they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. Gerasa is a notable city of Arabia beyond the Jordan, adjacent to the mountain Gilead, which was held by the tribe of Manasseh, not far from the lake of Tiberias, into which the swine were cast down. However, it signifies the nation of the Gentiles, which, after the sleep of the Passion and the glory of His Resurrection, the Savior deemed worthy to visit by sending preachers. Hence, it is fitting that Gerasa or Gergesa (as some read) is interpreted as 'casting out the colonist' or 'the stranger approaching.' Specifically indicating that the people of the Gentiles both cast out from their hearts the enemy who wickedly occupied it, and those who were far off were made near by the blood of Christ.

Luke 8:27

And when He had come out onto the land, a certain man who had a demon for a long time met Him. This man represents the people of the Gentiles, who for many times, that is, from nearly the very beginning of the world's birth, were vexed by a furious madness. [Luke 8:27] -- And he was not clothed with a garment. Because he lost the covering of his nature and virtue. For, indeed, our first parents, after sinning, are read to have been stripped of the garment of faith and charity. The prodigal son was clothed with this first robe after he returned repentant to the father. [Luke 8:27] -- Nor did he stay in a house, but in tombs. Because he did not rest in his conscience but delighted in dead works, that is, in sins. For what indeed are the bodies of the faithless if not certain sepulchers of the dead, in which not the word of God dwells, but the soul, dead in sins, is enclosed?

Luke 8:28

When he saw Jesus, he fell down before Him and cried out with a loud voice, saying, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" How great is the madness of Arius to believe that Jesus is a creature and not God, when even the demons believe and tremble at Him as the Son of the Most High God! What impiety of the Jews to say that He cast out demons by the prince of demons, when the demons themselves confess that He has nothing in common with them? Moreover, that which they then clamored in fury through the demoniac, they do not cease to say and confess afterwards in the

shrines of idols, namely, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Most High God, and that they have nothing of peace or association with Him. [Luke 8:28] -- "I beg you, do not torment me." For He commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For many times it had seized him. The enemy of human salvation considers it no small torment to cease harming the man; the longer he has possessed him, the more difficult it is to agree to let him go. Hence, we must strive with the utmost effort that if ever we are overcome by the devil, we immediately strive to avoid his snares, lest if we resist his rule too late, he might be expelled more laboriously at some point.

Luke 8:29

And he was bound with chains and shackles. Chains and shackles signify the severe and harsh laws of the Gentiles, by which in their republic sins are also restrained. [Luke 8:29] -- And having broken the bonds, he was driven by the demon into the desert. For having even transgressed those laws, he was led by desire to such crimes as already exceeded common custom.

Luke 8:30

But Jesus asked him, saying: What is your name? And he said: Legion, because many demons have entered into him. He does not inquire the name as if ignorant, but so that the confessed fury endured in front of witnesses, the power of the healer might more gratiously shine forth. But also priests of our time, who know to cast out demons through the grace of exorcism, are accustomed to say that those suffering cannot otherwise be cured unless they can confess everything that they have endured from unclean spirits in sight, hearing, taste, touch, and in any other sense of body or mind, waking or sleeping. And especially when, appearing either to men in the form of women or to women in the form of men, the demons, whom the Gauls call Dusii, falsely pretend by monstrous miracle to seek and accomplish intercourse with the human body. They command the name of the demon by which he has said he is known, and the bonds of their mutual pact of love by which they have sworn, to be exposed in confession. This matter, very much like a lie, is so true and well known by the testimony of many, that a certain priest, my neighbor, related to me that he began to cure a certain nun afflicted by a demon, but as long as the matter was hidden, he could achieve nothing with her.

However, once she confessed which phantom tormented her, he soon drove it out with prayers and other necessary purification methods, and healed the woman's body, afflicted with sores contracted by the demon's touch, with blessed salve as a medical remedy. But while one of the sores, deeply embedded in the side, could not close without continuously opening, he received advice from the very same woman he sought to heal on how she could be healed. "If," she said, "you sprinkle consecrated oil for the sick on the same wound and anoint me thus, I will immediately be restored to health. For I once saw in spirit, in a certain distant city I have never seen with bodily eyes, a certain girl suffering from a similar distress, being healed in this manner by a priest. He did as she suggested, and immediately the sore accepted the remedy it had previously resisted. I have cared to explain these things against the frauds of demons briefly, so that you may understand why the Lord did not ask for the name of the spirit He was going to expel in vain. But that many demons are remembered to have entered the man signifies that the people of the nations are enslaved not to one, but to innumerable and diverse idolatries. To which it is written, that the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one (Acts IV). Hence it is well that the unity of tongues was scattered in Babylon, and the variety of tongues was united in Jerusalem;

that confusion is interpreted as vision of peace: because evidently, among many tongues and nations, the chosen ones are confirmed in one faith and piety by peace, while the reproved are confused by even more sects than tongues, being dissociated.

Luke 8:31

And they begged him not to order them to go into the abyss. The demons knew that eventually, through the advent of the Lord, they would be sent into the abyss, not by foretelling the future themselves, but by recalling the words of the prophets spoken about them, and thus they thought that the Lord's advent, whose glory they marveled at, would tend to their own destruction. [Luke 8:32] -- Now there was there a herd of many pigs, feeding on the mountain, and they begged him to permit them to enter them: and he allowed them. He permitted this because he granted the demons' request, so that the destruction of the pigs would provide an occasion for salvation to humans. For the shepherds, seeing these things, immediately reported them to the city. Let the Manichaean be ashamed. If the souls of men and beasts

were of the same substance and from the same author, how could two thousand pigs be drowned for the salvation of a single man? Nonetheless, in their destruction, unclean men are figuratively represented, who lack voice and reason, who feed on the mountain of pride, and delight in filthy acts. Indeed, demons can dominate such individuals through the worship of idols. For unless someone lives like a pig, the devil will never gain power over him, or even if he receives it, it will only be for testing, not for destruction.

Luke 8:33

Therefore, the demons went out from the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. This signifies that with the Church now glorified, and the people of the Gentiles liberated from the dominion of demons, they who refuse to believe in Christ conduct their sacrilegious rites in hidden places, submerged in blind and profound curiosity. And it should be noted that the unclean spirits would not have gone even into the pigs unless the kind Savior himself had granted their petition, who certainly could have sent them into the abyss. He wanted to teach us a necessary lesson, namely that we should know that they can harm humans even less by their own power, who could not even harm any animals. However, this power, the just and good God can give to us with hidden justice, but not unjustly.

Luke 8:34

When they saw what had happened, those who were feeding the pigs fled and reported it in the city and in the villages. That the pig herders, fleeing, announced these things indicates that even some leaders of the impious, although they flee from the Christian law, nevertheless preach its power among the nations, in awe and wonder. [Luke 8:35] -- Those who came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, at His feet, and they were afraid, etc. This signifies the multitude delighted with ancient sweetness, honoring indeed, but unwilling to endure the Christian law, while they say that they cannot fulfill it, yet admiring the faithful people healed from their formerly lost conduct. For to sit at the feet of the Lord is to gaze upon the footprints of the Savior, supported by the rational examination of someone's mind, which he should follow. To resume being clothed is to be adorned with the studies of virtues, which he had lost by being deceived.

Luke 8:37

And all the multitude of the region of the Gerasenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. The Gerasenes, conscious of their fragility, judged themselves unworthy of the Lord's presence, not grasping the word of God, nor being able to sustain the weight of wisdom with their still infirm mind. This is also read to have happened to Peter himself, when he saw the miracle of the fish, and the widow of Zarephath, who perceived she was blessed by hosting the blessed Elijah, nonetheless thought herself burdened by his presence. "What have I to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquities to remembrance, and to kill my son?" (III Kings [I Kings] XVII).

Luke 8:37

But he himself, boarding the ship, returned. He had said above that the Lord, having left his parents, boarded the ship, and with the waves calmed together with the wind, immediately upon disembarking, he cured the demoniac who met him. By this, we taught that leaving behind the people of Judea, from which he took his origin according to the flesh, he provided for the salvation of the Gentiles after the storm of his passion had passed. Having done these things, he returned to his homeland, because blindness has happened in part to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in; and thus all Israel will be saved (Rom. XI). He boarded the ship, yet neither is he seized by sleep, nor is the ship struck by a storm, because Christ, rising from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has dominion over him (Rom. VI). However, his trophy of passion and the glory of resurrection will be proclaimed to the believing tribes of Judea, and when the preacher of his death, by which he conquered death with the standard, begins to be believed by the Hebrews, he will return to the homeland with the ship in which he had slept, as if repeating.

Luke 8:38

And the man from whom the demons had gone out begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and tell how much God has done for you." These words can be rightly understood from the Apostle's sentiment when he says, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is necessary on your account" (Philippians 1). Thus, one should understand that after the

forgiveness of sins, he must return to a good conscience and serve the Gospel for the salvation of others as well, so that afterward he may rest with Christ. Otherwise, if someone wishes prematurely to be with Christ, he may neglect the ministry of preaching, suited for the redemption of his brothers. [Luke 8:38-39] -- As for Matthew saying that two were cured from the legion of demons, while Mark and Luke mention only one, understand that one of them was a more notable and famous person, whom that region especially grieved for and whose salvation they greatly desired. The two evangelists, wanting to signify this, judged that only this one should be commemorated because the fame of this deed had spread more widely and clearly. But even in the highest concord of allegory, it is concordant because just as one possessed by a demon represents the Jews, so also two represent the types of Gentile peoples not inappropriately. For while Noah had three sons, only one's family was taken into possession by God: from the other two, diverse nations who served idols were born.

Luke 8:40

And it happened, when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And I said above that at the end of the age the Lord will mercifully return to the Jews and will be gladly received by them through the confession of faith. For the fact that they were all waiting for him is certainly what the prophet speaks to the synagogue: "You will wait for me many days, you will not be unfaithful, and you will not belong to another man" (Hosea 3). Now indeed, neither subjected to the man Christ nor committing idolatry, in the long expectation of her former spouse, that is, the Lord Christ, she awaits the embrace to come by grace. [Luke 8:41] -- And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. To the earlier reading, in which we interpreted about the rejection of the synagogue and the faith of the Church, and again about the restoration of the synagogue, is consequently added the dying daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. As the Lord was hastening to raise her, that woman with the hemorrhage intervened, obtained health, and thus by anticipating, she was the first to obtain salvation. For Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God (Psalm LXVII). And when the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then all Israel shall be saved. Therefore, the ruler of the synagogue is understood to be none other than Moses himself. Hence, Jairus is well called, that is, "illuminating," or "illuminated," because he receives the words of life

to give to us and by these he illuminates others, and he himself is illuminated by the Holy Spirit, by which he can write or teach vital instructions.

Luke 8:41

And he fell at the feet of Jesus, begging him to enter his house. If the head of Christ is God, the feet consequently are the incarnation, by which He touched the land of our mortality. Therefore, the ruler of the synagogue fell at the feet of Jesus, because the lawgiver, with the whole lineage of the fathers, acknowledged that Christ appearing in the flesh was to be preferred far above himself in the glory of dignity, affirming the apostle's statement with diligent devotion: Because the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Cor. I). He begged Him to enter his house, because with continuous prayers of joy he desired to see His coming. And my soul (says the Prophet) shall exult in the Lord, and shall delight in His Jesus. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee (Psalm XXXIV)? And this is to fall at the feet of Jesus, to confess Him with faithful piety as uniquely great above all.

Luke 8:42

Because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. The Synagogue itself, which alone was composed by legal institution, as if it were the only daughter of Moses, as if in the twelfth year of age, that is, when the time of puberty was approaching, was dying; because, having been nobly brought up by the prophets, after reaching the age of understanding, after it ought to generate spiritual fruits for God, suddenly distressed by the languor of errors, despairingly omitted to enter the ways of spiritual life. And if it were not helped by Christ, it would have fallen into horrendous death in every respect. [Luke 8:42] -- And it happened, as he went, the crowd pressed against him. The Lord, going to heal the girl, was pressed by the crowd, because, providing salutary advice to the Jewish people, which would raise its conscience sick with vices, he was burdened by the harmful custom of carnal populations.

Luke 8:43

And a certain woman was in the flow of blood for twelve years. The woman flowing with blood is the Church gathered from the gentiles, which, polluted by the inborn flow of carnal delights, had already been separated from the company of the faithful. But when the Word of God decided to save Judaea, it snatched away certain salvation from others with firm hope. It is

also to be noted that the daughter of the synagogue leader is twelve years old, and this woman had been flowing with blood for twelve years, that is, she began to be sick at the same time that the other was born. For almost at the same period of this age of the world, the synagogue was born among the patriarchs, and the nation of the gentiles began to be defiled by the filth of idolatry throughout the world. For the double flow of blood, that is, both over the prostitution of idolatry and over those things that are committed by the delight of flesh and blood, can be understood. Whence the sacred history beautifully refers that at the time when David, still a boy, slew the giant Goliath, the Philistines were encamped in the borders of Dommim, that is, of the bloods. Because evidently the Lord, appearing humble, found the peoples of the gentiles not only given to unfruitful works but also to the most filthy religion, in order to overthrow the prince of the world. Therefore, as long as the synagogue flourished, the Church toiled. The decline of that is the strength of this, because through their sin, salvation came to the gentiles.

Luke 8:43

She had spent all her substance on physicians and could not be healed by any. By physicians, he either means false theologians, philosophers, or secular law doctors who, discussing virtues and vices with great subtlety, promised to provide useful teachings for mortals on seeing and believing, or he certainly means the unclean spirits themselves who, as if advising men, suggested that they should already be worshiped as God. The more Gentile civilization spent its strength on listening to these, the less it could be cured of its own filth of iniquity. Hence, Mark, writing about this woman, says: "And she had suffered much from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse." But when she learned that the people of the Jews were sick, and recognized the true physician from heaven to be present, she also began to hope for and seek a remedy for her own ailment.

Luke 8:44

She came up behind and touched the fringe of His garment, and immediately her flow of blood ceased. The Church approaches and touches the Lord, who draws near to Him through the truth of faith. She comes up behind Him, either according to what He Himself said: "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me" (John 12), and elsewhere it is commanded: "You shall walk after the Lord your God"; or because, not seeing the Lord present in the

flesh, after the sacraments of the temporal dispensation were accomplished, she began to follow His footsteps through faith. She touches the fringe of His garment and restrains the flow of blood because blessed and truly to be purified is he who touches even the hem of the word with the hand of faith. For it is very rare to find one who deserves to recline on His chest or anoint His head with pure nard, since even that great one deemed himself unworthy to carry His sandals; and great too was she who merited to anoint His feet and wipe them with her hair.

Luke 8:45

And Jesus said: "Who touched Me?" Not to be taught what He did not know, but so that the power of faith, which He knew and indeed gave to the woman, might be manifested, He asked. [Luke 8:45-46] -- But with everyone denying it, Peter and those who were with him said: "Master, the crowds are pressing on you and afflicting you, and you say, 'Who touched me?'" The crowds press on all sides unpredictably, but one believing woman touches the Lord. For one who is afflicted by the various heresies amassed disorderly only seeks the one with a faithful heart of the Catholic Church. For, just as some see but do not see, and hear but do not hear, so too, those who touch do not touch, who do not faithfully touch Christ. Hence, to a certain one who loves indeed but who has not yet fully believed, he says: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John XX); clearly teaching what it means to truly touch Him, that is, to believe Him equal to the Father.

Luke 8:46

And Jesus said: "Someone touched me. For I know that power has gone out from me," etc. Let Pelagius say, if he pleases, that he is saved by his own effort. But let us say that the salvation of man is vain, in God we shall do virtue. For He also knows that the power, which is propitious to all our iniquities and heals all our infirmities, goes out not from ourselves but from Him. Therefore, He does not ignore the one who has touched the hem of His garment, that is, the mysteries of the incarnation, until he reaches the greater truths, having believed perfectly by fully loving. [Luke 8:48] -- But he said to her: "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." Therefore, daughter, because your faith has made you well. Nor did He say, your faith will make you well, but has made you well. For in what you have believed, you are now made well.

Luke 8:49

While he was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue ruler, saying to him: "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher." As the woman was healed from the issue of blood, immediately the death of the synagogue ruler's daughter is announced, because while the Church is cleansed from the stain of vices and, due to the merit of faith, is called a daughter, immediately the synagogue, which is of infidelity and envy, is dissolved by the law. Of infidelity indeed, because it did not want to believe in Christ; of envy truly, because it grieved that the Church believed. For it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: On the following Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicted the things spoken by Paul, reviling the way before the multitude (Acts XIII).

Luke 8:49

"Do not trouble the Teacher," is said even today by those who see the state of the synagogue so destitute that they do not believe it can be restored, and therefore do not think it should be interceded for its resurrection. But what is impossible with men is possible with God (Luke XVIII). Hence it follows: [Luke 8:50] -- But when Jesus heard this, he answered the father of the girl, "Do not be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved." The father of the girl is taken as the assembly of the doctors of the law, about whom the Lord said: The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat (Matt. XXIII). If they themselves would believe, the synagogue subjected to them would also be saved. [Luke 8:51] -- And when he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Previously, the son of the widow was publicly raised, here several witnesses are removed. Therefore, I think that the kindness of the Lord is again shown in this, because the widow, being the mother of an only child, did not suffer delays, and therefore, to avoid further affliction, maturity is added. It is also a form of wisdom, in that the son of the widow quickly believed in the Church, in the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, indeed, the Jews will believe, but fewer of the many.

Luke 8:52

They all wept and mourned for her. "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" he asked. "But the days will come when the

bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast." Therefore, the synagogue, because it lost the joy of the bridegroom, by which it might live, lies as if dead among mourners, not even understanding this itself, why it is mourned. [Luke 8:52] -- But he said: Do not weep. She is not dead, but sleeps. Dead to men, who could not raise her, she was sleeping to God, in whose power her soul was received and lived, and her body, to be resurrected, rested. Hence, the Christian custom has prevailed that the dead, who are undoubtedly to be resurrected, are called sleepers, just as the Apostle: "We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, about those who sleep, so that you do not grieve like the rest who have no hope" (1 Thess. IV). But even in the part of the allegory, when the soul which has sinned itself dies, yet it can be said to have slept to us, for it merited to be raised by Christ.

Luke 8:53

And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. Because they preferred to mock the word of the one raising than to believe, they were deservedly excluded outside, unworthy to see the miracle of the resurrection. [Luke 8:54] -- But he, taking her hand, called out saying: "Girl, arise." In Mark, it is written: He said to her: "Tabitha cumi", which is interpreted, "Girl, I say to you, arise"; and immediately she arose (Acts IX). Where a diligent reader may inquire why the truthful Evangelist, explaining the saying of the Savior, added from his own, "I say to you", when in the Syrian language which he used, it was said no more than "Girl, arise." Therefore, holding the girl's hand, Jesus healed her, because unless the hands of the Jews, which are full of blood, are first cleansed, their dead synagogue will not rise. [Luke 8:55] -- And her spirit returned, and she immediately got up. Mark says it this way: And immediately the girl got up and walked. And spiritually it teaches that whoever recovers from the death of the soul with Christ strengthening him by the hand, ought not only to rise from the filth of vices, but also immediately progress in good deeds.

Luke 8:55

And He commanded that she be given something to eat. He ordered her to eat, given as a testimony of life resurrected, so that it would be believed as truth and not a phantom. But if someone has risen from spiritual death, it is necessary that they soon be satiated with heavenly bread, and of course become a partaker of the divine word and the sacred altar. For according to

moral understanding, those three dead ones whom the Savior raised in the bodies signify three kinds of the resurrection of souls. Indeed, some by giving in to the consent of evil delight, with the sin's thought hidden, bring death upon themselves. But indicating that he brings such to life, the Savior raised the daughter of the synagogue leader, who was not yet carried outside but was dead inside the house, as if concealing vice secretly in the heart. Others, not only by consenting to noxious delight but also by performing the very evil they delight in, bring their dead almost outside the gates. And demonstrating that He brings these to repentance, He raised the young son of a widow carried out outside the gates and restored him to his mother. For He restored the soul repenting from the darkness of sin to the unity of the Church, as we have also taught before. However, some, not only by thinking or acting illicitly, but by the habit of sinning itself, almost corrupt themselves by burying.

Yet, neither is the power and grace of the Savior less in raising them if there are solicitous thoughts watching over their health, as devoted sisters to Christ. For indicating this, He raised Lazarus, already four days in the tomb, and attested by his sister as already stinking. For the worst deeds often accompany a harmful reputation. It should be noted, however, that the more severe the death of the soul that comes upon it, the more persistent the fervor of repentance must be that it deserves to rise. Secretly wishing to show this, the Lord resurrects the dead girl lying in the room with a modest and gentle voice, saying: "Child, arise. And because of the ease of resurrection, He denied that she had already died. The young man carried outside, He strengthens with more words so that he must revive, saying: "Young man, I say to you, arise. But the one dead for four days, to be able to release the long-sealing tomb, Jesus groaned in spirit, troubled Himself, shed tears, groaned again, and cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11). And thus at last, he who was in despair, with the weight of darkness dispelled, is returned to life and light. But it should also be noted that since public guilt requires a public remedy, but minor sins can be erased by lighter and private repentance, the girl lying in the house rises with few witnesses, who are also instructed not to divulge the miracle.

Luke 8:56

And his parents, he says, were amazed, and he commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened. The young man was raised outside the gate, with

a large crowd accompanying and watching. Lazarus, called forth from the tomb, became so widely known to the people that due to the witness of those who saw it, many crowds met the Lord with palms, and many from among the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. The Lord recognized a fourth dead man, as informed by the disciple; but since there were no living ones to beseech the Lord for his rescue: "Let the dead bury their own dead," he said (Matt. 13); that is, let the wicked weigh down the wicked with harmful praises, and since there is no righteous person present to correct in mercy, let the sin of the sinner anoint their head.

CHAPTER 9

Luke 9:1

But Jesus, having called together the twelve apostles, gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. First granting them the power of signs, he sent them to preach the kingdom of God so that the greatness of the works would also attest to the greatness of the promises, and the power shown would give faith to the words, and they would do new things, who preached new things. Hence now also, as the number of the faithful has increased, there are many within the holy Church who maintain a life of virtues, but do not have the signs of virtues. Because a miracle is shown in vain externally if it lacks what is at work internally. For, according to the voice of the master of the Gentiles, tongues are a sign not to the faithful, but to the unbelievers.

Luke 9:3

And he said to them: Take nothing for the journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money, nor have two tunics. It is usual to inquire how Matthew and Luke mentioned that the Lord told the disciples not to carry a staff, when Mark says, and he commanded them not to take anything for the road except a staff only. This is resolved in such a way that we understand the staff mentioned under a different meaning which, according to Mark, should be carried, and a different one that, according to Matthew and Luke, should not be carried. Just as temptation is understood under a different meaning when it is said: God tempts no one, and under another when it is said: The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love him. One denotes seduction, the other probation. Therefore, both statements must be

taken as said by the Lord to the apostles, both to not carry a staff, and to carry only a staff. For when, according to Matthew, he told them: Do not possess gold or silver (Matthew X), and other things, he immediately added: For the laborer is worthy of his food(Bidad). Hence he sufficiently showed why he did not want them to possess and carry these things. Not because these things were not necessary for the sustenance of this life, but because he sent them in such a way as to show that these things were due to them from those to whom the Gospel believers were announcing.

However, it is clear that the Lord did not command in such a way that the Evangelists should live from other sources than those who provide for them, to whom they announce the Gospel. Otherwise, the Apostle went against this precept, who earned his living from the labor of his hands, so as not to be a burden to anyone. But he gave authority, wherein they knew these things were due to them. However, when something is commanded by the Lord, if it is not done, it is a fault of disobedience. When authority is given, it is permissible for anyone not to use it, and as if to give up their right. Therefore, the Lord ordained this, which the Apostle says he ordained, that those who announce the Gospel should live from the Gospel, he spoke to the apostles, that secure they should neither possess nor carry the essentials of this life, neither great nor small. Therefore, he said, Nor a staff, showing that from their faithful ones, all things are due to his ministers, requiring nothing superfluous. And therefore adding: For the laborer is worthy of his food (Matthew X), he thoroughly opened and illustrated wherefrom he spoke these things. Thus, he signified this authority by the name of the staff when he says, not to take anything for the road, except a staff only. It is understood that by the authority accepted from the Lord, which is signified by the name of the staff, even those things that are not carried will not be lacking.

This must also be understood about two tunics, so none of them would think to carry another, besides the one they were wearing, worried it might be needed, as they could receive from that authority. But according to Mark, not to carry or have two tunics, but more expressively not to be clothed in two tunics, saying: And they were not to put on two tunics (Mark VI): what does he advise them except to walk not doubly but simply? Otherwise. In two tunics, they seem to me to show a double garment. Not that in the icy places of Scythia and snow, someone should be content with one tunic, but that in

a tunic, we understand clothing, so we should not be dressed in one and reserve another for ourselves from fear of the future.

Luke 9:4

And in whatever house you enter, stay there and do not go out from there. He gives a general command of constancy, so that they may uphold the laws of hospitable necessity, asserting that it is foreign to the preacher of the heavenly kingdom to wander through houses and change the inviolate laws of hospitality. Nor is it without reason that, according to Matthew, the house that the apostles enter is decreed to be observed, so that the reason for changing the hospitality and violating necessity does not suffice. [Luke 9:5] -- And whoever will not receive you, as you go out from that city, even shake off the dust of your feet as a testimony against them. The dust is shaken off their feet in testimony of their labor, in that they have entered the city, and the apostolic preaching has reached them. Or the dust is shaken off so that they may accept nothing from them, not even what is necessary for sustenance, who have spurned the Gospel. Allegorically, those who humbly attend to the word, if they are obscured by the spots of earthly levity as men, are soon purified by those marks of the evangelical preaching which they receive. But those who scorn through unbelief, negligence, or even deliberate effort, are judged to have their communion to be avoided, their synagogue to be shunned, and the dust of their feet shaken off, lest the mind's chaste mark be stained by what is handled and compared to dust.

Luke 9:6

But they went out and went about the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. What the Apostles preached, or how they healed, Mark explains more fully. He says, they preached that people should repent, and anointed many sick people with oil, and healed them. James also says: Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and if they have sinned, they will be forgiven (Mark 6). Hence it is clear from the apostles themselves that this custom of the holy Church was handed down, that with the oil consecrated by pontifical blessing, the sick are anointed. They preached that people should repent; and above, He says, He sent them to preach the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 1). For evidently they preached both, according to the example of John the Baptist, or the Savior Himself: Repent,

for the kingdom of heaven is near (Matt. 3). For to draw near to the gates of the heavenly kingdom is to repent of those five sins from which one had departed from God.

Luke 9:7

Now, Herod the tetrarch heard all that was done by Him, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead. How great was the envy of the Jews, who, with fury of malice against the Lord, we are taught in almost every place of the Gospel. Behold John, of whom it was said that he performed no sign, yet they believed he could have risen from the dead without any witness; but Jesus, proven by God with powers and signs, at whose death the elements trembled, and whose resurrection and ascension were declared by angels, apostles, and men and women alike, they preferred to believe was not risen, but was stolen away secretly. Nor should it be thought to contradict that Luke recounts that Herod was perplexed because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead: when Matthew and Mark report that Herod himself, having heard of Jesus' fame, said to his servants, This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him (Matt. 14); but it must be understood that after this perplexity, he confirmed in his mind what was being said by others.

Luke 9:9

And Herod said: I beheaded John. But who is this about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him. These are the words of the hesitant Herod, mentioned above. Because he desires to see one whom he discovered to be great by reputation, perhaps to recognize if he might be John himself. The sequence and cause of his beheading, since the Evangelists describe it most fully, Luke in his manner prefers to mention to indicate the state of the times, rather than to repeat what he sees is abundantly said. However, because there is mention of John's beheading, it should be noted, that both John and the Lord declare their own state and order both at the time of birth and by the order of their passion. For John was diminished by the head, the Lord was elevated on the cross. John was born when the days began to decrease, the Lord when they began to increase. As this appears too, it is that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3), that is, it must be re-

cognized that He, who was considered a prophet, is Christ: and I, who was thought to be Christ, must be understood as His forerunner.

Luke 9:10

And the apostles, having returned, reported to him whatever they had done. Not only do the apostles report to the Lord what they themselves had done and taught but also what John, occupied in teaching, had suffered, or Christ, or the disciples of the same John relay to him, as Matthew indicates. Thus follows:

Luke 9:10

And he withdrew, having taken them apart, to a deserted place called Bethsaida. He did not act out of fear of death, as some think, but sparing his enemies, lest they add murder to murder, and also waiting for the opportune time of his passion, for anyone who has carefully read the Gospels will find that the passions of John and the Lord were separated by more than a year. Indeed, the Lord performed the miracle of the loaves, according to three agreeing evangelists, after the beheading of John. John, about to describe this miracle, mentions that it was near the Passover, the feast day of the Jews; and after these events, Jesus is said to have gone up to the feast of their Tabernacles. There, while he was teaching in the temple, they sought to apprehend him, but no one laid hands on him because his hour had not yet come (John 7); and then during the time of the next Passover he completed the triumph of the cross. Thus, after John was killed, waiting for the time, he retreated apart to a deserted place called Bethsaida: mystically teaching that having left behind Judea, which, by not believing in prophecy, had lost its head, he would lavish the nourishment of the word in the desert of the Church, which had no husband. Hence, beautifully, Bethsaida is interpreted as the house of fruits. For it is the one about which Isaiah said: The desert and the parched land shall be glad; the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom like the lily (Isa. 35); and a little later: They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God (Isa. 35). Bethsaida is, however, in Galilee, the city of the apostles Andrew and Peter and Philip, near the lake of Gennesaret, as we find in the books of places.

Luke 9:11

When the crowds learned of it, they followed him. And he welcomed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed

care. The Lord tests the faith of the crowds, and rewards the proven faith with a worthy reward. By seeking the solitude, he explores whether they care to follow. These, by following and not using beasts of burden or various vehicles, but as some Evangelists tell, initiating the journey into the desert by the labor of their own feet, show how much they care for their salvation. Again, the Lord himself, as a powerful and merciful savior and healer, by welcoming the fatigued, teaching the ignorant, healing the sick, and feeding the hungry, suggests how much he delights in the devotion of believers. According to the laws of allegory, Christ, seeking the deserts of the Gentiles, is followed by many troops of the faithful, leaving behind the walls of ancient life and neglecting the protection of various doctrines. And he who was first known as God in Judea, after the teeth of the Jews became weapons and arrows, and their tongue was made a sharp sword against him. "Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and let your glory be over all the earth" (Psalm LVI).

Luke 9:12

The day began to decline, and the twelve, approaching, said to him, "Send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and countryside around and find food." As the day declined, the Savior feeds the crowds, because either with the end of the ages approaching, or when the Sun of righteousness has set for us, we are saved from the wasting away of long spiritual famine. [Luke 9:13] -- But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." He challenges the apostles to the breaking of bread, so that, as they declare themselves not to have anything, the greatness of the miracle might become more known, at the same time suggesting that through them our hungry hearts are to be fed daily. For what does Peter do when he speaks through the Epistles, if not to fill our poorly hungry hearts with the nourishment of the word? What do Paul and John achieve by speaking through the Epistles, if not that our minds may perceive heavenly nourishment and overcome the revulsion of famine by which they were dying?

Luke 9:13

But they said: We have no more than five loaves and two fish. The apostles did not yet have more than five loaves of the Mosaic law and two fish of both Testaments, which, for a longer time, were hidden in the mystery of things latent, as if covered and nourished by the waves of the abyss. However, it is

well said in the Gospel of John that the loaves, which designate the law, were barley loaves, which is the food of draught animals and most rustic slaves: because to beginners and those not yet perfected, harsher and coarser precepts are to be entrusted. For the animal man does not receive the things of the spirit of God (1 Cor. II). And so the Lord, giving gifts to each according to their strength, and always provoking to greater perfection, first feeds five thousand with five loaves, then four thousand with seven loaves. Thirdly, he entrusts the mystery of his flesh and blood to his disciples. Finally, he grants the great gift to the elect, that they may eat and drink at his table in the kingdom.

Luke 9:14

But there were about five thousand men. Because there are five senses of the outer man, the five thousand men who followed the Lord signify those who, still set in the secular state, have learned to use well the external things they possess. They are rightly nourished by five loaves, because such need still to be instructed by legal precepts. For those who renounce the world entirely are four thousand, and being nourished by seven loaves, that is, both elevated by the evangelical nourishment and taught by spiritual grace. For the sake of signifying this mystical distinction, I believe it was ordered to make five gilded columns at the entrance of the tabernacle, and four before the oracle, that is, the Holy of Holies. Because evidently beginners are chastised by the law so that they do not sin, but the perfected are admonished by grace to live more devoutly to God.

Luke 9:14

He said to his disciples, "Make them recline in groups of fifty," and they did so. The various groups of diners represent the various congregations of the Churches around the world, which compose the one catholic Church. They reclined not only in groups of fifty, but, as Mark attests, in groups of a hundred as well. Since the fiftieth psalm is one of repentance, and the number one hundred passes from the left to the right, those who recline at the Lord's banquet in groups of fifty are positioned in repentance and hearing the word. Those who recline in groups of a hundred, having already presumed upon the hope of forgiveness, yearn solely for eternal life. [Luke 9:16] -- After taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to set before the crowd. The Sa-

vior, seeing the hungry crowds, does not create new food, but blesses what the disciples have brought, because, coming in the flesh, he preaches nothing other than what has been foretold, but demonstrates the sayings of prophecy filled with the mysteries of grace. He looks to heaven to teach that the gaze of the mind should be directed there, and that the light of knowledge is to be sought there. He breaks the loaves and distributes them to his disciples to set before the crowd, because he reveals the closed sacraments of the law and prophecy to those who will preach throughout the world.

Luke 9:17

Twelve baskets of fragments were taken up that were left over. What was left over by the crowds is gathered by the disciples, because the more sacred mysteries, which the unrefined cannot grasp, should not be neglected but sought by the perfect. For by the twelve baskets, the apostles are symbolized, and through the apostles, all the subsequent choirs of teachers, who, though outwardly despised by men, are inwardly filled with the remnants of the saving food to nurture the hearts of the humble. For it is known that service works are commonly carried out with baskets, but it was he who filled the baskets with fragments of bread, who chose the weak things of this world to confound the strong. [Luke 9:18] -- And it happened, while he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. The disciples were present with the Lord, and followed him on the way, as Mark indicates, but he prayed to the Father alone, because the saints can be united with the Lord by faith and love; seeing him distinct from other mortals in the divine glory of majesty, also following humbly in the way he taught while he lived in the flesh: but the incomprehensible secrets of the Father's plan only the Son penetrates. For nowhere (if I am not mistaken) is he found to have prayed with the disciples, everywhere he prays alone, because the counsels of God cannot be grasped by human desires, nor can anyone be a partaker of the interior with Christ.

Luke 9:18

And he asked them, saying: Who do the crowds say that I am? But they answered and said, John the Baptist: others say Elijah, others that one of the old prophets has risen again. The Lord appropriately, intending to test the faith of the disciples, first asks the opinion of the crowds, lest the confession of the disciples, not having been tested by the acknowledgment of truth, seem to be established by popular opinion, and they may be thought to be-

lieve not from proven knowledge but to doubt from hearsay like Herod. Thus also he says to Peter, who confessed him as Christ, according to Matthew: Because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you (Matt. XVI), that is, human doctrine did not teach you the truth of faith. Also appropriately, those who hold different opinions about the Lord are noted by the name of the crowds, whose sense and speech are always doubtful, unstable, and wandering. From whom, to differentiate them, he immediately adds:

Luke 9:20

But you, who do you say that I am? For the disciples of Christ are not of the crowd, those who walk alone with the Lord, who are worthy to see him praying privately; but even if anyone from the crowd believes in Christ, he will no longer be of the crowd. [Luke 9:20] -- Simon Peter answered, Christ of God. Although the other apostles knew, Peter nonetheless responded before the others. Therefore, he encompassed everything, who both expressed the nature and the name, in which is the highest of virtues. Are we indeed asking questions about God's generation? When Paul judged that he knew nothing except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2), Peter thought nothing more than to confess the Son of God, and when and how He was born, and how great He is. Shall we inquire out of human weakness? Therefore, the end of my faith is Christ, the end of my faith is the Son of God. I am not allowed to know the sequence of generation, however, I am not allowed to be ignorant of the faith of generation.

Luke 9:21

But He, rebuking them, commanded that they should not tell anyone about this, saying; because it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and so on. Therefore, He did not want to be preached before the passion and resurrection, so that, after the sacrament of blood was completed, He might more opportunely tell the apostles: Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28). Because it would be useless to publicly preach Him, and to make His majesty known among the people, whom they will see in a little while being scourged and crucified, suffering many things from the elders and scribes, and the chief priests. And it should be noted that the one who must suffer many things and be killed and rise again, is called the Son of Man: because while Christ suffered in the flesh, divinity remained impassible. It should also be noted

that He calls Himself the Son of Man, but Peter confesses Him as the Christ, the Son of God, so that from both sides He is proven to be true God and true man.

Luke 9:23

He said to all: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself. He aptly added, to all, because the previous matters about the faith of the Lord's birth or passion, he dealt with only with his separate disciples. But then we deny ourselves when we avoid what we have been through oldness, and strive for what we are called through newness. Therefore, let Truth say, let it say: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself. For unless one fails from oneself, one does not approach him who is above oneself; nor can one grasp what is beyond oneself, if one does not know how to slay what one is. But now, one who denies oneself from vices must seek the virtues in which one may grow. For it is immediately added: [Luke 9:23] -- And let him take up his cross daily, and follow me. For the cross is borne in two ways, when either the body is affected through abstinence, or the soul is afflicted through compassion for a neighbor. Let us consider how Paul bore his cross in both ways, who said: I buffet my body, and bring it into servitude, lest after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected (I Cor. IX). Behold, in the affliction of the body, we heard the cross of the flesh; now in the compassion for the neighbor, let us hear the cross of the mind. He says: Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn (II Cor. XI)? But in both cases of bearing the cross, it is to be noted that we are commanded to bear it daily, and having taken it up, to follow the Lord.

Luke 9:24

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Thus it is said to the faithful: Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it, as if it is said to the farmer: If you keep the grain, you lose it; if you sow it, you renew it. For who does not know that grain, when it is sown, perishes from sight and disappears in the earth? But from where it decays in the dust, it sprouts anew. For the holy Church has a time of persecution and a time of peace, our Redeemer indicated these times in his teachings. For in the time of persecution, the soul is to be sacrificed, but in the time of peace, earthly desires which might dominate more must be broken. Hence it is now said:

Luke 9:25

For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses himself, and suffers damage to himself? When persecution from adversaries is absent, the heart must be guarded more diligently. For in times of peace, it is lawful to live, and also to be ambitious. Thus we often despise all fleeting things, but yet we are still hindered by the habit of human decency, such that the rectitude we keep in mind we are not yet able to express in words. But to this wound too a fitting remedy is added, when the Lord says: [Luke 9:26] -- For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But behold, now men say among themselves: We are now not ashamed of the Lord and his words, because we openly confess him with our voice. To whom I respond that in this Christian assembly there are some who confess Christ because they see that all are Christians. Therefore, the voice of profession is not sufficient for the testing of faith, as the profession of generality defends it from shame. Yet there is a place where each one may question himself, so that he may truly test himself in the confession of Christ. Certainly, in the time of persecution, the faithful could be ashamed of being stripped of their possessions, cast down from dignities, afflicted with scourges: but in the time of peace, since our persecutions are absent, there is another where we may be shown to ourselves. We often fear being despised by our neighbors, we disdain to tolerate verbal injuries: if perhaps a quarrel occurs with a neighbor, we are ashamed to make amends first. For the carnal heart, while seeking the glory of this life, rejects humility.

Luke 9:27

But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God in this place is called the present Church; and because some of the disciples were to live in the body to such an extent that they would see the Church of God constructed and raised against the glory of this world, it is now said with a comforting promise: There are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. But since the Lord was giving so many precepts of undergoing death, what was necessary that He suddenly came to this promise? Except that something also had to be promised to the unlearned disciples concerning the present life, so that they could be more firmly estab-

lished in the future, for which He promised them to see the kingdom of God on earth, so that this might be more faithfully presumed by them in heaven. But if we wish to accept the kingdom of God in this sentence as the future blessedness in heaven, even this some of those standing there saw not many days later on the mountain, namely so that by the contemplation of enduring joy, even if briefly experienced, they might more modestly endure the adversities of the passing present age. With a most fitting word, indeed, He testifies that the saints taste death, by whom the death of the body is, of course, tasted by sipping, and the life of the soul is held by possessing.

Luke 9:28

And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took Peter and James and John. On the eighth day, the Lord manifests to the disciples the glory of the promised future blessedness, so that, with the sweetness of heavenly life shown, he may refresh the hearts of all who can hear these things, and with the number of eight days, he may teach that the true joy of the resurrection is to come. For he himself rose from the dead on the eighth day, that is, after the sixth day of the Sabbath, on which he ascended the cross, and the seventh day of the Sabbath, on which he rested in the tomb. And we too, after the six ages of this world, in which we rejoice to suffer and labor for the Lord, and the seventh age of the rest of souls, which is meanwhile in another life, will rise again in a kind of eighth age. For that which Matthew and Mark say of the Lord being transfigured after six days does not result in the order of time, nor in the reason of the mystery. Because they only place the intermediate days, therefore they say absolutely that it happened after six days: he here includes both the first and the last, and thus more fittingly mentions about eight days. And this one signifies that the saints must rest from labor after six ages of the world, while the other one designates that we shall rise in the eighth time.

Hence also fittingly the sixth psalm is inscribed For the eighth, whose beginning is, O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger. Because indeed after the six ages in which it is permitted to work, it is necessary to insist in prayers that in the eighth time of retribution we are not rebuked by an angry judge. Which indeed the Lord himself wanted to teach us in this place by the example of his prayer being shown, about which it follows:

Luke 9:28

And he went up into the mountain to pray. He indeed went up into the mountain to pray, and thus to be transfigured, to show that those who expect the fruit of the resurrection, who desire to see the king in his beauty, ought to dwell in mind in the heights and devote themselves to continuous prayers. He takes only three disciples with him, because many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew XX). And those who here keep the faith with which they are imbued, with an incorrupt mind of the Holy Trinity, deserve to rejoice there in its eternal vision.

Luke 9:29

And it came to pass, while he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became white and dazzling. The Savior transfigured did not lose the substance of true flesh, but showed the glory of future resurrection, either his or ours. Just as he appeared then to the apostles, so shall he appear to all the elect after judgment. For in the very time of judging both the good and the evil, he will be seen in the form of a servant, so that the impious who spurned him, the Jews who denied him, the soldiers who crucified him, Pilate and Herod who judged him, may recognize the judge. The clothing of the Lord, however, is taken to mean the chorus of his saints, whom the Apostle glorifying says: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3). This same attire, while the Lord remained on earth, appeared humble and similar to others, but as he sought the mountain, it shone with new whiteness, for now we are sons of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3). Hence Mark, describing these clothes well, says: such as no launderer on earth can whiten (Mark 9). For the launderer to be understood here is the one whom the penitent Psalmist prays to: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51), he cannot give his faithful on earth the brightness, which remains preserved for them in heaven.

Luke 9:30

And behold, two men were speaking with him. They were Moses and Elias, of whom we read that one died, and the other was taken up into heaven. Unless this signifies the future glory of all the saints with the Lord in majesty, who at the time of judgment will reign with him, either found alive in the

flesh or resurrected from death tasted long ago. For as the Apostle testifies, "The dead who are in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. IV). Alternatively, Moses and Elias, that is, the lawgiver and the greatest of the prophets, appear and speak with the Lord to show that he is the one whom all the writings of the law and the prophets foretold. They appear, however, not in the lowlands, but on the mountain with him, because only those who seek the divine heights with their minds will perceive the majesty of the holy Scripture fulfilled in the Lord. Consequently, even the Jews saw Moses, but they did not merit to follow him as he ascended to God on the mountain. They see him also when he returned, but not without a veil. They knew Elias, but only Elisha with the sons of the prophets beheld the triumph of his ascent, because many of us read the words of Scripture here and there, but very few understand how lofty it shines in the mysteries of Christ.

Luke 9:31

And they spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. And to this day, the law and the prophets teach in mutual voices the mystery of the Lord's dispensation to whomsoever they find on the summit of true faith. [Luke 9:32] -- Peter, and those who were with him, were heavy with sleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw His majesty and the two men standing with Him. Not by mere chance, but by the reason of the mystery were the disciples heavy with sleep, namely, that they might see a representation of the resurrection after physical rest. Those who are awakened to the glory of the saints will see the majesty of the Lord more truly, the more they will rejoice in the immortality of their own flesh, in which they had conquered death. Then they will behold Moses and Elijah in glory, because they will better understand how not one jot or one tittle got passed from the law, nor the Lord came to dissolve the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matthew V).

Luke 9:33

And it happened, while they were departing from Him, that Peter said to Jesus: Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tents, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said. Oh, what great happiness it would be to be present perpetually at the vision of the

Deity among choirs of angels, if the transfigured humanity of Christ and the company of two saints seen even momentarily delighted enough for Peter to want to hold them in service so they wouldn't depart! Though in human condition he did not know what to say, he nevertheless showed a sign of the fervor instilled in him. For he did not know what he was saying, who forgot that the kingdom promised by the Lord to the saints was not in some place on earth, but in the heavens, nor could he or his fellow apostles, still burdened with mortal flesh, enter the state of immortal life, nor was a house made with hands necessary in that age. But even now, ignorance is marked by anyone who wishes to make three tents for the law, the prophets, and the Gospel, since these cannot at all be separated from each other, having one tabernacle, that is the Church of God.

Luke 9:34

While he was speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them. He who sought a material tabernacle received the shadow of the cloud, so that he might learn that in the resurrection, the saints are to be protected not by the covering of houses, but by the glory of the Holy Spirit. About which the Psalmist says: But the sons of men shall hope in the covering of your wings (Psalm 56). And in his Apocalypse, John says: And I did not see a temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21).

Luke 9:35

And they were afraid as they entered into the cloud, and a voice came from the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, hear him. Human fragility cannot bear the sight of greater glory, and trembling with the whole mind and body, it falls to the ground. The more one seeks greater things, the more he collapses to lower things, if he does not know his own measure. Indeed, the voice of the Father speaking from heaven is heard, which bears witness to the Son, and teaches Peter the truth, removing his error, and indeed teaches the other apostles through Peter. This is (he says) my beloved Son, it is he who should have a tabernacle built, it is him who should be obeyed. This is the Son; Moses and Elijah are servants to him, they too should prepare a tabernacle for the Lord in the inner rooms of their hearts along with you. And note, just as when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, so also on the glorified mountain, the mystery of the whole Trinity is declared, whose glory we confess in baptism, and which we will see in the resurrection. Nor is it in vain

that the Holy Spirit appears here in a bright cloud, there in a dove, because he who now keeps the faith which he perceives with a simple heart, will then behold what he had believed with the clear light of vision, and by the same grace will be protected forever.

Luke 9:36

And while the voice was being spoken, Jesus was found alone. When the Son began to be designated, the servants immediately departed, lest the paternal voice be thought to be addressed to them. Alternatively: as the voice was made over the Son, He was found alone, because when He reveals Himself to the chosen, God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15), indeed He with His own, Christ through all will be one, that is, the head will shine with the body. For which unity He said elsewhere: And no one has ascended into heaven, except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven (John 3). [Luke 9:36] -- And they were silent, and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. The premeditation of the future kingdom and the glory of the conqueror had been shown on the mountain. Therefore the disciples are silent, and, at the Lord's command, tell no one of the vision until the Son of Man is risen from the dead, lest the magnitude of the matter be incredible, and after such glory, the subsequent cross creates scandal among unrefined minds.

Luke 9:37

And it happened on the following day, as they were descending from the mountain, a great crowd met Him, and behold, a man from the crowd shouted out, saying: Master, I beseech You, look upon my son, for he is my only one. The places match the events: On the mountain, the Lord prays, is transformed, reveals to the disciples the secrets of His majesty; descending to the lower places, He is met by the crowd, struck by the lamentation of the wretched. Above, He reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to the disciples; below, He reproaches the crowds for the sins of unbelief. Above, He discloses the Father's voice to those who could follow Him; below, He expels wicked spirits from those who were being tormented. Even now, according to the quality of merits, He ceases not to ascend and descend for some. For those who are still earthly and beginners, as if seeking the low places, He strengthens, teaches, and corrects; but the perfect, whose conversation is in the heavens, He glorifies by exalting more highly, instructs more freely

about eternal things, and often teaches those things which the crowds cannot even hear.

Luke 9:39

And behold, a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it convulses him and scatters him with foam, and scarcely departs tearing him. This demoniac, whom the Lord healed descending from the mountain, Matthew describes as lunatic, Mark as deaf and mute. They signify those of whom it is written: "The fool changes like the moon" (Eccl. XXVII), who never remain in the same state, now changed to these, now to other vices, waxing and waning, mute in not confessing their faith, deaf in not in any way hearing the word of faith. [Luke 9:40] -- And I asked your disciples to cast him out, and they could not. In this saying he secretly accuses the apostles, for the impossibility of healing is sometimes attributed not to the weakness of the healers, but to the faith of those who are to be healed, the Lord saying: "Let it be done to you according to your faith."

Luke 9:41

But Jesus answering, said: O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Not that the gentle and meek one, who did not open his mouth like a lamb before its shearer (Is. LIII), overcame by weariness, nor did he break out in words of fury; but because in the likeness of a physician, if he sees a sick person acting against his prescriptions, he may say: How long shall I come to your house? How long shall I spend the effort of my art, while I command one thing, and you do another? But he was not angry at the person, but at the vice, and through one man he reproached the Jews for disbelief, so he immediately added: [Luke 9:41] -- Bring your son here. And as he was coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. For as Jesus approached, the demon convulsed and scattered the boy, because often those who turn to God after sins are attacked by greater and new snares of the old enemy, acting, evidently, either to instill hatred of virtue, or to avenge the injury of his expulsion. Hence (to move from the specific to the general) what great struggles he inflicted on the beginnings of the Church, as he grieved suddenly the losses inflicted on his kingdom.

Luke 9:42

And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. He does not rebuke the boy, who was suffering the attack, but

the demon which was causing it, because one who desires to correct a sinner must drive away the vice by surely reproving and hating it, but ought to restore the man with love, until he can be returned healthy to the spiritual fathers of the Church. [Luke 9:44] -- And all were marveling at all that he did, he said to his disciples: Let these words sink into your ears. For the Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men. Among the great works of divine power, he often impresses and reiterates the abasement of his human suffering, so that his sudden coming would not cause terror, but be endurable by a mind prepared in advance. Surely, what he said: "Let these words sink into your ears," should be read with emphasis and greater force, addressed to you, who more familiarly adhere to my discipleship and to whom the hidden and uncertain elements of my wisdom I have more plainly revealed (Ps. L), while others only marvel at the divine deeds, you should deeply ponder the event of the precious blood, by which the world is to be redeemed.

Luke 9:45

But they did not understand this saying. This ignorance of the disciples arises not so much from slowness as from love, because they, still being carnal and ignorant of the mystery of the cross, could not believe that he, whom they knew as the true God, could die. And because they were accustomed to hear him frequently speaking in figures, they thought even those things which he spoke concerning his being delivered up referred figuratively to something else.

Luke 9:46

But a thought entered among them about who was the greatest among them. Because they had seen Peter, James, and John being taken up the mountain separately, and believed some mystery was revealed to them there; and also because the keys of the kingdom of heaven had been promised to Peter earlier, and that the Church was to be built upon him, they thought either these three were preferred over the others, or among all the apostles, Peter was preeminent. There are those who think this thought was stirred in the disciples by the fact that the Lord, according to Matthew, took a coin from the mouth of a fish and gave it to those who collected the tribute for himself and Peter, as if implying that they were superior to the others, since Peter was equated with the Lord in the obligation to pay the tribute. How-

ever, a diligent reader will find this question among them happened even before the tribute coin was collected. Matthew records this event in Capernaum. But Mark says: "And they came to Capernaum. When they were in the house, he asked them, 'What were you discussing on the way?' But they were silent. For on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest" (Mark IX). Whether this was the occasion or some other, or both, possibly prompted, Jesus, seeing their thoughts and understanding the causes of their error, wants to heal their desire for glory with the remedy of humility.

Luke 9:48

Taking a child, he set him beside himself, and said to them: "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me." Either simply teaching that the poor of Christ should be received with honor by those who wish to be the greatest, or certainly advising that they themselves be like little children, preserving simplicity without arrogance, charity without envy, and devotion without anger, just as children display innocence. Hence, when he said, "Whoever receives this child," he added, "in my name." So that they would follow the example of virtue that a child naturally observes, with the help of reason's industry, for the sake of Christ's name. But because he taught that he himself was received in the child, since he himself was born as a child for us, lest it be thought to mean only what appeared, he added and said: [Luke 9:48] -- And whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. Wishing to be believed such as the Father is in size and worth. For he says, there is no difference at all between him and me, so that whoever receives me, receives him who sent me.

Luke 9:49

But answering, John said: Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. John, loving the Lord with special devotion and thus worthy to be loved back, thought he should be excluded from the benefit who did not use his service. But he is taught that no one should be excluded from the good he has in part, but rather to be encouraged towards what he does not yet have. [Luke 9:50] -- And Jesus said to him: Do not forbid him. For whoever is not against you is for you. Taught by this saying, the Apostle says: But whether in pretense or in truth Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice, yes, and will re-

joice (Philippians 1). But although he rejoices even in those who proclaim Christ insincerely, such people sometimes doing signs in the name of Christ are considered not to be prohibited for the sake of others' salvation, however, their own conscience is not made secure through such signs. Rather, on that day when they say: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? they will receive a reply: I never knew you, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness (Matthew 7). Therefore, in heretics and evil Catholics, it is not the common sacraments, which are with us and not against us, but the division contrary to peace and truth, which is not with us and they do not follow the Lord with us, that we ought to detest and prohibit.

Luke 9:51

But it came to pass, when the days of his assumption were accomplished, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. By 'day of assumption,' he means the time of his passion, which drawing near, he gradually approaches Jerusalem. Let the pagans cease, therefore, to mock as if he were merely a crucified man, as the time of his crucifixion was foreseen as God, and determined to go to the place where he was to be crucified with a firm face, that is, with resolute and fearless mind. [Luke 9:53] -- And they did not receive him, because his face was set to go to Jerusalem. Because the Samaritans saw he was going to Jerusalem, they did not receive the Lord. For the Jews do not associate with Samaritans, as the Evangelist John shows.

Luke 9:55

But when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" And he turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of. Great and holy men, who already knew very well that this death, which separates the soul from the body, is not to be feared, according to their spirit who feared it, punished some sins with death, so that fear might be instilled in the living, and to those who were punished with death, death itself would not harm them, but the sin, which could increase if they lived, was not recklessly judged by those to whom God had given such judgment. From this it is that Elijah put many to death, both by his own hand and by fire called down from heaven. In his example, when the apostles wanted to call fire from heaven to consume those who would not give them lodging,

the Lord rebuked in them not the example of the holy prophet, but the ignorance of vindicating, which was still in the novices, observing that they desired vengeance not out of love but out of hate. Therefore, after he had taught them to love their neighbor as themselves, and after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, such acts of vengeance were still found, although much more rarely than in the Old Testament. For there, serving more under fear, they were pressed; but here, being nurtured more in love, they were made free. For even at the words of the apostle Peter, Ananias and his wife fell down dead, nor were they raised up, but buried, and Paul says of a certain sinner: "Whom I have delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved" (1 Corinthians 5).

Luke 9:56

The Son of Man did not come to destroy souls, but to save them. And you, therefore, he says, by whose Spirit you are signed, follow His deeds, now advising piously, but justly judging in fury. [Luke 9:57] -- It came to pass, as they walked on the way, a certain man said to him: I will follow you wherever you go, and so on. Both wonderful and dreadful is the righteous dispensation of the secret judgment. The Samaritans are asked to receive the Lord, and not wanting to, are forbidden to be struck. This man promises to follow him and is removed, another desires first to bury his father and is compelled to evangelize. Another, intending to follow the Lord, wishes to announce this at home, but is not permitted. Someone who does not follow Christ works miracles in Christ's name and is commanded not to be prevented. But in each of these instances, the words of the Apostle are applicable to us: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways (Rom. XI)! And with Samuel: Man sees what is apparent, but the Lord looks on the heart (I Reg. XVI).

Luke 9:58

And Jesus said to them: Foxes have dens, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man does not have a place to lay his head. From the words of the Lord, it is shown that this man who promises service is rejected because, seeing the magnitude of the signs, he wished to follow the Savior, seeking profits from the miraculous works, desiring the same thing that Simon Magus had wished to buy from Peter. Therefore, such faith is justly con-

demned by the Lord's sentence, and it is said to him: Why do you desire to follow me for wealth and worldly profits when I am of such poverty that I don't even have a place to stay and do not use a roof of my own? Otherwise, it is understood that he wished to follow, moved by the Lord's miracles, for vain boasting, which the birds signify. However, the feigned service of the disciple is signified by the name of foxes. By the reclining of his head, he signified his humility, which had no place in that deceitful and proud man.

Luke 9:59

But he said to another: Follow me. But he said: Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father. He did not reject discipleship, but first, with the piety of completing his father's funeral, he desired to follow him more freely, worthy in all things in whom the Son of Man may lay his head, that is, in whose humble heart divinity may rest with a certain familiar dwelling. [Luke 9:60] -- And Jesus said to him: Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. It must be noted in this sentence that sometimes in our actions, lesser goods should be omitted for the sake of greater goods. For who does not know the merit of good work is to bury the dead? And yet, he who asked to be allowed to bury his father was told: Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. For the duty of this service was to be postponed for the duty of preaching. For with that, he would bury the dead in flesh in the earth, but with this, he would raise the dead in soul to life. But how can the dead bury their dead unless you understand a double death? One of nature, the other of guilt; one by which the soul is separated from the body, the other by which God is separated from the soul. Or he says the dead, meaning unbelievers. But their dead, who likewise without faith depart from the body.

Luke 9:61

And another said: I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me to say farewell to those who are at home. If a disciple of the Lord, because he wishes to say this farewell at home, is reproved, what will happen to those who, with no purpose of usefulness or of building faith, often do not fear to revisit the homes of those relatives they left in the world? [Luke 9:62] -- And Jesus said to him: No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. To put one's hand to the plow, is as if with a kind of instrument of compunction, with wood and iron to grind down the hard-

ness of one's heart in the passion of the Lord, and open it to bring forth the fruits of good works. If anyone, having begun to cultivate this, in delight looks back at the vices he left behind with Lot's wife, he is deprived of the gift of the future kingdom.

CHAPTER 10

Luke 10:1

After these things, the Lord appointed another seventy-two. Just as the twelve apostles clearly represented and foreshadowed the role of bishops, it is to be understood that these seventy-two represented the figure of presbyters, that is, priests of the second order. Although in the earliest times of the Church, as the Apostolic Scripture bears witness, both groups were called presbyters, and both were called bishops. One term signifies the maturity of wisdom, the other the diligence of pastoral care. The fact that seventy-two are sent out is appropriate. Either because the Gospel was to be preached to the same number of nations in the world, just as twelve tribes of Israel were to be embodied with respect to foreign peoples, or that by the very number of preachers, the whole world was to be illuminated by the Gospel of the supreme and indivisible Trinity. Just as it is established that the sun breathes its light's course upon the world through seventy-two hours over three days. For indeed, the Lord Himself calls Himself the day, and His apostles the hours, saying: "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble" (John XI). And it is well commanded in the Psalms: "Declare His salvation from day to day" (Psalm XCV), that is, light from light, true God from true God (John I). Moreover, in many places in Holy Scripture, the mystery of the Trinity is shown through three days, especially because the Lord rose from the dead on the third day. And in the Old Testament, the people arriving at Mount Sinai received the law on the third day. Similarly, they crossed the Jordan River, to which the grace of baptism is commended, on the third day after they reached it.

Luke 10:1

And he sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to come. For there are two precepts of charity, namely, the love of God and of neighbor, and charity cannot be less than between two (for no one properly says he has charity for himself, but his love reaches out to another, so that charity may exist). The Lord sends the disciples two

by two to preach, so that he may silently imply to us that anyone who does not have charity towards another should by no means undertake the duty of preaching. But it is well said that he sent them before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to come. For the Lord follows his preachers, because preaching goes before, and then the Lord comes to the habitation of our mind. Words of exhortation precede, and through these, the truth is received in the mind.

Luke 10:2

And he said to them: The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send laborers into his harvest. The great harvest signifies a multitude of peoples. The few laborers signify a scarcity of teachers. These are the laborers spoken of by the Psalmist: Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going forth they went and wept, carrying their seeds. But coming back they will come with exultation, carrying their sheaves (Psalm 126). And to speak more clearly, the great harvest is the whole crowd of believers. The few laborers are the apostles and their imitators who are sent into the harvest. [Luke 10:3] -- Go, behold I send you as lambs among wolves. He calls the wolves the scribes and Pharisees, who are the clergy of the Jews.

Luke 10:4

Do not carry a purse, nor a bag, nor sandals, and greet no one on the road. Such must be the preacher's confidence in God that, though he does not foresee the necessities of this present life, he must most certainly know that they will not be lacking for him. So that, while his mind is occupied with temporal matters, he may be less able to foresee the eternal for others. It is also permitted for him to greet no one on the road, to show how urgently he must continue on his journey of preaching. If anyone wishes to understand these words even allegorically, in the purse money is enclosed. Hidden money is hidden wisdom. Therefore, he who has the word of wisdom but neglects to dispense it to his neighbor is as if he holds money tied up in a purse. And it is written: "Hidden wisdom and hidden treasure, what use is there in both?" But what does the bag signify if not the works of the world? And what do sandals signify in this context if not the examples of dead works? Therefore, he who undertakes the office of preaching is not worthy to carry the burden of worldly affairs, lest, while this weighs down his neck, he

fails to rise up to preach the heavenly matters. Nor should he look at the examples of foolish works, lest he believes that his own works, as if from dead skins, are fortified. Anyone who greets on the way greets from the occasion of the journey, not from the pursuit of obtaining that same greeting. Therefore, he who preaches salvation to listeners not out of love for the eternal homeland but out of greed for rewards, greets as if on a journey, since he wishes salvation to listeners out of occasion and not out of intention.

Luke 10:5

In whatever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace will rest on him. But if not, it will return to you. The peace which is offered from the mouth of the preacher either rests in the house if there is a son of peace there, or it returns to the same preacher, for everyone is either predestined to life and follows the heavenly word that he hears, or if no one wants to listen, the preacher himself will not be without fruit, because the peace returns to him, since it is recompensed to him by the Lord for the labor of his work. Behold, however, he who prohibited carrying a purse and bag, grants expenses and sustenance from the same preaching. For it follows: [Luke 10:7] -- In the same house, remain, eating and drinking what things they have. If our peace is received, it is fitting that we remain in the same house, eating and drinking what things they have, so that we may receive earthly provisions from them, to whom we offer the rewards of the heavenly homeland. Therefore Paul, also receiving these things as of little value, says: If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things (1 Corinthians 9)? And it should be noted what follows:

Luke 10:7

For the worker is worthy of his wages. Because now the wages of the work itself are the supports of sustenance, so that here the reward of the labor of preaching begins, which there is perfected by the vision of truth. In this matter it is considered that two rewards are due for one work of ours, one on the journey, the other in the homeland: one that sustains us in labor, the other that rewards us in the resurrection. [Luke 10:8] -- And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you, etc. Having described the various entertainments of different houses, he teaches what they ought to do even in cities, namely, to communicate with the pious in

all things, but to separate themselves entirely from the society of the impious.

Luke 10:11

Into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, going out into its streets, say: Even the dust that clings to us from your city, we wipe off against you. Either as a witness to the earthly labor they undertook for them in vain, or to show that they sought nothing earthly from them, to the extent that they would not allow even the dust from their land to adhere to them. Alternatively: The feet of the disciples signify the very work and journey of preaching. The dust with which they are sprinkled is the lightness of earthly thought, from which even the highest teachers cannot be exempt when they incessantly attend to the healthful cares for the listeners, and as if along the roads of the world, they gather the dust of the earth scarcely with a single heel. Therefore, those who receive the word turn the afflictions and cares of the teachers, which they endured for them, into a testament of humility. But those who spurn the teaching transform the labors and dangers and weariness of the solicitude of the teachers into a testimony of their condemnation. And this is the dust that is wiped off against those who scorn the Gospel, and from which the feet of the evangelists are commanded to be washed by good listeners, or even narrated to be washed by the Savior himself.

Luke 10:12

But I say to you that it will be more bearable for Sodom in that day than for that city. The Sodomites, indeed, amidst so many flagrant vices of flesh and soul, with which they insatiably burned, were also inhospitable, as testified by Ezekiel, but they had no such guests among them as the prophets among the Jews, nor apostles. And Lot indeed was just in sight and hearing, but he is not reported to have taught anything or performed any signs there. And therefore, to whom much is given, much will be required from him (Luke 12), and the powerful will suffer powerful torments (Wisdom 6). [Luke 10:13] -- Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, also Tiberias, which John names, are cities of Galilee, situated on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, which is formed by the flowing Jordan, and even by the evangelists is also called the sea of Galilee, or the sea of Tiberias. The Lord therefore laments the cities which, after so many miracles and powers, did not repent. And worse than the Gentiles, who des-

troyed only the natural law, after the contempt of the written law, did not fear to trample also on the Son of God, and to despise grace with ingratitude.

Luke 10:13

For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes. We see today the fulfillment of the Savior's saying, because indeed Chorazin and Bethsaida did not want to believe with the Lord present. Tyre and Sidon, however, were once friendly to David and Solomon, and later believed in the disciples of Christ who were preaching. And they accepted the faith with such devotion, that all the citizens of Tyre, accompanying Paul the apostle as he was leaving, with their wives and children, followed him outside the city, and in a most beautiful spectacle, such a multitude of people escorted a very few guests, but the most illustrious for Christ's faith, up to the ships to bid farewell. But why the gospel was not preached to those who could believe earlier, truly it is to know for those to whom it was preached, while the Jews did not want to believe, it is to know for Him, whose all ways are mercy and truth (Psalm XXIV). Surely what the Lord says: Sitting in sackcloth and ashes they would have repented: in sackcloth, which is woven from goat hairs, signifies the harsh memory of the pricking sin, with which the left part is to be dressed on the day of judgment; in ashes, however, demonstrates the consideration of death, through which the whole mass of the human race is to be reduced to dust. Moreover, in the sitting denoted the humiliation of own conscience. Of which the Psalmist: Arise after you have sat (Psalm CXXVI), which is to say: Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in the time of visitation (1 Peter V).

Luke 10:15

And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to hell. There is a double meaning in this sentence. Either you will be brought down to hell because you have most arrogantly resisted my preaching; or because, having been exalted to heaven by my residence, from my signs and miracles having had such privilege, you will be punished with greater torments, since you refused to believe even these. And lest anyone think that this rebuke applies only to those cities or persons who, seeing the Lord in the flesh, despised Him, and not to all who even today despise the words of the Gospel, He added, saying: [Luke 10:16] -- He who hears you

hears me, and he who despises you despises me. So that anyone, by hearing or despising the preacher of the Gospel, would learn that he is not scorning lowly persons, but the Lord the Savior, and indeed the Father Himself. For it follows:

Luke 10:16

But he who despises me despises Him who sent me. For without doubt the master is heard in the disciple, and the father is honored in the son. It may also be understood this way: He who despises you despises me. He who does not show mercy to one of my least brothers, does not do it to me, because I too took the form of a servant and the condition of a poor person for their sake. But he who despises me, unwilling to believe in God, and trampling on the Son of God, despises Him who sent me, because I and the Father are one. [Luke 10:17] -- Now the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. They indeed confessed rightly, giving honor to the name of Christ, but because they were still rejoicing in the miracles with weak faith, see what they hear.

Luke 10:18

And he said to them: I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Not only do I see it now, but I saw it before, when he fell. What he said, "like lightning," either signifies a precipitous fall from high to low, or because, having been cast out, he still transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, because he saw the disciples elevated over their performance of signs, he frightens them by example and recalls them to humility by one who first fell by pride, so that they, remembering him cast out of heaven for pride, may understand that they, made from the earth, will be much more humbled if they become proud. [Luke 10:19] -- Behold, I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you; that is, the power to cast out every kind of unclean spirit from possessed bodies. Although, even literally, it can be rightly understood; for instance, Paul, attacked by a viper, suffered no harm. And John, as history reports, being given poison, was not harmed. I indeed reason that this distinguishes between serpents, which harm with their bite, and scorpions, which harm with their tail; that serpents openly rage, while scorpions secretly lay traps, signifying either men or demons. Serpents, who

present the poison of wicked persuasion against the virtues at the outset; scorpions, who seek to corrupt consummated virtues at the end.

Luke 10:20

However, do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you. They are forbidden to rejoice over the subjection of spirits, being flesh, because casting out spirits, like performing other virtues, is sometimes not a merit of the one doing it, but the invocation of Christ's name does this, given for the condemnation of those who invoke, or for the benefit of those who see and hear it, so that although men may despise those who perform the signs, they still honor God, at whose invocation such great miracles are done. For also, in the Acts of the Apostles, the sons of Sceva appeared to cast out demons, and Judas the apostle, with the intention of a traitor, is narrated to have performed many signs among the other apostles. [Luke 10:20] -- Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. If Satan (he said) through pride lost the seat of heaven with his companions, it is not fitting for you to rejoice over their humiliation, but over your own exaltation, so that where they fell from, humbled, you may ascend. Additionally, it must not be foolishly supposed that God inscribes the good in heaven and the wicked on earth as a remedy for forgetfulness, as Jeremiah says: All who abandon you shall be ashamed; those who turn away shall be written in the earth (Jer. XVII). But it must be understood beneficially that whether celestial or terrestrial deeds one has performed, he is, as it were, recorded by these deeds, eternally fixed in the memory of God.

Luke 10:21

At that very hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Confession does not always signify penitence but also thanks, as we very often read in the Psalms. Let those who falsely claim that the Savior was not born but created hear that he calls his Father the Lord of heaven and earth. For if he were also a creature, and a creature could call its creator father, it would have been foolish not to similarly call his own and the Lord of heaven and earth Father. [Luke 10:21] -- Because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to infants. He gives thanks, rejoices in the Father, that he has revealed the mysteries of his arrival to the apostles, which the scribes and Pharisees, who consider themselves wise and prudent, and wisdom justified by her children

(Luke VII), have ignored. Where he beautifully opposed infants, that is, the humble, to the wise and prudent, not as foolish and dull but to show he condemned pride, not intellect. For this is the key about which he says elsewhere: You have taken away the key of knowledge, that is, the humility of faith in Christ, by which you could have arrived at the recognition of his divinity, but you preferred to despise and reject it.

Luke 10: 21

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. In these words of the Lord, we receive examples of humility, so that we might not rashly discuss the heavenly counsel concerning the calling of some and the rejection of others. For when He mentioned both, He did not immediately give a reason but said it was pleasing to God in this way. He thus showed that it cannot be unjust what is pleasing to the Just. Hence, in rewarding the workers in the vineyard, when he made some laborers equal in reward despite their unequal work, and one who sweated more in labor sought more reward, he said: Did you not agree with me for a denarius? But I want to give to this last one as I give to you. Or is it not lawful for me to do what I wish? (Matt. XX). In all these things arranged outwardly, the hidden justice of the will is the open cause of reason.

Luke 10: 22

All things have been handed over to me by my Father. When you read all things, you recognize the almighty, not discolored, not degenerate from the Father. When you read handed over, you confess the Son, to whom by nature all things of one substance are rightfully proper, not granted as a gift by grace. However, all things which he says were handed over to him are not to be understood as the elements of the world, which he himself created, but as those to whom the Father revealed the sacraments of the Son, being humble in spirit, and concerning whose salvation the same Son, when he spoke these things, rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. Of all these, he says elsewhere: All that the Father gives me will come to me (John VI). [Luke 10:22] -- And no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. This is not to be understood as though the Son could be known by no one except the Father alone, and the Father not only by the Son but also by those to whom the Son reveals him, but it refers to both when he says: And anyone to whom the Son

chooses to reveal him, so that we may understand both the Father and the Son being revealed by the Son.

Luke 10:23

And turning to his disciples, he said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see, etc. Not the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees, who see only the body of the Lord, but those blessed eyes that can recognize his mysteries, about which it is said: And you have revealed them to little children. Blessed are the eyes of the little ones, to whom the Son is worthy to reveal both himself and the Father. [Luke 10:24] -- For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Abraham rejoiced that he might see the day of Christ, and saw it, and was glad. Isaiah also, and Micah, many other prophets saw the glory of the Lord, who for that reason are called seers. But all these seeing from afar and greeting (Him) saw through a glass and in a riddle (1 Cor. 13), but the apostles having the Lord in the present time, eating with Him, and learning by asking whatever they wished, by no means needed to be taught through angels or various visions. While Luke calls many prophets and kings, Matthew more explicitly calls them prophets and the righteous. For they are truly great kings, because they know how to not succumb by giving in to the impulses of their temptations, but to command by ruling over them.

Luke 10:25

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what shall I do to possess eternal life? The lawyer, who tests the Lord by asking about eternal life, as I think, took the occasion of testing from the very words of the Lord, where he said: But rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. But by his very temptation he declares how true is that confession of the Lord, with which he speaks to the Father: You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to little children. [Luke 10:26] -- But he said to him: What is written in the law? How do you read it? He answered, saying: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. As the lawyer responds, our Savior shows us the perfect path to heavenly life. To the one proposing the writings of the law about the love of God and neighbor, He says:

Luke 10: 28

You have answered correctly: Do this, and you will live. Then, after introducing a parable responding that the one who showed mercy to the wounded was the neighbor, He adds: Go, and do likewise, that is, remember to love and support your neighbor who needs such mercy. Very clearly declaring that love alone, and not merely shown in word but proven by the execution of deeds, leads to eternal life. [Luke 10:29] -- But he, wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? What a great madness of vain glory! The lawyer, to capture the favor of the people, so that he might be seen to have responded wisely, first confesses that he does not know the command of the law, truly according to the Savior's judgment, wise and prudent in the law, but because he does not desire to humble himself with the little ones of Christ, but to justify himself, refusing to receive the blessed eyes of doves washed in the milk of innocence, with which he might see Christ's secrets. Indeed, to him the Lord thus tempered his response, teaching that anyone who shows mercy to another becomes his neighbor, and yet this same parable particularly signifies the Son of God himself, who deigned to become our neighbor through his humanity. For we should not interpret so the neighbor whom we are commanded to love as ourselves so above Christ, as to try to diminish and remove the moral teachings of mutual brotherhood under the rules of allegory.

Luke 10: 30

But Jesus, looking up, said: A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. This man is understood to be Adam in the human race. Jerusalem, that heavenly city of peace, from whose happiness he fell into this mortal and miserable life. How well Jericho, which is interpreted as the moon, signifies, variously, indeed, labors of sins and errors, always uncertain. [Luke 10:30] -- And he fell among robbers. Understand the robbers to be the devil and his angels, upon whom, because he was descending, he fell. For unless he was first internally swollen, he would not so easily fall by external temptation. For it is a very true saying, which says: Before ruin, the heart is exalted (Proverbs 16). [Luke 10:30] -- And they stripped him. Namely, they deprived him of the glory of immortality and the garment of innocence. For this is the first robe with which, according to another parable, the prodigal son, returning through repentance, is adorned, and which the first parents lost,

realizing they were naked, and clothed themselves with tunics of mortal nature.

Luke 10:30

And after inflicting wounds, they went away, leaving him half-dead. The wounds are sins, by which, violating the integrity of human nature, they implanted a kind of seedbed of increasing death (so to speak), into the wearying bowels. But they went away, not ceasing from ambushes at all, but by concealing the frauds of the same snares. They left him half-dead because they could strip away the happiness of immortal life, but could not abolish the sense of reason. For in that part where he can understand and know God, man is alive. But from that part where he decays in sins and fails in misery, he is dead and defiled with a deadly wound. [Luke 10:31] -- It happened that a certain priest was going down the same way, and upon seeing him, he passed by. Similarly, a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. The priest and the Levite, who, seeing the wounded man, passed by, are the priesthood and ministry of the Old Testament, where through the decrees of the law the wounds of the languishing world could only be shown, but not healed, because it was impossible (as the Apostle says) for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Hebrews 9).

Luke 10:33

However, a certain Samaritan, as he was traveling, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. The Samaritan, which means "guardian," signifies the Lord, about whom the prophet most rightly prays, so that he may not fall upon these robbers. He says, "Guard me from the snare they have set for me, and from the traps of those who work iniquity" (Psalm 140). Who, for us men and for our salvation, descending from heaven, undertook the journey of this present life, and came near to him who was languishing with inflicted wounds, that is, being made in the likeness of men and found in human form (Philippians 2), became close to us by taking on our compassion and was made a neighbor through the consolation of mercy. [Luke 10:34] -- And approaching, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Sins, which he found in men, he restrained by reproving, instilling hope of pardon in those who repent, and terror of punishment in those who sin. For he binds up the wounds when he commands: "Repent," he pours oil when he adds: "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3). He also

pours wine when he says: "Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (ibid.).

Luke 10:34

And setting him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. His beast is the flesh, in which he deigned to come to us. And he set the wounded man on it because he bore our sins in his body on the wood (1 Peter 2); and according to another parable, having found the sheep that had strayed, he placed it on his shoulders and brought it back to the flock (Luke 15). Therefore, to be set on the beast is to believe in the very Incarnation of Christ, to be initiated into his mysteries, and simultaneously to be protected from the enemy's attack. The inn is the present Church, where travelers are refreshed, returning from this pilgrimage to the eternal homeland. And rightly so, he brought him to the inn, having set him on the beast, for no one will enter the Church unless baptized, unless united to the body of Christ.

Luke 10:35

And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, and said: Take care of him. The next day is after the Lord's resurrection. For even before, through the grace of his Gospel, he had enlightened those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death (Luke 1), but more so, after the celebration of the resurrection, the splendor of perpetual light shone forth. The two denarii are the two Testaments, in which the name and image of the eternal King is contained. For Christ is the end of the law (Romans 10). The two denarii were given to the innkeeper the next day: because at that time he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24). The next day the innkeeper received the denarii, by whose value he would heal the wounded, because the Holy Spirit came and taught the apostles all truth (John 16), so they might steadfastly teach the nations and preach the Gospel.

Luke 10:35

And whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I return. The innkeeper spends more than he received in the two denarii, when the Apostle says: Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my advice (1 Corinthians 7). And likewise: The Lord ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9). But we did not use this power, lest we should hinder any of you (1 Thessalonians 2). To

whom, returning, the debtor will repay what he promised, because the Lord, coming in judgment, says: Because you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord (Matthew 25). [Luke 10:36] -- Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? And he said: The one who showed mercy towards him. According to the letter, the Lord's judgment is clear: no one is more our neighbor than the one who shows mercy, if to a citizen of Jerusalem, neither the priest nor the Levite from the same people, indeed born and raised in the same city, but a resident of a foreign nation, because he showed more mercy, became a neighbor. In a more sacred understanding, since no one is more a neighbor than the one who healed our wounds, let us love him as the Lord our God, let us love him as a neighbor. For nothing is so close as the head to the members. Let us also love him who is an imitator of Christ. This is indeed what follows:

Luke 10:37

And Jesus said to him: Go and do likewise. That is, so that you may truly show that you love your neighbor as yourself, perform with devotion whatever you can to help his spiritual necessity. [Luke 10:38] -- It happened, as they were going, that he entered a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary. This reading is beautifully connected to the preceding one. For as that one designates love of God and neighbor through words and parables, this one designates it through deeds and truth. These two beloved sisters of the Lord demonstrate the two spiritual lives by which the present holy Church is exercised. Indeed, Martha represents the active life, by which we are united to our neighbor in charity; Mary represents the contemplative life, by which we long for the love of God. For the active life is to give bread to the hungry, to teach the ignorant the word of wisdom, to correct the erring, to bring back the proud to the way of humility, to take care of the sick, to dispense what is expedient to each one, and to foresee how those entrusted to us may be able to subsist. The contemplative life, however, is to retain the love of God and neighbor with the whole mind, but to rest from external action, adhering solely to the desire of the Creator, so that one no longer wishes to act but, having cast aside all cares, the soul burns with the desire to behold the face of its Creator, so that it regrets to bear the burden of the corruptible flesh and with all its desires aspires to join the hymnic choirs of angels, to be mixed

with the heavenly citizens, to rejoice in the eternal incorruption in the sight of God.

Luke 10: 39

And she also, sitting beside the feet of the Lord, listened to His word, but Martha was distracted by frequent ministering. No one doubts that these things suit both lives. And the uniform perfection of the contemplative life is indeed to have a mind stripped of all earthly things, and, as much as human weakness allows, to unite with Christ. But the frequent ministry of active life is taught by the Master of the nations, who in the numerous statements of his Epistles, recounts his labors by land and sea for Christ, his dangers. In which, also commending the visions and revelations of the Lord, he signifies that he was also completed in the speculative virtue, which is imitable by very few. Hence he says: For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we are sober, it is for your cause (II Cor. V).

Luke 10: 40

And she stood and said: Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her therefore to help me. He speaks from the perspective of those who, still ignorant of divine contemplation, consider that the work of brotherly love alone is pleasing to God, and therefore think that all who wish to be devoted to Christ should be bound to this. And it is well described that Martha stood while Mary sat beside the feet of the Lord, because the active life toils in laborious struggle, while the contemplative life, with the tumults of vices pacified, enjoys the desired repose of the mind in Christ. [Luke 10:41] -- And the Lord answered and said to her: Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but only one thing is necessary. And blessed David, defining this one thing necessary for man, desires to continually cling to God, saying: But it is good for me to cling to God, to put my hope in the Lord God (Psalm LXXII). And elsewhere: One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple (Psalm XXVI). Therefore, one and only theology, that is, contemplation of God, to which all merits of justifications and all studies of virtues are justly postponed.

Luke 10: 42

Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken away from her. Behold, the part of Martha is not blamed, but Mary's is praised. For he does not say that Mary has chosen a good part, but the best, so that Martha's part may also be indicated as good. But why the part of Mary is the best is explained when it is said: Which will not be taken away from her. For the active life ceases with the body. For who will give bread to the hungry in the eternal homeland, where no one is hungry? Who will give drink to the thirsty, where no one thirsts? Who will bury the dead, where no one dies? Therefore, with the present age, the active life is taken away. But the contemplative life begins here, so that it may be perfected in the heavenly homeland. For the fire of love that begins to burn here, when it sees the very one whom it loves, burns more intensely in love. Therefore the contemplative life is by no means taken away, because it is perfected with the light of the present age being withdrawn.

CHAPTER 11

Luke 11: 1

And it happened that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. After the story of the sisters who signified the two lives of the Church, it is not without reason that the Lord is described as having prayed and having taught his disciples to pray. For the prayer he taught contains the mystery of both lives in itself, and the perfection of these lives is not to be attained by our own strength, but by prayers. And because Luke often described the Savior as praying, he suggests what he did in prayer, who surely supplicated not for himself, but for us, when, after finishing his prayer, he reports that the disciples asked him how they should pray.

Luke 11: 2

And he said to them: When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. According to the evangelist Matthew, the Lord's Prayer seems to contain seven petitions. Of which in three eternal things are requested, in the remaining four, temporal things, which nevertheless are necessary for the sake of attaining the eternal. For what we say: Hallowed be thy name, thy

kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; which some have not absurdly understood as in spirit and body, must be retained entirely without end, and begin here, and the more we progress, are increased in us: and perfectly (which is to be hoped for in the other life) they will always be possessed. But what we say: Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; who does not see that it pertains to the need of the present life? Thus, in that eternal life, where we always hope to be, both in the sanctification of the name of God, and his kingdom, will remain perfectly and immortally in our spirit and body.

But daily bread is called so, because it is necessary here as much as should be given to soul and flesh, whether understood spiritually or corporeally, or both ways. Here too is the forgiveness we seek, where there is the commission of all sins. Here are the temptations, which allure or drive us to sin. Finally, here is the evil, from which we desire to be delivered. But in that life, there is none of these. The evangelist Luke, in the Lord's Prayer, not seven, but five petitions are comprised. Nor did he differ from the other, undoubtedly, but by how these seven are understood, he recommended by their brevity. For the name of God is hallowed in the spirit, but the kingdom of God is to come in the resurrection of the flesh. Therefore, showing that Luke considered the third petition to be a kind of repetition of the two preceding ones, he made it more understood by omitting it. Then he adds those three, concerning the daily bread, the forgiveness of sins, and the avoidance of temptation. And what the former put at the end: But deliver us from evil, the latter did not include for us to understand that it pertains to what was said above about temptation. Therefore, he indeed said: but deliver; he did not say: and deliver, as if demonstrating it to be one petition, saying not this, but that, so that everyone may know that he is delivered from evil, by not being led into temptation.

Luke 11: 5

And he said to them: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come from a journey to me, and I have nothing to set before him. When asked by his disciples, the Savior not only gave the form of prayer but also the perseverance and frequency of praying. The friend, therefore, to whom one comes at midnight is understood to be God Himself. To

whom we must pray in the midst of tribulation and beg for three loaves, that is, the understanding of the Trinity, by which the labors of this present life are comforted. The friend who comes from the journey is our own mind, which departs from us each time it wanders outside to pursue earthly and temporal things. He returns and desires to be refreshed with heavenly nourishment when he, having turned back to himself, begins to meditate on higher and spiritual things. It is fitting that the one who asked adds that he has nothing to set before him. For the soul, longing for God after the darkness of the world, wants to think of nothing, speak of nothing, look upon nothing except Him, and only contemplate the joy of the supreme Trinity which it has recognized and strives to more fully understand.

Luke 11:7

And he from within shall answer: Do not bother me, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give to you. The door of the divine friend is the understanding of the word, which the Apostle prays to be opened for speaking the mystery of Christ. And it is closed in the time of the famine of the word when understanding is not given. And those who, like bread distributors, preached gospel wisdom throughout the world, the children of the master of the house, are now in secret rest with the Lord. Yet through prayer, it is accomplished that he who desires understanding receives it from God Himself, even if a man is not present through whom wisdom is preached.

Luke 11:8

And if he persists in knocking, I tell you, even if he will not give him rising because he is his friend, still because of his impudence, he will rise and give him as many as he needs. And I tell you: Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. It is a comparison from the lesser. For if a human friend rises from bed and gives not out of friendship but compelled by weariness, how much more will God give, who grants generously without weariness what is asked? But He wishes to be asked so that those who seek may be made capable of His gifts. Therefore, so that the friend arriving from the journey does not perish from hunger, that is, so that a soul recently recovering from its vanity of error does not languish in spiritual desire for want, let us ask for the feast of the word by which it may be nourished, let us seek the friend who gives, let us knock on the door

where the hidden things are kept. For He who promises does not deceive, and has given and gives great hope.

Luke 11:10

For everyone (he says) who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Therefore, according to the previous parable of the requesting friend, perseverance is required so that we may receive what we ask, find what we seek, and have opened what we knock on. For if it is given to the one who asks, and the seeker finds, and it is opened to the one who knocks, therefore, to whom it is not given, who does not find, and to whom it is not opened, it is clear that he did not ask, seek, or knock properly. [Luke 11:11] -- Which of you is there, who, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Bread is understood as charity due to its greater desirability and so necessary that without it, everything else is nothing, just like a table is impoverished without bread. Its contrary is the hardness of heart, which he compared to a stone.

Luke 11:11

Or if he asks for a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? A fish represents faith in invisible things, either because of the water of baptism or because it is taken from invisible places. Since faith is also not broken by the waves of this world, it is rightly compared to a fish. Its contrary he set as the serpent because of the poison of deceit, which by evil persuasion also first sowed in man. [Luke 11:12] -- Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? In the egg hope is indicated. For the egg is not yet a perfect offspring but is hoped by nurturing. He opposed a scorpion to this, whose venomous sting is feared from behind, just as looking back is contrary to hope, since hope for the future stretches to what is ahead.

Luke 11:13

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to those who ask him? How do the evil give good? But he called them evil, lovers still of this world and sinners. Truly, the goods they give according to their sense are to be called good because they regard them as such for us, although in nature these are good things, but temporary, and pertaining to this frail life, and whoever gives them, being evil, does not give them from what is his own. For the earth is the Lord's, and its fullness, who made heaven and earth, the

sea and all that is in them (Psalm 24). How much then should we expect God to give us good things when we ask, and not be deceived to receive something else when we ask from Him, since even we being evil know how to give that which is asked! For we do not deceive our children, and whatever good things we give, we give not from our own, but from His. Alternatively: The apostles, who by the merit of election had exceeded the goodness of the human race in many ways, are called evil in the view of supernal goodness, because nothing is stable by itself, nothing unchangeable, nothing good, except the Deity alone. All creatures indeed obtain the blessedness of eternity or immutability not by their nature, but by participation and grace of their Creator. That it is said:

How much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to those who ask Him? for which Matthew put: Will give good things to those who ask Him (Matthew 7), it shows that the Holy Spirit is the fullness of God's goods and those which are divinely administered do not subsist without Him. Because all benefits, which are received by the grace of God's gifts, emanate from this source. BOOK FOUR. PROLOGUE. Exulting in the Holy Spirit, the Lord (as it is written above): I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to the little ones. This saying, conscious of the secret judgment, never ceases to display the power of its application. For it is shown both generally in the rejection of the Jews and the election of the Gentiles, and specifically in individuals according to the varying quality of their minds. Hence, to touch briefly on the recent, a lawyer wanting to justify himself approached the Lord to test Him but departed in confusion; whereas Mary, humbly bowing at His feet, chose the best part of heavenly philosophy. Likewise, the little ones of Christ, who learned to rely not on their own righteousness but on the grace of their Redeemer, inquire in what manner of prayers they should seek that grace, and they immediately hear with what words they should pray, with what insistence they should persevere, and for which things they should most urgently plead—namely, faith, hope, and charity—that perfectly seeking, they receive the good Spirit from the Father, the giver of these things. Against the wise and intelligent, because not only do they fail to ask, seek, or knock for the Spirit of grace but even strive to blaspheme it, they suffer the irremissible punishments of their obstinacy both here and in the future. And even unto the end of the Gospel,

whoever reads, indeed until the end of the world, whoever prudently examines, will understand that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (I Peter 5).

INVOCATION. Wherefore, beginning the fourth book of the exposition of the Gospel from the reading wherein the spirit of pride is cast out by the finger of God, I humbly beseech your mercy, Christ, that your good Spirit may lead me into the right way, and make far from me the one who is from the North, so that, with the wicked ones cast out from me, I may search the commands of my God, and with the eyes of my mind unveiled to consider the wonders of your most holy law, I may enter as a devoted reader. [Luke 11:14] -- And Jesus was casting out a demon, and it was mute. And when He had cast out the demon, the mute spoke, and the crowds marveled. This demon-possessed man is narrated in Matthew to have been not only mute but also blind, and it is said that he was healed by the Lord, so that he spoke and saw. Therefore, three signs were accomplished simultaneously in one man. The blind sees, the mute speaks, the one possessed by a demon is freed. This was indeed done physically at that time, but it is also completed daily in the lives of believers, so that, with the demon first expelled, they may behold the light of faith, and then the mouths previously silent may be opened to praise God.

Luke 11:15

But some of them said, "In Beelzebub, the prince of demons, He casts out demons." Not some from the crowd, but the Pharisees and scribes were slandering, as other evangelists testify. Indeed, to the crowds who seemed less educated, always marveling at the deeds of the Lord, those people, on the contrary, either tried to deny these things or to pervert what they could not deny with sinister interpretation, as if these were not the works of divinity but of an unclean spirit, that is, Beelzebub, who was the god of Ekron. For Beel is indeed Baal. Zebub, however, is called a fly. Nor is the letter l or d to be read at the end of the name according to certain erroneous copies, but b. Therefore, Beelzebub means Baal of the flies, that is, the lord of the flies, or the one having flies, supposedly because of the filth of sacrificial blood, from whose most foul rites or name they called the prince of demons.

Luke 11: 16

And others, testing Him, sought a sign from heaven from Him. Either they wished for fire to come down from above in the manner of Elijah, or, similarly to Samuel, for thunder to roar, lightning to flash, and rains to fall in the summer, as if those could not also be slandered and said to have happened from hidden and varied passions of the air. But you, who slander those things which you see with your eyes, hold with your hands, feel with their benefit, what will you do with those things that have come from heaven? Surely, you will answer that the magicians in Egypt also performed many signs from the heavens. [Luke 11:17] -- But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself will be desolated, and house will fall upon house. He responded not to what was said, but to what was thought, so that they might be compelled to believe in his power, who saw the hidden things of the heart. But if every kingdom divided against itself is desolated, then the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is not divided, which, without any contradiction and not by any impulse, is destined to be desolated, but will remain in eternal stability. But if the kingdom of the holy and indivisible Trinity remains indivisible, indeed because it remains indivisible, let the Arians desist from saying that the Son is lesser than the Father, and the Holy Spirit lesser than the Son. Because where there is one kingdom, there is also one majesty.

Luke 11: 18

But if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand, because you say that I cast out demons in Beelzebub? By saying this, he wanted it to be understood from their own confession that by not believing in him, they had chosen to be in the kingdom of the devil, which certainly could not stand divided against itself. Therefore, let the Pharisees choose what they wish. If Satan cannot cast out Satan, they could find nothing to say against the Lord. But if he can, let them be much more cautious and withdraw from his kingdom, which cannot stand divided against itself. By what means the Lord Christ casts out demons, let them consider what follows, so that they do not think him to be the prince of demons.

Luke 11: 19

But if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges. He said this, indeed, about his disciples,

the sons of that people, who certainly being disciples of Lord Jesus Christ, were well aware that they had learned nothing of evil arts from the good teacher to cast out demons by the prince of demons. Therefore (he says) they shall be your judges, they (he says) the ignoble and contemptible ones of this world, in whom not an artful malignity, but a holy simplicity of my virtue appears, they shall be my witnesses, they shall be your judges. Alternatively: He signifies the sons of the Jews, the exorcists of that people according to custom, who cast out demons through invocation. And he compels them with a prudent question, so that they confess it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. But if (he says) the expulsion of demons in your sons is attributed to God, not to demons, why should the same work in me not have the same cause? Therefore they shall be your judges, not by power, but by comparison, while they assign the expulsion of demons to God, you to Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

Luke 11:20

Moreover, if I cast out demons by the finger of God, indeed the kingdom of God has come upon you. This is the finger which even the magicians who opposed Moses and Aaron confessed, saying: This is the finger of God (Exod. VIII), by which also the stone tablets were written on Mount Sinai. Therefore, the Son is the hand and arm of God, and the Holy Spirit is His finger. The substance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one. Do not let the inequality of the members scandalize you, while the unity of the body builds you up. Alternatively: The Holy Spirit is called the finger of God because of the distribution of gifts which are given in it to each one individually, whether of men or angels. For there is no greater display of distribution in our members than in the fingers. But what he said, The kingdom of God has come upon you, means now the kingdom of God by which the impious are condemned, and are now separated from the faithful who are repenting of their sins.

Luke 11:21

When a strong man fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. By the strong man, he means the devil; and by his palace, he means the world which is set in evil, where until the coming of the Savior, he ruled with a malevolent but unchallenged authority, because he rested in the hearts of unbelievers without any opposition. Hence elsewhere he is called

the prince of this world, as the Lord says: "For the prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me" (John 14). And again: "Now the prince of this world will be cast out" (John 12), and the reference here too is to that casting out. [Luke 11:22] -- But if a stronger man comes upon him and overcomes him, he will take away his armor in which he trusted, and will divide his spoils. He is speaking of Himself, that He would not by a deceitful harmonious operation, as some were falsely alleging, but by a stronger power, victoriously free men from the devil. The armor in which the wickedly strong man trusted are the wiles and deceits of spiritual wickedness. The spoils, however, are the men themselves, whom he deceived. These victorious Christ distributes, which is the emblem of triumph, because leading captivity captive, He gave gifts to men, appointing some as apostles, others as evangelists, these as prophets, those as pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4).

Luke 11: 23

He who is not with me is against me. And he who does not gather with me, scatters. Let no one think that this refers to heretics and schismatics, though by extension it can be so understood, but from the context, the subject of the discourse refers to the devil, and that the works of the Savior cannot be compared to the works of Beelzebub. He desires to hold the souls of men captive, the Lord to liberate them; he preaches idols, the Lord preaches the knowledge of the one God; he draws to vices, the Lord calls back to virtue: how then can there be concord between them, whose works are divided? [Luke 11:24] -- When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he walks through dry places. Although it can be simply understood that the Lord added these things for the distinction between His works and those of Satan, namely that He always cleanses the defiled, while Satan hurries to defile the cleansed with even graver filth, it can nevertheless also be aptly taken to refer to any heretic, schismatic, or even a bad Catholic. From the time of baptism, the unclean spirit that had previously inhabited him is driven away by the confession of Catholic faith and the renunciation of worldly ways, and it wanders through dry places, that is, the hearts of the faithful which have been purged of the laxity of fluid thoughts. The cunning adversary sees if he can fix his wicked steps anywhere there. But it is well said:

Luke 11:24

"Seeking rest and finding none, for, fleeing chaste minds, the devil can only find a pleasant rest in the heart of the wicked." Hence the Lord says of him: "He sleeps under the shadow, in the covert of the reed, and in moist places." The shadow, that is, dark consciences; in the reed, which, shiny on the outside, is empty within, being a hypocrite; in moist places, insinuating himself into lascivious and soft minds. [Luke 11:24] -- He says: "I will return to my house from which I came out." This verse should be feared, not expounded upon, lest through careless neglect, the sin we believed extinguished in us should crush us. [Luke 11:25] -- And when he comes, he finds it swept and garnished, that is, cleansed by the grace of baptism from the stain of sins, but not filled with the industry of good works. Hence Matthew rightly says that he finds the house empty, swept, and garnished: swept, namely from past vices through baptism, empty of good deeds through negligence, and garnished with simulated virtues through hypocrisy.

Luke 11:26

And then he goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there. By the seven evil spirits, he designates all vices. For whoever after baptism is seized by either heretical depravity or worldly cupidity, will soon be cast into the depths of all vices. Hence the spirits are then rightly said to be more wicked entering him. Because he will not only have those seven vices, which are contrary to the seven spiritual virtues, but also through hypocrisy, he will pretend to have those virtues themselves.

Luke 11:26

And the last state of that man is worse than the first. For it would have been better for him not to know the way of truth than after knowing it to turn back. This we read particularly fulfilled in Judas the betrayer, or Simon the magician, and others of the kind. But as to where this parable generally tends, the Savior himself according to Matthew explained, where, having finished it, he immediately added, saying: So shall it be also to this wicked generation. That is, what I have told about any one in particular being usually carried out, this generally continues to be carried out in the whole nation of this people. For the unclean spirit went out from the Jews when they received the law. And he walked through dry places, seeking rest for himself. Expelled indeed by the Jews, he walked through the wilderness of the Gen-

tiles. Which, when afterward they had believed in the Lord, he not finding a place among the nations said: I will return to my former house, whence I came out. I will have the Jews, whom I had left before. And coming, he found it empty, swept, and garnished. For the temple of the Jews was empty, and did not have Christ as a guest, saying: Your house shall be left to you desolate.

Because therefore they did not have the protection of God and angels, and were adorned with the superfluous observances of the Pharisees, the devil returns to them, and with the addition of seven demons, inhabits his former house and the latter state of that people becomes worse than the first. For they are now possessed by a much larger number of demons, blaspheming Christ Jesus in their synagogues, than they were possessed in Egypt before the knowledge of the law. Because it is one thing not to believe in the one to come, another not to receive him who has come. But understand the number seven added to the devil, either because of the Sabbath or because of the number of the Holy Spirit. So just as in Isaiah, over the rod out of the root of Jesse, and the flower that rises from the root, the seven spirits of virtues are narrated to have descended, so also conversely the number of vices in the devil is consecrated.

Luke 11: 27

It happened that, as he was saying these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifted up her voice and said to him: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you. This woman is shown to be of great devotion and faith, who, while the scribes and Pharisees were testing and blaspheming the Lord, recognized his incarnation with such sincerity above all, confessed with such confidence, as to confound the calumny of the present nobles and the perfidy of future heretics. For just as the Jews then, by blaspheming the works of the Holy Spirit, denied the true and consubstantial Son of God to the Father, so later heretics, by denying that Mary, ever a virgin, ministered the material of flesh to the only-begotten God born from human members by the operation of the Holy Spirit's power, said that the Son of Man should not be confessed as truly consubstantial to his mother. But if the flesh of the Word of God, born according to the flesh, is proclaimed foreign to the flesh of the virgin mother, the womb that bore him and the breasts that nursed him are blessed in vain. For by what logic is he believed to have been nourished by her milk, whose seed is denied to be con-

ceived? Since both liquids are proven, according to the natural philosophers, to emanate from the origin of one and the same source.

Unless perhaps it is thought that the virgin could supply the material of her flesh to nourish the Son of God in the flesh through a lesser and familiar miracle, but could not do so for the incarnation through a greater and unusual miracle. But the Apostle counters this opinion, saying: "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. IV). Nor should we listen to those who believe it should be read as "born of a woman, made under the law," but rather, "made of a woman. For conceived from the virgin's womb, he drew flesh not from nothing, not from elsewhere, but from maternal flesh. Otherwise, he could not truly be called the Son of Man, who would not have originated from a human. And so, in these words spoken against Eutyches, let us lift up our voice with the Catholic Church, of which this woman was a type, lifting up our minds from the midst of the crowds, and let us say to the Savior: "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you" (Luke XI). For truly blessed is the mother, who, as someone said, gave birth to the childbearing King. Who holds heaven and earth through the ages, whose divinity and eternal embrace encompasses all things, his empire remaining without end; who, with a blessed womb, having the joys of a mother with the honor of virginity, has neither been seen to have a first like her nor having a second to follow her.

Luke 11:28

But he said: Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. The Savior beautifully agreed to the testimony of the woman, meaning not only her who was worthy to physically bear the Word of God, but also all those who spiritually, by the hearing of faith, conceive the same Word, and in the custody of good works strive either to bear it in their own heart or in the hearts of others, and as if to nurture it, asserting that they are blessed. For even the mother of God, and indeed she was blessed because she became the minister of the Word made flesh temporally, but much more blessed because she remained the eternal guardian of the same Word always to be loved. With this sentence, he silently strikes the wise of the Jews, who sought not to hear and keep the Word of God, but to deny and blaspheme it.

Luke 11: 29

But as the crowds were gathering, he began to say: This generation is an evil generation: it seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. He had been attacked with a double question. Some indeed were slandering him for casting out demons by Beelzebul, to whom this has been answered. And others, testing him, were seeking a sign from heaven from him, to whom he begins to respond, not giving them a sign from heaven which they were unworthy to see, but instead granting a sign from the depths of hell, like the prophet Jonah who, shipwrecked, swallowed by a whale yet freed from the abyss and the jaws of death, both received and gave, namely the sign of the incarnation, not divinity, of the passion, not glorification. But to his disciples, he gave a sign from heaven, revealing to them the glory of eternal blessedness, first figuratively transformed on the mount, and then truly lifted to heaven.

Luke 11: 30

For just as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. He showed that the Jews, like the Ninevites, were overwhelmed with grave sins and close to destruction if they did not repent. Yet, just as punishment was announced to the Ninevites and a remedy was shown, so too should the Jews not despair of mercy if they are willing to do penance. But see what follows: [Luke 11:31] -- The Queen of the South will rise in the judgment with the men of this generation, and will condemn them. She will indeed condemn not by the power of judgment, but by the comparison of a better act. But if the Queen of the South, who is undoubtedly chosen, will rise in the judgment with the reprobates, it is shown that there is one resurrection of all mortals, namely the good and the bad, and that not according to the fables of the Jews a thousand years before judgment, but to be in the very judgment.

Luke 11: 31

For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.--Here in this place it signifies not a pronoun, but an adverb of place, that is, he is conversing among you in the present, who is incomparably superior to Solomon. Scripture, however, recounts how the Queen of Sheba, with her people and empire abandoned, came to Judea to hear Solomon's wisdom through so many diffi-

culties, and bringing many gifts, received even more from him. She, therefore, will condemn the Jews in judgment, because she sought him from the farthest ends of the earth, whom she recognized to be famous upon receiving the gift of wisdom. They, however, having him among them who is not wise from elsewhere, but is wisdom and the power of God Himself, preferred not only not to listen but to blaspheme and act with treachery.

Luke 11:32

The men of Nineveh will rise in judgment with this generation and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. Jonah preached for a few days, I for so long a time. He to the Assyrians, an unbelieving nation; I to the Jews, the people of God. He to strangers, I to citizens. He spoke with a simple voice and, doing no signs, was accepted; I, doing so many signs, endure the calumny of Beelzebub. Thus, there is something greater than Jonah here, that is, in your midst preaching. And therefore, in the same way the queen of the south, the men of Nineveh will condemn the generation of Jews, that is, they will accuse them of infidelity. Otherwise: In the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south, the faith of the Church is preferred to Israel, which is reconciled to the Lord not less through repentance of past foolishness than through the industry of learning wisdom. For the unity of the Church is certainly gathered from two parts, namely, from those who do not know how to sin and from those who cease to sin. For repentance abolishes the crime, wisdom guards against it.

Luke 11:33

No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel. The Lord speaks these words about himself, showing that even though he previously said no sign would be given to the wicked generation except the sign of Jonah, he would not at all conceal the brightness of his light from the faithful. Indeed, he himself lights a lamp, who filled the vessel of human nature with the flame of his divinity. Certainly, he did not wish to hide this lamp from believers, nor to put it under a bushel, that is, to confine it under the measure of the law or to restrain it within the boundaries of the single nation of Judea. [Luke 11:33] -- But on the lampstand, He said, so that those who enter may see the light. He calls the Church the lampstand, upon which He has placed the lamp, because He has affixed the faith of His incarnation

on our foreheads, so that those who wish to sincerely enter the Church may openly see the light of truth. By this sentence, He condemns the leaders of the Jews as well, who, seeking signs outwardly, were unwilling to enter through the open door of light by believing. Thus, He commands us to cleanse and chasten not only our deeds but also our thoughts and the very intentions of our heart; for it follows:

Luke 11: 34

The lamp of your body is your eye. By body, He means the works that appear openly to all; indeed, the eye itself performs the intention of the mind, and by its merit, these works are discerned as works of light or darkness, as He Himself subsequently explained, saying: [Luke 11:34] -- If your eye is simple, your whole body will be full of light. But if it is evil, your body also will be full of darkness. He said, if you strive to do good with a pure and upright intention, the works that you do are indeed works of light, even if they seem to have some imperfection in the sight of men. Because for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. But if the preceding intention is perverse, every work that follows is of little value, even if it seems to be correct.

Luke 11: 35

Therefore, see to it that the light in you is not darkness. This means that the very intention of the heart, which is the light of the soul, should not be darkened by the fog of sins, but should be carefully considered with diligent discernment. As it is commanded elsewhere: With all vigilance, guard your heart, for from it flows the springs of life (Prov. IV). [Luke 11:36] -- If therefore your whole body is full of light, not having any part dark, it will be all bright, and as a lamp shining will illuminate you. Our whole body means all our works, because the Apostle calls certain works our members, which he condemns and orders to be mortified, saying: Mortify therefore your members which are on earth: fornication, impurity, lust (Col. III), and such things. If therefore you yourself perform good with good intention, not having in your conscience any part of dark thought, even if it happens that one of your neighbors is harmed by your good action, for example, either by the money he had received from you out of need and asked for, doing or suffering something evil, or by the word of exhortation with which you wanted to correct the erring one, perhaps erring more harmfully, nevertheless, you, for

your simple and bright heart, both here and in the future, will be endowed with the grace of light. These words were specifically said against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees cunningly seeking signs, may they instruct us generally according to the moral sense.

Luke 11:37

And while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him, and he went in and reclined. Luke carefully does not say, "And when he had spoken these things," but "While he was speaking," to show that he was invited to dine by the Pharisee not immediately after finishing the words he had set out, but after some others were interposed. Matthew explains what these are, who, after concluding this speech of the Lord, which Luke records partly more briefly and partly more extensively, immediately added, "While he was still speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him." "While he was still speaking," he said, so that you might understand, "while he was speaking these things," which he had indicated above. But Mark also, after he had related what the Lord said about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, said, "And his mother and brothers came." However, Luke did not follow the order of these events but preemptively narrated this event, having recalled it earlier. For he inserted it in such a way that it appears disconnected from the context both of the preceding and the following. Therefore, after he was informed that his mother and brothers were standing outside and he said, "Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3), it is implied that he entered the Pharisee's house to dine, having been invited.

Luke 11:38

The Pharisee began to think to himself why he had not washed before the meal. The evangelist Mark revealed the reason for the Pharisee's thought, saying, "For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands frequently, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash" (Mark 7). [Luke 11:39] -- And the Lord said to him: Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. And Mark indeed reports that they are accustomed to observe the washing of cups and pots, couches, and vessels of bronze, but under the guise of such vessels, they themselves are accused of the pretense of hypocrisy, because

they show one thing to men outwardly, and do another thing at home, having the form of godliness outwardly, but inwardly they are deformed by the filth of vices. For the Lord wishes to explain more fully what he had briefly stated above about cleansing the eye of the heart.

Luke 11: 40

Fools, did not he who made the outside make the inside also? He who, he says, made both natures of man desires both to be cleansed. This is against the Manichaeans, who think that the soul is created by God, but the flesh by the devil. This is against those who detest bodily sins, namely fornication, uncleanness, lust, theft, robbery, and such like, as very grave; but the spiritual sins which the Apostle also condemns no less, that is, bitterness, wrath, indignation, clamour, blasphemy, pride, and avarice which is idolatry (Colossians 3), they regard as trifling.

Luke 11: 41

"However, what remains, give as alms, and behold, everything is clean for you. What remains necessary for food and clothing, give to the poor. According to what John also commands: He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none (Luke 3). For he is not commanded to do almsgiving in such a way that you consume yourself in poverty, but so that after fulfilling the care of your own body, you sustain the needy as much as you can. Or it should be understood in this way: 'what remains,' what is the only remedy left for those preoccupied with so much sin, give alms. This speech applies to all things done out of useful mercy. For not only does he who gives food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, shelter to the stranger, and similar things, give alms, but also he who forgives the sinner gives alms. And he who corrects with a rod him over whom he has authority, or disciplines in some way, and yet forgives from the heart the sin by which he was harmed or offended, or prays for it to be forgiven to him, not only in that he forgives and prays, but also in that he rebukes and punishes with some corrective penalty, gives alms, for he shows mercy.

There are indeed many forms of alms, which when we do, we are helped so that our sins may be forgiven to us, but there is nothing greater than that by which we forgive from the heart what anyone has sinned against us. Or truly what he said: 'Give alms, and behold, everything is clean for you,' are we to understand it such that to the Pharisees who do not have faith in

Christ, even if they do not believe in Him, nor have been reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, everything is clean, only if they give alms, as some think they should be given, since all those whom the faith of Christ does not cleanse are unclean, about which it is written: 'Purifying their hearts by faith'? And yet it is true what they heard, 'Give alms, and behold, everything is clean for you.' For he who wants to give alms properly must begin with himself, and give it first to himself. For alms is a work of mercy, and it is very truly said: 'Have mercy on your soul, pleasing God' (Sirach 30). Because of this we are reborn, so that we may please God, to whom what we contracted by being born displeases with reason. This is the first alms we gave to ourselves, because we sought ourselves miserable by the mercy of the merciful God. For this order of love it was said: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Mark 12).

Therefore, when he rebuked them for washing themselves outwardly, but being full of plunder and wickedness internally, admonishing them of a certain alms that a man should first give to himself, and to cleanse the interior: 'However,' he says, 'what remains, give as alms, and behold, everything is clean.' Then to show what he had admonished and what they did not care to do, lest they think he was unaware of their alms."

Luke 11:42

But woe to you, he said, Pharisees. As if he said, I indeed warned you to give alms, by which everything would be clean to you: but woe to you, [Luke 11:42] -- Because you tithe mint and rue and every herb; for I know these as your alms, so do not think that I now admonish you about them. [Luke 11:42] -- And you neglect justice and the love of God. By this alms you might be cleansed of all inner impurity, so that the bodies you wash might also be clean to you, for this is indeed everything, both the inner and the outer, as it is read elsewhere: Cleanse what is inside, and what is outside will be clean (Matthew XXIII). But lest it seem that he rejects those alms made from the fruits of the earth, he says: [Luke 11:42] -- These things, however, you ought to have done. That is, justice and the love of God, so that judging rightly of our own misery and loving the charity of God that He has bestowed, we may live piously and rightly, confessing His righteous judgment, which the Apostle says, Judgment came through one to condemnation: and giving thanks to His great charity (Romans V), of which the same grace preacher

says: But God commends His charity in us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Ibid.).

Luke 11: 42

These things you ought to have done, and not leave the others undone, that is, alms from the fruits of the earth. Therefore, let them not deceive themselves who think that by giving the most generous alms from their fruits, or any money, they are buying impunity while remaining in the enormity of crimes and the wickedness of disgraces. [Luke 11:43] -- Woe to you Pharisees who love the foremost seats in synagogues, and the greetings in the market. Woe to us miserable ones, to whom the vices of the Pharisees have passed, who, in the brief and uncertain course of our life in which we ought to have humbly lamented our sins, by proudly contending with each other for priority, we did not fear to burden ourselves further with sins. [Luke 11:44] -- Woe to you who are like unseen tombs, and men walking over them do not know it. And this challenges the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who outwardly present an appearance of correct doctrine, but within conceal what filth they carry, like tombs which, while showing the common surface of the earth outwardly, are filled within with the stench of rotting corpses. Of these the Psalmist said: Their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalm 5); and he immediately clarified what he said by adding: They dealt deceitfully with their tongues.

Luke 11: 45

But one of the lawyers, answering, said to him: Teacher, in saying these things you also reproach us. How miserable a conscience that, hearing the word of God, thinks itself reproached, and always understands itself to be condemned by the mentioned punishment of the faithless. Hence, for me and my kind, the only refuge remains to supplicate the Lord with the prophet: May my ways be directed to keep your statutes. Then I shall not be ashamed, while I have regard for all your commandments (Psalm 119). [Luke 11:46] -- But he said: Woe to you lawyers also, because you load men with burdens that cannot be carried, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one finger. The burdens of the law cannot be carried in the way these lawyers imposed them on the people. Hence, they rightly hear that they do not touch the burdens with one finger, that is, they would not fulfill them even in the smallest part, which they presumed, contrary to the custom of

the fathers, to keep and hand down to be kept without the faith and grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they attempted to cast away and exterminate the yoke of Christ which is sweet and His burden which is light, where there is rest for souls, since it is written: The righteous shall live by faith (Romans 1). And the apostle Peter, to those who were teaching that Gentile believers should be circumcised, protested and said: Now therefore why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15).

Luke 11: 47

Woe to you who build the tombs of the prophets, but your fathers killed them. It is a crime not to adorn the tombs of the prophets, but to imitate the murderers of the prophets. Therefore, the Jews, by building the tombs of the prophets, were accusing the deeds of their fathers who killed them; but by emulating the deeds of their fathers, while they persecuted Christ and his apostles, they were turning the judgment upon themselves, committing the same deeds which they condemned in their parents. [Luke 11:48] -- Indeed you testify that you approve the deeds of your fathers. For they killed them, and you build their tombs. They pretended indeed, to win the favor of the masses, to abhor the treachery of their fathers, adorning the memorials of the prophets who were killed by them with great splendor. But by their very actions, they testify how much they agree with the wickedness of their fathers, injuring the Lord who was foretold by the same prophets. Thus they declare themselves both sons of murderers and, to the augmentation of their own damnation, knowingly sinning. Whence it is rightly added:

Luke 11: 49

Therefore also said the wisdom of God: I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall kill and persecute. He calls himself the wisdom of God, for he is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. 1). Accordingly, in Matthew, you have it thus: Therefore behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes. If, however, the same wisdom of God sent prophets as well as apostles, let the heretics cease to ascribe Christ's beginning to the Virgin, and let them not proclaim a different God of the law and the prophets, different from the God of the New Testament, although often even the apostolic Scripture calls

prophets not only those who foretold Christ's incarnation but also those who proclaimed the joys of the heavenly kingdom to come. The two or three prophets (it says) should speak, and the others should judge. But I would by no means believe these should be preferred to the apostles in the order of the catalog.

Luke 11: 50

That the blood of all the prophets that was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation. The question arises how the blood of all the prophets and the righteous may be required of one generation of the Jews, since many saints, both before the incarnation and after the death and resurrection of the Savior, were killed by other nations, and the Lord Himself was crucified by a Roman governor and Roman soldiers, though with the Jews shouting. But it is the custom of the Scriptures often to reckon two generations of men, namely, the good and the evil, that is, those who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1); and those to whom it is said: You are of your father the devil (John 8). And elsewhere: Serpents, generation of vipers (Matt. 23).

Luke 11: 51

From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple. Why from the blood of Abel, who suffered the first martyrdom, is not surprising, but why up to the blood of Zechariah is queried, since many after him, until the birth of Christ, and immediately after His birth, the innocent children in Bethlehem were killed by this generation, unless perhaps because Abel was a shepherd of sheep, Zechariah a priest, and one was killed in the field, the other in the temple courtyard, He wished to indicate the martyrs of both ranks, of the laity and of those dedicated to the service of the altar, under the name of both. [Luke 11:52] -- Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering. The key of knowledge is the humility of Christ, which the lawyers neither wished to understand in the law and the prophets, nor wished others to understand. For to enter is not to be content with the surface of the letter, but to penetrate to the secrets of more sacred understanding. Alternatively: Every teacher who scandalizes the listeners whom he edifies by word with his example

neither enters the kingdom of God himself, nor allows those who could enter to do so.

Luke 11:53

When He said these things to them, the Pharisees and the experts in the law began to fiercely oppose Him and to press upon His mouth, laying traps for Him about many things, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, so that they might accuse Him. The crimes of their perfidy, simulation, and impiety they themselves attest to have truly heard, who, at such a thundering storm, do not repent themselves, but plan to attack the teacher of truth with treachery.

CHAPTER 12

Luke 12:1

Meanwhile, as many crowds gathered so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. All the things He had disputed earlier while reclining at the Pharisee's dinner pertain to this leaven. About which the Apostle also commands: Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Cor V). For just as a little leaven corrupts the whole lump of dough into which it is thrown, and soon taints the entire mixture with its flavor, so indeed simulation, once it has imbued the mind of anyone, will rob it of all sincerity and truth of virtues. [Luke 12:2] -- Nothing, however, is covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. And how in the present age does the hypocrisy of many long remain hidden? Therefore, it must be understood about the future time, when God will judge the hidden things of men. For just as one of the friends of blessed Job very truly said: The praise of the wicked is brief, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. If his arrogance rises to the heavens, and his head touches the clouds, he will be lost in the end like dung (Job. XX). In the end, he says, he will be lost, who appeared to flourish at the beginning. Therefore, the sense is: Beware of emulating simulators, because surely the time will come, when both your virtue will be revealed to all, and their hypocrisy. But what follows:

Luke 12:3

For what you have spoken in darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the ear in chambers will be proclaimed on the

rooftops, not only in the future, when all hidden things of the heart will be brought to light, but also in the present time it can be suitably interpreted. For the things which the apostles once spoke or suffered in the darkness of oppressions and shadows of prisons are now proclaimed publicly throughout the world by the Church, now made glorious by their acts being read. Indeed, what he says 'will be proclaimed on the rooftops' refers to the custom of the province of Palestine, where they are accustomed to sit on rooftops. For they do not make their roofs elevated to peaks in our manner, but they make them flat in a level form. Hence, the law commanded that he who built a new house should build a parapet around the roof, so that bloodshed may not occur there if someone were to fall and be precipitated down. And in the construction of the temple, we read: He also covered the house with cedar boards, and built a story over the entire house five cubits in height. Therefore, it will be proclaimed on the rooftops, and it will be said openly for all to hear.

Luke 12:4

But I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do nothing more. If the persecutors of the saints, having killed their bodies, can do nothing more against them, then they rage with futile madness, who throw the dead bodies of martyrs to be torn apart by beasts and birds, or to be dissolved into the air, or to be dissolved in the waves, or to be reduced to ashes by flames, since they can in no way hinder the omnipotence of God from bringing them back to life by resurrection. [Luke 12:5] -- Fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast into Gehenna. For there are two kinds of persecutors: one openly raging, the other deceitfully and fraudulently flattering: wishing to arm and instruct us against both, the Savior commands us above to beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and here not to fear the slaughter of executioners, because evidently after death neither the cruelty of the former nor the deceit of the latter is able to endure. Rather, it is the Lord, who always sees, that must be pleased, the Lord, who is always able to punish or liberate, that must be feared.

Luke 12:6

Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria, and not one of them is forgotten before God? If, he says, the smallest of animals, and those birds that fly through the air everywhere, cannot be forgotten by God, you who are made

in the image of the Creator should not be frightened by those who kill the body, because he who governs the irrational does not cease to care for the rational. An assarius, which sells five sparrows, that is, they are sold for, is a type of very light weight, composed of two asses. Perhaps someone may ask how the Apostle says: Does God care for oxen? (1 Cor. 9) when certainly an ox is more valuable than a sparrow. But care is one thing, and knowledge is another. Lastly, the number of hairs, about which he consequently says:

Luke 12:7

But even the hairs of your head are all numbered, not actually in the act of counting, but understood in the capacity of knowledge. For God does not direct a watchful solicitude in tedious counting, but to whom all things are known, as if all things were numbered. Nevertheless, they are well said to be numbered, because we count the things we want to keep. Here he shows the immense providence of God towards men, and marks the ineffable affection that nothing of ours escapes God's notice, and that even small and trivial things spoken do not elude His knowledge. Those who deny the resurrection of the flesh deride ecclesiastical understanding in this place, as if we were to say that the same earthly matter, which becomes a corpse when the soul departs, is to be restored in the resurrection in such a way that the things which decay and are transformed into different shapes and forms of other things must necessarily return not only to the body from which they dissolved but also to the same parts of the body where they were. Otherwise, if the hair of the head returns, which frequent cutting has removed, if to the nails, which frequent trimming has taken off, it appears excessive and indecent to those who think about it, and thus the resurrection of the flesh does not present itself acceptably to those who do not believe.

But just as if a statue of any soluble metal were either melted by fire or ground into powder or reduced to a mass, and the artist wished to restore it again from that quantity of material, it would make no difference to its integrity which particle of material is restored to which member of the statue, provided that all from which it was constituted is reconstituted: so God, wonderfully and ineffably the artist, from all that our flesh was constituted, will restore it with wonderful and ineffable speed, nor will it matter for its reconstitution whether hairs return to hairs and nails to nails, or whether whatever of them had perished is transformed into flesh and recalled to oth-

er parts of the body, with the providence of the artist ensuring that nothing indecent happens.

Luke 12:7

Therefore, do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Not 'you are many,' which pertains to the comparison of numbers, but 'you are worth more,' that is, you are of greater merit, dignity, and esteem before God than countless sparrows, whether bodies or kinds. [Luke 12:8] -- But I tell you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will also confess him before the angels of God. But whoever denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. He looks at what was said before, where it was stated that any covered and hidden things are to be revealed, concluding that this revelation will take place not in any lowly meeting, but in the sight of the heavenly city and the eternal king and judge. And lest it be thought that because he says those who deny him will be denied, the condition of all, that is, of those who deny out of zeal and those who deny out of weakness or ignorance, is the same, he immediately adds:

Luke 12:10

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him. He who is scandalized by my flesh, considering me only a man because I have James, Joseph, and Judas as brothers, and that I am a human glutton and wine drinker, such opinion and blasphemy, though not free from the guilt of error, has pardon because of the benefit of the body. But he who, clearly understanding the works of God since he cannot deny their power, yet stirred by envy, slanders them, and says that Christ and the works of the Holy Spirit are of Beelzebub, this one will not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come. Not that we deny that even he, if he were able to repent, could be forgiven by Him who wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, but we believe this blasphemer, due to his deserving merits, will never reach forgiveness nor the fruits of worthy repentance. As the evangelist John truly wrote about some who were blinded due to the merit of their blasphemy: Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them (John XII).

Some indeed say that he who speaks the word or blasphemes against the Holy Spirit resists with an impenitent heart the unity of the Church where the forgiveness of sins is effected by the Holy Spirit, saying it is a remedy lest the blasphemy be irremissible, that an impenitent heart should be avoided. Of whom, many consider their opinion by no means firm, because obviously anyone who resists the unity of the Church with an impenitent heart, whether he is a Jew or a Gentile or even a heretic, can certainly have the remission of sins in the Holy Spirit, if he flees with a repentant heart to the unity of the Church. But they say that as long as someone resists the Spirit of grace with an impenitent heart, he does not have forgiveness. But the others object that this condition applies to all crimes. For as long as someone commits fornication, idolatry, adultery, male concubinage, theft, and other crimes, he does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God; but once these crimes have been forsaken, he can be washed, sanctified, justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God; so, they say, an impenitent person as long as he has an impenitent heart cannot have forgiveness; but as soon as he repents, he will also obtain forgiveness. And impenitence is found to be no more binding or irremissible than any other sins, which, remaining until repentance, will be erased once repentance is performed.

However, only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, by which someone in the likeness of the devil and his angels does not shudder to attack the majesty of the Deity against his own conscience, does not have forgiveness eternally, but will be guilty of an eternal offense. As the evangelist Mark clearly explains, who, having placed this testimony of the Lord, added and said: Because they were saying, He has an unclean spirit. For neither those who do not believe that the Holy Spirit exists, nor those who believe that He exists but is not God, nor those who believe that He is God but inferior to the Father and the Son, because they act out of human ignorance rather than diabolical envy, are held by this crime of irremissible blasphemy. Therefore, the leaders of the Jews, and all those corrupted by a similar plague of envy, blaspheme the majesty, and will perish without end. Read the first book of the blessed Augustine on the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount.

Luke 12:11

When they bring you into the synagogues, and to the rulers, and authorities. For He had said before: I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some

of them they will kill and persecute. [Luke 12:11] -- Do not worry about how or what you are to answer, or what you are to say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. Therefore, when we are brought before judges for Christ's sake, we should only offer our will for Christ; for Christ Himself who dwells in us, speaks for Himself, and the grace of the Holy Spirit in responding will be provided.

Luke 12:13

But someone from the crowd said to him: Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him: Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? Justly is this brother rebuked, who, while the teacher is commending the joys of heavenly peace and unity, wishes to bring in the trouble of earthly division. Justly is he noted by the term 'man'. For whereas there is among you, he says, jealousy and contention, are you not carnal, are you not men, and walking according to man? And the Lord denies that He is a divider of men, to whom he had come to bring peace both with Himself and with the angels. For God is not the author of disorder but of peace. And the multitude of believers was of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common (Acts IV). But the only divider of fraternity and author of dissension is he of whom it is said above: And he who does not gather with me scatters. And concerning his members: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and house upon house falls (Matt. XII).

Luke 12:15

And he said to them: "Take heed and beware of all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Just as earlier the Lord had spoken much against blasphemers and hypocrites, so here, on the occasion of this foolish petition, he strives to fortify both the crowds and his disciples against the pestilence of greed, by means of precepts and examples. And it is noteworthy that he did not say, "Beware of covetousness," but added, "of all," because some things seem to be done by men simply, but the internal judge, who sees with what intention they are done, judges. For who would consider it a crime to divide an inheritance with a brother or store the fruits grown in one's own field in granaries? But he himself is the witness and judge, as it is written. [Luke 12:16-21] -- Then he spoke a parable to them, saying: "The land of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest, and he

thought to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' And he said, 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' This rich man is not condemned for having cultivated the land or for having stored the fruits that came from it in barns, but for placing his entire life's trust in the very abundance of things, considering the surplus fruits that the land yielded as belonging to him and his goods, without distributing to the poor, according to the Lord's command saying, 'What is left over give as alms,' but rather making larger storehouses to reserve for his future luxury.

Luke 12:19–20

'Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' Something similar is read in Ecclesiastes: 'There is one who becomes rich by being sparing and his reward is a part of it in saying: I have found rest for myself, and now I will eat of my goods alone,' and he does not know that the time passes and he will leave everything to others" (Eccl. XI). [Luke 12:20] -- But God said to him: Fool, this night they will demand your soul from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? You who promised many delights for yourself foolishly in life, snatched away by death this very night, will leave what you have gathered to others. This is what it means for God to speak to a man, to restrain his wicked schemes with sudden reproof. Alternatively: The soul is taken away in the night, which is in the darkness of the heart, and wretched. It is taken away in the night, which did not wish to have the light of reflection, to foresee what it could endure. Hence well does the Apostle Paul say to the disciples considering the future: But you, brothers, are not in darkness, that that day might overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of light and children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of the darkness (1 Thess. V). For the day of departure catches like a thief in the night, when it casts out the souls of the foolish who do not meditate on the future.

Luke 12:21

Thus it is for the one who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God. If he who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God is a fool and to be taken away in the night, then he who wishes to be rich toward God should not treasure up for himself, but distribute his possessions to the poor. Thus he will rightfully be considered wise and a son of the light. Hence

the Psalmist rightly prefaces, concerning any greedy rich man: But in vain does he become troubled; he treasures up and does not know for whom he gathers (Ps. XXXVIII), then at once reveals the treasury of his heart, saying: And now, what is my expectation? Is it not the Lord? And my substance is with you (ibid.). [Luke 12:22] -- And he said to his disciples: Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will wear. When he says, Therefore I say, he looks back to the previous, that is, I forbid the anxiety of temporal things, so that you are not convicted with the world's rich for treasuring up for yourselves. Hence, what nature gives to all, and what is common to cattle, beasts, and humans, we are completely freed from the concern for it, but we are instructed not to be anxious about what we shall eat. And because we prepare bread for ourselves by the sweat of our brow, labor is to be exercised, anxiety is to be taken away.

Luke 12: 23

The soul is more than food, and the body more than clothing. It reminds us to remember that God has given us much more in creating and composing us from soul and body than food and clothing, so that you understand that he who gave the soul will much more easily give food. Likewise, he who gave the body will much more easily give clothing. In this place, it is usually asked whether this food reaches the soul, since the soul is incorporeal, but this food is corporeal. But we should know that in this place the soul is put for this life, for which this corporeal food is the support. According to this meaning, it was also said: Whoever loves his soul will lose it (Matthew 10). If we do not understand this as referring to this life, which must be lost for the sake of the kingdom of God, which the martyrs have shown to be possible, this command will be contrary to the statement where it was said: What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul (Matthew 16)?

Luke 12: 24

Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn, but God feeds them. If the birds, without care and toil, are fed by God's providence, which are here today and will not be tomorrow, whose soul is mortal, and when they cease to exist, will never be again, how much more so humans, to whom eternity is promised, are governed by God's rule! [Luke 12:24] -- How much more valuable are you than they! That is, you are worth more. For just as a rational animal like man is more highly

ordered in the nature of things than irrational beings like birds. [Luke 12:25] -- Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then cannot do even that which is least, why are you anxious about the rest? That is, by whose power and dominion was it done that your body was brought to this stature, by his providence also can it be clothed. It can be understood that it was not done by your own care that your body came to this stature from this: if you try and wish to add one cubit to this stature, you cannot. Therefore, also entrust the care of clothing the body to him, by whose care you see it was done that you have a body of such stature. Therefore, he says, if you then cannot do even that which is least, for this is minimal, but to God it is to make bodies. Moreover, an example had to be given also for clothing, just as it was given for nourishment. Hence, it follows, and he says:

Luke 12: 27

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither labor nor spin. But these examples should not be discussed as allegories, so that we might seek what the ravens or the lilies signify; for they were set forth so that from lesser things greater could be persuaded. [Luke 12:27] -- But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. And truly, what silk, what royal purple, what tapestry of weavers, can be compared to flowers? What blushes like the rose? What glows as the lily? The purple of violets truly surpasses any murex dye, more evident to the eyes than to words. [Luke 12:28] -- If then God so clothes the grass in the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O you of little faith? In the Scriptures, tomorrow is understood as a future time, as Jacob says: And tomorrow my righteousness will answer for me (Gen. XXX). And in the vision of Samuel, the witch speaks to Saul: Tomorrow you shall be with me (1 Sam. XXVIII).

Luke 12: 29

And you, do not seek what you shall eat, or what you shall drink. Note that he did not say, Do not seek or be anxious about food, or drink, or clothing, but more expressively, He said, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink. And above, neither for the body, what you shall clothe yourselves with. Where it seems to me those are censured who, having despised common food or clothing, seek more luxurious or more austere food or clothing than those with whom they live their lives. [Luke 12:29] -- And do not be lifted

up. He, having prohibited anxiety about food, consequently admonished that they should not be exalted. For at first, man seeks these things to fulfill a necessity. But when these things have become abundant, he begins also to take pride in them. This is like someone wounded boasting because he has many bandages in his house, although it would be good for him not to have wounds and not to need even one bandage.

Luke 12:30

For all these things the nations of the world seek. But your Father knows that you need them. Nevertheless, seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you. Here he most evidently shows that these are not to be sought as our ultimate goods, for the sake of which we should do good if we do anything, but that they are necessary. For what is the difference between a good which ought to be sought, and a necessity which ought to be used, he declared by this saying, when he said: Nevertheless, seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Therefore, the kingdom of God is our good and it is to be sought, and therein we should establish our end, for which purpose we should do all things whatever we do. But because in this life we struggle, that we may be able to reach that kingdom, which life cannot be lived without these necessities, He says, These things shall be added unto you, but you seek the kingdom of God. For he did not say, They shall be given, but they shall be added, surely indicating that there is another thing which is primarily given, another thing which is superadded. Because eternity should be in our intention, and temporality in our use, and that is given, and this is unquestionably superadded from abundance.

Luke 12:32

Do not fear, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. He calls the small flock the chosen ones, either in comparison to the larger number of the reprobate, or rather for the devotion of humility. Although He has already extended His Church to some size, He still wants it to grow until the end of the world and to reach the promised kingdom through humility. Therefore, He consoles its labors gently, commanding it to seek only the kingdom of God, and with a delighted kindness, promises that the kingdom will be given to them by the Father. [Luke 12:33] -- Sell what you possess, and give alms. He says, do not fear that those who fight for

the kingdom of God may lack the necessities of this life; indeed, sell what you possess for almsgiving. This is done worthily when, after having forsaken all things for the Lord, one nonetheless works with one's hands to earn a living and to give alms. Hence the Apostle boasts, saying: "I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak" (Acts 20).

Luke 12:33

Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old. Namely, by performing almsgiving, the reward of which remains forever. It should not be understood from this command that the saints reserve nothing of their money, whether for themselves or for the use of the poor: since the Lord Himself, though ministered to by angels, is read to have kept purses to instruct His Church. He conserved what was offered by the faithful and provided for the needs of His own and others who were in need: but it should not be that service to God is done for these things or that justice is abandoned out of fear of poverty. [Luke 12:33] -- A treasure unfailing in the heavens, where a thief does not approach, nor moth corrupts. Either simply taken that money kept fails, or namely, snatched by a thief from treasures, or in treasures itself spoiled by its own fragility, but given for Christ it bestows an everlasting fruit of mercy in the heavens; or certainly it should be understood that the treasure of good work, if it is stored for the sake of earthly gain, easily corrupted perishes, but if gathered solely with a heavenly intention, it is neither corrupted by external human favor nor ruined by the stain of empty glory within. For a thief steals from outside, a moth destroys from within. The thief has taken away the riches of those about whom the Lord says, They have received their reward (Matt. VI). The moth corrupts their clothes, of whom the Psalmist reproving says: For God scatters the bones of men who please themselves (Psalm LII). For bones he calls the strength of virtues.

Luke 12:34

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. This is to be understood not only about money, but about all passions. The glutton's god is the belly. Therefore, there he has his heart where his treasure is. The luxurious man's treasures are feasts, the wanton's amusements, the lover's lust, hence

each one serves from whom he is conquered. [Luke 12:35] -- Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands: and you be like unto men waiting for their lord. For he had shown many, either those subject to the world in all things, or those serving the Lord with a view to worldly benefit, beautifully and briefly he instructs his own, both to gird their loins for the sake of abstaining from the love of worldly things, and to have burning lamps, so that they may do this with true purpose and right intention. Otherwise, we gird our loins when we restrain the luxury of the flesh through abstinence. And we hold burning lamps in our hands, when through good works we show examples of light to our neighbors. For to our Redeemer, one without the other can by no means be pleasing, if either the one who does good yet has not abandoned the impurities of luxury, or the one who excels in chastity has not yet exercised himself in good works. But if both are done, it remains for any such person to strive with hope toward the heavenly homeland, by no means restraining himself from vices for the sake of this world's honor, but placing all his hope in the coming of his Redeemer. Hence it immediately follows:

Luke 12:36

And you be like men waiting for their lord, when he returns from the weddings. For the Lord went to the weddings, because rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, the new man united to himself the supreme multitude of angels. He then returns when he is now manifested to us through judgment. And well is it added concerning the waiting servants: [Luke 12:36] -- That when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. For he comes when he approaches for judgment; indeed, he knocks when he indicates that death is near through the afflictions of illness. To whom we open immediately, if we receive him with love. For he does not want to open to the knocking judge who trembles to leave the body; and he fears to see the judge whom he remembers having scorned. But he who is secure in his hope and action opens to the knocking judge immediately, because he joyfully waits for the judge; when he recognizes the time of imminent death, he rejoices at the glory of the reward. Hence it immediately follows:

Luke 12:37

Blessed are those servants whom the Lord will find watching when He comes. One watches who keeps the eyes of the mind open to the sight of the

true light. One watches who fulfills by action what he has believed. One watches who drives the darkness of sluggishness and negligence away from himself. Hence Paul says: Awake to righteousness, and sin not (I Cor. XV). Hence he also says again: It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep (Rom. XIII). But let us hear what the Lord, upon His coming, will offer to those vigilant servants. [Luke 12:37] -- Amen, I say to you that He will gird Himself and have them sit at table, and He will come and serve them. He girds Himself, which means He prepares their reward; He has them sit at table, which means they are refreshed in eternal rest. Our sitting at table surely means resting in the kingdom. Wherefore the Lord again says: They will come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. VIII). The Lord, passing by, ministers because He satisfies us with the illumination of His light. Truly, passing by, it is said, He returns from judgment to the kingdom. Or certainly, the Lord passes to us after judgment because He elevates us from the form of His humanity to the contemplation of His divinity. And His passing by is to lead us into the vision of His brightness, for when we see Him in humanity at judgment, we also see Him in divinity after judgment.

Luke 12: 38

And if he comes in the second watch, or if he comes in the third watch, and finds them so, blessed are those servants. The first watch is the time of youth, that is, childhood. The second is adolescence or youth. As the sacred word says in one authority: Rejoice, young man, in your youth (Eccl. XI). But the third is understood as old age. Therefore, he who did not wish to be watchful in the first watch, let him at least guard the second, so that he who neglected to turn away from his wickedness in childhood may awaken to the paths of life at least in his youth. And he who did not wish to be watchful in the second watch, let him not lose the remedies of the third watch, so that he who did not awaken to the paths of life in his youth may at least come to his senses in old age. But to shake off the sloth of our mind, external losses are also deduced through analogy, so that by these the mind may be roused to self-guarding; for it is said:

Luke 12: 39

But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. From this preceding analogy, an exhortation is also

implied when it is said: [Luke 12:40] -- Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. For while the master of the house is unaware, the thief breaks into the house: because while the spirit sleeps, neglecting self-guarding, an unexpected death comes, breaks into the dwelling of our flesh, and if it finds the master of the house sleeping, it kills. For when the spirit does not foresee future harms, death snatches it unaware to punishment. The master would resist the thief if he kept watch, because by anticipating the coming of the judge who secretly takes the soul, he would confront him by repenting, lest he perish impenitent. Our Lord wanted the final hour to be unknown to us so that it always might be suspected, and since we cannot foresee it, we may always be prepared for it.

Luke 12: 41

But Peter said to him: Lord, are you telling this parable for us, or for everyone? The Lord indeed had previously warned through a parable, both that he would come suddenly, and that they should expect him prepared; but of which of these matters Peter asked, or about both, whom he compared with himself and his companions, when he said, Are you telling this to us, or to everyone? It is not easily clear. And indeed in that which he says, us and everyone, he is supposed to signify no others but either apostles and those similar to apostles, and the other faithful, or those who individually dying daily receive the coming of their judge willing or unwilling, and those who are to be found alive in the flesh when the universal judgment comes. But it would be a marvel if blessed Peter doubted, or to all who wish to live soberly, righteously, and piously, expecting the blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God, who wants all men to be saved, whether the judgment will be unexpected for each and everyone, the great and the small, both the faithful and the unfaithful. Whence it remains to understand that, with these matters well understood, he found it more worthy to ask about those things which he might possibly be ignorant of, as namely whether those lofty precepts of heavenly life, by which he commanded to sell possessions, make purses that do not grow old, store up treasure in heaven, gird your loins, burn lamps and watch, and wait for the Lord, pertain solely to apostles and those like them, or even to all who are to be saved. This sense of the inquirer is declared (if I am not mistaken) by the Lord's very response.

Luke 12: 42

The Lord said: Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord shall make ruler over his household? Answering the questions of the Savior, he first teaches that judgment is present for all, and that individuals will receive rewards or punishments according to the merit of their work and the capacity of their understanding. Then, in addressing what was especially asked, he shows that the grace of virtues which he brought to the world is to be pursued by each as much as they can. "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?" Certainly, in saying "who then is," he suggests the difficulty, not the impossibility, of achieving virtue, just as the Psalmist says: "Who is wise, and will observe these things?" (Psalm 106). He signifies not no one, but the rarity. For elsewhere the same term is used not for difficulty, but for impossibility. "Who is like unto thee, O God?" (Psalm 82), that is to say, none. "For thou alone art the most High over all the earth" (Psalm 82).

Luke 12: 42

To give them their portion of wheat in due season. By the portion of wheat is expressed the measure of the word. For lofty matters ought to be covered before many listeners, and scarcely disclosed to a few, lest when something beyond the ability of a narrow heart is given, it be cast aside. Here, Moses, coming forth from the secret presence of God, veiled his shining face before the people, because surely, he did not reveal the secrets of innermost clarity to the crowds. Therefore, the speech of teachers ought to be formed according to the quality of the listeners, so that it suits each individually and yet never departs from the art of common edification. [Luke 12:43] -- Blessed is that servant whom, when the Lord comes, He finds so doing. Truly I say to you that He will set him over all His possessions. Just as there is a great difference in merits between good listeners and good teachers, so too is there in rewards. For when He comes and finds these watching, He will make them sit down to eat, and passing by, He will serve them. But those whom He finds faithfully and wisely dispensing the word of food to the family entrusted to them, He will set over all that He possesses, that is, over all the heavenly joys of the kingdom, not that they alone may hold the Lord, but that they may more abundantly enjoy eternal possession with the other saints. For those who are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and those

who instruct many to righteousness as the stars for endless eternities (Dan. XII). And the Apostle says: The elders who rule well are worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine (I Tim. V).

Luke 12: 45

But if that servant shall say in his heart, 'My Lord delays to come,' and shall begin to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink, and to become drunken. Just as in a faithful and wise steward the entire order of good things is taught, how he should live and be rewarded, so also in this most wicked servant is shown the work and damnation of all condemned overseers, who, neglecting the fear of the Lord, not only indulge in luxury themselves, but also incite their subordinates to wrongdoing. Although symbolically it can be understood that beating the male and female servants means corrupting the hearts of the weak, who are not yet strengthened in faith, hope, and charity, by showing them an example of bad behavior or speech. Eating, drinking, and becoming drunk means being occupied with all crimes and worldly pleasures, which dement the mind and lead it astray. Note certainly among the vices of the bad servant that he believed his lord's return to be slow, but not counted among the virtues of the good that he hoped for it quickly, but only that he gave his fellow servants the measure of wheat in time, that is, he showed them either the word of the Lord or the rule of his own example. Indeed, we also read that some good servants were reproved by the Apostle for trembling and anxiously believing the day of the Lord to be imminent, which he himself promised would come unexpectedly. Hence it is proven best, although we fervently desire to know when the Desired One for all nations shall come, to bear patiently not knowing what cannot be known, and just in the example of the good servant, whether he is near or far, to be ready to await and love his coming.

Luke 12: 46

The lord of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and appoint his part with the unbelievers. He will cut him not by beheading, but by separating him from the fellowship of the faithful and associating him with those who never belonged to the faith: for he who does not care for his own, and especially for his household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, as the Apostle says. [Luke 12:47] -- But that servant who knew his

master's will and did not prepare or act according to his will, will be beaten with many blows. Many, misinterpreting this sentence, do not want to know what they should be doing and ostensibly think they will be beaten less if they are ignorant of what they should have done. But it is one thing not to know, another to be unwilling to know. For he who wishes to learn but is unable does not know; but he who turns his ear away from the voice of truth so that he may remain ignorant, this one is condemned not for ignorance, but for contempt.

Luke 12: 48

But the one who did not know and did things deserving of punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked. Therefore, after saying, "To whom much is given," he added, "And from whom much is demanded," understanding, divine judgments. Unless perhaps through this he wanted to indicate both the order of the faithful, namely of the rulers and subordinates, because much is often given even to certain individuals to whom both the knowledge of the Lord's will and the ability to execute what they know is imparted. Much is also entrusted to him to whom, along with his own salvation, the care of pastoring the Lord's flock is entrusted. Therefore, the powerful will suffer powerful torments, and stronger torture awaits the stronger, that is, those endowed with greater grace, if they sin, greater vengeance will follow. However, the mildest of all penalties will be for those who, apart from the original sin they inherited, have not added any additional sin; and among the other sins they have added, each will have a more tolerable condemnation to the extent that he had less iniquity here.

Luke 12: 49

I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what do I wish except that it be kindled? This sentence responds particularly to the question of the blessed Peter inquiring whether the state of a stricter life should be sought by all. Indeed, he says fire is the fervor of the Holy Spirit, which, illuminating the secrets of the heart, provokes with continuous motions towards heavenly things, burns away the vices of carnal desire like thorns and thistles, improves by refining the golden vessels of the Lord's house, and consumes the wood, hay, and stubble; which, as soon as it was sent to the earth, fertilized

those hundred and twenty lamps found in the stronghold of Zion with an intimate sprinkling of its light. Of which, when he said above, "Let your loins be girded" (Luke XII), he added, "And your lamps burning." Therefore, you ask (he says) whether I advise all to await the Lord's coming with loins girded and lamps burning: but since for this reason alone I came forth from the Father's bosom and came into the world, that I might kindle men from earthly desires to heavenly desires, what do you think I wish other than that the radiance of this fire illuminates all regions of the world, that the flame of this devotion always grows in the hearts of the faithful until the end of the age, and that it is neither extinguished by any incursions of the faithless nor by waves or gusts?

Luke 12: 50

But I have a baptism to be baptized with. With the staining (he says) of my own blood I must first be washed, and thus inflame the hearts of the believers with the fire of the Spirit, by which they are able to despise or even hate all earthly things simultaneously and their own souls. For the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (Thess. III), that is, the victory of passion. About which elsewhere he says: Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? (Mark X). [Luke 12:50] -- And how am I distressed until it is accomplished? Some manuscripts have, And how am I anguished. Thus, the Lord's dignity is so great that he testifies that the zeal for infusing devotion in us, for completing perfection in us, and for ripening the passion's zeal for us is within himself; for he, who had nothing in himself to cause suffering, yet was distressed or constrained by our afflictions, and at the time of passion displayed sorrow, which he had assumed not from fear of his own death, but from the delay of our redemption. As he says: And how am I anguished until it is accomplished? Certainly, he who is anguished until perfection is secure about the perfection.

Luke 12: 51

Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. How the earth will burn after the baptism of his passion, after the coming of the spiritual fire, is declared. Indeed, the whole world is divided against itself for faith in Christ; every household has both unbelievers and believers, and therefore a good war has been sent, so that bad peace may be

broken. Which Isaiah also prophetically foretold under the guise of Egypt, saying: Behold, the Lord will ascend upon a light cloud, and will enter Egypt, and the idols of Egypt will be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt within it, and I will stir Egyptians against Egyptians (Isa. XIX), with some fighting against the faith and others for the faith. [Luke 12:52] -- For from now on, in one house, there will be five divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Luke 12: 53

It should be noted how he speaks of the five divided, when it seems he has mentioned six persons: father and son, mother and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. And it should be understood that the same woman is designated as both mother and mother-in-law, because she who is the mother of the son is also the mother-in-law of his wife, and thus, she is said to be divided both against her own daughter and against her daughter-in-law. If anyone seeks to interpret these divisions allegorically, three are divided against two, and two against three, because the good oppose the evil, and the evil oppose the good. No one doubts that three pertains to those who maintain faith in the highest Trinity. It is also found fitting that two relates to those who dissent from the unity of faith, and in many places in Scripture, this is proven; notably, unclean animals in the ark are held under this number, and only in Genesis is it said that the works of the second day are not seen by God as good.

Luke 12: 53

The father against his son, and the son against his father. Here, the father is the devil, whose sons we once were, not by his creation, but by imitating him, as the Lord said: You are of your father the devil (John VIII). But after we heard the voice of admonition, Forget your people and the house of your father's (Psalm 45:10), that fire came, that is, the spiritual grace that separated us from one another, showing us another father, to whom we would say, Our Father who art in heaven (Matthew VI). [Luke 12:53] -- The mother against her daughter, and the daughter against her mother. The mother is the synagogue, the daughter is the early Church, which both endured the

persecution of faith from that synagogue from which she derived her lineage, and also contradicted the synagogue in the truth of faith. [Luke 12:53] -- The mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law is the synagogue, the daughter-in-law is the Church of the Gentiles, because the groom of the Church, Christ, is the son of the synagogue, as the Apostle says: "Of whom are the fathers, and from whom Christ is according to the flesh" (Rom. IX). Therefore, the mother-in-law, that is, the mother of the groom, is divided against her daughter-in-law and daughter, as we said before, because the carnal synagogue persecutes those who believe from the circumcision and from the uncircumcision without ceasing. But these are also divided against their mother-in-law and mother, unwilling to receive carnal circumcision, as the Acts of the Apostles teach.

Luke 12:54

Moreover, he said to the crowds: When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, A storm is coming, and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say there will be heat, and it happens. The cloud rising from the west signifies his flesh rising from death. For from that, the rain of the Evangelical preaching has been poured upon all lands. The south wind blowing before the heat signifies lighter tribulations before the judgment. [Luke 12:56] -- Hypocrites, you know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. But how is it that you do not know how to interpret this time? We have briefly touched upon what is mystically signified by the cloud and the south wind. But the literal sense is also clear, because those who from the change of elements could easily predict the state of the weather as they wished, could also, if they wanted, understand this time, that is, the first or second coming of the Lord (for he had warned about both) from the words of the prophets, who have clearly indicated both with the most evident signs, either of things or of years. And lest anyone from the crowd perhaps flatter themselves with their ignorance and plead that they, being unlearned and ignorant of the prophetic readings, could not interpret the course of the times, he vigilantly adds.

Luke 12:57

But why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? Showing them, as rational creatures, and even if they are illiterate, they can by natural instinct

discern, either that one who has done works among them which no one else could have done should be understood as beyond human and therefore believed to be God, or that after so many injustices in this age, the just judgment of the Creator is going to come. No one, therefore, from what has been said above, should presume that a servant ignorant of the master's will shall receive few stripes, while in sinning, he avails himself of the excuse of ignorance. For, if I keep silent about other things, from the very fact that he is human, he can neither be ignorant of the evils which he must avoid, nor of the goods which he must seek.

Luke 12: 58

When you go with your adversary to the ruler, on the way, make an effort to be delivered from him, lest perhaps he deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. These things, like the previous admonitions, teach us to trample the allurements of the world underfoot, and to await the coming of the fearful judge with constant expectation. Indeed, our adversary on the way is the word of God opposed to our carnal desires in this present life. One who submits himself humbly to its precepts is thereby delivered from it. Otherwise, he is given over to the judge, and the judge delivers him to the officer, because from the despised word of the Lord, the sinner shall be held guilty in the judgment. The judge delivers him to the officer because he permits him to be dragged by the evil spirit to punishment, so that the spirit may exact the compelled soul to punishment from the body, which voluntarily consented to guilt. The officer throws him into prison because he is thrust back into hell by the evil spirit until the day of judgment comes, from which point onwards he will be tortured along with it in the fires of hell.

Luke 12: 59

I tell you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last penny. That is, until you have paid for even the smallest sins. Because you will always be able to pay the penalties by suffering, but never able to obtain forgiveness in return (for there will be no place for forgiveness there), you will never come out from where you will bear the eternal penalties for your deeds.

CHAPTER 13

Luke 13:1

There were present at that very time some who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. These Galileans, who were killed by the impious governor at their own sacrifices, indeed paid the penalties for their own crimes with a wicked and impious death. However, it was not their death itself, because even good people could die in such a manner, as the glory of blessed martyrs declares, but their wicked life, for which they would be sent into the second death, that harmed them: indeed, it was for the correction of the living, so that a foolish person might become wiser when seeing someone scourged with a plague: or certainly for the example of those unwilling to be corrected, and therefore destined to perish very badly, they were punished with such a death. Finally, it follows:

Luke 13:2

And responding, he said to them: Do you think that these Galileans were sinners above all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Indeed, those who did not repent similarly perished, because in the fortieth year of the passion of the Lord, the Romans came, identified by Pilate who, as belonging to their nation and kingdom, began from Galilee, whence the preaching of the Lord had commenced, and destroyed so completely the impious nation that not only the courts of the temple where sacrifices were usually offered, but also the inner parts of the house where Galileans had no access, were defiled with human blood. For truly, Pilate, whose name is interpreted as the mouth of a hammerer, symbolizes the devil, always ready to strike, the blood signifies sin, and the sacrifices express good actions, Pilate mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices, when the devil taints alms, prayers, fasting, and other good deeds of the faithful, either with deadly indulgence of the flesh and blood, or with meditation of hatred, or with the fury of envy, or with the ambition of human praise, or with any other wicked plague, so that although they seem to be offered to the Lord, the crafty adversary makes it so that they benefit nothing to those who offer them, something we wish we did not know happens with us daily.

Luke 13:4

Just as those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them. Do you think that they were worse debtors than all the men who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. And these Jerusalemites, like those Galileans, were not the only sinners, but they were punished to serve as a warning to the rest. Those who were crushed by the fall of the tower predict that all Jews who refuse to repent will perish with their cities. The number eighteen is not without reason, which in Greek is represented by ι and η, that is, the same letters with which the name Jesus begins. For they indicate that they especially deserved to be condemned for preferring to reject rather than accept the name of the Savior. Mystically, however, the tower of Siloam is such as the Psalmist sings: Thou hast led me because thou hast become my hope, a tower of strength in the face of the enemy (Psalm 60). For the very name Siloam, which is interpreted as "sent," where the man blind from birth received light, clearly signifies him who says: I am the light of the world (John 12). And again: And he who sent me is with me (John 8). Concerning whose fall, under the metaphor of a stone, it is said elsewhere: Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. But on whom it falls, it will grind him to powder (Luke 20). Otherwise: each of us must build a tower of virtues after having first calculated the costs, lest he be mocked by passers-by if he cannot finish it. This tower will stand firm if properly built. But if erected in pride, lacking a solid foundation, it will fall upon the one who built it.

Luke 13:6

He also spoke this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. This fig tree could indeed represent human nature. Well planted, that is, created in the likeness of its author. But when God sought fruit from it for three years, it refused to give because it disdained to obey before the law, under the law, and under grace. But if you look higher, you will notice it, and if generally for all, especially it bears the type of the synagogue. For when that terrible and fearful sentence precedes: "If you do not repent, you will all likewise perish," immediately he adds the parable of the unfruitful and to be uprooted tree, very clearly teaching those to whom he spoke, like the unfruitful fig tree, that if they did not repent, they would be cut down. Therefore, the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, as we are

taught by the song of Isaiah. But the synagogue established in the same house is the fig tree in the vineyard. But he who allowed his vineyard to be plundered by travelers also commanded the fig tree to be cut down.

Luke 13:6

And he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. He who instituted the synagogue through Moses, the Lord born in the flesh appeared, and frequently teaching in the synagogue, sought the fruit of faith, but found it not in the minds of the Pharisees. [Luke 13:7] -- Then he said to the vinedresser: Behold, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. By the vinedresser is expressed the order of apostles and teachers, whose prayers and admonitions suggest the constant care of the people of God. For the Lord very often complained about the unfruitful people of the Jews, that through the three years of his visitation, that is, in the legal edicts, in the prophetic attestations, and in the very grace of the shining Gospel, it remained negligent.

Luke 13:7

Cut it down therefore, why does it even occupy the land? Not by the apostles, but by the Romans the Jewish nation was cut down and cast out from the land of promise. But he says, cut it down, proposing to it the impending downfall with the counsel of repentance. Which by just judgment lost the land with the kingdom, out of love for which it did not fear to persecute the citizens of heaven, and to kill the King of heaven and earth, saying through its chief priests and Pharisees: If we allow him thus, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. Also, by the land occupied by the barren fig tree can be figured the crowd of the Jewish people, who, pressed under the shadow of wicked rulers, could not receive the light of truth, and hindered by their bad example from being warmed by the sun of heavenly love. As the Saviour elsewhere says to them: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who shut the kingdom of heaven before men. For you do not enter, nor do you allow those to enter who are going in (Matthew 23).

Luke 13:8

And he answering said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it. It is the voice of the apostles, who after the passion of the Lord earnestly prayed for the Jews, that the vengeance of the Lord's crucifixion

might not be sought upon the impenitent. Until I dig (he says) around it, that is, by the root of the unfruitful mind humble it with the sharp hoe of rebuke, and by inflicting, namely, the pressures of the present and the terror of perpetual damnation. Every trench indeed is at the bottom. And certainly rebuke, while it shows the mind to itself, humbles it. [Luke 13:8] -- And I will put manure. That is, I will recall to mind the abomination of the evils it has done, and I will rouse the grace of compunction as from the rottenness of manure. [Luke 13:9] -- And if it indeed produces fruit. But if not, in the future you will cut it down. When He said, "And if it indeed produces fruit," He did not add anything, but suspended the judgment. However, when He added, "But if not," He immediately attached the judgment of future condemnation, saying, "In the future you will cut it down," because evidently He saw the synagogue much more inclined to deny than to confess God. Hence, elsewhere, applying the same figure in facts as He does here in words, He condemned the unfruitful fig tree with the curse of eternal barrenness, showing that even if the apostles correct by digging and rebuke by heaping manure, it would never yield the fruit of repentance but must be cut down by the severity of the strict axe.

Luke 13:10–11

Now He was teaching in one of their synagogues on the Sabbaths, and behold, there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. After the parable of the fig tree was spoken, the Lord is narrated to have been teaching in the synagogue, to intimate that the parable was not referring to anything else but indicating seeking fruit on the fig tree and not finding it, meaning the word was given to the synagogue and not received. However, so that you might not think she would be entirely cut off due to the fault of barrenness but know the remnant is to be saved through the choice of grace, immediately following there is the healing of the primitive Church under the image of a curved woman. This woman had been bent over for eighteen years, a number which is completed by the sixfold multiplication of three, showing that she languished in weak works in the testimony of the law, the prophecy of the prophets, and the revelation of grace. For the number six, in which the world's creation is perfected, signifies the perfection of works. There are three times (as I have said) of the Lord's visitation, in which Judea, knowing more earthly than heavenly things: to work, was bent over for eighteen years from the uprightness of her mind.

Luke 13:11

And she was bent over, unable to straighten up at all. Because she was wise to earthly matters, seeking weakness, and not yet driven to think of heavenly ones, hearing through the prophet: "If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land." To whom, in contrast, the Apostle says to the members of the Church: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." (Colossians 3). [Luke 13:12] -- When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. He saw her through predestined grace, called her through enlightening teaching, laid hands on her with spiritual gifts to help, raised her to glorify God, by promoting her firm in good works until the end. "Those he predestined," says the Apostle, "he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." (Romans 8).

Luke 13:14

But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the crowd, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." Jesus healed on the Sabbath, showing that it was now time, according to the prophecy of the Song of Songs, for the day to breathe and the shadows to be removed. But the ruler of the synagogue did not understand this much more excellent sacrament, that by healing on the Sabbath the Lord was intimating, that after the six ages of this world, he would grant the eternal joys of immortal life. In whose figure Moses commanded rest on the Sabbath not from good but from servile, that is harmful, actions, thus prefiguring that time when our secular works would cease, but not the religious works of praising God. Therefore, the ruler of the synagogue is mistaken and misleads, because the law prohibited burdening oneself on the Sabbath, that is being weighed down by sins, not healing a person.

Luke 13:15

Responding to him, the Lord said: "Hypocrites, does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it to water? Indeed, he reproached the leaders of the synagogue for their faithlessness, and deservedly notes them with the name of hypocrites, that is, dissemblers, who, despite wanting to seem like teachers of the people, would not be

ashamed to place the healing of a person after the care of a beast: but in a higher sense, by the word ox and donkey, he signifies a Jew and a Greek. Concerning their calling, it is written: The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib. Both of these, released from the bonds of sin, have quenched the thirst and heat of this world by the draught of the Lord's fountain.

Luke 13:16

And should not this daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound for eighteen years long, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day? The daughter of Abraham is any faithful soul, the daughter of Abraham is the Church gathered from both peoples into the unity of faith, which, after the time of the law and the fulfillment of the Lord's resurrection, through the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit, broke the bonds of long captivity. Indeed, in this way, perhaps the mystery of the Sabbath and the eighteen years can conveniently be understood. It is therefore mystically the same to release the ox or the donkey from the stall to lead it to drink, as it is to raise the daughter of Abraham from the bond of harmful oppression, that is, the Church gathered from Jews and Gentiles to be freed from the snares of sins through the water of baptism, and to be lifted up to hope for heavenly things. Certainly, it must be noted that the most impious heresy, from the fact that the Lord said, the woman bound by Satan, tries to assert that the afflictions of human bodies do not pertain to God as their author, but rather to the devil, as if the devil, although always desiring to harm, could harm anyone unless he received power from the Almighty. For what else is declared not only in the book of blessed Job, which the aforementioned heresy, along with the other books of the Old Testament, and with God Himself who gave it, malignantly spurns as being under the rule of an evil world prince, but also in the Gospel, where the demons could not even enter into the swine unless He Himself permitted it, as we have also taught above."

Luke 13:17

And as He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him. Those who are ashamed of the sayings of the Savior show that they are rightly to be compared to the barren fig tree. Those who rejoice in His miracles declare that they belong to the daughter of Abraham, giving glory to God for her

uplifting, that is, to the Church by the piety of faith. [Luke 13:18] -- He said therefore, "To what is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed. The kingdom of God is the preaching of the Gospel and the knowledge of the Scriptures which leads to life. And concerning which it is said to the Jews, 'The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits' (Matthew XXI). The kingdom is therefore like a mustard seed, due to the fervor of faith particularly, or because it is said to expel poison. Hence, we also read elsewhere that perfect faith is compared to a mustard seed because it evidently conquers all doctrines of perversity, by its simplicity and humility.

Luke 13:19

A man took it and planted it in his garden. The man is Christ, the garden is His Church, always to be cultivated by His teachings and gifted with His gifts. It is well said that the same man who planted the seed also took it, because indeed the gifts which He bestowed on us with the Father from divinity, He also took with us from humanity, whence it is said, 'He received gifts among men.' And elsewhere Peter said, 'And having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.'" [Luke 13:19] -- And it grew and became a tree. The preaching of the Gospel spread throughout the world, and it grows also in the mind of each believer, because no one becomes perfect suddenly, but the ascent (he says) is arranged in his heart in the valley of tears (Psalm 83): and later: They shall go from strength to strength, the God of gods shall be seen in Zion (Ibid.). Certainly, the ascent from the valley of tears is gradual, so that on the mountain of heavenly joys the God of gods may be seen. And by growing, the mustard seed rises not like herbs that quickly wither, but like a tree, rejoicing in long endurance and rich fertility. And note that while the barren fig tree in the old vineyard is reproved, immediately in the garden of the Gospel a new mustard tree is born.

Luke 13:19

And the birds of the air rest in its branches. The branches of this tree are the diversities of teachings, in which chaste souls, who know how to tend towards the heavens with the wings of virtues, delight to nest and rest. Who will give me (he says) wings like a dove, and I will fly and rest (Psalm 54)? In the mustard seed, the humility of the Lord's incarnation itself can be under-

stood, which a man took and put in his garden, because Joseph, taking the body of the crucified Savior, buried it in a garden. But it grew and became a tree, because He rose and ascended into heaven. It spread out branches in which the birds of the air rested, because He sent preachers into the world, in whose words and consolations the faithful would find rest from the fatigue of this life.

Luke 13: 20–21

And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God, and what is it like? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until the whole was leavened." A measure called "satum" is a unit of measure according to the custom of the province of Palestine, holding one and a half modii. Therefore, the leaven refers to love, which heats up and stirs the mind. That woman, to whom he previously laid his hands and who immediately stood up straight glorifying God, signifies the Church, of which we are the flour; all who, through the exercise of fear and hope, are ground down by the upper and lower millstones, so that according to the Apostle, we may be one bread and one body in Christ. Therefore, the woman hid the leaven of love in three measures of flour, because the Church commands that we love the Lord with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength. Under the type of Sarah, it is said to Abraham: "Hurry, get three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes" (Gen. XVIII). Also, in the three measures of flour, the three fruits of the Lord's seed can be understood, namely the thirtieth, the sixtieth, and the hundredth, that is, of the married, the continent, and the virgins. And it is fitting that he says until the whole was leavened, because the love hidden in our mind ought to grow until it changes the whole mind into its perfection, so that the soul can love, act, and remember nothing except the love of its Creator. This indeed begins here, but there it is perfected, where, since God is all in all, he warms everyone with the same fire of his love.

Luke 13: 23

But someone said to him, "Lord, are only a few saved?" And he said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door." The hall of salvation is entered through the narrow door because it is necessary to overcome the enticements of this deceitful world through labors and fasts. And he well said, "Strive to enter," because unless the struggle of the mind is fervent, the wave of the

world is not overcome, by which the soul is always drawn back to the depths. [Luke 13:24] -- Because many, I tell you, will seek to enter, and will not be able. They seek to enter provoked by the love of salvation, and will not be able deterred by the harshness of the journey. They seek this out of ambition for rewards, from which they soon flee because of the fear of the burdens. Not because the yoke of the Lord is harsh or the burden is heavy, but because they do not want to learn from Him that He is gentle and humble of heart, so that they may find rest for their souls: and thus, the gate by which one enters into life is narrow.

Luke 13:25

But when the head of the family has entered and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying: Lord, open to us. The head of the family is evidently Christ, who is everywhere fully present in divinity, indeed He is within those whom He gladdens with His vision in the heavenly homeland, but as if He is still outside to those whom He secretly helps as a comforter in this journey, according to what He promised: Behold, I am with you all days until the end of the age (Matt. XXVIII). But He will enter and shut the door when He leads His whole body, which is the Church, glorified by the glory of the resurrection to the joy of His contemplation, taking away from the reprobates the place of repentance, which He now opens to all who piously knock. For standing outside and knocking at the door is to beg in vain for the mercy they had neglected from God, being separated from the lot of the blessed.

Luke 13:25

And He will answer and say to you: I do not know where you are from. How does He not know where they are from? When the Psalm says: The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain (Ps. XCIII). And elsewhere it is written: He knows the deceiver and him who is deceived; unless knowing by God is sometimes said to mean acknowledging, sometimes approving. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish (Ps. I). And thus He knows the reprobates whom He judges by knowing, for He would not judge those He did not at all know, and yet in some way He does not know where they are from, among whom He does not approve the character of His faith and love.

Luke 13: 26

Then you will begin to say: We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. Or simply to be understood that the Jews, rejecting the mysteries of faith, think themselves known to the Lord if they only bring victims to the temple, feast before the Lord, listen to the reading of the prophets, not knowing what the Apostle says: The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. XIV); and elsewhere: Whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame (Phil. III), that is, in carnal circumcision; or mystically it is to be felt that they eat and drink before the Lord, who receive the food of the word with worthy eagerness. Hence, those who say these things, as if explaining, add: And you taught in our streets. For sacred Scripture is sometimes food for us, sometimes drink. In more obscure places it is food, because it is as if it is broken down by explaining and swallowed by chewing. Truly, it is drink in clearer places, because it is taken in as it is found. Therefore, they testify that they understood both the hidden and revealed commands of the sacred word, who complain to the judge rejecting them that they ate and drank before him. But it is greatly to be feared what is added.

Luke 13: 27

And He will say to you: I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. He does not (say) that the feasting of legal festivals helps, one whom the piety of faith does not commend, the knowledge of Scriptures does not make known to God, whom the iniquity of deeds shows to His eyes as unworthy. [Luke 13:28] -- There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Weeping is usually stirred by heat, gnashing of teeth by cold. Where a double hell is shown: that is, of excessive cold, and of intolerable heat. Blessed Job's sentence agrees with this saying: They pass by violently from the waters of snow to excessive heat (Job. XXIV). Or certainly the gnashing of teeth betrays the feeling of the indignant, because each one repents too late, groans too late, is angry at themselves too late, who have sinned with such obstinate wickedness.

Luke 13: 30

And behold, there are the last who will be first, and there are the first who will be last. The main sense of this sentence indeed is clear from the preceding statements: because the peoples of the Gentiles, living without faith for a

long time, would be called to faith, and the Jews, holding the head of faith and justice through many generations, would be turned to the tail. But it can also be understood in this way, that some who are regarded as despicable in this age will have great glory in the future, and others who are glorious among men will be condemned by the strict judge. It can also be understood that many who come late to the service of God will excel in great merits of life, while others who are fervent in spiritual zeal from the earliest age will wear out in the end due to idle sloth.

Luke 13:31

On that same day, some Pharisees approached saying to him: Go out and depart from here, because Herod wants to kill you. And he said to them: Go, tell that fox. He calls Herod a fox because of his deceit and traps, as a fox is an animal full of fraud, always wishing to lurk in a hole, stinking with a foul odor, and never running on straight paths, but on winding trails. All these things are fitting for heretics, of whom Herod holds the type, who try to kill Christ, that is, to take away the humility of Christian faith from believers. [Luke 13:32] -- Behold, I cast out demons and accomplish healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected. These words are understood mystically and figuratively as spoken by the Lord, for he did not suffer on the third day from this day, as he follows by saying:

Luke 13:33

Nevertheless, I must walk today and tomorrow, and the next day, for it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem. Therefore, what he says, I cast out demons, and accomplish healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected (Luke XIII), is referred to his body which is the Church. For demons are cast out, when the Gentiles believe in him, forsaking ancestral superstitions: and healings are accomplished, when life is lived according to his precepts, after renouncing the devil and this world until the end of the resurrection. By which, as if on the third day, it will be perfected to fullness like the angels, that is, the Church will be perfected through the immortality of the body. [Luke 13:34] -- Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Jerusalem does not refer to the stones and buildings of the city, but to its inhabitants, whom he laments with a father's affection, as we also

read in another place that upon seeing her, he wept. But in saying, "How often I wanted to gather your children," he testifies that all the prophets were sent by him. The similarity of the bird gathering its nest under its wings is also read in the song of Deuteronomy: "As an eagle protects its nest and desires over its chicks, spreading its wings, it took them and bore them on its feathers" (Deut. XXVIII). And fittingly, the one who had called Herod a fox pondering his own death, compares himself to a bird. For the deceitful fox never ceases to lay snares for birds.

Luke 13:35

Behold, your house is left to you desolate. The same city which he had called his nest, he now calls the house of the Jews. Which, not undeservedly, is left to its own dominion, stripped of the Lord's help, because it not only despised being protected by that almighty bird—which Matthew names a hen under its wings—but also handed over that same bird, who wished to protect it, to be devoured by foxes, that is, to be crucified by Herod and Pilate. Without delay, the realm of those same foxes, that is, the kingdom of the earth, is given to plunder. For after the Lord was killed, the Romans came, and like stripping an empty nest, took their place, people, and kingdom. [Luke 13:35] -- But I say unto you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." The crowd indeed said this to the Lord coming to Jerusalem, but since Luke does not state that the Lord departed from here to not come except at the time when that would be said (for he continues on his journey until he reaches Jerusalem), it must certainly be understood mystically, that is, about that coming of his in which he will come in glory, especially since Matthew testifies that the Lord said this after the crowd's praises were sung to him. Otherwise, what he says, this is: Unless you repent and confess that I am he of whom the prophets sang, the son of the almighty Father, you shall not see my face. The Jews have been given the time for repentance; let them confess the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord, and they will see the face of Christ.

CHAPTER 14

Luke 14:1

And it happened when he entered the house of a certain ruler of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, and they watched him closely, and behold, there was before him a certain man suffering from dropsy. The disease of

dropsy takes its name from a watery humor. For in Greek, ὑδωρ means water. It is a subcutaneous liquid born from a defect of the bladder, with swelling, and foul breath. It is peculiar to the dropsical person, the more the disordered humor abounds, the more they thirst. And so it is rightly compared to him whom the flowing excess of carnal pleasures oppresses. It is compared to the avaricious rich man, who, the more abundant his riches are, which he does not use well, the more ardently he covets such things. [Luke 14:3] -- And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? But they remained silent. What is said of Jesus answering refers to what has been mentioned earlier: And they watched him closely. For the Lord knows the thoughts of men. But they rightly remain silent when questioned, seeing that whatever they say is said against them. For if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath, why do they watch the Savior to see if he heals? If it is not lawful, why do they themselves provide care for animals on the Sabbath?

Luke 14:4

He himself, after taking hold of him, healed and dismissed him. By provident dispensation the Lord heals the dropsical man before the lawyers and Pharisees, and soon disputes against avarice, so that through the sickness of this body, the sickness of their heart might be expressed. After many exhortations in his disputation, it is added: "But the Pharisees who were lovers of money heard all these things, and they derided him." Indeed, the dropsical man, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts. And every greedy person multiplies his thirst, who, when he has obtained the things he desires, pants for others even more.

Luke 14:5

And responding to them, he said: "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull it out on the Sabbath day?" Thus he convicts the observing Pharisees, so that he also condemns them for avarice. He said, "If you on the Sabbath hasten to rescue a donkey or an ox or any other animal that has fallen into a pit, not for the sake of the animal, but consulting your avarice, how much more ought I to free a man, who is much better than an animal?" Accordingly, he compared the dropsical man to an animal that had fallen into a pit, for he was oppressed by fluid. Just as he had compared the woman who had been bound for eighteen years

and was freed from that bondage to an animal that is loosed to be led to water. And fittingly in both cases he placed the ox and the donkey, because whether we perceive them to signify the wise or the dull, or as it is said above, both peoples, so that he whose neck the yoke of the law has chafed, and him whom any deceiver has found, like a brute animal retaining no reason, has led astray with error wherever he wished, the Savior, coming, found all bound in the chains of Satan, all sunk in the deep pit of desire. For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. III).

Luke 14:7

He also spoke a parable to those who were invited, noting how they chose the best places, saying to them, "When you are invited to a wedding, do not sit in the first place." Indeed, this admonition of the Savior is plain on the surface, teaching humility, which is praiseworthy not only before God but also among men, but since the evangelist does not call this a parable in vain, we must briefly consider what it also signifies mystically. In many passages, it appears that Christ and the Church's union are called a wedding. One such passage is: "Can the children of the wedding fast while the bridegroom is with them?" (Mark II). Another is: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who made a wedding feast for his son and sent his servants to call the invited to the wedding" (Matt. XXII). Therefore, whoever having been invited attends these weddings, that is, unites himself to the members of the Church through the grace of faith, should not sit in the first place, that is, should not, by boasting of his merits, exalt himself as superior to others. Let him indeed strive, according to the parable of another place, to appear clad in the wedding garment, that is, shining with the splendor of virtues, but let him adorn the attire of these virtues with the place of devoted humility.

Luke 14:9

Lest perhaps someone more honorable than you has been invited by him, and the one who invited both him and you comes and says to you, "Give this man your place," and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. He gives place to the one invited after, who, made more secure by the confidence of his long conversation, is surpassed by the swiftness of those who have followed Christ. And with shame, he holds the lowest place when, recognizing

better things in others, he humbles whatever high thoughts he had of his own works, saying with the Prophet, "I am poor and in labor from my youth, yet having been exalted, I am humbled and confounded" (Psalm LXXIII). [Luke 14:10] -- But when you are invited, go, recline in the lowest place. The more you are, he says, humble yourself in everything (Eccli. III). And the Psalmist boasts: "I have been humbled in every way, Lord, revive me according to your word" (Ps. CXVIII). Clearly indicating that he can be revived by the Lord if he himself feels humble about his virtues.

Luke 14:10

So that when the one who invited you comes, he may say to you: Friend, move up higher. The Lord, coming and finding him humble, calling him blessed by the name of friend, will order him to ascend higher. For whoever humbles himself as a little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. [Luke 14:10] -- Then you will have glory in the presence of those who recline with you. It is beautifully said: Then you will have glory, so that you do not begin to seek now what is reserved for you at the end; for, as Solomon says, an inheritance hastened at the beginning will lack blessing in the end. But it can also be understood in this life, that he who is found reclining in the lowest place will be exalted by the coming of the Lord, because the Lord enters his marriage daily, judging the manners, seats, and habits of those dining, despising the proud and often granting such great gifts of his spirit to the humble that he rightly glorifies them with the admiration of the unanimous assembly of those who recline, that is, of those who rest in faith, and jumping up in praise of his author, he says: "But to me, your friends, O God, have been greatly honored; their sovereignty has been greatly strengthened."

Luke 14:11

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. And from this conclusion it is clearly evident that the preceding speech of the Lord must be understood figuratively. For not everyone who exalts himself before men will immediately be humbled, nor will everyone who humbles himself in the sight of men be exalted by them, but on the contrary, sometimes those who elevate themselves either to the height of honor or to some other obtained glory continue to be exalted until the end. Similarly, anyone who is humble and modest, content in his own

mediocrity, perseveres until the end of life. And therefore, according to the truth, everyone who imprudently elevates himself because of his merits will be humbled by the Lord, and he who wisely humbles himself concerning his good deeds will be exalted by Him; without a doubt, this preceding speech of the Redeemer, which forbids seeking the first seats at feasts, corresponds to the same meaning.

Luke 14:12

And he said also to the one who had invited him: When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your relatives, nor your rich neighbors. He does not forbid celebrating feasts with brothers, friends, and the rich, as if it were a crime, but shows that, like other necessary human commerce, where even sinners lend to sinners to receive equal returns, such actions are of no value in acquiring the rewards of heavenly life. Finally, he adds: [Luke 14:12] -- Lest perhaps they also invite you in return, and it may become for you a recompense. He does not say, "And it may become a sin for you," but he says, "And it may become for you a recompense." Like what he says elsewhere: "If you do good to those who do good to you, what grace is there to you?" (Luke 6). He does not say here, "It is a sin for you," but, "What grace is there to you?" Since even sinners do this. Although there are some mutual banquets of brothers, friends, relatives, and wealthy neighbors, which not only receive recompense in the present but also condemnation in the future. Finally, they are counted among the works of darkness by the Apostle. As he says, "Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelries and drunkenness" (Rom. 13). Indeed, revelries are luxurious banquets which are celebrated either by everyone's contribution or are usually hosted in turns by companions, such that no one is ashamed to say or do anything dishonorable, because it is convened for disgraceful things to be done there, stimulated by an abundance of wine and various pleasure of lust.

Luke 14:13

But when you make a banquet, call the poor, the weak, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they do not have the means to recompense you. For a recompense will be given to you in the resurrection of the just. He speaks of the resurrection of the just, who, although all will rise, it is rightly called their own, who do not doubt they will come to be blessed in this. Therefore, he who calls the poor to a banquet will receive a reward in the fu-

ture. He who calls friends, brothers, and the wealthy receives his reward. But even if he does this for God's sake in the example of the sons of blessed Job, as other duties of brotherly love, He who commanded it will reward. He who invites gluttons and the luxurious for the sake of wantonness will be punished in the future with eternal penalty.

Luke 14:15

When one of those who reclined at table with him heard this, he said to him, "Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God." The bread eaten in the kingdom of God, according to Cerinthus, is not to be understood as food of the body, but truly he who says: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (John VI). That is, if anyone perfectly incorporated into the sacrament of my Incarnation is deemed worthy to enjoy the vision of my divine majesty, this one will rejoice in the everlasting happiness of immortal life. But because some receive this bread by faith alone, as if by worshipping, but disdain to truly taste its sweetness, the following parable condemns such laxity as unworthy of the heavenly feast. It follows: [Luke 14:16] -- But he said to him: A certain man made a great supper, and called many. Who is this man, but he of whom it is said by the prophet: "And he is a man, and who knows him?" He made a great supper, for he has prepared for us the fullness of internal sweetness. Because he calls many, but few come, because sometimes those who are subject to him through faith contradict his everlasting feast by living badly.

Luke 14:17

And he sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited that they should come, for everything is now ready. What is the supper time if not the end of the world? In which we indeed are, as Paul long ago bears witness, saying: We are those upon whom the ends of the ages have come (I Cor. X). If, therefore, it is now the supper time when we are called, we ought much less to excuse ourselves from the banquet of God as we see the end of the age now approaching. That this banquet of God is called not a lunch but a supper, is because after lunch supper remains; but after supper no banquet remains. And because the eternal banquet of God will be prepared for us at the end, it was fitting that it should be called not lunch, but supper. But who is denoted by this servant who is sent by the householder to invite, if not the

order of preachers? To repel our disdain, everything is now ready, because to cleanse the tepidity of our minds, the unique lamb who takes away the sins of the world was slain for us in the supper of God.

Luke 14:18

And they all began to make excuses together. God offers what should have been asked for, without being asked He wants to give what could scarcely have been hoped for. Because He would deign to lavish when asked, He is despised when ready, He announces the delights of eternal refreshment, and yet all at once they make excuses. But some say: We do not want to excuse ourselves; for we indeed rejoice to be called and to arrive at that supper of heavenly refreshment. They truly say this, if they do not love earthly things more than heavenly ones, if they are not more occupied with bodily matters than with spiritual ones. From here also the very cause of those making excuses is added when it is immediately said: [Luke 14:18] -- The first said to him: I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. I ask you, have me excused. What is meant by the field if not earthly wealth? Therefore, he goes out to see the field, who thinks only externally because of wealth.

Luke 14:19

And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee, have me excused. What do we understand by the five yokes of oxen, if not the five senses of the body? Which are rightly also called yokes, because they are doubled in both sexes. These bodily senses, namely, since they are unable to comprehend what is internal but only know externals, and forsaking inner things touch only what is outside, rightly signify curiosity through them. For curiosity is indeed a serious vice, which, while leading anyone's mind to investigate the outward life of another, always hides its own inner things from him. For this reason, it is also said of these same five yokes of oxen: I go to prove them, because indeed sometimes examination pertains to curiosity. But it should be noted that both he who excuses himself from the supper of his inviter on account of the farm, and he who excuses himself on account of proving the yokes of oxen, mixes words of humility, saying: I pray thee, have me excused. For while he says "I pray," and yet scorns to come, humility sounds in his voice, pride in his action. And behold, the wicked each judge this when they hear it, yet do not cease to do the things they judge. For when we say to anyone acting perversely: Turn, follow

God, leave the world, where do we call them if not to the Lord's supper? But when they respond: Pray for me, for I am a sinner, I cannot do this, what else do they do but request and excuse themselves? For saying, "I am a sinner," indicates humility, but adding, "I cannot turn," demonstrates pride.

Luke 14:20

And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. What is understood by a wife, except carnal pleasure? For although marriage is good and instituted by Divine Providence for the propagation of offspring, some nevertheless seek in it not the fruitfulness of offspring, but the desires of pleasure. And therefore, through a just matter, an unjust matter can not incongruously be signified. Therefore, the highest Master of the house invites us to the banquet of the eternal feast, but while this one is occupied with earthly care, another is devoured by the keen thought of another's actions, and even the mind of another is polluted by carnal pleasure, each fastidious one does not hasten to the feasts of eternal life.

Luke 14:21

And the servant returned and reported these things to his master. Then the head of the household, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the city, and bring in the poor, and the crippled, and the blind, and the lame. Behold, whoever clings to earthly substance more than justly refuses to come to the Lord's supper; whoever strives in the labor of curiosity despises the prepared nourishment of life; whoever clings to carnal desires rejects the spiritual banquet of the feast. Therefore, since the proud refuse to come, the poor are chosen. Why is this? Because, according to Paul's word, God chooses the weak of the world to confound the strong (1 Cor. 1). But the poor and weak are said to be those who consider themselves weak in their own judgement. For there are also the poor and seemingly strong, who, even positioned in poverty, are proud. The blind, however, are those who have no light of understanding. And the lame are those who do not have upright steps in action. But as the vices of morals are designated in the weakness of members, it is clear that just as those who were invited and refused to come were sinners, so too those invited and who come are sinners; but proud sinners are rejected, and humble sinners are chosen. Therefore, He chooses those whom the world despises, because often that very contempt brings a man back to himself. The poor and weak, the blind and lame are

called and come, because the weak and despised in this world often hear God's voice all the more quickly, since they do not have where they find delight in this world. But, having brought the poor to the supper, let us hear what the boy adds:

Luke 14:22

Lord, it has been done as you commanded, and still there is room Many such were gathered from Judea to the Lord's supper, but the multitude from the Israelite people did not fill the place of the heavenly feast. The crowd of Jews has already entered, but still there is room in the kingdom, where the multitude of the Gentiles ought to be received. Hence, it is also said to the same servant: [Luke 14:23] -- Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. When the Lord invites from the streets and alleys to the feast, He evidently designates those people who knew how to hold the law in urban life. But when He commands His guests to be collected from the highways and hedges, He clearly seeks to gather the rural people, that is, the Gentiles. It is notable in this third invitation, that it is not said, Invite, but Compel to enter. For there are some who understand the good that must be done, but cease to do it. As we said above, it often happens to them that they are struck by the adversity of this world in their carnal desires. For often they waste away with long illness, or fall afflicted by injuries, or are struck by heavier losses, criticizing themselves in their desires, and turn their hearts to the Lord. Therefore, when they are broken by the adversities of this world and return to the love of God, and are corrected from the desires of present life, what are they but compelled to enter? But the very sentence which immediately follows is terrifying. For He says:

Luke 14:24

"But I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet." Behold, He calls through Himself, He calls through angels, He calls through the Fathers, He calls through shepherds, He often calls through miracles, He often calls through scourges, sometimes He calls through the prosperity of this world, sometimes through adversity. Let no one disdain, lest while they excuse being called, when they wish to enter they may not be able to.

Luke 14:25–27

Now great crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and

children, brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple; and whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. I want to inquire how we are instructed to hate parents and close relatives according to the flesh, who are even commanded to love our enemies. And certainly, regarding the wife, the Truth says: "What God has joined together, let no man separate" (Mark 10). And Paul says: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church" (Ephesians 5). Behold, the disciple instructs that a wife should be loved, while the Master says: "Anyone who does not hate his wife cannot be my disciple." Does the judge announce one thing, and the herald proclaim another? Or can we both hate and love at the same time? But if we weigh the force of the command, we may do both by discernment, so that those who are linked to us by fleshly kinship, we love as relatives and avoid as adversaries in the way of God. And so that the Lord might show that this hatred towards neighbors does not stem from unfeelingness but from charity, he immediately added, saying: "Yes, even his own life." For we then properly hate our own life when we do not yield to its carnal desires, when we break its appetite, and when we oppose its pleasures. Therefore, what is despised leads to a better outcome, being loved through what seems like hatred. Thus, we should exhibit the discretion of this hatred towards our neighbors, so that we love them for what they are, but hate that which hinders us in the way of God. How this same hatred towards our own souls should be demonstrated, the Truth reveals by adding, saying:

Luke 14:27

And he who does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For the cross is called so from torment. And we bear the cross of the Lord in two ways: either when we afflict the flesh through abstinence, or when we consider the need of our neighbor as our own through compassion. For he who shows sorrow for another's necessity bears the cross in his mind. But it must be known that there are some who practice abstinence of the flesh not for God, but for empty glory; and there are many who render compassion to their neighbor not spiritually, but carnally, so that they indulge them not for virtue, but, as it were, by pitying them, foster their faults. These, indeed, seem to bear the cross but do not follow the Lord. Therefore, rightly does the same Truth say: He who does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For to bear the cross and follow the Lord is either to show abstinence of the flesh or compassion to the neighbor with the intention of

eternal study. For whoever does this for a temporal intention may indeed bear the cross but refuses to follow the Lord. Because sublime commandments have been given, the comparison of building a height is immediately added, when it is said:

Luke 14:28

For which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost necessary to complete it? For in all things, the end must be considered. Everything we do should be preceded by the effort of consideration. Behold, according to the voice of Truth, he who builds a tower prepares the cost of the building. Therefore, if we wish to construct the tower of humility, we must first prepare ourselves for the adversities of this world. For the distinction between earthly and heavenly building is this: that the earthly building is constructed by collecting expenses, while the heavenly building is constructed by dispersing expenses. We make expenses for the former by collecting what we do not have; we make expenses for the latter by even relinquishing what we have. It must indeed be considered what is said: [Luke 14:29-31] -- Lest after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' For, according to Paul's words, we have been made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. And in all that we do, we must consider our hidden adversaries, who always pay attention to our works, always rejoice in our shortcomings. Observing whom the Prophet says: "My God, in you I trust, I will not be ashamed, nor let my enemies mock me" (Psalm 25). For if we do not vigilantly watch against evil spirits when intent on good works, we suffer the mockers whom we have as persuaders to evil. But since a comparison was given about constructing a building, now a likeness from lesser to greater is added, so that greater things may be weighed from the smallest matters. For it follows:

Luke 14:31

Or what king, going to engage in war against another king, will not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? Otherwise, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. A king comes against a king in equal battle, and yet, if he perceives that he cannot be sufficient, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. With what

tears, therefore, must we hope for pardon, who in that dreadful trial do not come to judgment equally with our king, whom undeniably our condition, weakness, and cause present as inferior? But perhaps we have already severed the faults of evil work, already we have outwardly declined all depravities; do we suffice to give an account of our thoughts? Therefore, when a double army comes against a single one, it examines us, scarcely prepared in our deeds alone, simultaneously concerning our deed and thought. And therefore, while it is still far away, let us send a delegation, let us ask for the things of peace. It is said to be far away, because it is not yet seen presently through judgment. Let us send our delegation, our tears, let us send works of mercy, let us sacrifice on His altar the offerings of placation. This is our delegation, which appeases the coming king.

Luke 14:33

Thus therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple. The Lord very clearly teaches with this conclusion what it means to build a tower or to make peace with a stronger king: namely, to be his disciple; and to prepare the costs to complete the tower, and to send a delegation to obtain peace, is nothing else but to renounce all that we possess. Among such possessions, even the love of our neighbors, as mentioned earlier, and our own soul, which some think is referred to for this temporal life, must be understood in such a way that we possess it temporarily so that it does not hinder us from the eternal, if anyone should threaten to take it away. There is certainly a difference between renouncing all things and leaving all things; it is for the few and the perfect to leave all things, to set aside the cares of the world, and to aspire solely to eternal desires. But it is for all the faithful to renounce all that they possess, that is, to hold onto worldly things in such a way that they are not held by them in the world; to have temporal things in use, eternal things in desire; to manage earthly things in such a way that yet with the whole mind they strive for heavenly things.

Luke 14:34

Salt is good: But if the salt has also lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? He refers to the preceding, where he commanded not only the beginning but also the completion of the tower of virtues. Indeed, it is good to hear the word of God, to more frequently season the hidden things of the heart with

the salt of spiritual wisdom, even to become salt of the earth with the apostles, that is, to suffice for saturating the minds of those who still think of earthly things. But if anyone once enlightened by the seasoning of truth returns to apostasy, by what other teacher will he be corrected, who has rejected the sweetness of wisdom which he himself has tasted, whether terrified by worldly adversities or enticed by allurements? According to what some wise man said: Who will heal the enchanter bitten by the serpent? (Eccl. XII) By which sentence it is not undeservedly believed that Judas Iscariot and his companions themselves are designated, who, overcome by avarice, did not hesitate to betray his rank of apostleship and to hand over the Lord.

Luke 14:35

Neither is it fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but it shall be cast outside. Just as salt which has lost its savor, when no longer useful for seasoning food or preserving meat, is good for nothing (for it is not fit for the land, as its application hinders growth, nor for the dunghill, as it harms fertile soil mixed with it, preventing the seeds of crops from sprouting, and rather extinguishes them), so anyone who, after knowing the truth, turns back, neither brings forth the fruit of good works nor cultivates others, but is to be cast outside, that is, to be separated from the unity of the Church, so that, according to the preceding parable, the mocking enemies may say, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." And therefore, the exhortation is very useful when it is said: [Luke 14:35] -- He who has ears to hear, let him hear. That is, he who has ears of understanding, with which he can perceive the word of God, let him not despise but hear, obeying and doing what he has learned. For not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work will be blessed in his deed. Amen.

CHAPTER 15

Luke 15:1–2

But the tax collectors and sinners were approaching him to hear him, and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." Because not only can the righteous sin through inertia, but also the sinner can repent through diligence, after it is narrated that the tasteless salt must be cast outside, immediately a group of penitents is described being admitted within, who, approaching to hear the word of God, were received not only for conversation but also for dining together. Seeing

this, the Pharisees were indignant, because true righteousness has compassion, and false righteousness has indignation, although the righteous may rightly be indignant with sinners. But it is one thing to act out of pride, and another out of zeal for discipline. But those who were so sick that they did not realize they were sick, until they recognized what they were, the heavenly physician heals them with gentle remedies, presents a kind example, and presses with tenderness on the swollen heart of the wound; he says:

Luke 15:4

Which one of you, having a hundred sheep, and if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? Behold, in a marvelous dispensation of kindness, Truth has given a parable that man might both recognize in himself and that it particularly pertains to the very Creator of men. For since the number one hundred is perfect, He had a hundred sheep when He created the substance of angels and men. But one sheep was lost when man, by sinning, abandoned the pastures of life. He left the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness because He left those lofty choirs of angels in heaven. Why is heaven called a wilderness, unless it is because it is said to be abandoned? Man deserted heaven when he sinned. Moreover, ninety-nine sheep remained in the wilderness when the Lord was seeking the one on earth because the number of rational creatures, namely angels and men, made to see God, was diminished by the loss of man, and in order to complete the perfect number of sheep in heaven, the lost man was sought on earth.

Luke 15:5

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. He laid the sheep on his shoulders because, taking on human nature, He Himself bore our sins. [Luke 15:6] -- And coming home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. Having found the sheep, he returned home, because our Shepherd returned to the heavenly kingdom after restoring man. There he found friends and neighbors, namely those choirs of angels. Who are his friends, because they continually keep his will in their stability. They are also his neighbors, because they enjoy the brightness of his vision with their constant presence. And note that he does not say, Rejoice with the found sheep,

but Rejoice with me, because our life is his joy, and when we are led back to heaven, we fulfill the solemnity of his joy.

Luke 15:7

I tell you that there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just persons who do not need repentance. There will be more joy in heaven over converted sinners than over just persons standing still, because often those who know they are not oppressed by the weight of sins indeed stand in the path of righteousness, commit no unlawful deeds, yet do not long anxiously for the heavenly homeland. And they allow themselves to use lawful things as much as they remember not committing any unlawful acts, and often they remain sluggish in performing the foremost good deeds because they are very secure in that they have committed no grievous evils. But on the other hand, sometimes those who remember having committed some unlawful acts burn with love for God from their very sorrow, and strive in great virtues. There is therefore more joy in heaven over a converted sinner than over a standing just one, because even a leader in battle loves more the soldier who, after fleeing, returns and strikes the enemy bravely than the one who never turned his back and never did anything valiantly. But among these things, it must be known that there are many just ones in whose life there is so much joy that no repentance of sinners can in any way be placed before them.

For many are aware of no evil within themselves, and yet they exercise themselves in the affliction of such great fervor, as if they were anguished by all sins, reject even all lawful things, are sublimely girded for the contempt of the world, rejoice in lamentations, humble themselves in all ways; and just as some bewail the sins of their works, so these lament the sins of their thoughts. Hence it must be concluded how much joy it brings to God when the just humbly mourn, if it makes joy in heaven when the unjust condemns through repentance what he has wrongly committed.

Luke 15:8

Or what woman having ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and search diligently until she finds it? He who is signified by the shepherd, he also is signified by the woman. For He Himself is God, He Himself is the Wisdom of God. And because the image is expressed on the drachma, the woman lost the drachma when man, who had

been created in the image of God, by sinning departed from the likeness of his Creator. But the woman lights a lamp because the wisdom of God appeared in humanity. Indeed, the lamp is light in a vessel. The light in the vessel is divinity in flesh. When the lamp is lit, the house is swept, for as soon as His divinity shone through the flesh, our whole conscience was shaken. The house is swept when human conscience is disturbed by considering its own guilt; when the house is swept, the drachma is found, because as the conscience of man is disturbed, the likeness of the Creator is restored in man.

Luke 15: 9

And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost." Who are these friends and neighbors but those heavenly powers previously mentioned? They are as close to heavenly wisdom as they approach it by the grace of continuous vision. But it should be noted why this woman is said to have had ten drachmas. For the Lord created the nature of angels and men to know Him, and when He willed them to stand for eternity, He undoubtedly created them in His own likeness. The woman had ten drachmas because there are nine orders of angels, but to complete the number of the elect, man was created as the tenth, who did not perish from his Creator even after sin, because eternal Wisdom, dazzling with miracles in the flesh, restored him from the light in the vessel.

Luke 15:10

Thus, I say to you, there will be joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. To repent is both to lament the wrongs committed and to refrain from committing those that should be lamented. For he who laments some wrongs yet commits others still either does not know how or pretends to repent. For what does it profit if one mourns the sins of lust but still pants with the fires of avarice? Or what does it profit if one already laments the faults of anger yet still wastes away with the torches of envy? But it is much less than what we say, that he who laments his sins at least does not commit those that should be lamented. For it must be seriously considered that he who remembers he has committed unlawful acts should strive to abstain even from some lawful things, so that in this way he may make amends to

his Creator, that he who has committed forbidden acts should also cut off himself even from permissible ones.

Luke 15:12

He said: A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father: Give me a portion of the substance that falls to me. And he divided the substance to them. As the scribes and Pharisees murmured about the acceptance of sinners, the Savior set forth three parables in order, the first two of which, as discussed, suggest how much He Himself rejoices with the angels over the salvation of the penitent. The third, which follows, not only demonstrates His and His people's joy but also reproves the murmuring of the envious. The man who is said to have had two sons is understood as God the Father, the begetter of two peoples, and as the author and creator of the two branches of the human race. For the elder son signifies those who remained in the worship of one God; the younger, those who abandoned God up to idol worship. The portion of substance that falls to the younger son is the rational sense in man. For to live, to understand, to remember, to excel in keen ingenuity, is a gift of divine substance. The younger son seeks this from the father when man, delighted with his own power, sought to govern himself by free will and to shake off the dominion of the Creator. And He divided the substance to them, imparting to the faithful the protection of His grace, which they desired, and granting to the unfaithful only the benefit of natural wit, with which they were content.

Luke 15:13

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. He went far away, not by changing his location, but by changing his mind. For the more someone sins in wicked deeds, the further he withdraws from the grace of God. The fact that it is said he departed not many days after, having gathered all together, to a far country, means because not long after the establishment of the human race, it pleased the soul to carry with it by free will a certain power of its nature, and to abandon Him by whom it was created, presiding over its own strengths. These strengths it consumes the quicker, the more it abandons Him by whom they were given. Therefore, he calls this life prodigal, loving to squander and to spend prodigally on out-

ward shows, emptying itself within, when someone follows what proceeds from it, and leaves behind Him who is more interior to himself.

Luke 15:14

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country. All the things he wasted signify the adornments of nature which he consumed. The famine in the far country is the lack of the word of truth, in the forgetfulness of the Creator. Concerning which it is said in the prophets: Because the Lord will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8). [Luke 15:15] -- And he began to be in want, and went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. Rightly he began to be in want, who abandoned the treasures of the wisdom of God, the heights of heavenly riches. But a certain citizen of that country to whom the needy joined himself is surely he who, by the merit of his perversity, is set over earthly desires, called by the Lord the prince of this world. And of whom the Apostle says: The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving (2 Cor. 4).

Luke 15:15

And he sent him into his village to feed swine. To be sent to the village is to be subjected to the desire of worldly substance. Concerning which, in another parable, someone despising spiritual banquets to which he was invited, said: I have bought a village and I need to go out and see it (Luke XIV). But to feed swine is to perform those actions in which unclean spirits rejoice. [Luke 15:16] -- And he desired to fill his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. The husks with which he fed the swine are secular teachings, resonating with barren sweetness, from which praises of idols and myths to the gods of the nations slip through in various speech and songs, which delight demons. Hence, when he wished to be filled with these, he wanted to find something solid and true that pertained to the blessed life in such things, and he could not. For this is what he said:

Luke 15:16

And no one gave to him. But coming to himself, he said. Now, indeed, withdrawing his intention from those things which outwardly lure and deceive in vain, directing it back to the inner conscience. [Luke 15:17] -- He said: How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger. How could he know this, being in such great obli-

vion of God, as all idolaters were, unless because this recollection was already of one repenting, when the Gospel was preached? Therefore, the workers of the Father have bread aboundingly, because those who strive to perform deeds worthy with a view to future recompense are daily refreshed with the nourishment of divine grace. But truly, they perish with hunger who, placed outside the house of the Father, desire to fill their bellies with husks. That is, those who, living without end, seek a blessed life in the pursuits of vain philosophy. For just as bread, which strengthens man's heart, is likened to the word of God which refreshes the mind, so too the husk, which is internally empty and externally soft, and does not refresh the body but fills it, so that it is more a burden than a benefit, is not unreasonably compared to secular wisdom, whose language is sonorous with eloquence but empty of the power of usefulness.

Luke 15:18

I will arise and go to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. How merciful and compassionate a father he knew, who, not offended by his son, does not disdain to hear the word "father." I will arise, therefore, he says, because I have recognized that I lie down. And I will go, because I have departed far away. To my father, because I languish under the prince of swine with miserable destitution: I have sinned, however, against heaven, before the angelic spirits and holy souls, in whom the seat of God is signified. Before you truly, in the inner chamber of conscience, which the eyes of God alone could penetrate. [Luke 15:19] -- And I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants. Indeed, he does not dare to aspire to the affection of a son, who does not doubt that all things which are of the father are his own, but he desires the status of a hired servant, now willing to serve for a wage. Yet he testifies that he can merit even this only by paternal grace. Where then are the Pelagians, who trust that they can be saved by their own virtue, against the very clear sentence of truth which says: Without me, you can do nothing?

Luke 15:20

And rising up, he came to his father. To come to the father is to be established in the Church through faith, where legitimate and fruitful confession of sins already may exist. [Luke 15:20] -- Yet while he was still far off. And before he could understand God, but nevertheless while he already piously

sought Him. [Luke 15:20] -- His father saw him. For the impious and proud are fittingly said to not be seen, as if not held before the eyes. For someone held before the eyes is usually said to be one who is loved. [Luke 15:20] -- And he was moved with mercy, and running, fell on his neck. For the father did not desert the only-begotten Son, in whom he ran and descended even to our distant wandering. Because God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself (II Cor. V). And the Lord Himself said: The Father dwelling in me, He does the works (John XIV). What is it, then, to fall on his neck, but to incline and humble his arm in an embrace? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (John XII), which is indeed our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 15: 20

And he kissed him. To be consoled by the word of God's grace unto the hope of the forgiveness of sins, that is, after long journeys remaining, to merit the kiss of charity from the father.

Luke 15: 21

And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Now he begins, established in the Church, to confess his sins, and he does not say all he had promised to say, but only up to this: I am not worthy to be called your son. For he desires to become through grace what he confesses himself unworthy to be through merits. He did not add what he had said in that meditation: Make me like one of your hired servants. For when he lacked bread, he even desired to be a hired servant. Which, after his father's kiss, he most generously now disdains. For he understands that there is no small distinction between a son, a hired servant, and a slave. Namely, a slave is one who still, through fear of hell or the presence of laws, abstains from vices; a hired servant, who by hope and desire for the kingdom of heaven; a son, by affection for goodness itself and love of virtues. In the consummation of these three virtues, the blessed Apostle, summarizing all salvation, says: Now, he says, faith, hope, and charity remain, these three. But the greatest of these is charity. For faith is that which, through fear of future judgment and punishments, causes one to turn away from the contamination of vices. Hope, which calling our mind away from present things, by the expectation of heavenly rewards, despises all pleasures of the body.

Charity, which lighting us up with the ardor of the mind towards the death of Christ and the fruit of spiritual virtues, makes us detest with complete hatred whatever is contrary to them. Therefore, the prodigal, after coming to his senses, feared the punishments of dire famine, and as if now made a slave, even thinking of the state of a hired servant from the reward, desires it. But the father, running to meet him, not content with granting lesser things, hastily passing through both stages, restores him to the former dignity of sons, and now makes him think not of the reward of a hireling, but of the inheritance of a parent.

Luke 15: 22

And the father said to his servants: Quickly bring the first robe, and put it on him. The first robe is the garment of innocence, which man, well created, received but lost when poorly persuaded, when after the fault of transgression he recognized himself to be naked, and with the glory of immortality lost, he took on the skin, that is, a mortal garment. The servants who bring it are the preachers of reconciliation. For they bring forth the first robe when they assure mortal and earthly men that they will be elevated, so that they may not only be citizens of angels but also heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. [Luke 15:22] -- And put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. The ring is either the seal of sincere faith, by which all promises are inscribed with a certain impression in the hearts of believers, or the pledge of those nuptials by which the Church is espoused. And it is well that the ring is given on the hand so that faith may shine through works, and works may be strengthened by faith. But shoes on the feet announce the duty of evangelizing, so that the course of the mind tending to celestial things, may be preserved and kept clean from the contagion of earthly matters, and fortified by the examples of the former ones, may safely tread upon serpents and scorpions. Therefore, the hands and feet, that is, the work and the course, are adorned. The work so that we may live rightly; the course, so that we may hasten to eternal joys. For we do not have a lasting city here, but we seek the one to come (Hebrews 13).

Luke 15: 23

And bring the fattened calf and kill it. The fattened calf is likewise the Lord, but according to the flesh. And well fattened, because his flesh is so richly endowed with spiritual virtue that it suffices for the salvation of the whole

world to send forth a sweet odor, namely the aroma of sacrifice, to God, and to intercede for all. However, to bring the calf and kill it is to preach Christ and to intimate his death. Then indeed it is as if he is freshly killed for each one of us when we believe he was killed. Then his flesh is eaten when the sacrament of his passion is received by the mouth for cleansing, and thought of by the heart for imitation. And let us eat and celebrate, because this my son was dead and has come to life again, he was lost and has been found. Not only the son who comes to life and is found again, but even the father and his servants, are feasted on the sacred flesh of the calf that was slain for the son, because the father's food is our salvation, and the father's joy is the remission of our sins. Nor is it only that of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For just as there is one will and operation in the divinity, so too there is one delight of the holy and undivided Trinity.

Hence blessed Abraham, receiving three angels as guests, is recorded to have slain a most tender and best calf, and offered it to them to feast with milk, bread, and butter. Because whoever desires to refresh the blessed Trinity with the services of right devotion, that is, to gladden it, ought also to celebrate with the sincerity of a pious confession the death of the only-begotten Son of God in the flesh, who is one person in the same Trinity. And it is to be noted that before the first robe, before the ring, before the shoes are granted, thus afterward the calf is sacrificed, because unless each person puts on the hope of the first immortality, unless he fortifies himself with the works of faith with a ring, unless he preaches the same faith by piously confessing it, he cannot partake in the heavenly Sacraments.

Luke 15:24

And they began to celebrate. These feasts and festivities are now celebrated, extended and spread throughout the world by the Church. For indeed that calf is offered in the body and blood of the Lord, both to the Father, and it feeds the whole household. [Luke 15:25] -- But his elder son was in the field. The elder son is the people of Israel who, although he did not go into the distant land, is said not to have stayed at home, but in the field, because the same people neither forsook the Creator to the point of worshipping idols, nor penetrated into the depths of the law they had received, but content with merely the letter of the law, they were accustomed both to work and hope for outward and earthly things, hearing through the prophet: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1).

Luke 15: 25

And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. The son draws near to the house when those more considerate among the Israelites (for many such were found among them, and often are found) condemn the labor of servile works and from the same Scriptures consider the freedom of the Church. He hears music and dancing, that is, those filled with the Spirit preaching the Gospel with harmonious voices, to whom it was said: "I beseech you, brethren, that you all speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1), and of those living in harmony, being of one soul and heart in the praises of God. [Luke 15:26] -- And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him. He calls one of the servants when he takes up to read one of the prophets, and inquiring in this way asks whence these things celebrated in the Church come, in which he does not see himself. Let the servant of the father, the prophet, answer him:

Luke 15: 27

Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he received him safe and sound. Your brother was in the ends of the earth, but from there greater joy comes from those singing a new song to the Lord, for his praise from the ends of the earth (Ps. 47). And for him who was absent, that one was sacrificed to whom it was said: "And may your burnt offering be fat" (Ps. 19). [Luke 15:28] -- But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. He is still indignant and does not want to go in. Therefore, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, his father will go out at the appropriate time, so that all Israel may be saved, from whose part blindness has happened, like an absence in the field, until the fullness of the younger son, far off in the idolatry of the Gentiles, returns to enter and eat the calf. For there will indeed be an open calling of the Jews in the salvation of the Gospel. He calls this manifestation of the calling, as the father's going out to plead with the elder son.

Luke 15: 29

But he, answering, said to his father: Behold, all these years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command. The question arises how that people could be said to have never disobeyed God's command. But it is easily resolved that this was not said about every command, but about the one most necessary, by which they were commanded to worship no other God. Neither

should this son be understood as representing all Israelites, but those who have never turned from the one God to idols. For although this son, placed as if in a field, desired earthly things, he desired these goods from the one God. This is also confirmed by the testimony of his father when he says: You are always with me. For he does not refute him as if he were lying, but approving his perseverance with him, invites him to the enjoyment of a greater and more delightful celebration.

Luke 15:29

And you never gave me a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. Certainly, a sinner is usually signified by the name of the young goat, but far be it from me to understand the Antichrist. For it is quite absurd that it is said to him. You are always with me, having wished this from the father, that he would believe in the Antichrist. Nor is it at all proper to understand this son in the people of the Jews, who are going to believe in the Antichrist. But how would he feast from that goat if he himself is the Antichrist, who would not believe in him? Or if this is to feast from the slaughter of the goat, which is to rejoice at the destruction of the Antichrist, how does the son, whom the father receives, say that this was not granted to him, when all the sons of God are going to rejoice at the damnation of that adversary? Surely, therefore, he complains that the Lord Himself is denied to him for joining, while he considers Him a sinner. For when the goat is of that nation, that is, when he considers Him a violator of the Sabbath and a transgressor of the law, he did not deserve to rejoice in His feasts. So that what he says: You never gave me a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends, is as if he were saying, him who seemed a goat to me, you never gave me to feast upon, thus denying me him himself by that very thing by which he seemed a goat to me. But what he says, With my friends, either it is understood from the perspective of the leaders, with the people, or from the perspective of the people of Jerusalem, with the other peoples of Judea.

Luke 15:30

But after your son, this one who has devoured his wealth with prostitutes comes, you killed the fattened calf for him. The prostitutes are the superstitions of the Gentiles, with whom to dissipate wealth is, having forsaken the single union of the word of God, to commit fornication with the crowd of demons with the most shameful desire.

Luke 15: 31

But he said to him: Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But it was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. When he says: And all that is mine is yours, it should not be thought that this implies that they are not also the brother's, as if you were to suffer anxieties in an earthly inheritance. How could everything be the older's if the younger also has his own share? For indeed, everything belongs to the perfect and fully purified and now immortal children in such a way that all things belong to each one, and each one to all. For just as desire holds nothing without anxiety, so charity holds nothing with anxiety. Therefore, when we attain that blessedness, the superior things will be ours to live by, the equal things ours for companionship, the inferior things ours to rule over. But if anyone is troubled as to how, in supplicating the Father, the truth says: And all mine are yours, and yours mine, which seems very similar to what is said to this son: And all that is mine is yours, let him know that all that belongs to the Father belongs to the only-begotten Son, because he is also God, and being born of the Father, he is equal to the Father. For even what he says concerning the Holy Spirit:

All things that the Father has are mine, therefore I said that he will take of mine and declare it to you, he spoke of those things that pertain to the very divinity of the Father, in which he is equal to the Father, possessing all that the Father possesses. For the Holy Spirit was not to take something from the creature that is subject to the Father and the Son when he said: He will take of mine, but certainly from the Father from whom the Spirit proceeds and from whom the Son is born. Whether therefore these two sons should be referred to the two peoples, or as some prefer to any two individuals, namely the penitent and the just, or one who seems just to himself, let the older brother rejoice, for the younger brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

BOOK FIVE. LEGE FELIX PROEM. After rebuking those who murmured about the reception of sinners, or rather penitents, who seemed just to themselves, with three continuous parables, previously discussed, the Savior refuted them, teaching that the salvation of the repentant is indeed most pleasing to God and angels, but most grievous to envious men, soon adding a fourth and fifth parable about giving alms and following frugality, showing with pious and just discretion that those who distribute worldly goods to the

poor will be received into eternal dwellings by them. However, those who desire to luxuriate alone in these things will be buried in hell and will not even obtain the slightest drop of water that might cool the perpetual burning torments even for a moment. For indeed the order of preaching is most fitting, that after repentance, alms, that is, the work of mercy, should be suggested. For he who repents rightly obtains mercy from God by being merciful himself as much as he can to the needy neighbor without delay. But he who turns away his ear not to hear the poor, his prayer will be abominable. Wherefore, when John the Baptist persuaded the crowds that they should not be thrown into fire due to their barrenness, he immediately added the counsel of salvation to those seeking it, and said: "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise" (Luke 3). And these same Pharisees and scribes, languishing no less from the plague of avarice than pride, denied both forgiveness to the repentant and money to the needy. However, he who wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2) now continuously bestows his customary gifts of kindness both by speaking to them and, in their hearing, to his disciples. But let us come to the text.

CHAPTER 16

Luke 16:1–4

He also said to his disciples: There was a rich man who had a steward, and this one was accused before him of wasting his goods. And he called him and said to him: What is this that I hear about you? Render an account of your stewardship, for you cannot be steward any longer. Then the steward said to himself: What shall I do? For my lord is taking away the stewardship from me. I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. In this steward whom the Lord cast out from his stewardship and praised him for having looked out for himself in the future, we ought not to take everything for imitation. For we should not in any way deceive our Lord, so as to make alms from this very deception, nor should we consider those, by whom we wish to be received into the eternal tabernacles, to be debtors of God and our Lord, since it is understood in this place that the just and the holy will introduce those into the everlasting tabernacles who have shared their earthly goods with their needs. Of these also He says

that whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of them in the name of a disciple, will not lose his reward (Matthew X).

But these parables are also contrary, so that we may understand if the one who committed fraud could be praised by the Lord, how much more will those who do works according to His command please the Lord God. Just as He also made a comparison with the unjust judge who was appealed to by the widow, to the Judge God, to whom in no way could the unjust judge be compared. By the term steward, we call those who have money, no longer masters of their own, but rather dispensers of another's property. If they, following the example of this servant, foresee the time of the end of stewardship and the rendering of accounts diligently, easily stripped of all delight and love for earthly things, will take care to gather more friends for themselves in the future than riches in the present. He, anxiously pondering many things to himself, said: What shall I do? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. For once stewardship is taken away, we cannot dig, because, with this life ended, in which only we are permitted to work, we are no longer able to seek the fruit of good conversation, with the spade of devoted compunction. To beg is shameful. Namely, with that worst kind of begging, in which those foolish virgins were said to have begged, who, when the time of the weddings came, and the oil of virtues was lacking, said to the wise:

Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out (Matthew XXV). And of which Solomon says: Because of the cold, the sluggard would not plough, therefore he shall beg during the harvest, and it shall not be given to him (Proverbs XX).

Luke 16:5

Then, having called each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much do you owe my lord? And he said: A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him: Take your bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And you, how much do you owe? Who said: A hundred measures of wheat. And he said to him: Take your bill, and write eighty. A measure is a Greek amphora, containing three urns. A "corus" comprises thirty modii. Now, as to having the debtor write fifty out of a hundred measures of oil, and eighty out of a hundred measures of wheat, I think it means nothing else but that whatever a Jew did for priests and Levites should abound in righteousness in the Church of Christ beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, so that whereas they gave tithes, these should give half, as Zac-

chaeus did not only from his fruits but from his very goods. Or certainly doubling the tithes, so that by giving two tithes, they exceed the expenses of the Jews. Unless perhaps someone thinks simply that every person who alleviates the indigence of any poor saint, either by half, or certainly by one-fifth, as twenty or fifty to a hundred, will be granted a sure reward of their mercy.

Luke 16:8

And the lord praised the unjust steward because he had acted prudently. For the children of this age are wiser than the children of light in their generation. Let the wise of this world hear, that they may abandon foolish wisdom and learn the wisdom of God's foolishness, how greatly divine equity has valued their wisdom, whom He remembers not as truly wise, but wise in their generation. As it is said elsewhere: Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight (Isaiah 5). And also, by calling the lovers of eternal life children of light, He reproves those who are wise to do evil but know not how to do good as being children of darkness. The children of light and the children of this age are so called, just as the children of the kingdom and the children of perdition. For each one is named a child of that of which he performs the works.

Luke 16:9

And I say to you: Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. He calls this money which we possess temporarily "unrighteous mammon" because mammon is interpreted to mean riches. And these are riches only for the unjust, who place their hope and abundance of happiness in them. But for the righteous, when they possess these, it is simply money, but they are not riches for them, except heavenly and spiritual. By fulfilling their spiritual need with these, excluding the destitution of the needy, they will be enriched with the abundance of happiness. But if those who give alms from unrighteous mammon make friends for themselves by whom they may be received into the eternal dwellings, how much more should those who distribute spiritual feasts, who give their fellow servants food at the appropriate time, be raised with the most certain hope of the highest reward?

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful in little is also faithful in much. And he who is dishonest in little is also dishonest in much. There are those who, ignorant of the

bowels of compassion and works of mercy owed to their neighbors, nonetheless rightly consider themselves faithful in chastity, vigils, prolonged prayer, full faith, fasting, and other virtues which the love of God tends to produce. But, as the judge himself attests, he who is faithful in little, that is, in sharing money with the poor, is also faithful in much, namely, in that act by which he desires particularly to adhere to the Creator, and become one spirit with Him. But he who neglects to rightly dispense the temporal things he possesses, empties the glory of the eternal which he boasts of for himself. For how can he who does not love his brother whom he sees love God whom he does not see (1 John IV)? And as the same says: If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him (1 John XIII)?

Luke 16:12

If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you what is your own? It has been previously explained that unrighteous mammon signifies the riches of the wicked. Regarding which, the Savior elsewhere says the deceitfulness of riches chokes the word (Matthew XIII). But true riches, either the very joys of eternal life, of which it is written: What is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Ephesians I), or the abundance of spiritual virtues, by which one attains life. Of which Isaiah says: The riches of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear of the Lord, that is his treasure (Isaiah XXXIII). [Luke 16:12] -- And if you have not been faithful in what is another's, who will give you what is your own? The resources of this world are alien to us, meaning, situated outside of our nature. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we cannot take anything out of it. But our possession is the kingdom of heaven. Our life is Christ. Our wealth is the fruits of spiritual works. Of which Solomon says: The redemption of a man's soul is his own wealth (Proverbs XIII). Therefore, he reproaches the Pharisees for fraud and avarice, who, since they were not faithful in their resources, preferring to have the Creator's common goods privately, did not deserve to receive Christ, whom that publican, Zacchaeus, who I mentioned a little earlier, offered half of his goods so he might acquire.

Luke 16:13

No servant can serve two masters. Because it is not possible to love both transitory and eternal things at the same time. For if we love eternity, we possess all temporal things in use, not in affection. [Luke 16:13] -- For either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. These words must be carefully considered. For who these two masters are, he subsequently explains by saying: [Luke 16:13] -- You cannot serve God and mammon. Let the greedy hear this, let him who is called by the name Christian hear that it is not possible to serve mammon, that is, riches, and Christ simultaneously. And yet he did not say: He who has riches, but he who serves riches. For he who is a servant of riches, keeps riches as a servant. But he who has cast off the yoke of servitude, distributes them as a master. But he who serves mammon, surely serves him who is rightfully set over these earthly things due to his own perversity, called the prince of this world by the Lord. Therefore, one will either hate the one and love the other, as it should happen. He will hate, of course, the devil, and love God. Or he will hold to the one and despise the other. He will cling, of course, to the devil when he pursues his temporal rewards. However, he will despise God—not that he will hate, but as those who usually put off His threats for their own desires, who flatter themselves with impunity because of His goodness. To whom it is said through Solomon: "My son, do not add sin upon sin, and say, 'The mercy of God is great'" (Eccl. V).

Luke 6:14

But all these things were being heard by the Pharisees, who were greedy and derided him. The Lord was indeed admonishing the scribes and Pharisees, not to think highly of themselves, not to presume on their own righteousness, but to receive sinners and publicans who repent, and to redeem by alms their sins which might incidentally appear; but they derided the teacher of mercy, humility, and frugality for two main reasons. Because, forsooth, either he commanded less useful things, never to be performed as if he were giving harmful orders, or certainly useful things, but being superfluous brought forward what they had already done. [Luke 16:15] -- And he said to them: You are those who justify yourselves before men. But God knows your hearts, for what is exalted among men is an abomination before God. They justify themselves before men, who indeed despise sinners as if they were in-

firm and hopeless, but consider themselves as perfect in everything and without any weakness, not believing that they have need of the remedy of alms. But this height of noxious pride, how justly it is to be condemned, is seen by Him who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and manifest the counsels of hearts.

Luke 16:16

The law and the prophets were until John; since then the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces their way into it. The Pharisees, who loved money, mocked the Savior disputing against avarice, as if He commanded things contrary to the law and the prophets, where many and very rich were read to have existed and yet to have been pleasing to God. But even Moses, if he followed the law, promised the people he governed an abundance of all the good things the earth produces, while if they neglected it, he predicted they would be struck by plague, famine, poverty, and all evils. To this He responded, showing that between the law and the Gospel, just as with promises, so too with commandments, there should be no small difference; and indeed greater ones for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, but lesser ones for the sake of the kingdom of earth, are commanded by the same one God who made heaven and earth. For there it is said: If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land (Isaiah 1). But here: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5). Therefore, appropriately, when he said the kingdom of God is preached, he added: and everyone forces their way into it. For it is a great force and a significant violence for us, born of the earth, to seek the seat of heaven, to want to possess through virtue what we could not hold by nature, and not only to despise earthly things but also the tongues of those mocking us for seeking such things. This indeed he added when he was mocked by the Pharisees for speaking of despising riches.

Luke 16:17

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to become void. Lest they think that in what he said, "The law and the prophets were until John," he was proclaiming the destruction of the law or the prophets, he clearly declares that the greatest elements of the world will pass more easily than the smallest words of the law. And indeed: for the figure of this world passes away (1 Cor. 7). And elsewhere: "We look for new heavens

and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells, according to his promise" (2 Pet. 3). Yet not even the smallest stroke of a letter, that is, not even the smallest and seemingly trivial or superstitious things, are devoid of spiritual significance, as all things are summed up in the Gospel. And yet the law and the prophets were until John, because it could not be prophesied what was already clear had come through John's proclamation.

Luke 16:18

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. What he foretold concerning the law that must never be violated, he confirms with one example taken from it, so that from this one example they may learn that he came not to abolish but to fulfill the decrees of the law. For a fuller exposition of this testimony, let anyone who desires to see it search not our works, but the writings of the greater authorities. For the most blessed fathers, Augustine in the first book of "On the Sermon on the Mount," Jerome, and Ambrose in their commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and indeed many others in their various works have more than sufficiently discussed it.

Luke 16:19

A certain man was rich and was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. Few doubt that purple is the color of royal attire, dyed from marine shells. For shells, when cut with iron, emit tears of purple color, with which wool is dyed. But byssus, indeed, is a type of flax, exceedingly white and very soft, which the Greeks call πάπατιν. Therefore, the Lord had advised to make friends from the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail from this life, they may receive us into the eternal tabernacles: the Pharisees, hearing this, mocked. But he, supporting what he proposed with examples, showed that the rich man clothed in purple was tormented irredeemably in the infernal regions because he neglected to make an ally of the poor Lazarus, who might have received him into the tabernacles of life. Some, however, think that the precepts of the Old Testament are stricter than those of the New, but these indeed are surely deceived by inconsiderate reflection. For in that one, not holding nothing but rapine is penalized, where an unjustly taken thing is punished by a quadruple restitution, here indeed this rich man is not faulted for having taken from others but for not

giving his own; nor is it said that he oppressed anyone, but because he elevated himself in the possessions received.

Hence, thus, it must be gathered with great earnest what punishment one who rips from others deserves, if he is struck with damnation of hell, who does not share his own. And there are some who do not think it sinful to wear fine and precious garments; which evidently if it were not a fault, the Word of God would by no means express so vigilantly that the rich man who is tormented in the infernal regions was clothed in byssus and purple. For no one seeks fine garments unless for vain glory, evidently to seem more honorable than others. This fault we can better perceive in contrast, for if the rejection of humble clothing were not a virtue, the evangelist would not have vigilantly mentioned concerning John: He was clothed with camel's hair (Matt. III). But it should be greatly noted by us, in the mouth of Truth concerning the proud rich man and the humble poor man, how great the order of the narrative is. Behold, indeed it is said: A certain man was rich. And immediately it is added:

Luke 16:20

And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus. Certainly in the populace it is more common for the names of the rich rather than the poor to be known. Why is it then that the Lord, when making a parable about a poor man and a rich man, mentions the name of the poor man, but does not mention the name of the rich man, except that God knows the humble and approves of them, and disregards the proud? Hence, to some who pride themselves on their miraculous powers, He will say in the end: "I do not know where you are from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity" (Luke XIII). But to Moses, it is said: "I know you by name" (Exodus XXXIII). Therefore, He says about the rich man: A certain man. About the poor man, He says: A beggar named Lazarus. As if He were clearly saying: I know the humble poor man, I do not know the proud rich man. I acknowledge him through approval, but I do not recognize the latter through the judgment of reprobation.

Luke 16:21

He who lay at his gate full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover even the dogs came and licked his sores. The beggar Lazarus, full of sores, lies at the gate of the rich man. Con-

cerning this matter the Lord accomplished two judgments at once. For the rich man might perhaps have had some excuse if the poor and sore-covered Lazarus had not lain at his gate, if he had been removed, if his poverty had not been obtrusive to his eyes. Again, if the rich man had been far away from the eyes of the sore-covered poor man, the temptation would have been less for the poor man in spirit. But while he placed the needy and sore-covered man at the gate of the rich man who abounded in delights, in the same situation he brought about the punishment of the indifferent rich man from the sight of the poor man, and again proved the poor man tested daily from the sight of the rich man. For certainly, poverty alone might have sufficed for his punishment, even if he had been healthy. Again, sickness might have sufficed, even if succor had been present. But to test the poor man further, both poverty and sickness crippled him, and moreover, he saw the rich man proceeding, supported by a train of attendants, while he was visited by no one in his infirmity and need. For that no one was there to visit him, the dogs testify, who freely licked his wounds. Therefore from one situation, Almighty God exhibited two judgments, while He allowed Lazarus, the poor man, to lie at the gate of the rich man, so that the impious rich man might increase his punishment and the tested poor man might grow toward his reward.

Luke 16:22

And it came to pass that the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died, and was buried in hell. Abraham's bosom is the rest of the blessed poor, of whom is the kingdom of heaven, to which they are received after this life. The burial of hell is the depth of the torments that devour the proud and merciless after this life.

Luke 16:23–24

But lifting up his eyes while he was in torment, he saw Abraham from afar and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried out, saying, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." Oh, how subtle are the judgments of God, oh, how strictly is the retribution of good and evil deeds carried out! Certainly, it was said earlier that in this life Lazarus was looking for the crumbs falling from the rich man's table, and no one gave them to him; now it is said of the rich man that from his punishment, he

desires water to be dripped from Lazarus's fingertip into his mouth. He who was unwilling to give even the smallest from his table has reached the point of seeking the smallest in hell. But it is very noteworthy what it is that the rich man, placed in the fire, requests his tongue to be cooled. For it is the custom of holy speech sometimes to say one thing but imply another from that very saying. Moreover, previously the Lord did not describe this arrogant rich man as indulging in loquacity, but as feasting superfluously. He did not narrate this about him due to loquacity but for having sinned with pride, tenacity, and gluttony. But because loquacity usually abounds at feasts, he who is here said to have feasted badly is reported to suffer more grievously in his tongue in hell. But with great fear, it must be considered what follows.

Luke 16:25

And Abraham said to him, "Son, remember that you received good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus likewise bad things. But now he is comforted here, and you are tormented." Behold, when it is said, "You received good things in your lifetime," it is indicated that this rich man had some kind of good from which he received good things in this life. Again, when it is said about Lazarus that he received bad things, it clearly shows that Lazarus had some kind of evil that needed purification. But the poverty burned away Lazarus's evils, and the happiness of passing life rewarded the goods of the rich man.

Luke 16:26

And in all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who would pass from here to you cannot, nor from there can they cross over to us. In this context, it is very much to be asked how it is said: Those who would pass to you cannot. For it is not doubtful that those who are in hell desire to pass to the lot of the blessed. But how is it said that those who have already been received into the lot of blessedness desire to pass to those who are tormented in hell? But just as the reprobates wish to pass to the elect, that is, to migrate from the affliction of their punishments, so the just, out of mercy, wish to go in mind to the afflicted and those placed in torments and to desire to free them. But those who desire to pass from the seat of the blessed to the afflicted and those placed in torments cannot, because the souls of the just, although they have mercy by the goodness of their nature, already bound by the justice of their Creator with such righteousness

that they are moved by no compassion towards the reprobates. But after hope is taken away from the burning rich man, his mind turns to the relatives he had left behind, because the punishment of the reprobates' souls sometimes trains them uselessly into charity, so that even then they spiritually love their own, who here, while they loved sins, did not even love themselves. Therefore, it now follows:

Luke 16:27

And he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house; for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." In this matter, it is to be noted how many signs of punishment are accumulated for the burning rich man. For to his punishment, both knowledge and memory are preserved. For he recognizes Lazarus whom he despised, and remembers also his brothers whom he left behind. Indeed, perfect vengeance for him would not be, if he did not recognize him in retribution. And perfect punishment in the fire would not be, if he did not fear the same for his own. Therefore, that sinners may be punished more in torment, they both see the glory of those whom they despised and are tormented by the punishment of those whom they loved in vain. But it is to be believed that before the retribution of the final judgment, the unjust in their rest behold some of the just, so that seeing them in joy, they are tormented not only by their own suffering but also by the good fortune of the others. The just, however, always look upon the unjust in torment, so that their joy is increased by seeing the evil which they mercifully escaped, and they render greater thanks to their Deliverer, as they more clearly see in others what they themselves could have suffered if they had been neglected. For those who see the glory of their Creator, nothing is done in creation that they cannot see.

Luke 16:29

And Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." But he who had despised the words of God thought that his followers could not hear this. Wherefore the rich man replied: [Luke 16:30] -- "No, father Abraham, but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." To whom it was immediately answered with a true sentence:

Luke 16:31

If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. For indeed, those who despise the words of the law will, by far, more hardly accomplish the commands of the Redeemer who has risen from the dead, as much as they are more subtle. And indeed it is apparent that those who refuse to fulfill His words, undoubtedly refuse to believe in Him. Who, according to the allegory, does this rich man signify, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day, if not the Jewish people, who outwardly had the worship of life, who used the delights of the law received to shine, not to be useful? And who does Lazarus, full of sores, signify if not the Gentile people figuratively expressed? Who, when converted to God, was not ashamed to confess his sins, this one had wounds on his skin. Indeed, in a wound of the skin, the poison is drawn from the inner parts and erupts outwardly. What, then, is the confession of sins, but a certain breaking of wounds? Because the poison of sin is healthily revealed in confession, which was pestilently hidden in the mind.

But Lazarus, wounded, desired to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one gave him any, for that proud people despised admitting any Gentile to the knowledge of the law, who, inasmuch as they did not have the teaching of the law for charity but for pride, feared, as it were, losing their accepted wealth, and because words flowed down from their knowledge, as it were, crumbs fell from their table. On the other hand, the dogs licked the wounds of the lying poor man. Sometimes in the sacred word, preachers are understood by the dogs. For indeed the tongue of the dogs, while it licks the wound, heals it because the holy teachers, while they instruct us in the confession of our sins, they, as it were, touch the wound of the mind with their tongue. And because they deliver us from sins by speaking, they, as it were, bring back the wounds to health by touching them. Hence it is well that Lazarus means 'assisted' because they help him to be delivered, who heal his wounds by the correction of the tongue. It happened that both of them died: the rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, was buried in hell, but Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. What does Abraham's bosom signify, if not the secret rest of the Father? about which the Truth says:

Many will come from the east and west and recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of this kingdom will

be cast out into the outer darkness (Matt. 8). For he who is said to be clad in purple is rightly called the son of the kingdom. He lifts up his eyes from afar to see Lazarus because, while they are in the depths of their punishment for their damnation, the unbelievers, they look up at the faithful in rest before the day of final judgment, whom they can never behold after their joy. What they see is far off because they do not reach it through any merit. He is shown to burn more intensely in his tongue when he says: Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame. The unbelieving people held the words of the law in their mouth, which they contemned to keep by action. Therefore, he will burn more where he showed he knew what he refused to do. He desires to be touched by the tip of the finger because he wishes, while given to eternal punishment, to partake even a little in the action of the just. To whom it is answered that he received good things in his life because he thought all his joy was in transitory happiness.

Indeed, the just may have good things here, but they do not receive these in recompense, because while they seek better, that is, eternal things, however many good things may present themselves, with holy desires they yearn for, the good things are scarcely seen. Among these, it is noteworthy that it is said to him: Remember, son. Behold, Abraham calls him son whom he does not free from torment, because the preceding faithful fathers of these unbelieving people, as they observe many swayed from their faith, do not deliver them from torments by any compassion, whom they nevertheless recognize as sons through the flesh. In torment, the rich man is said to have five brothers, for the same proud Jewish people who are already in great part condemned know those whom they left on earth, addicted to the five bodily senses. Therefore, he expresses the brothers he left by the number five because, while in hell, he laments that they do not rise to spiritual understanding. He asks for Lazarus to be sent to them, to whom it is said that they have Moses and the prophets. But he says that they do not believe unless someone rises from the dead. To this, it is immediately responded: If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone rises from the dead. Certainly, the truth says about Moses: If you believed Moses, you would believe me also. For he wrote of me (John 5).

It is thus fulfilled what is said through the response of Abraham. For the Lord rose from the dead, but the Jewish people, because they did not want to

believe Moses, even disdained to believe Him who rose from the dead; and as they declined to understand the words of Moses spiritually, they did not come to Him about whom Moses spoke.

CHAPTER 17

Luke 17:1

And he said to his disciples: It is impossible that scandals should not come, but woe to him through whom they come. The Apostle also says: There must be heresies, that those who are approved may be made manifest among you. It is therefore impossible in this world, so full of errors and afflictions, that scandals will not come very often; but woe to him who, by his fault, causes what is inevitable to come through him. Although some false brother or Judas himself, who was preparing his mind for betrayal, may be understood here by the general sense, this passage yet looks back to the previous context, where the Lord, speaking about giving alms, is mocked by the Pharisees. For he who reproaches one speaking rightly certainly provides a scandal, that is, a stumbling block and ruin to weak listeners, especially if he, like the Pharisees, appears to possess knowledge of the law. Rebuking whom, the Apostle says: And the weak brother perishes by your knowledge, for whom Christ died (I Cor. VIII).

Luke 17:2

It is better for him that a millstone be placed around his neck and he be cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. He speaks according to the custom of the province, by which this punishment was for greater crimes among the ancient Jews, that they be drowned with a stone tied to them in the depths. And indeed it is better for the innocent to end their bodily life with a punishment, however atrocious, than to deserve the eternal death of the soul by harming a brother. Rightly, however, one who can be scandalized is called little. For he who is great, whatever he sees, whatever he suffers, does not turn away from the faith. But he who is small in spirit and little, seeks opportunities to be scandalized. Therefore, it is most appropriate for us to consider those who are small in faith, that they not be offended by anything of ours, and leave the faith, and fall from salvation. It is indeed to be noted that in our good work sometimes we must avoid scandalizing our neighbor, but at other times, it must be contemptuously disregarded. Insofar as we can without sin, we must avoid scandalizing our neigh-

bors. But if a scandal arises from the truth, it is better to permit the scandal to arise than to forsake the truth.

Luke 17:3

Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. We read something similar in Leviticus: You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of him (Lev. 19). He therefore shows the order in which we can avoid scandals and escape eternal woe: if we take care not to offend anyone, if we rebuke the sinner with the zeal of justice, if we open the bowels of mercy and compassion to the penitent. Here it must be carefully noted that we are commanded not to forgive indiscriminately but to forgive the one who repents. And first, indeed, to rebuke the sinner with mercy, so that we may justly have someone to forgive afterwards. Therefore, whoever sees his brother sin and remains silent is no less a transgressor of the Lord's command than he who refuses to grant pardon to the penitent. For he who said, If he repents, forgive, preceded it with, If he sins, rebuke. Therefore, mercy on a brother is to be granted after rebuke, but certainly to the one who turns away from error by repenting, lest forgiveness be either too difficult or indulgence too lax.

Luke 17:4

And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns back to you, saying: I repent, forgive him. The number seven does not set a limit for granting forgiveness, but either commands that all sins should be forgiven, or that the one repenting should always be forgiven. For often the universality of any matter or time is indicated by the number seven. Hence it is sung in the psalm: Seven times a day I have praised you (Psalm 119), which means nothing other than His praise is always in my mouth (Psalm 34). For elsewhere too, when Peter asked how many times he should forgive a brother sinning against him, and he said up to seven times, the Lord replied: I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven (Matthew 18), that is, four hundred and ninety times. So you should forgive your brother sinning that many times in a day, as he could not sin that many times. Therefore, if a brother sins against you and repents, you have the power, indeed the necessity, to forgive him, so that the Father who is in heaven may also forgive you when you repent and ask for mercy. But if he, having been reprimanded, neglects to convert and to do penance, consider what the judgment of

truth decrees about this. If your brother sins against you, go and correct him, and so on, up to where he says:

If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. And deservedly so, because under the name of the faithful he performed the works of the unfaithful. Certainly, we are commanded to give forgiveness differently to a brother who asks for it and differently to an enemy who persecutes. To the former, so that, having received forgiveness for the sin by which he harmed us innocents, he may join us in communal charity; to the latter, that while he wishes evil upon us and, if possible, does it, we may always wish and do good to him as far as we can. For David could not extend the same measure of forgiveness to his persecutors, deprived of the remedy of penance and despite compassionately mourning for them, as Joseph kindly and recognizably extended to his brothers, corrected with salutary contrition.

Luke 17:5

The apostles said to the Lord: Increase our faith. The Lord had said earlier: He who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much. And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? And so the apostles, who were already faithful in what is another's and in the very little, that is, in the contempt of earthly things, ask that faith be increased in what is their own and in what is greater. For no one becomes supreme suddenly, but in good conduct each one begins with little things, so that he may reach great things. For the beginnings of virtue are one thing, its progress another, its perfection yet another. Hence, earnestly seeking, they say to the Lord: Increase our faith.

Luke 17:6

The Lord said: If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree: Be uprooted, and be transplanted into the sea, and it would obey you. He compares perfect faith to a grain of mustard seed, which is indeed humble to the face and fervent in the heart, seen as vile to those looking upon it everywhere and appearing to have no strength, but when pressed it shows what perfection it carries inside. It should also be noted that a grain of mustard serves very beneficially for the purgation of the head. For if you thoroughly grind it and sift it with tepid fatty honey, and gargle with it fasting under the warm sun or in the bath, it purges all harmful moisture

from the head even if it is quite thick, and it prevents imminent weaknesses from arising. Thus indeed, faith tested by the pestle of temptations, sifted through the sieve of discernment from all the surface of light thoughts, and sweetened with the honey of perfect love, not only exhausts all vices from the heart, which is the head of our inner man, but it also prevents them from being able to gather in the future. And the mulberry tree to be uprooted and transplanted into the sea, or simply placed, can be understood because it evidently is a sign of consummate faith commanding the elements with a word, so that what was said of one thing in particular is believed to apply generally to all.

Finally, the Lord says elsewhere when the fig tree withered by the word, and the disciples marveled: If you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what is done to the fig tree, but if you say to this mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea, it will happen (Matthew XXI). Or certainly by the mulberry tree, whose fruit and twigs redden with a bloody color and hence is called "rubus" in Latin, the Gospel of the cross is expressed, which through the faith of the apostles, having been uprooted from the Jewish people in whom it was held as in a stem of origin, was transplanted and planted into the sea of the Gentiles. The sense is also supported by the parables joined to this sentence, which deals with the ministers of the word. It is also helpful to note that mulberry leaves, when thrown on a serpent, bring death to it because the word of the cross, while bringing health to all, takes away all harmful things.

Luke 17:7

Which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep. This parable teaches that faith, the more excellent it is outwardly in virtues, should become all the more humble within in conscience. For a servant plowing or tending sheep is understood as any teacher of the Church. About whom the Lord said: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. And to another who testified his love for Him, He responded for the third time: Feed my sheep. [Luke 17:7] -- Who, when he returns from the field, would immediately say to him, "Come along, sit down," and would not say to him, "Prepare what I may eat"? The servant returns from the field when, after pausing from the work of preaching for a time, the teacher returns to his conscience, and, retreating from public speaking to the court of his heart, privately reviews his acts or words with himself. To whom the

Lord does not immediately say, "Come along, sit down," that is, "pass from this mortal life, and be refreshed in the blessed abode of eternal life." For He will say this later, but in the meantime, after the shepherding and farming, He orders him to prepare what he may eat at home, that is, to display the labor of open speech, as well as the humility of self-reflection. For the Lord deigns to enter such a temple of conscience and desires to partake most willingly of such a meal. For behold, He says, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me (Apoc. III).

Luke 17:8

And gird yourself and serve me while I eat and drink. To gird oneself is to restrict one's humble mind from all wandering thoughts by which the steps of duties are usually impeded. For whoever girds their clothes does this to avoid being entangled to the point of stumbling while walking. To serve God is to confess that one is insignificant in everything and has no strength without His grace. For a minister takes his name from a lower status, that is, subjection, just as a master takes his name from a higher status. Therefore, he serves the Creator who, considering his nature, fearing His judgements, humbles himself regarding his own virtues. [Luke 17:8] -- And after this, you will eat and drink. After, he says, I have been delighted by the work of your preaching, and refreshed by the feasts of your compunction, then finally you will pass and recline, and you will be refreshed forever with the eternal feasts of my wisdom.

Luke 17:9

Does he give thanks to that servant because he did what was commanded of him? I think not. So also you, when you have done all things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants. If a man, he says, demands not uniform but multiple service from a human servant, and yet does not give him thanks, how much more you, who can do nothing without me? You ought not to measure the merits of labors by the length of time, but by love and voluntary service, always increasing the former by new endeavors. Therefore say: We are unprofitable servants. Indeed, servants, because you were bought at a price. Truly unprofitable, because the Lord does not need your goods. If, however, he is unprofitable who has done all things, what is to be said about him who either could not accomplish what was commanded

due to weakness, or, what is worse, despised it out of pride? Otherwise: We are unprofitable servants, because the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us (Romans 8). And elsewhere: Who crowns me with mercy and compassion (Psalm 103). He does not say with merits and works, because by whose mercy we are prevented, that we may humbly serve God, by his gift we are crowned, that we may reign loftily with him.

Luke 17:10

What we ought to have done, we have done. Indeed we ought to have, because he who did not come to be served, but to serve (Matt. 20), made us debtors to himself, so that, evidently not trusting in our own works, but always fearing his judgment, we may say with the prophet: What shall we render to the Lord for all that he has rendered to us? (Psalm 115). In order to show that he had faith like a mustard seed, humble and fervent, he prefaced, saying: I believed, therefore I have spoken, but I was greatly humbled (Psalm 116). To show that he did not trust in his own strength, he added, speaking in ecstasy: Every man is a liar (Psalm 116), to signify himself as an unworthy servant even after receiving the precious chalice of death, he exclaimed: O Lord, I am your servant, I am your servant, and the son of your handmaid, you have loosed my bonds (Psalm 116). He did not say, I have loosed them myself, I am sufficient to save myself, but You have loosed my bonds, I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving (Psalm 116). This then is the only perfection of faith in men, if, having fulfilled everything that has been commanded, they know themselves to be imperfect, and as long as they wander away from the Lord, always acknowledge the evils in themselves to lament, always remember the good that is missing that, with his grace aiding, they may progress.

Luke 17:12

And it came to be, etc., ten leprous men met him. Leprous men can not unreasonably be understood as those who, not having the knowledge of true faith, profess various doctrines of error. For they do not hide their ignorance, but present it as supreme expertise to the light and display the boasting of their speech. And indeed there is no false doctrine which does not mix some truths among the false things. Hence true things mixed irregularly with false ones, appearing in one argument or narration of a man, as in the

color of one body, signify leprosy, diversifying and staining human bodies with places of true and false colors. These therefore are to be avoided by the Church, so that if possible, being far removed, they may invoke Christ with a loud voice. Wherefore it is aptly added: [Luke 17:13] -- Those who stood afar off, and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And well, that they may be saved, they call Jesus Master. For indeed, in his words, they show they have erred, calling him the humble teacher of salvation, and when they return to the knowledge of the teacher, they immediately recur to the form of salvation. For it follows:

Luke 17:14

When he saw them, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it happened as they went, they were cleansed. The Lord is found to have sent none of those to whom he granted these corporal benefits to the priests, except lepers, because evidently, the priesthood of the Jews was a figure of the future royal priesthood, which is in the Church, whereby all belonging to the body of Christ, the highest and true Prince of priests, are consecrated. And whoever has lacked the grace of the Lord, either by heretical depravity, gentile superstition, Jewish perfidy, or even fraternal schism, must come to the Church and show the true color of faith they have received. But other vices, like the health and as it were the senses and limbs of the soul, the Lord heals and corrects within through conscience and understanding. Indeed, Paul also, having heard the voice of the Lord: Why do you persecute me? and, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting (Acts 9), was nevertheless sent to Ananias, so that through that priesthood established in the Church, he might receive the sacrament of the doctrine of faith, and be approved in its true color. Not because the Lord cannot do all things by himself (for who else does these things even in the Church?

but so that the very society of gathered faithful, by approving and communicating the doctrine of true faith among each other, might impart in all that is said in words or signified in sacraments, as it were, one form of true color. Cornelius also, although his alms and prayers were accepted and heard by the angel, is nevertheless commanded to send for Peter, for the unity of doctrine and sacraments, as if to him and his it was said: Go, show yourselves to the priests; for as they went, they were cleansed. For Peter had already come to them, but they had not yet received the sacrament of baptism, had

not yet spiritually come to the priests, and yet by the infusion of the Holy Spirit and the wonder of tongues, their cleansing was declared.

Luke 17:15

One of them, etc. This one, who returned glorifying God, signifies the devoted humility of the one Church to Christ. Who, well falling at the feet of the Lord, gave thanks. For he truly gives thanks to God, who, by repressing the thoughts of his own presumption, humbly sees how weak he is in himself, who attributes no virtue to himself, who acknowledges that the good deeds he performs come from the mercy of the Creator. Hence it is rightly added:

Luke 17:16

And he was a Samaritan. Indeed, Samaritan is interpreted as custodian. By this name, that people who, by giving thanks to Him from whom they received, attributes everything they received, is most aptly signified, in a manner singing from the Psalm: My strength I will guard for You, because You, O God, are my protector; my God, His mercy will precede me (Psalm LVIII). He falls moreover on his face, because he blushes from the evils he remembers having committed. For there man falls where he is ashamed. Hence also Paul, as if saying to some lying on their face, said: What fruit then did you have in those things of which you are now ashamed (Rom. VI)? On the other hand, concerning the rider of the horse, that is, about him who is lifted up in the glory of this world, it is said: His rider shall fall backward (Gen. XLIX). And again concerning the persecutors of the Lord it is written: They went backward and fell to the ground (John XVIII). What is this, that the chosen fall on their face and the reprobate fall backward, except that everyone who falls backward falls where he undoubtedly does not see; but he who falls forward falls where he sees? Therefore, the wicked, because they fall into things unseen, are said to fall backward, because they collapse where they cannot currently see what follows them. But the just, because they willingly cast themselves down in these visible things in order to be raised in the invisible, as if they fall on their face, because pierced by fear while seeing, they are humbled.

Luke 17:17

But Jesus answered and said: Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? If one is added to nine, a certain image of unity is completed. It results

in such an embrace that the number does not advance further unless it returns again to one, so that this rule through the infinity of numbers is preserved. Therefore, the nine need one, so that they may be unified into a certain form of unity and become ten. But one does not need them to preserve unity. Therefore, as that one who gave thanks is approved and praised as a sign of the unique Church, so those nine who did not give thanks were made reprobate, excluded from the fellowship of unity. Hence, such will remain in the number of nine as imperfect. And rightly does the Savior inquire as if unknown, Where are they? For to know God is to choose; to not know is to reprobate.

Luke 17:18

There was no one found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner. According to the body, indeed, it is easy to see a man who does not have leprosy and yet is not of good spirit; but according to the significance of this miracle, it troubles the observer to consider how the world can be ungrateful. But now it is also easy to see that it may happen that anyone in the society of the Church acquires sound and true doctrine and argues everything according to the rule of the Catholic faith, distinguishes the creature from the Creator, and is thus revealed to have been free from the diversity of lies like leprosy, and yet is ungrateful to God and his purifying Lord, because, elevated by pride, he is not humbled by holy thanksgiving, and thus becomes like those of whom the Apostle says: Although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks. For by saying they knew God, he shows they had been cleansed from leprosy, but nevertheless immediately accuses them of being ungrateful.

Luke 17:19

And he said to him: "Rise, go; your faith has made you well." He who devoutly fell before the Lord is commanded to rise and go, because he who, subtly recognizing his infirmity, humbly lies down, is ordered to rise through the consolation of the divine word to strong deeds, and with increasing merits daily to advance to more perfect things everywhere. But if faith made him well who bent down to give thanks to his Savior and cleanser, then disbelief destroyed those who neglected to give glory to God for received benefits. Therefore, this reading is linked with the previous one by that reason, that there it is determined through the given parable that

faith ought to be increased by humility, but here it is more clearly shown by actual events, not only that faith recognized the rationale, but that the executed operation of faith is what makes the believer well and gives glory to the Father who is in heaven.

Luke 17:20

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said: "The kingdom of God does not come with observation." They ask about the time of the kingdom of God, because as below Luke revealed, they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately be manifested when the Lord came to Jerusalem. Thus even the apostles, led by this opinion, asking him after his resurrection said: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts I); and elsewhere Cleophas said: "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke XXIV). However, the kingdom of God does not come with observation. [Luke 17:21] -- Nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" Because neither angels nor humans can observe when it will come, just as the time of the Lord's Incarnation, predestined by the most certain prophecies of the prophets, and declared by the proclamations of angels, so that his conception, birth, baptism, preaching, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven were incessantly accompanied by signs from either angels or humans or certainly miracles.

Luke 17:21

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. The Kingdom of God itself says it is placed within them, that is, in their hearts, where they believed it reigns. Hence it is written: The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we preach (Rom. X). [Luke 17:22] -- And he said to the disciples: The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. This is the kingdom of God, which we hope for to see the day of Christ, and indeed one day, because in that glory of bliss, the prophet sighing said: For one day in your courts is better than a thousand (Psal. LXXXIII), there is no interruption of darkness, no memory at all of misery or pain, which have gone away, clouding the light of perpetual peace. Therefore, it is good to desire the presence of this day, but not to imagine everything to us in the greatness of desire, as if the day of the Lord were at hand. Hence also the Lord aptly added while predicting the future:

Luke 17:23

And they will say to you: Look, there. Do not go, do not hurry. Although this sentence can be understood not only for a time, but also for a person. And indeed for a time, because there arose some who, calculating the courses of ages, would say they had found the certain year, day, and hour of the end of the world, against the authority of the Lord saying: It is not for you to know the times or the moments (Acts I). As for the person, because many heretics came against the Church, and many will come, who assert themselves to be Christs, the first of whom is Simon Magus, and the last, greater than others, is the Antichrist. Therefore, if anyone says to you, Look here, look there, that is, that in this or that person, or hour, the kingdom of God is coming or is going to come, they are not to be followed, who do not fear to seek higher things and to say unspeakable things.

Luke 17:24

For as a lightning flash that lights up from under heaven shines unto everything under heaven, so will the Son of Man be in His day. This is what the psalm says: God will come manifest, our God, and will not keep silent (Psalm XLIX), because clearly the second coming of the Savior will be not in humility as before, but in glory and majesty. And it is beautifully said: Flashing from under heaven, because judgment will happen under heaven, that is, in the midst of the air, as the Apostle testifies, who says: We will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. IV). But if the Lord will appear in judgment like lightning, then no one will be allowed to hide in his mind, because he is penetrated by the very brightness of the judge. Therefore, neither the time nor place of His coming can be observed by mortals, as He will obviously come blazing and sudden like lightning to all. However, this response of the Lord can also not incongruously be taken regarding that coming of His, by which He comes daily in the Church. For the Kingdom of God is within us, because He who will come as the judge of all in time now even presently reigns in the hearts of the faithful.

Indeed, the heretics often so disturbed the Church, each saying in his own doctrine that the faith of Christ remains, that the faithful of those times desired the Lord to return to earth, even for one day if it were possible, and by Himself to declare the truth of faith as it stands. And he said: And

you will not see, because it is not necessary to return the Lord in this bodily vision, which once the brightness of His Gospel was spread throughout the entire world He has spiritually exhibited, and against all the assaults of apocryphal writings He has established with the undivided light of His love.

Luke 17:25

But first, it is necessary for him to suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. The Lord, speaking much about the glory of His advent, also took care to insert a few words about the terror of His passion so that when they would see Him dying, whom they had heard would be glorified, the pain of the passion would be mitigated by the hope of the promised glory, and at the same time, they themselves might prepare, if they love the glory of the kingdom, not to dread the danger of death. However, the generation He refers to is not only the Jews but all the reprobate, by whom even now the Son of Man in His body, that is, in the Church, suffers many things and is rejected. For although the head of this body, which indeed is ourselves, already rises freely above all, nevertheless He still feels the wounds of the reprobate through His body, which He holds downward.

Luke 17:26

And as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. He affirms the suddenness of His coming with many examples. For what He had compared to lightning quickly traversing everything, He compares to the days of Noah or Lot, when sudden destruction came upon mortals. [Luke 17:27] -- They ate and drank, they married wives, and they were given in marriage. This does not condemn marriages or food as per the insane doctrines of Marcion, Manichaeus, and Tatian the leader of the Encratites, as in these matters lie the supports of succession, and in those of nature, but, as the Apostle says: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful" (1 Corinthians 6), it is rather the immoderate use of permissible things that is condemned. For it is not because they gave themselves wholly to these things and despised God's judgments that they perished by water or by fire.

Luke 17:27

Until the day Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Noah builds the ark, just as the Lord constructs the Church by uniting faithful men, as if they were smoothed timbers. He enters it perfectly completed, when, in the day of judgment, He illuminates it with the presence of

His eternal vision. But while the ark is being built, the wicked indulge in pleasure: when it is entered, they perish because those who here insult the struggling saints will be punished with eternal damnation when they are crowned there. [Luke 17:28] -- Similarly as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. The Lord, omitting that great and abominable crime of the Sodomites, mentions only those sins which could have been considered light or none at all, so that one may understand what punishment illicit actions may receive, if lawful actions and those without which this life cannot be led, when done immoderately, are punished by fire and sulfur. Therefore, the blessed Augustine, upon seeing the allurements of a harmful habit and stirred by just sorrow, exclaims: "Woe to the sins of men, which alone we shudder at only because they are unusual; yet the usual ones, for the purging of which the blood of the Son of God was shed, although they are so great that they entirely block the kingdom of God against them, by seeing them repeatedly, we are often compelled to tolerate all, and often by tolerating, even to commit some of them. And would that, O Lord, we do not commit everything that we could not prohibit."

Luke 17:29

But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed them all. Hitherto Lot in Sodom, that is, the chosen people among the reprobate, dwells as a stranger, both just in sight and hearing, and according to the interpretation of the name Lot, avoiding their crimes as much as he could. But with Lot departing, Sodom will perish. Because at the end of the age, the angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the just and cast them into the fiery furnace. Here it should be noted that the fire and sulfur which he recalls rained from heaven do not signify the very flame of perpetual punishment but the sudden advent of that day. For that perpetual fire will not come and punish the impious, but rather they will be cast out from the sight of the Judge and sent into the eternal fire, although we do not doubt that sulfur is also present in that fire, as testified by John, who describes both fires, that of sudden chastisement and of eternal burning, saying: "And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them, and the devil who seduced them was cast into the lake of fire and sulfur, where both the beast and the false prophets are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20).

Luke 17:30

According to these things will be the day when the Son of Man will be revealed. Beautifully He will be revealed, because He who now unseen sees everything, then seen will judge everything. However, He will appear to judge at the very time when He will see all forgotten of His judgments, given over to this world. For although the end of the world is set to come at a predetermined time, yet with the love of many growing cold towards the end, the iniquity of the human race will increase so much that it must deservedly be destroyed along with the world it inhabits. Even now we see countless people so devoted to revelry and drunkenness, buying and selling, and other worldly matters, that it's clear they provoked the wrath of the strict judge, but we fear that worse things are yet to come, things which no wise person can even think about without grave sorrow. For what was once said about one sinful nation to be destroyed: The sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure (Genesis 15), undoubtedly must be understood concerning the entire mass of the wicked to be condemned.

Luke 17:31

In that hour, whoever is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. So far it has been mentioned that the kingdom of God, that is Christ, will come not with observation, but unexpectedly; now it is shown by whom this same coming should be expected. Therefore, he is on the housetop who, exceeding the carnal, lives spiritually as if in free air. His goods in the house are carnal desires, which he had loved too much, but seeking heavenly things had left in this world, which he must by no means retrieve with the judgment impending. For He does not speak of that hour when the judge comes, but when He is about to come, not when the fire descended on Sodom, but when Lot is compelled to leave, or rather when he, hesitating, is seized and taken out by the angels. For no one, when the judge is already coming and appearing, would be able or willing to descend into this world to take anything from it. But this hour is happening today as we anxiously watch for the coming judge, not knowing when He will come. About this, John said: "Dear children, this is the last hour" (1 John 2).

Luke 17:31

And he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back. He who works in the Church, and like Paul and Apollo plants and waters, let him not look back to secular hope, to which he has renounced. [Luke 17:32] -- Remember Lot's wife. Lot's wife signifies those who in tribulation look back and turn away from the hope of God's promise. Therefore, she was made into a pillar of salt, as a warning to people not to do this, as if they season their heart, so that they may not be foolish. [Luke 17:33] -- Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it. This sentence can be correctly understood in two ways, but both meanings refer to one single end, namely, to suffer adversities for Christ, indeed not to fear to endure death itself. For he who, with death threatening from a persecutor, if he does not deny Christ, prefers rather to save his life for a time by denying, undoubtedly prepares it for eternal perdition. Likewise, he who seeks the eternal salvation of his soul, does not doubt to lose it temporally into the hands of persecutors, that is, to give it into death. But to both meanings, what follows fits aptly:

Luke 17:33

And whoever loses it will save it. That is, whoever loses it here, will save it there, he who has delivered it to death for Christ, considering it all day as a sheep to be slaughtered (Romans 8), then with Christ rising and helping, will find it free for the sake of the name of Christ. [Luke 17:34] -- I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed. The Lord had said above that he who is in the field should not turn back, so that you would not think that it was said only about those who openly intend to turn back from the field, that is, to deny the Lord. He continues to show that there are some who, even though they seem to have their faces turned forward, still look back with their mind and spirit. Therefore, in that night, he said, in that tribulation so dark, that even the elect might be led astray, if it were possible (Matthew 24), there will be two in one bed, those namely who choose ease and rest, neither occupied with secular affairs, nor with ecclesiastical matters, which their rest by the name of bed signifies.

Luke 17:34

One will be taken, and the other left. It is not as if it was said about two men, but about two kinds of affections. For he who has strived for continence for the sake of God, so that living without anxiety he may consider the things of

God (I Cor. VII), will be taken by God; but he who has wounded the monastic state of life with which he is imbued, either from love of human praise or by any other corruption of vices, he, as to where he is to be left, the lamentations of Jeremiah hint, who describing the fall of any idle and sinful soul under the image of Judea, says: The enemies have seen her, and have laughed at her Sabbaths (Lam. I). [Luke 17:35] -- There will be two grinding at the mill. He calls those grinding at the mill who are placed among the people and are governed by teachers, doing the things of this world, whom he also signifies by the name of women, because, as I said, it is expedient for them to be governed by the counsels of the skilled. And he said grinding, on account of the circle and cycle of temporal affairs. Yet he said in one grinding, inasmuch as they provide for the uses of the Church out of their own resources and businesses. For every action of this world is a mill, which while it gathers many cares, it turns human minds as if in a circle, and casts forth like flour, because it constantly generates minute thoughts in a restless heart.

Luke 17:35

One will be taken, and the other left. That part which has engaged in marriage only for the love of offspring and has dispensed earthly substance for acquiring heavenly things will be taken; but that which has served marriages for the allurements of the flesh, and whatever earthly things it may have offered to the Church or the poor, did so in order that, as if having made a bargain with the Lord, it might more abundantly abound with these things, will be left.

Luke 17:36

Two will be in the field; one will be taken, and the other left. Just as above, with two in one bed and two women grinding at the mill, so here it is understood to be in one field. This signifies those who labor in the ministry of the Church, as in the field of God, to whom his farmer said: "You are God's field" (1 Corinthians 3:9). The one who will be taken is the one who does not adulterate the word of God (2 Corinthians 2:17), but speaks in Christ truthfully before God. The one who preaches Christ insincerely, but out of selfish motivation, will be left behind. I do not think there are other kinds of people within the Church, except these three pairs distinguished by being taken or left behind, although within each pair many diversities of pursuits and wills can be found, converging nevertheless towards harmony and unity.

Therefore, the prophet Ezekiel saw three who were saved: Noah, Daniel, and Job, in whom preachers, those who live in continence, and those who are married, are represented. For Noah ruled the ark on the waters, and thus held the figure of those who govern. Daniel, devoted to abstinence even in the royal court, thus signified the life of those who live in continence. Job, placed in marriage and taking care of his own household, pleased God, and through him the order of good spouses is worthily represented.

Luke 17:37

Answering they say to him: Where, Lord? He said to them: Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered. Two Saviors were asked, where the good will be taken, and where the evil will be left, he said one thing, but left another to be understood. For by asserting that the saints will be with him, obviously the reprobates will be separated from his vision, and therefore they will be condemned nowhere else than with the devil, he implies. Therefore, wherever the Lord will be in body, the elect will be gathered there, who by imitating his passion and humility, are as if filled with his flesh, whose youth, like eagles, will be renewed in the resurrection (Psalm 103). It also harmonizes with the efforts of those who thirst to contemplate the glory of the supreme majesty with their whole mind, as the eagle surpasses other birds in flight and joyfully fixes its eyes on the sun's rays. It also fits that, for the protection of its nests, the eagle is accustomed to bring a resisting stone so that perhaps a serpent may not approach, or dare to touch its chicks or eggs. Because evidently every wise person, to defend his actions and thoughts from the incursion of the ancient serpent, needs to always keep in his heart that stone, cut from the mountain without hands, which laid waste to the devil's kingdom (Daniel 2), that is, the faith and love of Christ.

CHAPTER 18

Luke 18:1

He also told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. The Apostle also says: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing." But who can always pray like this, and persist in prayer without failing or pausing, so that he neither has time for receiving food or for sleeping? Therefore, it must be said that he always prays and does not lose heart, who daily during the canonical hours according to the custom of the Church tradition does not cease to praise and beseech the Lord with psalms and cus-

tomary prayers, and this is what the Psalmist said: "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34). Or certainly, all that the righteous do and say according to God should be regarded as a prayer. For since the righteous constantly do what is just, they will thereby constantly pray without ceasing, nor will they ever cease from prayer unless they cease to be righteous.

Luke 18:2

There was a certain judge in a certain city, who neither feared God nor respected man. However, there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him, saying: Avenge me against my adversary. And he refused for a long time. But afterward he said to himself: Though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. The Lord places parables either according to some likeness, as in the case of a man who had two sons, the elder working in the field close to him, and the younger living luxuriously in a distant place, or he proves something from dissimilarity itself, as in this passage: If the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, God so clothes, how much more you of little faith (Matthew VI). Therefore, the former type can be joined with these words: Just as that, so this one too. The latter, however, with these words: If that, how much more this one? Or, if that, how much less this one? But these are set forth obscurely in some places, openly in others. Hence, the unjust judge here is employed not by similarity, but by dissimilarity. For indeed, that unjust judge by no means allegorically represents the person of God, but still, as the Lord wanted to infer here, how much God, who is good and just, cares about those who beseech Him, because even an unjust man cannot disregard those who pester him with persistent prayers, if only to avoid their annoyance. For this is what he said: Lest by her coming she weary me. The widow herself can indeed have the likeness of the Church, which seems desolate until the Lord comes, who, however, even now secretly takes care of it.

Luke 18:6

The Lord said: Hear what the unjust judge says. Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. If anyone is troubled by why God's elect pray to be avenged, as is also men-

tioned in the Revelation of John regarding the martyrs, although we are most clearly admonished to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us, it is to be understood that this is the vengeance of the righteous, that all the evil should perish. They perish in two ways: either by conversion to righteousness, or by losing their power through punishment, which now to some extent prevails against the good, as long as it serves the good temporarily. The end that the righteous desire to come, although they pray for their enemies, is nonetheless reasonably called the desire for vengeance.

Luke 18:8

However, when the Son of Man comes, do you think He will find faith on the earth? Although the omnipotent Creator is always ready to vindicate His chosen ones who cry out to Him, on the day of judgment, which should be held in trembling hearts, when the same Creator appears in the form of the Son of Man, there will be such a rarity of the chosen that the ruin of the entire world will have to be hastened not so much because of the cry of the faithfully unjustly condemned, but because of the torpor of those justly condemned. But the Lord says doubtfully: Do you think, will He find faith? He does not doubt, but rebukes. The word of doubt reproves infidelity, not divinity. For we also sometimes use the word of doubt reprovingly about things we are certain about, although we do not doubt in our heart. For instance, if you are indignant with your servant, you might say: You despise me, consider perhaps, I am your master. And the Apostle to some of his contemptors: I think also I have the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 7). He who says, I think, seems to doubt. But he was reproving, not doubting. Thus, the Lord, who indeed knows all things through whom all things were made, nonetheless doubtingly reproves the hearts of the faithless.

Luke 18:9

He also spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves as righteous and despised others. Because the Lord concluded the parable, in which He always taught to pray and not to lose heart, saying that when the judge comes, faith would be hard to find on earth, lest anyone should flatter themselves with useless faith, knowledge, or even confession; immediately following with another parable, He more diligently showed that from God, faith is examined not by words, but by deeds. Among which deeds, humility predominates greatly. Therefore, earlier, when He compared faith to a mustard seed,

small indeed but burning with curiosity, He almost explained further: "When you have done all that you are commanded, say: We are unworthy servants" (Luke XVII). Contrary to this, the proud, while they do only a little of what is commanded, not only immediately presume their own righteousness but also despise the weak, and thus, as though devoid of faith, they are not heard when they pray.

Luke 18:10

Two men went up to the temple to pray. One a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The tax collector, praying humbly, belongs to those members of the mentioned widow, that is, the Church, of whom it is said above: "But will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him?" The Pharisee, however, boasting of his merits, pertains to those about whom the terrible closing statement is made: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" [Luke 18:11] -- The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: God, I thank you that I am not like other men, robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this publican. There are four types by which all the swelling of the arrogant is demonstrated, when they either believe they have good from themselves, or if they believe it is given to them from above, they think they have received it because of their own merits, or certainly when they boast they have what they do not, or, despising others, seek to appear singularly to have what they have. The Pharisee is found to have labored under the plague of these boastings, who therefore descended from the temple without justification, because he attributed the merits of good works to himself, as though singularly, and preferred himself over the praying publican.

Luke 18:12

I fast twice on the Sabbath, I give tithes of all that I possess. The prophet Ezekiel writes about the heavenly creatures shown to him. And the whole body full of eyes, around those four. For the bodies of the creatures are described as full of eyes because the actions of the saints are circumspect from every part, desirably providing for the good, cautiously avoiding the evil. But we often, while attending to other matters, neglect others. And where we neglect, there undoubtedly we do not have an eye. For behold, the Pharisee had an eye for exhibiting abstinence, for extending mercy, for giving thanks to God, but he did not have an eye for maintaining humility. And what does

it benefit if nearly the whole city is cautiously guarded against the enemy's plots, if one opening is left open, where the enemies may enter? [Luke 18:13] -- And the publican, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying: God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. How confidently does he offer forgiveness to the worthily penitent, given that the publican, who fully recognized his wrongdoing, wept, confessed, and if he came unjust to the temple, he left justified from the temple. Typically, however, the Pharisee is the populace of the Jews, who extol their own merits through the justifications of the law. The publican, on the other hand, represents the Gentile, who, placed far from God, confesses his sins. One departed proud and humiliated, while the other, by lamenting, deserved to approach exalted.

Luke 18:14

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Of the aforementioned people, both the proud and the humble, it can rightly be understood, just as we read elsewhere: Before destruction the heart is exalted, and before glory, it is humbled (Prov. XVI). Therefore, from the words of the arrogant Pharisee, by which he deserved to be humbled, we can also take, conversely, the form of humility by which we may be exalted, so that as he, considering both the vices of the worse and his own virtues, was lifted up to ruin, we, seeing not only our own sloth but also the virtues of the better, may be humbled to glory, that each of us may humbly and submissively implore this before himself: Almighty God, have mercy on your suppliant, because I am not like your innumerable servants, exalted by the contempt of the world, glorious by the merit of justice, angelic in the praise of chastity, nor like many of those who, after public crimes, have deserved to be devoted to you by repenting. Who also, if by your granting grace I do any good, I do not know with what end I do it or by what strictness it should be weighed by you.

Luke 18:15

They were bringing children to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. And this lesson, full of the teaching of humility, shows that the innocent and simple can reach the grace of the Lord. The disciples rebuked those who were bringing them, not because they

did not want the children to be blessed by the Savior's hand and voice, but because, not yet having complete faith, they thought he would be exhausted by the importunity of those presenting the children, like a human. [Luke 18:16] -- But Jesus, calling them, said: Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them. For of such is the kingdom of God. He significantly said "of such," not "of these ones," to show that it is not age that reigns, but manners, and that the reward is promised to those who have similar innocence and simplicity. The Apostle also agrees with this sentiment: Brothers, do not be children in understanding, but be infants in malice. In understanding, however, be perfect.

Luke 18:17

Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it. Just as a child does not persist in anger, does not remember being hurt, does not take delight in a beautiful woman, does not think one thing and say another, so too, unless you have such innocence and purity of mind, you will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. Another interpretation: We are commanded to receive the kingdom of God, that is, the teaching of the Gospel, like a child, because a child neither contradicts teachers in learning, nor composes arguments and words to resist them, but faithfully accepts what is taught, and obeys and rests with respect. [Luke 18:18] -- And a certain ruler asked him, saying: Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? I believe this ruler had heard from the Lord that only those who want to be like children will enter the kingdom of God, and therefore, concerned with obtaining clear guidance, he asks to be told openly, not in parables, by what merits of works he may gain eternal life.

Luke 18:19

Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. Since he had called him a good teacher and had not confessed him as God or God's Son, he learns that compared to God, no mere human being is good. Of whom it is said: 'Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good' (Psalm 106). But God alone being good is not to be understood as the Father alone, but also the Son, who says: 'I am the good Shepherd.' Also the Holy Spirit, because the Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11). That is, the one and individual Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the only one and good God. Therefore, the Lord does

not deny being good but indicates being God. He does not deny being a good teacher but testifies that no teacher apart from God is good.

Luke 18:20

You know the commandments: You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother. This is the chastity of childlike innocence, which is proposed to us for imitation if we wish to enter the kingdom of God. It should indeed be noted that justice of the law, kept at its proper time, not only confers the goods of the earth but also eternal life. [Luke 18:21] -- He said, "All these I have kept from my youth." Jesus, hearing this, said to him, "You still lack one thing." This prince is not to be thought a liar when he claimed he kept the commandments of the law, but he confessed simply as he had lived. Because if he were guilty of the charge of lying, the evangelist Mark would not have added, writing about him: "Jesus looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'You lack one thing: Go, sell all that you have' (Mark 10), and so on. For the Lord loves those who keep even the lesser mandates of the law, but nonetheless shows what was lesser in the law to those who desire to be perfect.

Luke 18:22

Sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me. Whoever wishes to be perfect must sell, like Ananias and Sapphira, but sell everything; and when he has sold it, give everything to the poor, and so prepare a treasure for himself in the kingdom of heaven. And this does not suffice for perfection, unless after despising riches, he follows the Savior, that is, leaving behind evil, he does good. For it is easier to despise the purse than the will. Many, though they leave riches, do not follow the Lord. However, he follows the Lord who is his imitator, and walks in his footsteps. For whoever says he believes in Christ, ought to walk as He did. [Luke 18:23] -- Hearing this, he was sorrowful, for he was very rich. This is the sadness of the world that works death. These deceptive riches are like thorns that choke the Lord's seed.

Luke 18:24

But Jesus, seeing him become sad, said: How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! It is clear indeed that those who strive to multiply their riches here, disdain to seek the joys of another life,

but there is a difference between having wealth and loving wealth. Many indeed who have do not love. Many who do not have, love. Similarly, others both have and love, while others neither have nor love the riches of this world, whose state is safer, with the Apostle saying: The world is crucified to us, and we to the world (Gal. VI). Hence Solomon does not say, Whoever has, but Whoever loves riches, will not enjoy their fruit (Eccl. V). And the Lord Himself, according to Mark, with the disciples astonished at the words of this statement, further explained: Little children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God (Mark X)! And it is to be noted that He did not say, Impossible, but Difficult, that is, it is of the greatest labor for those who have wealth, or trust in wealth, stripping off the bonds of avarice, to enter the court of the heavenly kingdom.

Luke 18:25

For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. If it is easier for a camel, which has enormous and huge limbs, to pass through the narrow eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, then no rich man will enter the kingdom of God. And how is it that both in the Gospel according to Matthew, Zacchaeus, and Joseph, as well as in the Old Testament, so many rich men of God have entered the kingdom? Unless perhaps they learned, by the Lord's inspiration, either to value riches at nothing or to leave them entirely? Did David, who sang about himself: "For I am poor and alone" (Ps. XXIV), trust in the riches of his kingdom? And he advises others: "If riches increase, do not set your heart on them" (Ps. LXI)? I believe he did not dare say "Do not accept them. Is it credible that Abraham preferred his possessions to the Lord, for whose sake he did not hesitate to strike his only heir? In a higher sense, it is easier for Christ to suffer for the lovers of the world than for the lovers of the world to be able to be converted to Christ. For by the name of the camel, He wished to be understood, because He voluntarily humbled Himself and bore the burdens of our weakness.

In what indeed is it more clearly understood than in what is written of Him: "The greater you are, humble yourself in all things" (Eccli. III)? By the needle, he signifies the punctures, and by the punctures, the sufferings endured in His passion. Therefore, the eye of the needle denotes narrowness and sufferings. When it is split, He deigns somehow to mend, that is, to restore our nature's garments, so that after the fall we may be better reformed,

as we rejoice in the testimony of the Apostle, who says: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galat. III).

Luke 18:26

And those who heard it said, "And who can be saved?" What does this answer pertain to unless it is because the far greater multitude of the poor, who could be saved with the rich being lost, understood that all who love riches, even if they cannot obtain them, are reckoned among the rich? [Luke 18:27] -- He said to them: What is impossible with men is possible with God. It is not to be understood in such a way that the greedy and the proud, who are signified by the name of that rich man, will enter the kingdom of heaven with their greed and pride, but it is possible for God that through His word (as we also see has been done and is done daily) they may be converted from the desire for temporal things to the love of eternal things, and from destructive pride to most salutary humility.

Luke 18:28

But Peter said: Behold, we have left everything and followed you. Great confidence. Peter was a fisherman, he was not rich, he sought food by hand and skill, and yet he speaks confidently, We have left everything. And because it is not enough to just leave, he adds what is perfect: And followed you. We have done what you commanded, so what reward will you give us?

Luke 18:29–30

He said to them: "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house, or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive much more in this time, and in the age to come, eternal life. Some, on account of this saying, build up the Jewish fable of a thousand years after the resurrection of the just, when all things which we have abandoned for God will be rendered to us with manifold interest, and eternal life will be granted in addition. Nor do the foolish see that even if in other respects the promise is worthy, in wives it appears as a scandal a hundredfold, according to other evangelists; especially as the Lord testifies that in the resurrection there will be no marriage, and according to the evangelist Mark, that what has been left will be received in this time with persecutions: which persecutions, indeed, those chiliasts dogmatize as absent from their thousand years of troubles. The sense, therefore, is this: Whoever has despised all affections for the sake of acquiring the kingdom of God, has trampled on all

the delights and luxuries of the world, will receive much more in the present because, from brothers and companions of his purpose, who are bound to him with spiritual glue, he will receive much greater charity even in this life.

This charity, which is joined among parents, children, and brothers, spouses or relatives, either by the society of marriage or the necessity of consanguinity, is known to be quite brief and fragile. In fact, sometimes it is even broken for a just cause. Only those who retain the unity of perpetual conjunction, and indiscriminately possess all things, who believe that all that is theirs is the brothers', all the brothers' things are theirs. Read the Acts of the Apostles, that the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one, and all things were common to them, and there was not a needy person among them who left their own for the Lord. Of whom Paul also says: "As having nothing, yet possessing everything" (II Cor. 6). A much greater sweetness indeed will be received from conjugal continence than that which was previously offered to them by the mingling of sexes. Before, I possessed a wife in the lascivious passion of desire; now I possess the same in the honor of sanctification and true love of Christ. There is one woman, but the merit of chastity has grown a hundredfold. For what is said according to Mark: "He will receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and fields, with persecutions" (Mark 10), can be understood more deeply.

Certainly, the number a hundred, transferred from left to right, although it appears to hold the same shape in the curve of the fingers, grows exceedingly in magnitude, because all who scorn temporal things for the kingdom of God's sake, even in this life, taste the fullest joys of that same kingdom with firm faith, and in the expectation of the heavenly homeland, they enjoy most sincerely the love of all the elect together.

Luke 18:31

Jesus took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For he will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked, insulted, and spit upon. After they have scourged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again." Foreseeing that the suffering of his passion would trouble the spirits of his disciples, the Savior predicts to them long in advance both the punishment of his passion and the glory of his resurrection, so that seeing him die as it was predicted, they might not

doubt that he would also rise again. He also foresaw that certain heretics would arise in the Church who would claim that Christ taught contrary to the law and the prophets, and that the God of the Old Testament was different from the God of the New Testament. He showed that the prophecies were directed to no one more than to himself and the mystery of his temporary dispensation for us, so that his passion and subsequent glory would be the fulfillment and perfect celebration of the prophecy. He also most clearly refuted the madness of the pagans who mock his cross, when he predicted the time of his imminent passion as if he were aware of the future, and approached the place of his death fearlessly.

Luke 18:34

And they understood none of these things. And this saying was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend what was said. We read in the Gospel according to John, the Lord saying: "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." The crowd answered and said: "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. And how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'?" (John 12). Why, then, is it that the disciples, who had the mystery of the Lord's passion repeated to them so many times, could not understand it, while the Jews, at a single word, and so obscurely put that the Evangelist deemed it worthy of explanation: "Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death He would die" (ibid.), immediately understood that the exaltation of the cross was meant, except because the disciples, whose lives especially wished to witness that, could not hear of His death? They, knowing Him not only as an innocent man but also as the true God, thought He could by no means die. And because they were accustomed to hearing Him often speak in parables, whenever He said anything about His passion, they believed it was not to be understood as it sounded, but to be referred allegorically to something else dictated by love. But the Jews, because they conspired for His death, understood whatever He spoke about His passion or cross; for He spoke what they most eagerly wished to occur and labored to bring about. Thus, in a marvelously unusual way, the same mystery of undergoing the cross, which love concealed from the faithful, envy revealed to the unfaithful.

Luke 18:35

And it came to pass, that as he was coming near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. This blind man signifies, by allegory, the human race, which, expelled from the joys of paradise in the first parent, suffering the darkness of damnation, unaware of the clarity of heavenly light. But when Jesus is said to approach Jericho, the blind man is illuminated. For Jericho is interpreted as the moon. The moon, however, in sacred scripture, is used to signify the defect of the flesh, because as it decreases in its monthly phases, it signifies the defect of our mortality. Therefore, when our Creator approaches Jericho, the blind man returns to the light, because, as the Divinity takes on the defect of our flesh, the human race receives the light that it had lost. This blind man indeed is rightly described as sitting by the way and begging. For the Truth itself said: I am the way (John XIV). Thus, he who knows not the clarity of eternal light is blind; but if he already believes in the Redeemer, he sits by the way. If he already believes, but does not request to receive the eternal light, and neglects to pray, the blind man indeed sits by the way, but he does not beg. But if he both believes and prays, the blind man both sits by the way and begs.

Luke 18:38

And he cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And those who were going before rebuked him, so that he might be silent. But he cried out much more, Son of David, have mercy on me. What do those signify who precede Jesus as he comes, if not the crowds of carnal desires and the tumults of vices, which, before Jesus comes to our hearts, scatter our thoughts with their temptations and disturb the voices of the heart in prayer? For often, when we wish to turn to God after having committed sins, while we strive to pray against these same vices that we have committed, the phantasms of the sins we committed come to our heart, reverberate the focus of our mind, confound, and press down the mind and voice of our supplication. But he who is rebuked by the crowd to be silent cries out all the more, because the more heavily we are pressed by the tumult of carnal thoughts, the more ardently we should persist in prayer.

Luke 18: 40

But Jesus, standing still, ordered him to be brought to him. Behold, he stands who previously was passing by, because when we still suffer the crowds of phantasms in prayer, we feel Jesus in some way passing by. But when we fervently persist in prayer, Jesus stands still and restores the light, because God is fixed in the heart, and the lost light is restored. [Luke 18:41] -- And when he approached, he questioned him saying: What do you want me to do for you? And he said, Lord, that I may see. Did He who could give light not know what the blind man wanted? But He wishes that this be asked, which He knows beforehand that we would ask and He would grant. For He urgently admonishes us to prayer, and yet He says: Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him (Matthew VI). Therefore, He requires this, that it be asked; He requires this, that the heart be stirred to prayer. Wherefore the blind man immediately adds: Lord, that I may see. Behold, the blind man does not ask gold, but light from the Lord, he reckons it insignificant to ask for anything outside of light. Because even if the blind man can possess anything, without light he cannot see what he possesses. Let us therefore imitate him whom we have heard saved both in body and in mind, let us not seek false riches, not earthly gifts, not fleeting honors from the Lord, but light: namely that light which we can see only with the holy angels, which neither beginning initiates nor end confines. To which indeed light, the way is faith. Wherefore it is rightly added while illuminating the blind man:

Luke 18: 42

And Jesus said to him: Look, your faith has saved you. And immediately he saw and followed Him, glorifying God. He sees and follows, who works the good he understands. He indeed sees, but does not follow, who indeed understands good, but despises performing good works. For he who imitates follows Jesus. Hence He says: If anyone serves me, let him follow me (John XII). Let us therefore consider where He leads, that we may deserve to follow. Thus it comes about that not only does our life progress in God, but this very conversion of ours kindles others to the praise of God, whence it is added: [Luke 18:43] -- And all the people, when they saw, gave praise to God. For the people gave praise to God, not only for the granted gift of light, but also for the merit of the faith of the one asking. They gave praise to God because they saw Jesus mercifully and powerfully restore light to the one asking, and

acknowledged that the cry of firm faith, which rightly sought, could immediately be accomplished. Wherefore it should be noted that the Lord, appearing in the flesh, confirmed everything He taught with words by examples. For He who commanded us: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt. V), in all things He began to do and teach (Acts I), sought not His own glory from men, but the glory of the Father (John VIII).

CHAPTER 19

Luke 19:1–4

And entering, he was passing through Jericho; and behold, a man named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he was seeking to see Jesus, who he was, and he could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. And running ahead, he climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, because he was to pass that way. What is impossible with men is possible with God (Luke XVIII). Behold, a camel, having laid down its hump load, passes through the eye of a needle (Matthew XIX), that is, a rich man and a tax collector, having left the burden of riches, having despised the sense of frauds, ascends the narrow gate and the difficult way that leads to life (Matthew VII). With an extraordinary devotion of faith to see the Savior, what was lacking in nature, he supplied by climbing the tree, and thus justly, although he did not dare to ask, he received the blessing of the Lord's visitation, which he desired. Mystically, Zacchaeus, who is interpreted as "justified," signifies a believing people from the Gentiles. The more occupied he was with worldly cares, the more he was made humble by the oppressive devices. But he was washed, he was sanctified, he was justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God, who was seeking to see the Savior passing through Jericho but could not because of the crowd.

Because he desired to partake of the grace of faith which the Savior brought to the world, but the ingrained habit of vices obstructed him from reaching his desire. The same crowd of harmful habits that rebuked the blind man crying out so that he might not seek the light, also delays the tax collector looking upward so that he might not see Jesus. But just as the blind man overcame the voices of the crowds by crying out more and more, so the short man must overcome the obstacle of the harmful crowd by seeking higher things, leaving earthly things behind, ascending the tree of the cross. The sycamore tree, which is a tree with leaves similar to the mulberry, but

excelling in height, and is therefore called lofty by the Latins, is called the foolish fig. And the same is the Lord's cross, which nourishes believers like a fig, but is ridiculed by unbelievers as foolishness. For we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness. But to those who are called, Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians I). This very tree Zacchaeus of short stature climbs in order to be exalted, when anyone humble and aware of his own weakness, trusting in the Lord, proclaims: But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians VI).

Having climbed the sycamore, he sees the Lord passing by, because through this commendable foolishness, even if not yet solidly, yet already fleetingly, and as if in passing, he gazes upon the light of heavenly wisdom.

Luke 19: 5

And when He came to that place, looking up, Jesus saw him. Traversing Jericho, the Savior came to the place where Zacchaeus, having run ahead, had climbed a sycamore tree, because, having sent His heralds of the word through the world, in whom He Himself certainly both spoke and went, He came to the people of the nations, who, already exalted by faith in His passion, were also longing to be blessed, having recognized His divinity. Looking up, He saw him, because through the grace of faith, elevated from earthly desires and standing out among the unbelieving crowds, He chose him. To see God is indeed to choose or to love. Hence, it is: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous (Psalm 34). For we also desire to see what we love, and we hasten to turn our gaze away from what we abhor. Therefore, Jesus saw the one seeing Him, because He chose the one choosing Him, and He loved the one loving Him. This indeed is the order of progressing, that is, coming to the knowledge of Divinity through faith in the Lord's incarnation, symbolized by climbing the sycamore tree to behold Jesus' face, as an excellent teacher indicated when he said: For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2). And reproaching others similarly, he said: You have become such as need milk, not solid food (Hebrews 5), calling the milk the weak details of the temporal dispensation, and solid food the profound truths of eternal majesty.

Luke 19:5

And he says to him: "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." And he hurried and came down, and received him joyfully. The Lord sometimes stayed in the house of the chief of the Pharisees, that is, he taught in the synagogue of the Jews; but because they reproached him with a venomous tongue for healing on the Sabbath without being baptized before the meal, for receiving publicans and sinners, for arguing against avarice, and for performing other deeds worthy of God, weary of their crimes, he departed and fled saying: "Your house will be left desolate to you" (Matt. 23). But today he must stay in the house of the little Zacchaeus, that is, in the heart of the humble nations of believers where the grace of the new light shines. Moreover, the fact that Zacchaeus is ordered to come down from the sycamore and thus prepare a dwelling for Christ in his house, signifies what the Apostle says: "For although we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer" (II Cor. 5). For even though he died in weakness, he lives by the power of God.

Luke 19:7

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying that he had turned aside to a sinner's house. It is evident that the Jews always hated the salvation of the nations, for it is written: "On the following Sabbath, almost the whole city came together to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. And they began to contradict what was spoken by Paul" (Acts 13). And elsewhere: "Even the faithful brothers disputed against the chief of the apostles, saying: Why did you go in to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" (Acts 11).

Luke 19:8

But Zacchaeus, standing, said to the Lord: "Behold, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore fourfold." While others were slandering the man as a sinner, Zacchaeus himself, standing, that is, persisting in the truth of the faith he had begun, proves not only to have been converted from a sinner, but also to have lived among the perfect. For as the Lord says: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell all that you have and give to the poor" (Matthew XIX), anyone who lived innocently before conversion can give everything to the poor after being converted. But whoever has taken anything by fraud must first return these things

according to the law, then give what remains to the poor. And thus he himself, because he keeps nothing for himself, disperses all his possessions, gives them to the poor, and his justice remains forever (Psalm CXI). And this is that wise foolishness, which the publican had gathered from the sycamore tree, as it were the fruit of life, namely to restore what was taken, to leave behind one's own property, to despise visible things, to desire even to die for unseen things, to deny oneself, and to long to follow in the footsteps of the Lord, who is not yet seen.

Luke 19:9

Jesus said to him: "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham." Zacchaeus is called a son of Abraham, not because he was born of his lineage, but because he imitated his faith. Just as Abraham left his land, kin, and father's house, at the Lord's command, for the hope of future inheritance, so he also, to acquire treasure in heaven, left his goods to be shared with the poor. And he beautifully says, "And he too," to declare that not only those who persist in righteousness, but also those who repent of unrighteousness, belong to the sons of the promise. Alternatively: Salvation, which once filled the house of the Jews, today has shone upon the people of the nations, because this people too is a son of Abraham by believing in him. The Apostle says: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed" (Gal. III). And, as he says elsewhere, Abraham is the father of circumcision, not only to those who are of the circumcision but also to those who follow the footsteps of the faith that is in the uncircumcision of our father Abraham (Rom. IV).

Luke 19:10

Indeed, the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. This is what he says elsewhere: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. IX). The merciful Teacher certainly does not disdain to explain his mysteries to the murmuring crowds, showing clearly that the repentance of sinners is not to be despised, as the Son of God himself was sent to earth especially for this reason. To remind us of his compassionate governance, he frequently calls himself the Son of Man, diligently reinforcing to us that he became benignly for us. [Luke 19:11] -- Hearing these things, he added a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. It is the custom of the Lord to confirm the

preceding discourse with subsequent parables. Therefore, having received and commended the penance of the publican more than the righteousness of the proud, he added a parable to teach that penance of sinners pleases him more than the justice of the proud, and that he would more widely reign among humble Gentiles who were ignorant of the law, than among Jews who are proud of the justice from the law. And because the disciples, hearing about the passion of the Lord above, or the resurrection to be fulfilled in Jerusalem, did not understand what was being said, thinking that the kingdom of God was coming immediately, he illuminated their ignorance, showing that he would first spread the faith of his kingdom over the whole world, and thus at the end of the world would come as judge and king of all ages.

Luke 19:12

Therefore, he said: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. That nobleman is he, to whom the blind man above cried out: Son of David, have mercy on me (Luke XVIII). And coming to Jerusalem, they sang together: Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel (Matthew XXI). The far country is the church from the Gentiles. Concerning which the same nobleman, who speaks: But I have been established as king by him (Psalm II); is told by the Father: Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession (Ibid.). This inheritance and possession is called a far country for a twofold reason, either because it cries out to the Lord from the ends of the earth, or because salvation is far from sinners (Psalm CCXVIII). And although God is present everywhere, yet he is far from the sense of those who worship idols, the true God is absent. But those who were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians II).

Luke 19:13

But calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas. The number ten pertains to the law, because of the Decalogue. Therefore the head of the household calls ten servants, because he chooses disciples steeped in the letter of the law. He gives them ten minas, because he reveals the words of the law to be understood spiritually. After his passion and resurrection, he indeed opened their minds to understand the scriptures. For a mina, which the Greeks call "mna," amounts to a hundred drachmas. And the discourse of all

scripture, because it suggests the perfection of heavenly life, sparkles with the weight of the number one hundred. [Luke 19:13] -- And he said to them: Trade until I come. He says, offer the words of the law and the prophets to the people through mystical interpretation, and receive from them the confession of faith and the integrity of morals. Just as the Psalmist commands his listeners, saying: Take up the psalm, and give the timbrel (Psalm 80). That is, perceive the praise of preaching with the intention of the heart, and return the devotion of work in the chastisement of the flesh. For the timbrel is a skin stretched on wood. Indeed, the skin stretched on wood is our flesh afflicted after the example of the Lord's cross.

Luke 19:14

But his citizens hated him. And they sent a delegation after him, saying: We do not want him to reign over us. By citizens, he means the impious Jews. Of whom he elsewhere protests: But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15). Who not only hated him present even unto the death of the cross, but also after his resurrection sent persecution to the apostles and spurned the preaching of the heavenly kingdom. [Luke 19:15] -- And it happened that he returned, having received the kingdom. It signifies the time when he will come in the most manifest and most eminent clarity, he who appeared to them humble, when he said: My kingdom is not of this world (John 18). [Luke 19:15] -- And he ordered the servants to be called to whom he had given the money, that he might know what each had gained by trading. To know, he said, not that anything should be hidden from him, to whom it is truly said: "Lord, you know all things." But to know, he says, is to make everyone know. For then the works and thoughts of all shall be plainly shown to everyone. As in Deuteronomy: He tests you, he says, the Lord your God, that he might know if you love him (Deut. XIII), that is, to make it known. Let no one think indeed that only those to whom the grace of preaching is given, but not also those to whom it is preached, shall be called to judgment then. For they themselves are the money which the good servants gained by trading. Furthermore, know that those also who have never been preached to shall be there to be condemned, about whom we shall speak below.

Luke 19:16

But the first came, saying: Lord, your mina has gained ten minas. The first servant is the order of teachers sent to the circumcision, who received one mina to trade with, because they were commanded to preach one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. But this same mina gained ten minas, because the people under the law came to be united to him through teaching. [Luke 19:17] -- And he said to him: Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities. The servant is faithful in a very little, who does not adulterate the word of God, but speaks in Christ as from God, in the presence of God (II Cor. II). For whatever we receive of gifts at present is in comparison to the future very little and small, for we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, that which is in part shall be done away (I Cor. XIII). The ten cities, however, are the souls coming to the grace of the Gospel through the word of the law. To whom he who has worthily given the money of the word to God shall then be rightly glorified. Hence, a certain excellent merchant, addressing the cities over which he presided, that is, the souls he had received to govern, says: What is our hope or joy or crown of glory? Is it not even you before our Lord Jesus (I Thess. II)?

Luke 19:18

And another came, saying, "Lord, your mina has made five minas." This servant is of the group that was sent to evangelize the uncircumcised, to whom the Lord had granted one mina, that is, the same faith which was also entrusted to the circumcision, but this one made five minas, because he converted the Gentiles, who were previously enslaved by the senses of the body, to the grace of the evangelical faith.

Luke 19:19

And to him he said, "And you be over five cities." This means, from the faith and conversion of the souls whom he had instructed, shine forth as great and exalted. Concerning which Isaiah mystically says: "In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt, speaking the language of Canaan" (Isaiah 19). For the five cities in the land of Egypt are the five senses of the body, which we use in this world, namely sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. And, "whoever looks at a woman to lust after her" (Matthew 5); who "turns his ear away from hearing the poor" (Proverbs 21); who "gets drunk with wine, in

which is dissipation" (Ephesians 5); who "enjoys crowning himself with roses before they wither" (Wisdom 2); whose "hands are full of blood, and his right hand is filled with bribes" (Psalm 26), the five senses of this person speak the language of Egypt, that is, all the senses perform works of darkness. For Egypt signifies darkness. But he who "stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil" (Isaiah 33), who "tastes and sees that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34), who "disciplines his body and brings it into subjection" (1 Corinthians 9), who can say with the Apostle, "We are to God the fragrance of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2), the cities of this person speak with a changed language, which is interpreted as Canaan. And the one who had taught them away from the darkness rightly is remembered as being over five cities, because he is honored not only for his own progress but also for the progress of his listeners, whom he called to the light.

Luke 19:20

And another came, saying: Lord, behold thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin. For I feared thee, because thou art a stern man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. The servant who, being ordered to trade, hid the master's money in a napkin, shows those who, although fit to preach, refuse either to take up the office of preaching, by command of the Lord through the Church, or at least to carry it out worthily once taken up. For to tie money in a napkin is to hide the received gifts in the idleness of sluggish inactivity. There are indeed men flattering themselves with this perverse reasoning, so as to say: It is enough that each one renders an account concerning himself. What need is there to preach to others, so that each one may be obliged to render an account also concerning them, since even those are inexcusable before the Lord to whom the law was not given, and who have slumbered without hearing the Gospel, because they were able to know the creator through creation? For this is, as it were, to reap where he has not sown, that is, also to hold them guilty of impiety to whom the word of the law or the Gospel has not been ministered. However, avoiding this sort of peril of judgment, they rest in lazy languor away from the ministry of the word, and this is, as it were, tying what they have received in a napkin.

Luke 19:22

He saith unto him: Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. He is called a wicked servant, because he is both lazy and idle in conducting business, and insolent and proud in accusing the judgment of the Lord. [Luke 19:22] -- You knew that I am a harsh man, taking what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow, and why did you not give my money to the table? What he had thought to say as an excuse turns into his own fault. If, he says, you knew I was harsh and cruel, and seeking what belongs to others and reaping where I have not sown, why did such thinking not instill fear in you, so that you would know that I would seek my own more diligently and give my money or silver to the table? For the Greek word ἀργυρίω signifies both. The words of the Lord, he says, are pure words, silver tried in a furnace (Psalm XI). Therefore, money and silver are the preaching of the Gospel, and the divine word, which ought to have been given to the table, that is, to be planted in the ready and prepared hearts of the faithful. In particular, to this table, that is, to the mind of the hearers, should no other money than the Lord's be presented, so that every word of the teacher follows the meaning of Scripture. For in this place the Lord says that not just any money, but His own, must be entrusted to the bankers, as the Apostle explains, saying: If anyone speaks, let him speak as the words of God (1 Peter IV).

Luke 19:23

And I coming, would have certainly demanded it with interest. He who receives the money of the word from the teacher, and acquires it by believing, must necessarily repay it with interest by working, so that what he has learned by hearing, he may carry out in action. Indeed, through interest, money even not given is received. Or certainly, he repays the interest on the received money of the word, who from what he hears also strives to understand other things, which he has not yet learned from the mouth of the preacher. [Luke 19:24] -- And to those standing by, he says: Take away the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas. And they said to him: Lord, he has ten minas. Rightly does he lose the bestowed grace, which by preaching to others he neglected to share, so that it may be increased to him who labored for it. According to what is said to the angel of the Church of Ephesus: And I will move your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent

(Rev. II). And while the royal anointing, which Saul lost through pride, David earned by obedience: The Spirit of the Lord, it says, departed from Saul, and was directed to David from that day forward. But indeed the mina taken from the wicked servant being commanded to be given to him who had ten minas mystically indicates, as I believe, that upon the fullness of the Gentiles entering all Israel will be saved (Rom. XI), and then the abundance of spiritual grace, which we now suddenly exercise, will be bestowed upon the teachers of that people.

Luke 19:26

But I say to you that to everyone who has, it will be given. But from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. This saying refers to the previous teachings, showing that even he who has the gift of God can lose it if he does not use it, and it will be increased in him who has it and uses it well. This transformation of graces, because it usually happens in this life, should be noted from the testing of the Lord's return, which is now partially celebrated but will then be universally fulfilled. For every day He returns with the kingdom received from the Father because He observes the state of the Church, which sojourns on earth. Every day He gives money to be traded by this large number of faithful servants, and in each examines the measure of their completed work, rewarding one who works faithfully and wisely with a greater gift of grace, and depriving another who follows idle pleasures and softness in luxury of what had been given to him. Truly, regarding the universal judgment manifest to all, which is terrible even to speak of, many who seemed apt to teach will be counted among the ignorant because of their negligence. But other simpler brothers and those entirely ignorant of the basics but devoted in excellent conduct will receive the highest rewards among the apostolic teachers. For he who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward (Matt. X).

Luke 19:27

Nevertheless, bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me. This signifies the impiety of the Jews or all the reprobates unwilling to turn to Christ, to be punished on the day of judgment. Through the two faithful servants, representing the teachers of both peoples, through the ten and five minas, the same peoples believing, through the wicked servant, evil Catholics, through the enemies who

did not want Him to reign over them, indicating the impiety of those who either never heard the word of faith or preferred to corrupt it by misinterpretation, through the unsewn field, indicating even those who never had the opportunity to hear the word of God, the examination is signaled. Through these five personas is expressed the entirety of the human race, which will be on the day of judgment. [Luke 19:28] -- And having said these things, he advanced, going up to Jerusalem. The parable being finished, he went up to Jerusalem, to show that the parable had been particularly about the outcome of this very city, which not long after would both kill him and, owing to the hatred of his reign, be destroyed by hostile calamity.

Luke 19:29

And it came to pass, when he approached Bethphage and Bethany, to the mountain called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying: Go into the village opposite you. Bethphage was a village of priests on the Mount of Olives. Bethany was also a small town or city on the side of the same mountain, about fifteen stadia from Jerusalem, as the evangelist John reveals, where Lazarus was raised from the dead. Whose tomb a church now built there shows. Bethphage means house of the mouth, Bethany means house of obedience. The Savior, about to arrive in Jerusalem, exalted these places with the dignity of his presence, because before his passion he filled many with the gifts of pious confession and spiritual obedience by teaching them. These beautiful cities situated on the Mount of Olives refer to, that is, the very Lord, who refreshes us with anointing of spiritual graces and the light of knowledge and piety. Hence, when he said elsewhere: A city set on a hill cannot be hidden (Matthew V), he immediately added: Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket (Ibid.), because the same Mount of Olives, that is, the chief distributor of spiritual graces, who exalts his city to stand out, also anoints it with the oil of gladness so that it can shine. And because the same light did not wish to be put under a basket, he sent the disciples to the village opposite them, that is, he took care to send teachers to penetrate the uneducated and barbaric coasts of the whole world, as though they were the walls of a village placed opposite. And so rightly two are sent, either for the knowledge of truth, and purity of work, or for the sacrament of the twin love, namely of God and neighbor, to be preached throughout the whole world.

Luke 19: 30

Entering there, you will find a colt tied, on which no man has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. And if anyone asks you why you are untying it, you shall say this to him: Because the Lord has need of it. Entering the world, the preachers found the people of the nations entangled in the bonds of perfidy. For each one was constrained by the cords of their sins, not only of the nations, but also of the Jews. For all have sinned and are in need of the glory of God (Rom. III). Hence it is fittingly noted in Matthew that a donkey is also found tied with the colt. Indeed, the donkey, which was domesticated and had borne the yoke of the law, signifies the synagogue: the unruly and free colt of the donkey represents the people of the nations. On whom no man has ever sat, that is, no rational teacher had ever imposed the restraints of correction, by which either their tongue could be kept from evil or they could be forced onto the narrow path of life; none had contributed the garments of salvation by useful teaching, by which they could be spiritually warmed. A man would have sat upon it if anyone using reason had corrected its foolishness by repression.

Hence two disciples are fittingly delegated to present the animals to the Lord, just as in the example of the previous parable, the two orders of preachers, one directed to the nations, the other to the circumcision, can be understood. And it should be noted that the three evangelists who wrote in Greek only mention the colt; but Matthew alone, who wrote his Gospel to the Hebrews and in the Hebrew language, also reports the donkey being untied and brought to the Lord, to show that the salvation of the Hebrew nation should not be despaired of if it repents. Untie, he says, and bring. For whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. XVIII).

Luke 19: 32

But they who were sent went away and found the colt standing, as he had told them. Mark writes that the colt was found tied at the door outside, in the street. Now the door itself is He who says: I am the door of the sheep; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture (John X). From which pastures of life this colt, that is, the people of the Gentiles, was lacking when it still stood tied outside this door in the street. And rightly in the street, because it did not hold to a certain way of

life and faith, but followed many uncertain paths of heresies in error. To which it is appropriately added: [Luke 19:33] -- And as they were loosing the colt, its owners said to them: Why are you loosing the colt? For it had many owners, being not devoted to one doctrine and superstition, but wretchedly carried off to various and diverse errors of idols at the whim of unclean spirits, proceeding as it was led. Finally, it is said to be common by a certain vernacular Scripture custom that which is unclean, as also a voice from heaven says to Peter: What God has cleansed, you must not call common (Acts XI). Because he who is holy is God's alone and is shared with no one else. But he who is sinful and unclean belongs to many. For many demons possess him, and therefore he is called common.

Luke 19:34

But they said: Because the Lord has need of him. And they brought him to Jesus. Those who had resisted the loosing of the colt, upon hearing the name of the Lord, became quiet, for the masters of errors who opposed the teachers of the salvation to the Gentiles, defended their darkness until the power of the true possessor and Lord shone through with miracles to back it up. But after the power of the dominical faith appeared, with the complaints of the adversaries giving way all over, the liberated congregation of believers, carrying God in their heart, is brought forward. [Luke 19:35] -- And throwing their garments on the colt, they set Jesus upon it. The garments of the apostles, or the doctrine of virtues, or the exposition of Scriptures, or certainly the various dogmas of the ecclesiastical understanding, with which they cover human hearts, formerly bare and cold, so that they may become worthy for Christ as rider.

Luke 19:36

And as he went, they spread their garments in the way. As the Lord is carried by the donkey, the disciples lay their garments in the path, because by stripping away their own bodily attire, they prepare the way for the simpler servants of God with their own blood, so that they may walk with an undisturbed step of the mind towards Jerusalem, where Jesus leads. For Jesus, sitting on the donkey, heads towards Jerusalem when, governing the soul of each faithful one, He leads His donkey to the vision of inner peace, or also when He presides universally over the holy Church and kindles in it the desire for the peace of heaven. But because according to other evangelists, not

only disciples but also many from the crowd spread their garments on the road, those may be understood as well who, following the examples of the martyrs, discipline their bodies through abstinence, to prepare a path for the Lord towards the mind, or offer good examples for those who might follow.

Luke 19:37

And as he was now approaching the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice. As the Lord descends from the Mount of Olives, the rejoicing and praising multitudes also descend, because with the author of mercy humbling himself by his own will, it is necessary for those who are most in need of mercy to imitate, as far as they can, the footsteps of His humility. It is necessary, I say, for us to look at how Jesus descended from the Mount of Olives, that is, how He, being in the form of God, humbled Himself, became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, we also should humble ourselves under His mighty hand, so that we may be exalted in the time of visitation.

Luke 19:38

Above all the virtues they had seen, they said: Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. They had indeed seen many virtues of the Lord, but they were especially astonished at the resurrection of Lazarus, which had recently taken place, with the crowd bearing witness who had been with Him when He called him out of the tomb and raised him from the dead. For the prophet also came to meet him and the crowd, because they heard he had performed this sign. It should be noted, for the Savior was not coming from Galilee now for the first time, that is, five days before Passover. He had previously visited Jerusalem, as John records, during the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month of the previous year, and from there for six continuous months, that is, until the day of Passover when He suffered. At times, He worked signs and taught in Jerusalem; at times, He ascended the Mount of Olives; at times, expelled from Judea, He went beyond the Jordan; at times, He stayed in a city of the wilderness called Ephraim with the disciples, but never during that time did He return to Galilee. Therefore, above all the virtues they had seen Him perform over such a time, the crowds praised God, saying:

Luke 19:38

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest. But blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord is rather to be understood as in the name of the Lord, in the name of God the Father, although it can also be understood in His own name, because He Himself is the Lord. Hence, it is written elsewhere: The Lord rained from the Lord. But His words direct our understanding better, who said: I have come in the name of my Father, and you did not receive me; another will come in his own name, him you will receive (John 5). For Christ is the teacher of humility, who humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death (Philippians 2). Thus, He does not lose divinity when He teaches us humility. However, Christ is not the King of Israel to demand tribute or to arm an army with iron and to conquer visible enemies, but the King of Israel because He rules minds, because He cares for eternity, because He leads believers, hopers, and lovers into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, the Son of God, equal to the Father, the Word by which all things were made, who wished to be the King of Israel, is a matter of condescension, not promotion, a sign of compassion, not an increase in power. For He who was called King of the Jews on earth is the Lord of the angels in heaven.

But because Christ in the flesh has shone as the propitiation of the whole world, namely, of men and angels, it is fitting that heavenly and earthly things mutually sing of His praise together in His dispensation. Thus, at His birth, the armies of heavenly powers sang, praising God: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men (Luke 2), and at His triumph over the prince of this world, and His imminent return to heaven, mortals reciprocate praise: Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

Luke 19:39

And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Him: Teacher, rebuke Your disciples. The dementia of the envious is remarkable, who do not doubt to call Him Teacher because they knew He taught the truth; yet, they think His disciples should be rebuked, as if they were better taught, and they advise Him to correct those He instructed, whom they see manifest as God by His approving signs. [Luke 19:40] -- To whom He Himself says: I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would cry out. All His acquaintances stood at a distance when the Lord was crucified, fearing to confess God

whom they saw fixed to the wood, but while these were silent, the stones and rocks with a great voice proclaimed the King who comes in the name of the Lord. For when He gave up the spirit, behold, the earth shook, and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened: what humans hesitate to confess either out of fear or treachery, even the hardest elements of creation openly proclaim as the God and Lord of the world. Truly, in a higher mystery, He indicates the unbelieving and hard-hearted nations of the Gentiles under the name of stones, to whom, having removed the heart of stone, He gave a heart of flesh (Ezek. XI), that is, sensible and human, by which they could believe in, praise, and see their God and Creator. Therefore, even if the crowds of men should keep silent, the stones will cry out, because blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and thus all Israel shall be saved (Rom. III).

Luke 19: 41–42

And as He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If you had known, even you. Because it is written that the Lord wept at this destruction of Jerusalem which was undertaken by the Roman princes Vespasian and Titus, no one who reads the history of its overthrow can be unaware. But one must first inquire what is meant by: Seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If you had known, even you. The merciful Redeemer indeed wept over the ruin of the faithless city, which the city itself did not know was coming. To which it is rightly said by the Lord weeping: If you had known, even you, meaning: you would have wept over what you now exult over, because you do not know what is coming. Hence it is also added: [Luke 19:42] -- And indeed in this your day, what is to your peace. For when it was giving itself to carnal pleasures, it did not foresee the evils about to come, it had, in its day, what could have been for its peace. Why it would have present goods for peace is made clear when it is added:

Luke 19: 42

But now they are hidden from your eyes. For if the evils that were impending had not been hidden from the eyes of his heart, he would not have rejoiced in present prosperity. Moreover, the punishment that was imminent from the Roman leaders, as I predicted, was added, when it is said: [Luke 19:43] -- Because the days will come upon you, and your enemies will build an embankment around you. And they will surround you and hem you in on every

side, and will level you to the ground, you and your children within you. This is also added: And they will not leave one stone upon another in you. The very migration of that city now testifies to this, since, whereas now it is built in that place where the Lord was crucified outside the gate, that former Jerusalem was utterly overthrown. The reason for its overthrow that brought its due punishment is added:

Luke 19:44

Because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. For the Creator of all things deigned to visit this city through the mystery of the Incarnation, but it did not remember His fear and love. Hence, through the prophet, the birds of the sky are brought as witnesses against the hardness of the human heart, when it is said: The stork in the sky knows its appointed time, the turtledove, the swallow, and the crane keep the time of their coming, but my people do not know the judgment of the Lord (Jerem. VIII). [Luke 19:46] -- And having entered the temple, He began to cast out those who sold and bought in it, saying to them: It is written, My house is a house of prayer. He who announced the evils to come and immediately entered the temple to cast out those who sold and bought in it, surely showed that the ruin of the people was chiefly due to the fault of the priests. Describing the overthrow and striking those who sold and bought in the temple, He showed in the very act of His work from where the root of destruction originated.

Luke 19:46

But you have made it a den of robbers. Those who sat in the temple to receive gifts, indeed, for it was not doubtful that they would seek injuries from those not giving gifts. Therefore the house of prayer had been made into a den of robbers, because they had accustomed themselves to stand in the temple for this reason: either to physically persecute those not giving gifts, or spiritually to kill those giving. Yet because our Redeemer does not withhold the words of preaching from the unworthy and ungrateful, after He held the rigor of discipline by casting out the perverse, He immediately showed the gift of grace; for it is added:

Luke 19:47

And he was teaching daily in the temple. We briefly run through these things according to history, now let us repeat the same to be discussed with moral understanding. Seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: Because if you

also had known. This he did once when he announced that the city was destined to perish. This our Redeemer in no way ceases to do daily through his chosen ones, when he considers that some have gone from a good life to reprobate morals. For he weeps for those who do not know why they are wept for, since according to the words of Solomon, they rejoice to do evil, and exult in wicked things (Proverbs II). For if they knew the damnation that threatens them, they would weep for their sins with tears. Truly, in this your day, which is for your peace. The perverse soul has its day here, which rejoices in a fleeting time. To whom the present things are for peace, because while it rejoices in temporal things, while it is exalted by honors, while it is dissolved in the will of the flesh, while it is not terrified by the fear of future punishment, it has peace in its day, which will have the grievous scandal of its damnation on another day. For there it is to be afflicted where the just will rejoice. But now they are hidden from your eyes.

The perverse soul, given to present things, dissolved in earthly pleasures, hides from itself the evils that will follow, because it refuses to foresee the future, which disturbs present joy. And while it forsakes itself in the delight of this present life, what else does it do but go to fire with closed eyes? Because days will come upon you, and your enemies will encircle you with a palisade. Who are greater enemies to the human soul than evil spirits? who besiege it when it leaves the body, which they nurture with deceptive delights placed in the love of the flesh. They encircle it with a palisade, because recalling its iniquities, which it has committed, before its mind's eyes, they constrict it, dragging it to the society of their damnation. And they will encircle you, and press you in on every side. Evil spirits press the soul on every side, when they not only repeat the iniquities of deeds, but also of speech and moreover of thoughts, so that the soul, which previously expanded itself greatly in wickedness, in the end may be distressed about all in retribution. And they will dash you to the ground, and your children within you. Then the soul is dashed to the ground by the recognition of its guilt, when the flesh which it believed to be its life, is urged to return to dust. Then they fall at the death of his son, when illicit thoughts that now proceed from her are dispersed in the ultimate vengeance of life, as it is written:

On that day all their thoughts will perish. These hard thoughts, indeed, can also be understood by the symbolism of stones. For it follows: And they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you. For when a perverse mind adds

perversion to perverse thought, what else does it do but place stone upon stone? But in a destroyed city no stone is left upon a stone because when the soul is led to its vengeance, all the construction of its thoughts is scattered. Because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. Omnipotent God also habitually visits a perverse soul in many ways. For he constantly visits it with a precept, sometimes with a scourge, sometimes indeed with a miracle, so that it may both hear the truths it did not know and, while still proud and disdainful, either return compuncted by pain or be ashamed of the evil it has done, conquered by benefits. But because it does not recognize the time of its visitation, at the end of life it is handed over to those enemies with whom it is bound in the society of eternal judgement of its own damnation. And entering the temple, he began to drive out those who were selling in it and those who were buying. Just as the temple of God is in the city, so in the faithful people is the life of the religious.

And often some assume the habit of religion, but while they perceive the place of sacred orders, they attribute the duty of holy religion to the commerce of earthly negotiations. For those who are selling in the temple are those who grant to some as a reward what is rightfully theirs. Indeed, to sell justice is to keep it for the sake of receiving a reward. But those who are buying in the temple are those who, while unwilling to render to their neighbor what is just, and while scorning to do what is rightfully due, buy sin by giving a reward to patrons. To whom it is rightly said: My house is a house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves. Because when sometimes perverse men hold a place of religion, they kill with the swords of their malice where they ought to have revitalized their neighbors by the intercession of their prayer. The mind and conscience of the faithful is also the temple and house of God, which, if it brings forth perverse thoughts in harming the neighbor, is like a den where thieves reside and they kill those who walk simply when they strike with the swords of harm against those innocent in any way. For the mind of the faithful is no longer a house of prayer but a den of thieves when, leaving behind innocence and the simplicity of holiness, it strives to do that from which it can harm its neighbors.

But because we are endlessly instructed against all these perverse things by the words of our Redeemer through the sacred pages, now this is happening which is said to have been done, when it is said:

Luke 19: 47

And he was teaching daily in the temple. For when he skillfully instructs the minds of the faithful to guard against evil, Truth teaches daily in the temple. [Luke 19:47] -- But the chief priests, and the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy him, and they did not find what they might do to him. Either because he taught daily in the temple, or because he had cast out the thieves from the temple, or because when he came as King and Lord, he received the praise of a heavenly hymn from such a great throng of believers, the envious leaders sought to destroy him.

Luke 19: 48

For all the people were hanging on to hear him. This can be understood in two ways: either the people feared a tumult and did not find what they might do to Jesus whom they had determined to destroy; or they sought to destroy Jesus because, neglecting their teaching, they saw so many flock to hear him. Meanwhile, it is pleasing to consider briefly how beautifully the legal shadow of Passover corresponds, not only in mystery but also in the measure of time, with our true Passover in which Christ was sacrificed. He says, "On the tenth day of the first month, let each one take a lamb according to their families of their household. According to this rite, you will take a kid, and you will keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month (Exod. XII). For on the tenth day of the first month, that is, five days before Passover, as the evangelist John testifies, all the people went out to the Mount of Olives and took the Lord from there. Who is the lamb, because he came to take away sins, and there is no sin in him; he is the kid, because he was accused of sin. They brought the lamb into the house, singing joyfully, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord"; the kid, they said out of envy, "Master, rebuke your disciples"; the lamb, the entire people were hanging on to hear him; the kid, the leaders who sought to destroy him.

And five days before Passover, that is, from the tenth moon to the fourteenth, they kept the lamb or the kid to be sacrificed. Because although they thirsted for his blood even then, no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. They kept the lamb, who willingly listened to his words; the kid, who through their plots sought to catch something from his mouth to accuse him. But on the completed fourteenth day, that is, during the evening, after he handed over the sacraments of his body and blood to be

celebrated by his disciples, for those coming who would bind and seize him, there began to be fulfilled what follows: "And all the assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening" (Exod. XII). For by the cross of Jesus stood not only the wicked who mocked his death, but also the saints who mourned. I have chosen to briefly touch upon these matters to remind the reader that everything which follows leading up to the Lord's passion pertains to the figure of the lamb retained in the house and prepared for sacrifice.

CHAPTER 20

Luke 20:1

And it happened on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple and proclaiming the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came to him, and they said to him, "Tell us by what authority you do these things." In different ways, they construct the same slander as above, when they said, "In Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he casts out demons" (Luke XI). For when they say, "By what authority do you do these things?" they doubt the authority of God, and they want it to be understood that it is by the power of the devil that he does these things. Adding also: [Luke 20:2] -- "Or who is it that gave you this authority?" They most manifestly deny the Son of God, whom they think does signs not by his own power, but by that of others.

Luke 20:3

But answering, he said to them, "I will also ask you one thing. Answer me. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" The Lord could have confuted the slander of the tempters with an open answer, but prudently he asks so that by their own silence or response, they might be condemned. [Luke 20:5] -- But they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' He whom you confess had prophecy from heaven bore witness to me, and from him you heard by what authority I do these things. [Luke 20:6] -- But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us. For they are certain that John is a prophet." Therefore, they saw that whatever they responded, they would fall into a trap, fearing stoning, but fearing the confession of the truth even more.

Luke 20:7–8

And they answered that they did not know whence he was. And Jesus said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things. I do not tell you what I know, because you do not wish to confess what you know. Rejected most justly, they certainly left confused, and what is said in the psalm by the Prophet God the Father was fulfilled: I have prepared a lamp for my Christ (Psalm CXXXI), that is, John himself: I will clothe his enemies with confusion (Ibid.). However, it should be noted that the knowledge of the truth is to be concealed from those seeking for two main reasons, namely when the one who seeks is either less capable of understanding what he seeks, or is unworthy out of hatred or contempt for the truth itself that it should be revealed to him. For the sake of the one, the Lord said: I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now (John XVI). For the other reason, however, he instructs the disciples: Do not give what is holy to dogs or cast your pearls before swine (Matthew VII).

Luke 20:9

He began to tell the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country for a long time. While the Lord was teaching the people and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders gathered and questioned, testing in what authority he performed signs. Overcoming them with his wisdom, the Lord proceeded with what he had begun. Indeed, while they were listening, he addressed the people all the more, because they listened to his words more willingly. Introducing a parable, he intended to show them their impiety and to teach that the kingdom of God would be transferred to the nations. Therefore, the man who planted the vineyard is the same one who, according to another parable, hired laborers in his vineyard (Matthew 20). For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel (Isaiah 5). The tenants are the laborers who are said to be hired at the first, third, sixth, and ninth hours to cultivate the vineyard. However, he went into another country, not by changing his location. For where can God be absent from, who says: I fill heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23)? and elsewhere: I am a God who is near, and not far off, says the Lord? But he is said to go away from the vineyard to leave the tenants free will in their working. This is similar to what is said through

Isaiah, when the vineyard was let out to tenants: And I looked for it to yield grapes, but it produced wild grapes (Isaiah 5).

Luke 20:10

And in due season he sent a servant to the tenants to receive from them the fruit of the vineyard. But they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Correctly, he placed the time of fruits, not of harvests. For no fruit existed from the Jews, no yield of this vineyard was found, even though it was often and diligently sought. Therefore, the servant who was first sent is understood to be the lawgiver Moses, who for forty continuous years sought some fruit of the law he had given from the tenants; but they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. For they provoked Moses in the camp, and Aaron, the holy one of the Lord. And Moses was vexed because of them, for they embittered his spirit. And this same servant clearly declares what he thinks of the fruit of the vineyard, saying in a song: "For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and their branch from Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. The fury of dragons is their wine, and the cruel venom of asps" (Deut. 32).

Luke 20:11

And he added the sending of another servant. But they also beat him and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. The other servant signifies David the prophet and king. Who was sent after Moses, to urge the tenants of the vineyard, through the modulation of psalmody and the sweetness of the lyre, to the practice of good work after the legal decrees. For David himself also sought to lift the heart of the people to higher things, establishing that the praises of the Lord be sung continuously with sweet melody among the rites of carnal sacrifices. But even him they treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. For they said: "What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse" (1 Kings 12). They changed David's kingdom with an ignoble lineage and the religion with impiety. Yet he intercedes that this vineyard, which, transplanted from Egypt, covered the mountains of Palestine with its shadow, might not be utterly destroyed. "O Lord God of hosts, turn now, look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard, and protect the branch that your right hand has planted" (Ps. 80). Where he also explains who the man is who planted this vineyard, namely the Lord God of hosts.

Luke 20:12

And he sent a third, but they wounded this one also and threw him out. Understand the third servant as the group of prophets, who with continual testimonies admonished the people and foretold the evils that were to come upon this vineyard. But which of the prophets did they not persecute? They killed those who announced the coming of the just one (Acts 7). And these also spoke much about the barrenness of this vineyard, but let the lament of Jeremiah alone suffice. "I planted you as a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?" (Jeremiah 2). For the protection of this vineyard, namely so that in it or for it there would not arise the weak and infirm vegetable of quickly perishing sweetness, we read that Naboth the Jezreelite was not only wounded but also killed. Although we receive no prophetic utterance from him, yet his prophetic act, through his own blood, foretold that many martyrs were to come for this vineyard. Clearly, these three grades of servants can be understood to represent the figure of all teachers under the law, as the Lord elsewhere plainly shows, saying: "For it is necessary to fulfill all that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms" (Luke 24).

Luke 20:13

But the Lord of the vineyard said: What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps when they see him, they will respect him. Though the Lord of the vineyard is said to speak doubtfully and not with deliberation, this does not come from ignorance. For what could the Lord of the vineyard, who is understood here to be God the Father, not know? But God is always said to waver so that free will may be reserved for man. When the tenants saw him, they discussed among themselves, saying: This is the heir, let us kill him so that the inheritance may become ours. The Lord most clearly demonstrates that the leaders of the Jews did not crucify the Son of God out of ignorance but out of envy. For they understood that he was the one to whom it was said: Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance (Psalm II). And therefore, as if consulting among themselves, they were saying: Behold, the whole world is following him, and if we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him (John XII). Therefore, the inheritance of the son is the Church given to him from all the nations, which the Father did not leave to him by dying, but he miraculously acquired by his own death, because he

possessed it by rising again. But the wicked tenants were attempting to seize this, having killed him, when the Jews, crucifying him, tried to extinguish the faith which is through him, and rather to promote their own righteousness, which is from the law, and sought to implant it in the gentiles to be instructed.

Luke 20:15

And they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. The heir of the vineyard is slaughtered outside the vineyard, because Jesus suffered outside the gate to sanctify the people with his own blood. Either he was cast out of the vineyard and killed, because he was first rejected by the heart of the unbelievers, and then given over to the cross. In whose figure Moses set the altar of burnt offering, where the blood of the victims would be poured, not within the tabernacle, but at the door, mystically teaching that the altar of the Lord's cross should be placed outside the gate of Jerusalem, and that Christ himself, the true sacrifice of the Father, whom he had come to sanctify, should not be received in the innermost heart of the house of the Jews, but should be tinged with his own blood outside. But that which according to Mark is said with the order changed: And they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard (Mark 12), marks their obstinacy, who did not want to believe the apostles preaching of the crucified and risen Lord, but cast him out as if he were a vile corpse. Because, as far as it depended on them, excluding him from their boundaries, they gave him to be received by the Gentiles.

Luke 20:15

What then will the lord of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others. When they heard this, they said: God forbid. They contradicted the Lord's sentence because they recognized that it was against their own perfidy. For they understood the parable not because they were already prepared by the merit of holiness to grasp the words of the mystery, but because they were inflamed with the flames of malice to do what was being said, and therefore they were ready to recognize what they had in mind, although spoken in parables, as something long meditated upon. Therefore, to the Jews denying that it would be just for the knowledge of the divine law which they despised to be transferred to the Gentiles, observe what the Savior replies.

Luke 20:17

But he, looking at them, said: What then is this that is written: The stone which the builders rejected, this one has become the head of the corner? How, he says, will this prophecy be fulfilled, which says that the stone rejected by the builders is to be made the head of the corner, unless it be that Christ, rejected and killed by you, is to be preached to the believing nations? So that, like a cornerstone binding together two into itself, from both peoples he builds for himself one city of the faithful, one temple. For the same teachers of the Synagogue whom he had previously called husbandmen, he now calls builders, because those who were instructed to cultivate the people subject to them to bear fruits of life like a vineyard, were commanded to build and adorn this for God as a worthy dwelling, like a house. Whence also the Apostle writing to the faithful says: You are God's husbandry, God's building (I Cor. III). But those who refused the fruit of God's vineyard as bad husbandmen, the same ones as bad masons attempted to remove the precious chosen stone from the house of God, which was to be placed either in the foundations or in the corner, that is, they tried to take away the faith of Christ from their hearers. But even though they were unwilling, this same stone made the head of the corner, because from both peoples, as many as he willed, he joined together in his faith.

Luke 20:18

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken. Upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder. It is one thing to stumble against Christ through evil deeds, another to deny Him through impiety. Whoever is a sinner and yet believes in Him falls indeed upon the stone and is shattered, but is not utterly crushed; for he is preserved by wisdom for salvation. Upon whomever it falls, that is, upon whom the stone itself comes down, and who utterly denies Christ, it will grind him to powder, so that not even a shard remains in which a little water may be drawn. Whether he speaks of those who fall upon Him, who now despise Him or bring Him injuries. Therefore, they do not utterly perish yet, but are nonetheless shattered so that they do not walk rightly. But upon whom it falls, it will come upon them from above in judgment with the punishment of destruction. Therefore, it is said it will grind them to powder, so that the wicked may be like dust which the wind drives away from the face of the earth (Psalm 1).

Luke 20:19

And the chief priests and scribes sought to lay hands on him at that hour, and they feared the people. For they knew that he had spoken this parable against them. The chief priests and scribes, as if accusing the Lord of lying against them, sought to kill him, but by seeking this they were teaching that what he said was true. For he is the heir, whose unjust death he said would be avenged; they are the wicked tenants, who hesitated a little due to human fear from killing the Son of God until his hour had come, but they were never able to be restrained by divine love. Indeed, in a moral sense, each of the faithful is assigned to tend the mystery of baptism which he exercises in his works, like a vineyard he cultivates. One servant after another is sent to receive the fruit, which is read in the law, the psalms, and the prophecies, following their admonition by doing good. But a sent servant is mistreated or beaten and cast out, when the word heard is either despised or, worse, even blasphemed. He kills the sent heir as much as is in his power, who tramples the Son of God and insults the Spirit of grace by whom he was sanctified. With the bad tenant destroyed, the vineyard is given to another, when each humble person is enriched with the gift of grace which the proud one scorned.

And this, too, that the chief priests and scribes, seeking to lay hands on Jesus, are restrained by the fear of the people, is enacted daily in the Church, when anyone refrains from attacking the unity of ecclesiastical faith and peace, which he does not love, either out of shame or fear of the multitude of good brothers living together. Yet, just as the Lord said about the foolish ostrich, when the time comes, will he take flight on high, because by persecuting the Church, he will rejoice in having the Lord crucified and displayed.

Luke 20:20

And observing, they sent spies, who pretended to be righteous, in order to catch him in his speech, and deliver him to the authority and power of the governor. Seeking to apprehend the Lord, the chief priests and the scribes feared the people, and therefore what they could not do themselves, they tried to accomplish through the hands of the governor, so that they might appear innocent of his death. For recently, under Caesar Augustus, Judea was subjected to the Romans, when a census was held throughout the entire world, and it had become tributary, and there was great unrest among the

people, with some saying that for security and peace, with the Romans fighting for all, tributes should be paid; however, the Pharisees, who prided themselves on their righteousness, were contrary to this, arguing that the people of God, who paid tithes and offered first fruits, and other things written in the law, should not be subjected to human laws. The spark of this unrest grew so strong that after the Lord's passion, when the Romans besieged them, they preferred to lose their homeland, nation, and kingdom, the noble temple with its religion, even the light itself, rather than pay tributes.

Luke 20:21

And they questioned him, saying: Master, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and do not show partiality, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not? The flattering and deceitful question provokes the respondent to fear God more than Caesar, and to say that tributes should not be paid, so that immediately the governor's officers, who are recorded to have been present according to other evangelists, could hold him as a leader of sedition against the Romans. [Luke 20:23] -- But perceiving their craftiness, he said to them: Why do you test me? Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have? Wisdom always acts wisely, so that his tempters may be refuted by their own words. Show me, he said, a denarius. This is the type of coin accounted for ten coins and bore the image of Caesar. Those who think the question of the Savior to be ignorance and not dispensation, let them learn from the present passage that Jesus certainly could know whose image was on the coin. But he asks so that he may aptly respond to their words.

Luke 20:24

They answered and said: Caesar's. And he said to them: Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Let us not think of Caesar as Augustus but as Tiberius, his stepson, who succeeded in the place of his stepfather, under whom the Lord also suffered. All Roman kings from the first Gaius Caesar, who had seized the empire, were called Caesars. Moreover, when he says: Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, let us understand it to mean the coin, the tribute, and the money, and unto God the things that are God's: tithes, firstfruits, offerings, and sacrifices. Just as he himself pays the tribute for himself and Peter, and renders unto God the things that are God's, fulfilling the will of

the Father. Alternatively: Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; just as Caesar demands from you the impression of his image, so too does God, so that just as the coin is given to Caesar, so too the soul should be given to God, illuminated and imprinted with his visage. Hence the Psalmist: "The light of your face has been imprinted upon us, O Lord" (Psalm 4). For this light is the whole of man, and the true good, which is perceived not by the eyes but by the mind. He said "imprinted upon us", as a denarius is imprinted with the image of the king. For man was made in the image and likeness of God, which he corrupted by sinning. Therefore, his true and eternal good is to be imprinted anew through rebirth.

Luke 20:26

And they could not reproach his word before the people, and marveling at his answers they remained silent. They who ought to have believed because of such wisdom, wondered that their cunning in ensnaring had found no place. [Luke 20:27] -- Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came forward. There were two heresies among the Jews, one of the Pharisees and the other of the Sadducees. The Pharisees upheld the justice of traditions and observations, which they call deuterosis. Hence they were called divided by the people. The Sadducees, however, who are interpreted as just, claimed for themselves what they were not. The former believing in the resurrection of both body and soul, and confessing angels and spirits, while the latter, according to the Acts of the Apostles, denied everything. [Luke 20:28] -- And they asked him, saying: Teacher, Moses wrote to us, if anyone's brother dies having a wife, and he is without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. See the difference between the letter and the spirit. According to the letter, one is compelled to marry in life, so that the brother may raise up seed for the deceased; the spirit, however, is the measure of chastity.

Luke 20:29–32

Therefore, there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her, and he too died without children. And the third took her. Similarly, all seven, and they left no seed, and died. Last of all, the woman also died. Those who did not believe in the resurrection of bodies, judging that the soul perishes with the bodies, rightly

fabricate such a story, which accuses as madness those who assert the resurrection of the dead. However, it is possible that this truly happened at some time among their people. [Luke 20:33] -- In the resurrection, therefore, of which of them will she be the wife? For the seven had her as wife. They oppose with the disgrace of the story, so that they may deny the truth of the resurrection. But mystically, these seven brothers who died without children correspond to the reprobate of all kinds, who, throughout the entirety of this life's span, which revolves in seven days, are barren of good works. When these are individually swept away by miserable death, ultimately even the worldly way of life itself, which they led without vital work, will pass away like an unfruitful wife.

Luke 20:34

And Jesus said to them: The children of this age marry, and are given in marriage. When the Lord says: Do not give what is holy to dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine (Matthew 7), because He is found to have said certain things either here about the glory of the resurrection, or elsewhere about the mystery of His dispensation or even His divinity, which many who were present either by resisting or by scorning did not receive, He is not to be thought as having given what is holy to dogs, or cast pearls before swine. For He did not give to those who could not grasp it, who, due to the impurity of others, ought not to be neglected. Indeed, when the tempters were questioning Him, and He was responding to them in such a way that they had nothing to contradict, even though they would rather languish in their own venom than be satisfied with His food, yet others who were able to grasp it heard many things usefully because of them.

Luke 20:35

But those who are considered worthy of that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. This is not to be understood as if only the worthy will either rise again or be without marriage, and the unworthy, that is, sinners, are either believed not to rise again or to rise for the sake of marriages; rather, it should be understood that all will both rise again and remain without marriages in that age. But the Lord and Savior, to incite souls to seek the glory of the resurrection, wished only to speak of the elect. If, however, in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, then the bodies that rise are ones that can marry and be given

in marriage, that is, bodies of men and women distinguished by specific members, but bound by no pleasure or necessity of intercourse. For no one says about a stone or a tree, and these things which do not have genital members, that they do not marry nor are given in marriage, but about those who, when they can marry, do not for another reason.

Luke 20:36

For they can no longer die. Because marriages are for the sake of children. Children are for the sake of succession. Succession is for the sake of death. Therefore, where there is no death, neither are there marriages. [Luke 20:36] -- For they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Equal to angels and sons of God, who, renewed by the glory of the resurrection, without any fear of death, without any stain of corruption, without any act of earthly state, enjoy the perpetual vision of God, to which, whoever desires to ascend to the equality of angelic dignity must now condescend to the least of the brothers. [Luke 20:37] -- But that the dead rise again, even Moses showed at the bush, as he says, "The Lord God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." To confirm the truth of the resurrection, he could have used much more obvious examples, among which is this: "The dead shall be raised, and those who are in the tombs shall arise." Therefore it is questioned why the Lord chose to bring forth this testimony, which seems ambiguous or not sufficiently relevant to the truth of the resurrection. But the Sadducees accepted only the five books of Moses, rejecting the prophecies of the prophets. Thus, it was foolish to bring forth testimonies from there whose authority they did not follow. Furthermore, to prove the immortality of souls, he used the example from Moses: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus III). And immediately he adds,

Luke 20:38

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." To prove that souls remain after death, something which they denied along with other things (for it could not be that he is the God of those who do not exist at all), the resurrection of bodies would consequently be inferred, which, with the souls, have done good or evil. [Luke 20:38] -- For all live to him. All those, indeed, whose Lord is God. They live to him, truly the life by which the just live even when they die in the body. About this elsewhere the Lord says: "He who be-

lieves in me, even if he dies, shall live" (John XI). Believe, therefore, and if you die, you shall live. But if you do not believe, even when you live, you are dead. For the widow who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives (I Timothy V).

Luke 20:39–40

But some of the scribes answering said: "Master, you have spoken well." And they dared not ask him anything further. The chief priests, Sadducees, and scribes seeking a cause for calumny, and to find a word that could be ensnared, since they were confounded in their speeches, asked no more, but openly handed him over to the Roman authority. From this, we understand that the poison of envy can indeed be overcome, but it is difficult to rest. [Luke 20:42] -- He said to them: How do they say that Christ is the son of David, and David himself says in the book of Psalms: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? David therefore calls him Lord, and how is he his son? The question of Jesus profits us even today against the Jews. For those who confess that Christ is to come assert that he is a simple man and a holy man of the lineage of David. Let us therefore ask them, taught by the Lord, if he is a simple man and only the son of David, how does David call him his Lord? They are not reproved because they say he is the son of David, but because they do not believe he is the Son of God. Indeed, he is both the Lord of David, continuously being God before time, and appeared as the son of David, born as a man at the end of times. And that the enemies are subjected by the Father does not signify the weakness of the Son, but the unity of nature by which one works in the other. For the Son also subjects the enemies to the Father because he glorifies the Father on earth.

Luke 20:46

When all the people were listening, he said to his disciples: Beware of the scribes who wish to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at banquets. To walk in stoles means to proceed to the public adorned in more distinguished garments. In which among other things, the rich man who feasted sumptuously every day is described as having sinned (Luke 16). However, it should be noted that he does not forbid those whose duty these things properly belong to, to be greeted in the forum, or to sit in the first places, or to

recline at banquets; but rather, he teaches that those who, whether having them or not, unjustly love these things, are to be considered as reprobate by every faithful person, rightly censuring the mind and not the rank. Nonetheless, it is not without fault if those wish to engage in lawsuits in the forum, who desire to be called teachers in the Synagogue in the seat of Moses. Truly, we are commanded to beware of those desirous of vain glory for two reasons: first, so that we are not led astray by their pretense, thinking that what they do is good, and second, that we are not inflamed by emulation, foolishly rejoicing in being praised for the good things they pretend.

Luke 20:47

Those who devour the houses of widows, while feigning long prayers, will receive greater damnation. He did not simply say they will receive damnation, but added greater, to indicate that even those who stand praying in corners to be seen by men (Matthew VI) deserve damnation; but those who do these things more lengthily, as if acting more religiously, not only seeking praises from men but also money, will be punished with lengthier damnation. For there are those who, pretending to be righteous and of great merit before God, do not hesitate to take money from any weaklings troubled by the conscience of their sins, as if they would be their advocates in judgment for them. And while normally an outstretched hand assisting a poor person is helped by prayers, these people, primarily in their prayers, watch through the night to take a coin from the poor. To them, the curse of Judah is deservedly applicable: When he is judged, let him go out condemned, and let his prayer become a sin (Psalm CVIII). For he goes out condemned when he is judged, and his prayer turns into sin, who, now esteemed great among men, is found not only unable to intervene for others in the divine examination but not even able to avail by his own merits, and indeed those prayers by which he deceived the human judgment, he suffers punishment among crimes.

CHAPTER 21

Luke 21:1

But looking up, He saw the rich putting their offerings into the treasury. Because in the Greek language, φυλάσσειν means to guard, and gaza in the Persian language means riches, the treasury was called the place where riches were kept. It was a chest with a hole on top, placed near the altar to the right of those entering the house of the Lord, into which the priests who guarded

the doors put all the money brought to the temple of the Lord and its upkeep. Read the words of the days. Even now, those who pray running into the house of the Lord, He too looks upon those bringing gifts, and whom He sees as worthy, He praises; whom He sees as reproachable, He condemns.

Luke 21: 2–3

And he saw a poor widow casting in two small coins, and said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them." This place morally communicates to us how acceptable to God anything we offer with a good heart is, for He undoubtedly weighs the heart and not the substance, and does not consider how much is given in His sacrifices, but from how much it is given. According to the laws of allegory, the rich who were casting gifts into the treasury represent Jews puffed up by the righteousness of the law, while the poor widow signifies the simplicity of the Church. She is rightly called poor because she has cast away either the spirit of pride or sins as if they were the riches of the world. She is called a widow, for her Husband bore death for her, and now, hidden from her eyes in the recesses of heaven, He lives as if in part of another region. She casts two small coins into the treasury because she presents into the sight of the Divine Majesty, where the offerings of our work are kept as if inscribed and recorded by a certain number, either charity towards God and neighbor, or the gifts of her faith and prayer, which are considered small due to her realization of her own fragility, but accepted due to the merit of her pious devotion, surpassing all the works of the proud Jews.

Luke 21: 4

For all these out of their abundance have cast into the gifts of God; but she out of her poverty has cast in all the livelihood that she had. The Jew casts into the gifts of God out of his abundance, who, presuming on his own righteousness, prays thus with himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, etc." (Luke 18). But the Church casts her whole livelihood into the gifts of God, understanding that everything she lives by is not of her own merit, but the gift of God, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." (Luke 18). And elsewhere: "My strength I will guard for you, for you, O God, are my protector, my God, His mercy will go before me." (Psalms 58). THE SIXTH BOOK. READ HAPPILY. When Solomon, the wisest of kings, in the figure of Christ and the Church, was building a

temple for the Lord, he also, among other things, foretold through fitting examples of figures, that upon the arrival and manifestation of the truth and light of those things which were then being shadowed forth, soon all that shadowy and figurative composition of types would be utterly taken away. For after the house of incomparable work made from stone, wood, and gold was completed, he sent, in the figure of the people from the Gentiles who would believe, and brought Hiram from Tyre, the son of a widow woman (III Kings VII); without doubt in reference to her who, by casting two mites into the treasury, is praised for giving more than all. From the tribe, he said, of Naphtali, with a Tyrian father, a craftsman in brass, and full of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (Ibid.). But all the vessels which Hiram made for King Solomon in the house of the Lord were of bronze. The king cast them in the clayey ground in the plain of Jordan. For he who made all his vessels not with beaten work, but with cast work, first, no doubt, formed a mold of clay to the likeness of each vessel, necessary indeed until the work of the vessel was completed; but afterward, not only no longer useful, but clearly to be broken that the completion of the vessel might be apparent.

So then, like the form of clay, the legal ceremonies precede, so that the gifts of evangelical truth might follow like vessels of bronze. The composed, for the time, worthless earthenware should be broken, so that the permanent ornament which lay hidden can be revealed. The ashes of the heifer that sanctified the unclean are to be taken away, and the cross of Christ, which redeems the world, proclaimed. When the time comes when the bronze sea, by whose vivifying wave all who will enter the Church are baptized, when the twin pillars of the law, bearing lilies for heads, firm the door here and there for the sheep devoted to Christ, when the ten paired works of our deeds are prepared for the purifying of offerings when finally innumerable vessels of election are carried to the mount of the temple, the clayey ground that for a time covered these hidden things in the plain is dissolved. That is, with the approaching proclamation of the Lord's passion, through which the long-hidden sacraments of the Church would be uncovered from the veil of the letter, the shadow which concealed the heavenly secrets begins to wane and be destroyed. Thus rightly after the offering of the poor widow, that is, the faith of the Church praised by the Lord's mouth, the Evangelist follows on to add:

Luke 21:5–6

And to some who were speaking of the temple, that it was adorned with good stones and gifts, he said: The days will come when, looking at all these things, not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down. For formerly Jerusalem was that great royal city, where the most famous temple had been built to God. But afterwards, when he who was the true temple of God came, and began to reveal the mysteries of the heavenly Jerusalem, that earthly one was destroyed where the heavenly appeared, and not one stone remained upon another in that temple. There was previously a high priest, purifying the people with the blood of bulls and goats; but since the true high priest came, who purified believers with his own blood (Hebrews 13), that former high priest is nowhere to be found, nor is any place left for him. There was an altar previously, and sacrifices were celebrated; but when the true lamb who offered himself as a sacrifice to God came (Hebrews 9), all those things, placed as if for a time, ceased. Therefore, the divine dispensation rightly ensured that the city itself, the temple, and all those things were overturned so that, lest anyone, still a child and sucking from the faith's breast, seeing those things continue, while being astonished at the ritual of sacrifices and the order of ministries, would be taken away by the view of their various forms. But God, foreseeing our weakness and wishing to multiply His Church, caused all those things to be overthrown and utterly removed, so that without any hesitation when those things ceased, we might believe these true things, for which the types in those things preceded.

Luke 21:7

And they asked him, saying: Teacher, when will these things be? And what sign will there be when they begin to come to pass? Because while some were praising the buildings of the temple, the Lord openly responded that all these things would be destroyed, the disciples secretly, as he sat on the Mount of Olives, asked about the time and the signs of the predicted destruction, as Matthew and Mark testify. [Luke 21:8] -- He said: See to it that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am he" and "the time is near." Therefore, do not go after them. Many, at the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, rose up as leaders and claimed to be the Christs, asserting that the time of freedom was now approaching. Many in the Church, even in the times of the apostles, arose as heresiarchs who, among numerous other

things contrary to the truth, preached that the day of the Lord was at hand. Whom the Apostle condemns in the letter to the Thessalonians. Many in the name of Christ came as Antichrists, the first of whom was Simon the Magician, to whom, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, all those in Samaria listened, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called great" (Acts 8). Because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

Luke 21:9

But when you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified. These things must first take place, but the end will not come immediately. Wars pertain to enemies. Insurrections pertain to citizens. Both of these have been abundant among the Jewish people since the time of the Lord's passion, who chose a seditious thief as their savior. But with these preceding, the apostles are warned not to be terrified and not to abandon Jerusalem and Judea. Because evidently the end does not come immediately, which rather is to be deferred to the fortieth year, that is, the destruction of the nation and the ultimate ruin of the city and temple follows. [Luke 21:10-11] -- Then he said to them: Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines, and pestilences. It is established that these things occurred literally before the end of the desolation of the temple, that is, in the time of the Jewish sedition. However, kingdoms against kingdoms, and the pestilence of those whose word spreads like gangrene (2 Tim. 2), and the famine of hearing the word of God (Amos 8), and the disturbance of the entire earth, and separation from true faith, can also be understood in the heretics, who, fighting against each other, bring about the victory of the Church.

Luke 21:11

And there shall be terrors in the heavens, and great signs. And these same things being fulfilled, whoever has read the history of Josephus will find out. For indeed a star similar to a sword, as he states, hung over Jerusalem for a whole year, terrifying the anxious citizens with a dreadful portent. And likewise chariots and armed horsemen were seen running through the skies, and mimicking the manner of warriors for forty days. Moreover, when a heifer was brought to sacrifices, it gave birth to a lamb in the hands of those offering it. But what merit caused these things to happen is immediately added

when it is said: [Luke 21:12] -- But before all this, they will lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, dragging you before kings and governors for my name's sake. This indeed had been either the sole or the greatest cause of ruin for the Jewish nation, because after the occasion of the Lord Savior, they likewise harassed his preachers and confessors with impious cruelty.

Luke 21:13

It will happen for you as a testimony. As a testimony of whom, but of those who either bring about deaths by persecuting, or do not imitate by seeing? For the death of the just serves as assistance for the good, and as a testimony against the evil, so that the perverse may perish without excuse from where the elect take example that they might live. But, after hearing so many terrors, the hearts of the weak might be troubled, and thus consolation is added when it is immediately said: [Luke 21:14] -- Therefore, set in your hearts not to meditate beforehand what you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist or contradict. As if openly saying to his weakening members: Do not be terrified, do not fear. You go to battle, but I fight. You utter words, but I am the one who speaks.

Luke 21:16–17

But you will be betrayed by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by everyone because of my name. Lesser pain is caused by evils inflicted by strangers; indeed, the torments rage more within us that we suffer from those minds of whom we had confidence because with the loss of body, the evils torment us of lost charity. But because hard things are predicted about the affliction of death, immediately consolation is added about the joy of resurrection, when it is said:

Luke 21:18

And not a hair of your head will perish. We know that flesh cut feels pain, hair cut does not feel pain. Therefore, he says to his martyrs: Not a hair of your head will perish, evidently saying openly: Why do you fear lest what is cut and feels pain will perish, when even that in you which is cut and feels no pain cannot perish? In another sense: Not a hair of the head of the disciples of the Lord will perish, because not only the strong deeds or words of saints,

of which it is said: The Lord preserves all their bones (Psalm 33), but also the volatile (so to speak) and most delicate surface of the thoughts of the faithful, which emerges from the hidden root of the heart, as hair from the brain, will be preserved with due reward by the just judge. Hence rightly the Prophet, to show how much the merits of even good thoughts are accepted by the Lord, says: And the leftovers of thoughts will feast for you (Psalm 76). Hence the Nazarenes in the law, during the time of consecration, are commanded to nurture their hair, and it is said that a razor did not come upon the head of Samuel. Conversely, the captive woman in order to marry an Israelite man, cleansed from leprosy to be worthy to communicate with the Church, is commanded to shave all the hair of her body, because evidently every thought of the wise, which is good, pleasing, and perfect, is saved forever, and its reward is with the Lord. But the thought of the foolish and wicked, as an unworthy root before the sight of God, must be cut off through repentance.

Luke 21:19

And in your patience you shall possess your souls. Therefore, the possession of the soul is placed in the virtue of patience, because patience is the root and guardian of all virtues. Through patience indeed we possess our souls, because while we learn to master ourselves, we begin to possess that very thing which we are. For we are wondrously created, so that reason possesses the soul, and the soul possesses the body. But the right of the soul is repelled from the possession of the body if the soul is not first possessed by reason. Therefore, the Lord showed that patience is the guardian of our condition, who taught us to possess ourselves in it. But true patience is to endure others' evils with equanimity, and to be moved by no pain against the one who inflicts them. For he who bears the evils of his neighbor in such a way that he remains silently sad, and seeks a time for just retribution, does not exhibit patience, but feigns it.

Luke 21:20

But when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by an army, then know that her desolation is near. Thus far these things which were to be for forty years, with the end not yet coming; here the very end of the desolation, which was made by the Roman army, is explained by the Lord's words. [Luke 21:21] -- Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. The ecclesiastical his-

tory narrates that all the Christians who were in Judea, warned by the Lord at the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, left the place, and until the desolation of Judea was fulfilled, lived in a certain city named Pella across the Jordan. [Luke 21:21] -- And those who are in the midst of it, let them depart. And those who are in the regions, let them not enter into it. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. It indeed seems to pertain to appropriate admonition, that those who are outside should not enter into it, but how will those who are in the midst depart from a city already surrounded by an army? Unless perhaps what was stated before, that is, then those who are in Judea should flee, does not pertain to the exact time of the siege, but to the time before the siege, when the Roman soldiers first began to spread through the boundaries of Galilee or Samaria, so that then everyone would hasten to flee while there was still time for flight. But these are the days of vengeance, namely seeking vengeance for the blood of the Lord.

Luke 21: 23

Woe to those who are pregnant and those nursing in those days. Woe, in the presence of captivity, to those who are pregnant and those nursing, or suckling, as some interpret. For their wombs or hands burdened with the load of their children significantly hinder the necessity of flight. Read even the history of the Kings, where the wife of Jonathan, avoiding the evil of captivity with a hasty flight, received her son, who slipped from her bosom, permanently lame. [Luke 21:23] -- For there will be great distress upon the earth, and wrath upon this people. This distress and wrath have adhered as an inseparable companion to that people scattered among all nations up to this day, yet it is not believed to adhere perpetually. For after the Lord showed the order of the same distress or wrath, saying: [Luke 21:24] -- And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles. Immediately following the prophecy which sings: In wrath remember mercy, he appended and said:

Luke 21: 24

Until the times of the nations are fulfilled. For those times of the nations are indeed those which the Apostle mentions, saying: Because blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved (Rom. XI). When they have obtained the promised sal-

vation, and they shall return to their fatherland and rejoice in the possession and inhabitation of their former metropolis, perhaps it is not hoped in vain, because it is said that they shall not be oppressed forever, but until the times of the nations are fulfilled. What, however, follows after the times of the nations are fulfilled, and so all Israel is saved, the Lord manifestly explains in order. For according to Matthew, the disciples asked this, not only inquiring about the time of the destruction of the temple, but also the sign of his coming and the end of the age.

Luke 21:25

And there will be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, and on the earth distress of nations, in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves. For as the Lord indicates in the following, when the universal judgment appears, heaven and earth will pass away, and as we read in the Apocalypse of John, the sea will be no more, rightly therefore, with the same judgment impending, the roaring of the sea and waves is confused, the inhabitants of the earth pressing upon each other are afflicted, the great lights of the sky having their rays struck with new horror hide their troubled face. And just as trees thrust to fall are accustomed to emit signs of their crash and movement, so the elements, as if anxious with the approach of their end, tremble and waver. Therefore, what Matthew says: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky (Matt. 24), signifies the very presence of judgment, when with the appearance of the true glory of light, all the lights of the world are compared to darkness and shadows. However, what Luke says: There will be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, he indicates as precursors, as heralds of the coming judgment. Among these is that of the Prophet: The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord comes (Joel 2). Also what Luke says:

And on the earth distress of nations, I believe this to be what Matthew describes when speaking of the times of the Antichrist: For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be (Matt. 24). But what Luke adds, in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, is a foretelling of what John saw among the other changes of the age concerning the sea.

Luke 21:26

Men will wither away from fear and expectation of what is coming upon the entire world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. I believe this sentence signifies the very advent of the judge, when, according to another parable, all, that is, both wise and foolish virgins, roused by an unusual cry, trim their lamps, that is, they count their works with them, for which, with great fear, they are now expecting the imminent event of eternal judgment. For until then, nearly the entire world will act without any fear of the judge, as testified by the apostle who says: For when they say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction will come upon them (I Thess. V). Then therefore, with fear and expectation of the strict examination coming upon the whole world, many who seemed to flourish in this world will wither when they see themselves fruitless. Then faith, which flourished without works, will wither, as proven by the righteous Judge. Nor is it surprising that men, that is either by nature or by earthly sense, are disturbed at His judgment, whose presence even the powers of the heavens, that is, the angelic hosts, tremble at, as testified by the blessed Job who says: The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His rebuke. What, then, will the planks do when the columns tremble? What will the twig of the desert endure when the cedar of paradise is shaken?

Luke 21:27

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. In power and majesty, they will see Him whom, when He was in humility, they did not wish to hear, so that they will then feel His power all the more severely, as they now do not bow the neck of their hearts to His patience. But since these words are spoken against the reprobate, they are soon turned to the consolation of the elect, for it is added: [Luke 21:28] -- When these things begin to take place, look up and lift your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. When the plagues, he says, of the world increase, when the terror of judgment is shown by the shaking of the powers, lift up your heads, that is, cheer up your hearts. Because as the world, to which you are not friends, is ending, the redemption you seek is near. In the holy Scripture, indeed, the head is often put for the mind. For just as the limbs are governed by the head, so thoughts are arranged by the mind. To lift up the head, therefore, is to raise our minds to the joys of the heavenly homeland. But

that the world should be trampled upon and despised, the Lord shows by a prudent comparison. For it follows:

Luke 21:30

And He told them a parable: Look at the fig tree and all the trees, as soon as they put forth their fruit, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. He therefore clearly teaches that just as the coming summer is known by the fruit of the trees, so also the kingdom of God is known to be near by the ruin of the world. By these words it is certainly shown that the fruit of the world is ruin. For it grows to fall. It sprouts so that whatever it has sprouted consumes in disasters. But rightly is the kingdom of God compared to summer, because then the clouds of our sorrow pass away, and the days of life shine with the brightness of the eternal sun.

Luke 21:32

Amen, I say to you, that this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Indeed, the Lord greatly emphasizes what He thus pronounces. In a way, if it is permitted to say, it is His oath: Amen, I say to you. For Amen is interpreted as true, and yet it is not interpreted, since it could have been said "I tell you the truth," neither the Greek interpreter dared to do this, nor the Latin. Thus it remained, it is not interpreted, so that it might have the honor of a secret veil, not that it is denied, but lest it should be cheapened if exposed. Therefore "I tell you the truth" is said by the Truth, which indeed even if it did not say so, it could not lie altogether. Nevertheless, He emphasizes, He insists, He somehow awakens those who are asleep, He makes them attentive, He does not wish to be disregarded: "Amen," He says, "I say to you, that this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Now He either means every human generation, or specifically the generation of the Jews.

Luke 21:33

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. We must understand that the heaven which will pass away is not the ethereal or sidereal, but the airy heaven, from which both the birds of heaven and the clouds of heaven are named. This is attested by Peter, who states that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth formed out of water and through water by the word of God, by means of which the world then existed perished. But the

heavens that now exist and the earth are stored up by the same word for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men (2 Peter 3). He clearly teaches that not another heaven will perish by fire than the one destroyed by water, that is, these empty and cloudy spaces of the windy air. For the water of the flood, which surpassed the mountain peaks by only fifteen cubits, is not to be believed to have reached beyond the boundaries of air and ether. But wherever it could reach, evidently, according to the aforementioned statement of the blessed Peter, the fire of judgment will also reach. If, however, heaven and earth will pass away, it can be questioned how Ecclesiastes says: A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever (Eccles. 1). But by clear reason, heaven and earth pass away through the image they now have; nevertheless, they subsist without end through their essence.

For the form of this world is passing away (1 Cor. 7). And to John, the angel says: There will be (he says) a new heaven and a new earth (Apoc. 21). These indeed are not other things to be created, but these same are renewed. Therefore, heaven and earth will both pass away and will be, because they are purged by fire from the form they now have, and yet they will always be preserved in their own nature. Hence it is said by the Psalmist: You will change them, and they will be changed (Psalm 102). Indeed, their ultimate transformation is now announced to us by the very vicissitudes we observe, by which they incessantly alternate for our uses. For the earth fails from its species, in winter dryness, and greens in vernal moisture. The heaven is shrouded daily by the darkness of night, and is renewed by the brightness of day. Hence, therefore, hence let every faithful person deduce both that these things perish and yet are renewed through innovation, which now evidently are continually repaired as if from defect.

Luke 21: 34

But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. O foolish presumption of the human heart, which foresees the lamentable end of greed, drunkenness, and carousing, not even with the judge himself testifying, but, like the edict of the eternal King, after having learned it, despises it like a wicked servant. And certainly, if any skilled and wise doctor were to instruct us: Take heed, saying to you, lest one (for ex-

ample) too eagerly takes of the juice of this or that herb; for if he does this, sudden destruction will come upon him, how diligently would every man keep the commands of the forewarning doctor, so that by refraining from the forbidden, he might not perish? But now the Saviour and Lord of both souls and bodies commands the herb of drunkenness and carousing to be avoided, as well as the cares of the world, as if they were deadly juices, yet how many of us fear not only to be wounded by these but also to be consumed? I believe there is no other cause, but that they despise to give the same credence to the words of the Lord as they do to those of a doctor. For if they had believed, surely by believing they would fear, and by fearing they would beware of impending danger. But they, on the contrary, by remaining sluggish, prove how justly it is said: When the Son of Man comes, do you think he will find faith on earth (Luke XVIII)?

Luke 21:36

Therefore, watch at all times, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. He who desires to stand before the Son of Man, and to serve Him day and night in His temple according to the Revelation of John, and not to be cursed and cast into eternal fire away from His sight, should not only be restrained from worldly allurements but also pray and fast, and this not on certain days but at all times, just as the psalm says: I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth (Psalm XXXIII). For in this manner, he will be worthy to dwell in the house of the Lord, to praise Him forever and ever.

Luke 21:37

But he was teaching in the temple by day, and by night going out he stayed on the mount called Olivet. And all the people would come early in the morning to him in the temple, to hear him. What the Lord commands in words, he confirms by his deeds. For he who exhorts us to watch and pray, neglecting the pleasures and concerns of this life before the sudden advent of universal judgment, before the uncertain end of each of us, himself, at the time of his impending passion, perseveres in the vigils of his teaching and in prayers, equally indicating by example that it is worthy of God to be vigilant, to show the way of truth to others by word or deed, and either by word calling to faith those for whom he was to suffer, or by prayer commending them

to the Father. And we also, when we conduct ourselves soberly, justly, and piously in prosperity, and in adversity do not despair from the height of divine mercy, indeed teach in the temple all days, because we provide a model of good work to the faithful. By night, however, we remain on the Mount of Olives, for in the darkness of distress we breathe through the consolation of spiritual joy. According to him who said: "But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God; I have trusted in the mercy of my God" (Psalm LI). That is, just as the one who bestowed the fruit of mercy on those whom he could, I do not doubt that I am to be shown mercy by the Lord. And to hear us, all the people flock together, when, either having cast off the works of darkness or conquered them by the grace of God, walking honestly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, they imitate us as children of light (Rom. XIII).

CHAPTER 22

Luke 22:1

Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. The Passover, which in Hebrew is called phase, is named not from suffering, as many suppose, but from the transition, because the destroyer, seeing the blood on the doors of the Israelites, passed over and did not strike them, or the Lord Himself, providing help to His people, walked above. The evangelist John, examining the mystery of this word more sublimely, says: "Knowing that Jesus' hour had come that He should pass out of this world to the Father" (John XIII). Here he clearly declares that by the law the day of this festival is mystically called transition because the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, would either himself be passing from this world on that day or would lead us in a healthful transition as if out of Egyptian bondage. Certainly, according to the letter of the Old Testament, there is this distinction between the Passover and the unleavened bread: the Passover is called the day alone on which the lamb was slain in the evening, that is, the fourteenth moon of the first month. On the fifteenth moon, when they went out of Egypt, the feast of unleavened bread followed. Its feast is established for seven days, that is, until the twenty-first day of the same month, in the evening. Indeed, the Scripture of the Gospel often uses the day of unleavened bread for the Passover and the days of unleavened bread in place of the Passover.

For Luke says: "The feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover. Again John, when the matter occurred on the first day of unleavened

bread, that is the fifteenth moon, says: "And they did not enter into the judgment hall, so that they would not be defiled but might eat the Passover" (John XVIII). Because indeed the day of Passover is commanded to be celebrated with unleavened bread, and we, as if making a perpetual Passover, are always commanded to pass from this world. For having slain the lamb in the evening on one particular day, seven consecutive days of unleavened bread follow. Because Christ Jesus, having once suffered in the flesh for us in the fullness of times, orders us to live through all the time of this age, which is done in seven days, in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth: always fleeing with earnest effort the desires of the world, as if the snares of Egypt, and admonishing us to undertake a hidden solitude of virtues as if from worldly conversation.

Luke 22:2

And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill him. For they feared the people. These things, two days before the Passover, Matthew testifies, having assembled the chief priests, and the elders of the people, and the scribes, in the court of Caiaphas. But they feared the people, not dreading an uprising, but taking caution lest he be taken from their hands by the aid of the people. [Luke 22:3] -- But Satan entered into Judas surnamed Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. John notes in his Gospel that when the Lord had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, and after the morsel, then Satan entered into him. But this does not contradict Luke, who recounts that Satan had already invaded him before the morsel, because the one whom he now entered to deceive, he later entered to possess more fully as one already handed over. Now he entered to tempt as though he were still a stranger, then to drag him, as though already his own, to accomplish any harmful deeds he wished.

Luke 22:5

And he went and spoke with the chief priests and magistrates about how he might betray him to them, and they were glad. His saying: He went and spoke, shows that he was invited by the chiefs, not constrained by any necessity, but of his own accord he entered into the plan with a wicked mind. [Luke 22:5] -- And they agreed to give him money. And he promised. And he sought an opportunity to betray him without a crowd. Many today shudder at the crime of Judas, who sold his Lord, Master, and God for money, as

something monstrous and nefarious, yet they do not beware. For when they speak false testimony against anyone for bribes, surely because they deny the truth for money, they sell the Lord for money. For he said: I am the truth (John 14). When they stain the fellowship of brotherhood with any plague of discord, they betray the Lord, because God is love. Even if no one gives money, they sell the Lord for silver, because they take the image of the prince of the world, that is, the examples of the ancient enemy, ignoring the creator's image to which they were created. For just as John the Baptist, who did not die for the confession of Christ, but for the defense of the truth, yet, therefore, died for Christ because he accepted martyrdom for the truth, so on the contrary, he who scorns the laws of charity and truth indeed betrays Christ, who is truth and love. Especially when he does not sin through weakness or creeping ignorance, but in the likeness of Judas seeks an opportunity to change truth into a lie, virtue into crime, with witnesses absent.

Luke 22:7

Now the day of Unleavened Bread came, on which it was necessary to sacrifice the Passover. And he sent Peter and John saying: Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat. The day of unleavened bread of Passover refers to the fourteenth day of the first month, when, with leaven cast out, the Passover, that is, the lamb, was usually sacrificed in the evening, as has already been said above. Explaining this, the Apostle says: For Christ our Passover is sacrificed (1 Cor. 5). This Passover then had to be sacrificed, that is, it was decreed by the paternal counsel and definition. Although he was crucified on the following day, that is, the fifteenth moon, yet on this night when the lamb was slain, he both handed over to his disciples the mysteries of his flesh and blood to be celebrated, and, being caught and bound by the Jews, consecrated the beginning of his own immolation, that is, his passion.

Luke 22:9

But they said: Where do you wish us to prepare? We do not have a dwelling, we do not have a tent. Let those who are concerned with building houses and who think about the construction of grand porticoes hear this, those who are delighted by the display of precious marbles and ceilings adorned with gold, let them recognize Christ, the Lord of all, who had no place to lay his head. And for this reason, his disciples asked him: Where do you wish for us to prepare the Passover for you to eat? [Luke 22:10] -- And he said to them:

Behold, when you enter the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters. It is indeed a sign of foreknowledge from divinity that, while speaking with his disciples, he knows what will happen elsewhere. Beautifully, as the disciples are preparing the Passover, a man carrying a water jar meets them, to show that this mystery of the Passover is to be celebrated for the complete purification of the whole world. For water signifies the washing of grace, the jar signifies the perfect measure. Therefore they prepare the Passover, where a jar of water is brought, because the time is at hand when the symbolic blood on the threshold is removed for the true worshippers of the Passover, and the baptism of the life-giving font is consecrated to remove sins.

Luke 22:11

And you will say to the head of the household: The Teacher says to you: Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? The names of either the water-bearer or the Lord of the house are deliberately omitted, so that all who wish to celebrate the Passover, that is, to be imbued with the sacraments of Christ, asking to receive Christ in the hospitality of their own mind, may be given the opportunity. [Luke 22:12] -- And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there. And going, they found it as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. The large upper room is the spiritual law that, moving out of the narrow confines of the letter, welcomes the Savior in a high place. For he who still observes the killing letter and understands nothing else in the lamb but the animal, undoubtedly celebrates the Passover below, because he does not yet comprehend the majesty of the spirit. But he who has followed the water bearer, that is, the herald of grace, into the house of the Church, this one, transcending the roof of the letter through the life-giving Spirit, prepares a dwelling for Christ in the high chamber of the mind, because he understands all the mysteries of the Passover or other decrees of the law written about him.

Luke 22:14

And when the hour had come, he reclined at the table, and the twelve apostles with him. The hour of eating the Passover is designated, which, as it has been often emphasized, occurred on the fourteenth day of the first month, brought to evening, and with the fifteenth moon already appearing to the earth, according to the edicts of the law.

Luke 22:15

And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. First, he desires to eat the typical Passover with the disciples, and thus reveal the mysteries of his passion to the world, so that he may both be acknowledged as the fulfiller of the ancient and legal Passover and teach that this pertains to the figure of his own dispensation, restraining from exhibiting it carnally any further. Rather, as the shadow passes, he demonstrates that now the light of the true Passover has come. This is beautifully prefigured in the times of Joshua by the time and order of the fulfillment of the manna, where it is written: And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho, and they ate of the produce of the land on the next day, unleavened cakes, and parched grain of that year. And the manna ceased after they ate of the produce of the land, nor did the children of Israel use that food anymore (Joshua 5). Indeed, Joshua, taking up the people after the death of Moses, for some time beyond Jordan, refreshed them with the accustomed manna, by which he himself, although recognizing and having already tasted the fruit of the promised land, is refreshed. Thence he crosses the Jordan, circumcises with stone knives, and for three days and a half, up until the completed festival of Passover, does not take away the accustomed manna.

For, with Moses dead, Joshua is appointed leader, because, with the law corrupted by the traditions of the Pharisees, Christ is incarnated. Joshua feeds and is fed with manna beyond the Jordan because the Lord up to the time of his baptism observes the ceremonies of the law himself and desires them to be observed by all. Joshua circumcises the people crossed over Jordan with stone because, with the grace of baptism celebrated, the Savior also by the severity of faith preempts the temptations that the law could not deter. And those three and a half years, as if nourished by the usual manna, he does not cease to observe the sacraments of the law, although gradually provoking to the promises of heaven, until at the designated time, eating the desired Passover with his disciples, thus at dawn breaking offering the most pure mysteries of his body and blood consecrated on the altar of the cross, as unleavened cakes of the promised land to be imbued by the faithful. Finally, what follows:

Luke 22:16

For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. To the same extent Joshua's words agree, who said: Nor did the children of Israel eat that food any longer, but they ate from the fruits of the land of Canaan (Joshua V). -- I will not eat it, He says, until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God, that is, I will no longer celebrate the Mosaic Passover until it is spiritually understood and fulfilled in the Church: For that itself is the kingdom of God. Of which He elsewhere said to the disciples: The kingdom of God is within you (Luke XVII). In which kingdom the Lord still today eats the old Passover fulfilled, when He spiritually exercises in His members, that is in the Church itself, what Moses commanded the rude people to observe carnally.

Luke 22:17

And having taken the cup, He gave thanks and said: Take it and divide it among yourselves. And this cup pertains to that old Passover, of which He desired to put an end. Having taken it, He gave thanks, for this reason indeed, because the old things were to pass away, and all things were to be made new.

Luke 22:18

For I tell you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. This verse can indeed be taken simply, that from this hour of the supper until the time of the resurrection, when He would come in the kingdom of God, He would not drink wine. For afterwards, the apostle Peter testifies that He took food and drink, who said: Who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead (Acts X). But it is much more consistent that, just as above He denies eating the typical lamb, He also denies drinking the typical passover drink, until, with the glory of His resurrection shown and manifested, the faith of the kingdom of God comes to the world. So that by the two greatest edicts of the law, namely the Passover meal and drink spiritually changed, you might learn that all the sacraments of the law, or commands which seemed to sound carnal, are now to be transferred to spiritual observance. [Luke 22:19] -- And having taken the bread, he gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. With the old solemnities of the Passover having been completed, which were celebrated in memory of

the ancient liberation from Egypt, he moved to the new, which the Church desires to celebrate in memory of his redemption.

That namely, instead of the flesh of the lamb or its blood, substituting the sacrament of his flesh and blood in the figure of bread and wine, he showed that he himself was the one to whom the Lord swore and will not repent, you are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 109). He himself breaks the bread which he hands out, to show that the breaking of his body would not be without his own will, but, as he says elsewhere, he has the power to lay down his life and to take it up again. And just as he had acted to end the old, so also to begin the new he gave thanks to the Father, giving us at the same time an example that in every beginning or completion of a good work, the Father who is in heaven should be glorified. But what he says: Do this in remembrance of me, the apostle Paul explains. For when he set forth the words themselves saying: Do this in remembrance of me, this is my body which is broken for you, and again: This cup is the new testament in my blood, do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me, he added by explaining, and said: For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (I Cor. XI).

Luke 22: 20

Similarly also the cup, after he had supped, saying: This cup is the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you. What he says: Similarly also the cup, it is understood to be given in common (ἀπὸ κοινοῦ), as the full sentence: Similarly also the cup, after he had supped, he gave to them. Therefore, because bread strengthens the body and wine works blood in the body, this refers mystically to the body of Christ, that to the blood. But because it is necessary that both we in Christ, and Christ in us remain, the wine of the Lord's cup is mixed with water. For as John testifies, the waters are peoples (Rev. 15). And it is not permitted to offer water alone, nor wine alone, just as neither is it permitted to offer wheat grain alone without mixing and processing it into bread, lest such offering would signify as if the head is to be separated from the members, and either that Christ could suffer without the love of our redemption, or that we could be saved without Christ's passion, and be offered to the Father; if anyone is moved that when the Savior had supped with the apostles, he handed over his body and blood, why then are

we taught by the universal Church's custom of fasting to receive the same sacraments?

Let him briefly hear that therefore the apostles then, having supped, communicated, because it was necessary for that typical Passover to be consummated first, and so to move on to the sacraments of the true Passover. Now, in honor of such a great and so terrible sacrament, it pleased the teachers of the Church that we first be strengthened by the participation in the Lord's passion, first to be sanctified by spiritual feasts inwardly and outwardly, and thereafter the body to be refreshed by earthly banquets and common foods. And what he says: This is the cup of the new testament in my blood, refers to the distinction of the old Testament, which was dedicated with the blood of goats and calves, as the legislator said while sprinkling: This is the blood of the testament which God has commanded unto you (Heb. 9). For it is necessary indeed that the examples of heavenly things be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these, according to what the Apostle throughout the whole Epistle to the Hebrews distinguishes between the law and the Gospel, with very beautiful exposition and complete reasoning declares.

Luke 22:21

Nevertheless, behold the hand of the one betraying me is with me on the table. And indeed, the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. He who foretold the passion also foretells the betrayer, giving a chance for repentance, so that when he understood that his thoughts and hidden plans were known, he might repent of his deed. Yet he does not specifically designate him, lest, being openly corrected, he might become more shameless. He casts the crime upon a number so that the guilty might secretly repent. He also foretells the punishment, so that those who shame could not conquer might be corrected by the announced penalties. But even today and forever, woe to that man who approaches the Lord's table wickedly, who, with plots conceived in his mind, who, with a heart polluted by some crime, does not fear to partake in the mysteries of Christ. For indeed, he, in the example of Judas, betrays the Son of Man, not to the sinful Jews, but nevertheless to sinners, to his own members, who dare to violate that inestimable and inviolable body of the Lord. He sells the Lord, who, neglecting his love and fear, is found to love and care more for earthly and perishable things, indeed even for criminal ones. Woe, I say, to

that man, of whom Jesus, who during the offering at the holiest altars, as one who is about to consecrate the presented gifts, is not doubted to be present, with the ministers of heaven standing by him, is forced to ask: Behold, he says, the hand of the one betraying me is with me on the table.

Luke 22: 23

And they themselves began to inquire among themselves who it might be from them who was going to do this. And certainly, the eleven apostles knew that they had not conceived such a thing against the Lord, but they believed the teacher more than themselves, and fearing their own weakness, they sorrowfully inquired about the sin, of which they had no consciousness. Judas also shamelessly inquires, as Matthew and Mark mention, in order to falsely feign a good conscience with boldness.

Luke 22: 24

But a contention also arose among them, regarding who seemed to be the greatest among them. Just as it is customary for good morals in the Scriptures to always look to the examples of the preceding Fathers, by which they might progress to better things, and having recognized these, humble themselves about their own actions, so on the contrary, the reprobate, if by chance they find something reprehensible in the elect, as if they would cover their own wickedness by this or defend it as just, are most willing to gladly accept it. Therefore, they read with much more ardor that a contention arose among the disciples of Christ about who seemed to be the greatest among them than that the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul (Acts IV). They much more tenaciously recall that a dissension occurred between Barnabas and Paul, to the point where they separated from each other, than what Paul himself said: For while there is jealousy and contention among you, are you not carnal and acting like ordinary men? as if the weakness of the saints should be proposed for our imitation, and not rather that, because they recovered from their weakness, they became strong in battle, especially in this place where even the cause of their contention is unknown to us. For it is not unbelievable that, according to what is commanded elsewhere: Strive to enter through the narrow gate (Luke XIII), they might have vied with one another, outdoing one another in showing honor. Indeed, for whatever reason they might have contended, let us look rather at

what the spiritual master commanded than at what the not yet spiritual disciples did.

Luke 22:25

But he said to them: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. While the disciples were contending for precedence, the pious master did not rebuke them for initiating a dispute, but modestly described the form of humility they should follow. Yet, in obtaining this form, those who are greater and precedent, that is, the teachers of the Church, need not a small amount of discretion so that they do not, like the kings of the Gentiles, lord over their subjects and enjoy being raised by their superfluous praises, but, following the example of the King, they must preside and become like ministers. Because it is necessary for those acting in humility to be companions so that they may be raised against the vices of those who sin through the zeal of justice, so that they neither put themselves above the good in anything, nor when the fault of the wicked demands it, do they fail to recognize the power of their priority. Lest, indeed, the mind of the presiding one be carried away to the elation of power by the pleasure of it, it is rightly said by a wise man: "They have made you a leader, do not be lifted up, but be among them as one of them" (Ecclus. 32). Hence also Peter says:

"Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5). And yet sometimes it is a graver sin if among the perverse equality is preserved more than discipline, because, overcome with false piety, Eli did not wish to strike his sinning sons, yet suffered cruel punishment with them before the strict judge. Hence it is necessary that the ruler exhibits to his subjects both the piety of a mother and the discipline of a father. And amidst these, a careful circumspection must be provided with solicitude, lest either rigid strictness or remiss piety prevails.

Luke 22:27

For who is greater, the one who reclines or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines? But I am among you as the one who serves. To his words of exhortation, he adds examples, which the evangelist John more fully records, writing among other things: If I, the Lord and Master, have washed your

feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet (John XIII). Although by the word of serving, all the things that God did in the flesh can be understood. For he signifies that he will pour out the sacrament of his own blood to be administered to us, when he says: The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew XX), and showing this also as a primary example of service for the elders of the Church to emulate, so that we not only extend the ministries of mercies, charity, saving doctrine, spiritual example to our brothers, but also learn to lay down our lives for one another as he laid down his life for us.

Luke 22: 28–29

You are those who have remained with me in my trials, and I appoint to you, as my Father appointed to me, a kingdom. Not the beginning of patience, but perseverance is granted the glory of the heavenly kingdom. Because, indeed, perseverance, which is called constancy by another name, is a certain strength and fortitude of mind, and (so to speak) the pillar of all virtues. When it stands well upright and firm, nothing is more certain, nothing safer for good morals. But if it is thrown down by any storm, it does not fall alone; for indeed, all the goods of the soul collapse together. Therefore, as the Father appointed to the Son the kingdom, who was made obedient to death, even the death of the cross, exalted him, and gave him a name that is above every name (Philippians 2), so also the Son will lead those who remain with him in the trials to the eternal kingdom. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6). From the height of whose promise the unhappy Judas is excluded. For even before the Lord spoke these things, he is believed to have gone out. He not only spurned to remain with Him in the trials but also helped the authors of his trials. Those who, having heard the words of the incomprehensible sacrament, went back and no longer walked with Him, are also excluded. For there are none who have departed from the Lord, except those who returned repenting, who could be saved.

Luke 22: 30

That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. This table is set for all the saints to enjoy; it is the heavenly glory of life. The food and drink is that of which it is said elsewhere: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew V), for they shall be filled. By enjoying, namely, the

joy longed for and loved of the true and unwavering good. And you shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what the psalm sings of as the change of the right hand of the Most High (Psalm LXXVI), so that those who now humbly rejoice to serve their fellow servants may then be nourished on the Lord's table with the feasts of eternal life; and those who, here in trials, are unjustly judged, may remain with the Lord, and there, with him, come as just judges over their tempters, and as much as they were despised in this world in great humility, so then, with received seats, they will rise in power with a greater summit.

Luke 22:31

The Lord said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked for you, that he might sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail." Lest the eleven apostles should glory and attribute to their own strength what was said almost alone among so many thousands of Jews to have remained steadfast with the Lord in trials, he shows that they too, if they had not been protected by the aid of the Lord helping them, could have been crushed by the same storm as the others. But while Satan seeks to tempt them, and, as who winnows wheat, to shake them by ventilating, he teaches that no one's faith is tested by the devil unless God allows it. For Satan desires to sift the good men, and he breathes with the heat of malice to their affliction. For as much as he covets their trial by envy, so much he perishes as if seeking their seemingly trial. But when the Savior, praying for Peter, does not ask that he not be tempted, but that his faith should not fail, that is, that after the fall of denial he should rise again to his former state by repenting, he insinuates that it is beneficial for the saints to be tested by the flames of temptations, so that either they appear strong because they have been tempted, or having recognized their own weakness through temptations, they may become stronger, and thus, when they have been tested, they also may receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him (James 1).

Luke 22:32

"And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Just as I (he says) protected your faith by praying that it may not fail when Satan tempts, so you must remember to strengthen and comfort weaker brothers by the example of your repentance, lest they despair of forgiveness. This same ex-

hortation he gives after the resurrection, when he commands three times to feed his sheep to the one who professes loving him three times (for it was fitting that the fear of a threefold denial should be washed away by a threefold confession of love). [Luke 22:33-34] -- He said to him: "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." But he said: "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you deny three times that you know me." Because the Lord had said that he had prayed for Peter's faith, he, aware of his present fervent affection and faith, but ignorant of his future fall, did not believe that he could in any way fail him. But he who alone knows what is in man, so that no faithful person may either confidently trust in their own stability or carelessly distrust their fall, foretells as God the manner, time, and number of his denial, and as a merciful one promises the help of his protection.

Luke 22:35

When I sent you without purse, and wallet, and sandals, did you lack anything? And they said, Nothing. Then he said to them: But now he that has a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet; and he that has none, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword. How rightly does the judgment of the Fathers define discretion as the mother and nurturer of all virtues, and from this saying of the Lord, it is proven, who instructs his disciples not by the same rule of living in times of persecution as in times of peace. For there are virtues that must always be upheld firmly, and there are those that, for time and place, are to be changed by prudent discretion. Who indeed does not know that the bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, patience, modesty, chastity, faith, hope, charity, and the like, are to be kept by the faithful without any interruption of time? But indeed hunger, thirst, vigils, nakedness, reading, psalmody, prayer, the labor of working, teaching, silence, and similar things, if anyone thinks they are always to be performed, not only will he deprive himself of their fruit, but he will incur the mark of indiscreet obstinacy, indeed of stubborn foolishness. Therefore, the Master and Lord of virtues, to insinuate the measure of discretion, sends his disciples to preach, commanding them to take nothing on the way, as he ordains that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel.

But when the danger of death is imminent, and the whole people at once are persecuting both shepherd and flock together, he decrees a rule suitable to the time, permitting them to take money necessary for sustenance until

the furor of the persecutors calms down and the time to evangelize returns. Here he also gives us an example that for a just cause, sometimes certain rigors of our commitment can be temporarily set aside without fault. For instance, when we travel through inhospitable regions, it is allowed to carry more provisions for the journey than we had at home. He also commands to take up or to buy a sword if they do not have one, so that readers may know that the disciples do not lack the ability to resist, but rather that the teacher possesses the love of suffering. Where, even if there were no other cause for drawing the sword, that would be enough, so that by the ear of the servant being cut off and healed by the touch of the Lord, the virtue of the Savior's blessing might instruct even his assailants not to endure the anger of the one struck, but rather to prefer to embrace the faith of the risen one.

Luke 22:37

For I tell you that this which is written must still be fulfilled in me: "And he was numbered with the transgressors." For indeed, the things concerning me have an end. Behold why the disciples are advised to take a purse, a bag, and a sword, namely because the Lord was to be numbered with the transgressors, which Isaiah describes among other things (Isa. 53), either with robbers, between whom he was to be crucified, or with the dead to whom he was to descend by death, implying that. And then indeed he was numbered with the transgressors, when he descended to the dead and brought those he found there, who were his, back to the living. As another prophet sings about this: "By the blood of your covenant, you have released your prisoners from the pit wherein is no water" (Zech. 9). [Luke 22:38] -- But they said: Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said to them: It is enough. Two swords are enough to bear witness to the voluntary suffering of the Savior. One which would show the apostles' courage in striving for the Lord, and, when struck, the ear cut off would demonstrate the Lord's mercy and healing power even unto death. Otherwise, the other sword, not being drawn from its sheath, would show that they were not allowed to do all they could for his defense.

Luke 22:39

And he went out and went, according to custom, to the Mount of Olives. And his disciples followed him. The Lord, about to be betrayed by a disciple, goes to the usual place of retreat where he could be most easily found. Where,

then, are those who argue that he feared death, and was unwillingly crucified? And beautifully, he leads the disciples imbued with the mysteries of his body and blood to the Mount of Olives, so that he might designate that all those baptized in his death were to be confirmed by the highest chrism of the Holy Spirit, who can say with the Psalmist: "The light of your face, O Lord, has been signed upon us, you have put gladness in my heart" (Psalm 4). And about whom it is added elsewhere: "From the time of their grain, wine, and oil, they were multiplied" (ibid.).

Luke 22:40

And when he had come to the place, he said to them: Pray that you do not enter into temptation. It is impossible for the human soul not to be tempted. Hence also, in the Lord's Prayer we say; Lead us not into temptation (Matthew VI): not utterly rejecting temptation, but pleading for strength to endure in temptations. Therefore, even now, he does not say Pray, that you may not be tempted, but that you may not enter into temptation, that is, that the temptation may not ultimately overcome you, holding you within its snares; for example, a martyr who sheds his blood for the confession of the Lord is indeed tempted, but is not ensnared by the nets of temptation; whereas he who denies falls into the traps of temptation. [Luke 22:41] -- And he was separated from them about a stone's throw. And kneeling down, he prayed, saying. Having given the apostles the command to pray, he himself, separated from them, prays alone for all, signifying that his prayer is as far removed from ours as his passion is, and he kneels to show the humility of his mind by the posture of his body. He was separated from them about a stone's throw, as if to typify for them that they should direct the stone at him, that is, that they should bring him into the temptation of the law which was inscribed on stone. For that stone can come as far as he, since Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

Luke 22:42

Father, if you will, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. He asks that the cup be removed from him, not out of fear of suffering, but out of mercy for the earlier people, that they may not drink the cup offered to them. Hence also, significantly, he did not say Remove the cup from me, but this cup, that is, of the people of the Jews, who cannot have the excuse of ignorance if they kill me, having the law and the prophets,

who daily proclaim me. And yet, returning to himself, he confirms by the authority of the Son of God what he timidly held from the perspective of man. [Luke 22:42] -- Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. He says, not let this happen because I speak with human feeling, but because by your will I descended to earth. Therefore, he says, if it can be that the multitude of the Gentiles can believe without the destruction of the Jews, I refuse the passion. But if those are to be blinded so that all the Gentiles may see, not my will, Father, but yours be done. Alternatively: Approaching the passion, the Savior took up the voice of the weaklings in himself, saying: Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me, and he took on their fear to remove it. And again, through obedience, showing the strength of mind, he said: Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. When something looms that we do not want to happen, let us thus ask through weakness that it not happen, so that through strength we may be ready that the will of our Creator be done even against our own will.

Luke 22:43

And an angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him. Elsewhere we read that angels came and ministered to him. In the testament of each nature, it is described that both angels ministered to him and an angel strengthened him, since he who existed as God before the ages was made man at the end of the ages. Who, even before being exalted through the glory of resurrection, was above the angels in divinity, but nonetheless was made lower than the angels in humanity, as it is written (Psalm VIII), through which he was also subject to death. But after he trampled death by rising, he even placed his humanity above the majesties of the archangels. Certainly, if any heresy flatters itself by this, affirming that he was weak and needed the help of a strengthening angel, let it remember that the Creator of angels did not need the support of his creation. Indeed, if he wished, he could have led twelve thousand legions of angels from the heavens. Then subsequently he was necessarily strengthened in the same way that he was saddened. For if he was sad for us, that is, he was sad because of us, it is necessary that he was strengthened for us and for our sake.

Luke 22:44

And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. What would He who granted celestial things with power on earth, pray for Himself in agony? But as death

approached, He expressed in Himself the struggle of our mind, we who suffer a certain force of terror and dread when we approach eternal judgment through the dissolution of the flesh. For then, no soul is unreasonably terrified when it finds, after this brief time, that which it cannot change forever. [Luke 22:44] -- And His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. Let no one ascribe this sweat to weakness, for it is against nature to sweat blood. Nor can it in any way pertain to the heresy of weakness, which serves against the heresy lying of a phantom, towards the truth of the body by means of blood sweat. Rather, let him understand by the earth irrigated and sanctified with His blood, that it was declared openly for us, not for Himself who already knew, that He had achieved the result of His prayer, that is, to purify with His blood the faith of His disciples, which earthly frailty still accused, and whatever scandal they had borne about His death, He would erase entirely by dying Himself, and even more, with His innocent death, He would resurrect the entire vast world of the earth dead in sins to heavenly life.

Luke 22: 45

And when He rose from prayer and came to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. And He said to them: Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. That is, lest the cup of my passion fall on you. Where He clearly shows that He prayed for them too, whom He diligently warns, by vigilantly and praying, to be participants in His prayers. [Luke 22:47] -- While he was still speaking, behold, a crowd, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them, and he drew near to Jesus to kiss him. Why he kissed him, the other evangelists make clear; that is, so that by this sign they might recognize that it was he who would betray him. However, the Lord accepted the kiss of the betrayer, not to teach us dissimulation but so as not to seem to flee betrayal, and at the same time fulfilling what is in the Psalm of David: "With those who hate peace, I was peaceful" (Psalm 119).

Luke 22: 48

But Jesus said to him: Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss? He says, do you betray the Son of Man because it is the flesh, not the divinity, that is seized. However, it rebukes the ungrateful all the more because he betrayed him who, though he was the Son of God, nevertheless wanted to be

the Son of Man because of us. And it is as if he is saying: Ungrateful one, do you betray what I took on because of you? Certainly, it should be pronounced interrogatively, as if with the affection of someone who loves, he rebukes the betrayer. Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss? That is, with the symbol of love you inflict a wound, with the duty of charity you shed blood, with the instrument of peace you impose death; the servant betrays the Lord, the disciple the master, the chosen one the author?

Luke 22:49

Seeing what was to happen, those around him said: Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. Peter did this, as the evangelist John teaches, with the same fervor of mind with which he had done other things. For he knew how Phinehas received the reward of righteousness and everlasting priesthood by punishing the sacrilegious. What follows:

Luke 22:51

But Jesus answered and said: "Permit it thus far." It should not be thought that He was pleased with what had happened up to this point, but rather He did not want it to proceed any further. In the words which Matthew records the Lord is said to have spoken: "Put your sword back in its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26). It was understood rather that the entire action, wherein Peter used the sword, was displeasing to the Lord. For it is more accurate that when they asked Him, saying: "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" then He responded: "Permit it thus far," meaning: do not be concerned with what is about to happen, they must be allowed to proceed up to this point, that is, to apprehend Me, and that what is written about Me may be fulfilled. But in the intervening time between the words of those questioning the Lord and His responding, Peter, in his eagerness to defend and with greater commotion for the Lord, struck. But it could not also be spoken at the same time that which could be done at the same time. For He would not have said: "But Jesus answered," unless He was responding to their questioning. For concerning Peter's action, Matthew alone states what He judged. Where Matthew also did not say: "Jesus answered Peter: 'Put your sword back,'" but said: "Then Jesus said to him: 'Put your sword back,'" which appears the Lord said after the fact.

Luke 22: 51

And when he touched his ear, he healed him. The Lord never forgets his compassion, even preventing his enemies from being harmed. They inflict death on the just one, while he heals the wounds of the persecutors: mystically teaching that even they can be healed, if they are converted, who are wounded in agreement with his death. According to the allegory, this servant is the people of the Jews, subjected to the obedience of the chief priests, so much so that by their influence they asked for Barabbas to be released, and Jesus, whom they had just been singing Hosanna to as the son of David and king, to be crucified. In the Lord's Passion, they lost the right ear, that is, the spiritual understanding of the law, being content only with the left, that is, the benefit of the letter. This ear is cut off by Peter's sword, not because he takes away the understanding from those listening, but reveals the neglect removed by divine judgment. But the same right ear was, by divine dignity, restored to its original function in those who chose to believe from the same people. Alternatively: the ear cut off for the Lord, and healed by the Lord, signifies hearing renewed after the old state is removed, so that it is in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Whoever is granted this by Christ will also be granted to reign with Christ. Hence, it is fitting that Malchus, the name of that servant, is interpreted as king or one destined to reign. But that he was found a servant also pertains to that old condition which generates servitude, which is Hagar. But when health approached, freedom was also symbolized.

Luke 22: 52

Jesus said to those who had come to him, the chief priests, and officers of the temple, and elders. It is asked how Jesus is said to have addressed the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders who came to him, when other evangelists report that they did not come themselves but sent servants while waiting in Caiaphas's court. But since the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders managed the Lord's death in such a way that they appeared innocent of His blood: Let Him not be handed over by us, but by His disciple; let Him not be seized by us, but by the tribune and the mob; let Barabbas be chosen by the people, not by us; and finally, let Him be condemned not by us but by the governor, and crucified not by our hand but by Roman soldiers; the evangelist, wishing to show that those who orchestrated everything were guilty of

His blood, says that the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders came to apprehend the Savior, so that it might be understood that just as they did not seize Christ themselves, but through those they sent, so too all those who shouted for His crucifixion did not kill Him by their own hands but through the one who was impelled by their clamor to this wickedness.

Luke 22:52

"Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth hands against me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness." It is foolish (he says) to seek him with swords and clubs, who willingly surrenders to your hands; to search for him at night as if he were hiding and avoiding your sight through a betrayer, who teaches daily in the temple. But you gather against me in the darkness because your power, which is armed against the light of the world, is itself in darkness. [Luke 22:54] -- Having seized him, they led him to the high priest's house. By high priest, he means Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, as the evangelist John testifies. [Luke 22:54] -- Peter, however, followed from a distance. He rightfully followed from afar, for he was already close to denying. For he could not deny if he had adhered closely to Christ. But in this, he is most worthy of our admiration, that he did not abandon the Lord even when he was afraid. For what he feared was natural; what he followed was devotion; what he denied was deception; what he repented was faith.

Luke 22:54

Otherwise: when Peter followed the Lord going to His passion from a distance, it symbolized the Church, which indeed would follow, that is, imitate the passions of the Lord, but in a much different way. For the Church suffers for itself, but He suffered for the Church. [Luke 22:55] -- And when they kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat around it, Peter was in their midst. There is a fire of love, and there is also a fire of desire. Of this, it is said: "I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Luke 12:49). Of that: "Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that gird yourselves with flames: walk in the light of your fire, and in the flames that you have kindled" (Isaiah 50:11). This fire, descending from heaven upon the believers in the upper room of Zion, taught them to praise God in various tongues. That fire, kindled from earthly materials of Caiaphas in the court-

yard, inflamed the crowds to deny the Lord. With this fire, Moses burned the head of the golden idol, with that Zedekiah burned the writings of Jeremiah prophesying. Whoever extinguishes a vicious and harmful fire within himself can sing to the Lord: "For I am become like a bottle in the frost, I have not forgotten your statutes" (Psalm 119:83). But he who loses the flame of virtues hears from the Lord: "Because iniquity has abounded, the charity of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). Numbed by this chill for a moment, Apostle Peter desired to be warmed by the coals of the persecutors, because he sought the temporary comfort of their company. But without delay, being regarded by the Lord, he abandoned both their physical fire and the infidelity in his heart.

Luke 22:56

When a certain servant girl saw him sitting in the light and looked closely at him, she said, "This man was also with him." Why is it that the servant girl is the first to betray him, when surely men could have recognized him more clearly, except that this gender also should appear to have sinned in the death of the Lord, and this gender should be redeemed by the Lord's passion? Therefore, a woman first received the mystery of the resurrection and kept the command, to abolish the old error of transgression. [Luke 22:57] -- But he denied him, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." Some, out of affection for the apostle Peter, interpret this passage as if he had rightly said that he did not know him whom the human mind cannot comprehend, for no one knows the Son except the Father (Matt. XI). Again, when questioned, he said, "Man, I am not," preferring to deny himself rather than Christ. But even when asked a third time, with the words, "Man, I do not know what you are saying," he signified that he rejected and cursed their sacriligeous acts, that is, condemning them by rejecting and execrating them. But this interpretation is frivolous, as both the Lord, who predicted with truthful assertion that Peter would deny him three times, and Peter himself, who revealed through his subsequent tears that he had spoken not out of premeditation but out of weakness, make clear.

Luke 22:58

After a little while, another saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." In this denial by the blessed Peter, we learn that not only is Christ denied by him who says he is not Christ, but also by

him who, although he is a Christian, denies being a Christian; the Lord, however, did not say to Peter, "You will deny that you are my disciple," but "You will deny me." Therefore, he denied him when he denied being his disciple. [Luke 22:59] -- And after about an hour had passed, another person insisted, saying: Truly this one also was with him, for he is a Galilean. It is not that the Galileans spoke a different language from the people of Jerusalem, who were both Hebrews, but because each province and region, having its own peculiarities, cannot avoid the local accent in speech. Hence in the Acts of the Apostles, when those on whom the Holy Spirit had descended spoke in the languages of all nations, among others who had gathered from different parts of the world, those who lived in Judea are recorded as having wondered and said: Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each in our own language in which we were born?

Luke 22:60

And Peter said: Man, I do not know what you are saying. And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. The sacred Scripture often signifies the merit of causes through the state of times. Hence Peter, who denied in the middle of the night, repented at the crowing of the rooster. Also, after the resurrection, in the light of day, he professed three times that he loved the Lord whom he had denied three times, because evidently what he erred in the darkness of forgetfulness, he corrected in the hope of the remembered light, and having attained the presence of the true light, he fully restored whatever had changed. I think that this rooster should be understood as some teacher who, waking us up and reproving us when we are sleepy, says: Awake, just ones, and do not sin (I Cor. XV).

Luke 22:61

And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And Peter went out and wept bitterly. With the Lord looking upon him, Peter's heart was pricked, and he wiped away the stain of denial with the tears of repentance, as it is not only while repentance is performed but also for it to be performed, that the mercy of God is necessary. For His looking is to show mercy. Hence the Psalmist says: "How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Look upon me and answer me, O Lord my God" (Psalm 12), that is, have mercy and help me. How harmful indeed are

the sayings of the treacherous! Peter, among the Jews, denied knowing the man he had confessed as the Son of God among his fellow disciples. But could he do penance while detained in Caiaphas' courtyard? He went out, so that, separated from the council of the impious, he might wash away the stains of fearful denial with unrestrained weeping.

Luke 22:63–64

And the men who held Him mocked Him, beating Him, and blindfolded Him, and struck His face. The prophecy is fulfilled that says: "With a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek" (Micah 5). But He who was struck then by the blows of the Jews is also struck now by the blasphemies of false Christians. But they blindfolded Him, not so that He would not see their wickedness, but to hide His own face from them as they once did to Moses. For if they believed Moses, they might perhaps have believed in the Lord as well. But this veil remains over their hearts to this day, not revealed to them, but taken away from us who believe in Christ. For not in vain, at His death, was the temple veil torn in two. [Luke 22:64] -- And they asked him, saying: Prophesy, who is it that struck you? And many other things blaspheming, they said against him. They did these things as a mockery of him, who wished to be regarded as a prophet by the people: but as he himself, who suffers, ordains, all things are done for us, so that as Peter exhorts, having suffered Christ in the flesh, we should arm ourselves with the same thought. And also heretics, or Jews to this day who deny Jesus as God, and evil Catholics, who, by their reproachful deeds, provoking him, do not believe that their thoughts and works of darkness are seen by him, as if mocking him, they say: Prophesy, who is it that struck you?

Luke 22:67

And when day came, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes, gathered together, and led him into their council, saying: If you are the Christ, tell us. They did not desire the truth, but were preparing a calumny. For thinking that the Christ would come only as a man from the lineage of David, just as they replied to him in another place when he questioned them, this they asked him greatly, so that if he said, I am the Christ (as they only conceived), from the seed of David, they would calumniate that he arrogated to himself royal power. [Luke 22:67] -- And he said to them: If I tell you, you will not believe me. But if I also ask you, you will not answer

me, nor let me go. Frequently he had said to them that he was the Christ, namely, when he said: I and the Father are one (John X); and again: The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me, but you do not believe (Ibid.), and such things. He also asked how they could say that Christ was David's son, when David himself in the spirit called him his Lord, so that by such a question they might learn that he was not only a true man, because a son of David, but also a true God, because the Lord of David. But they neither wished to believe by following what he said, nor to answer when he questioned, nor to release him who was proven to be innocent. They who sought to calumniate the seed of David, heard more than they bargained for.

Luke 22:69

From this, the Son of Man will be sitting at the right hand of the power of God. Therefore, if in Christ, O Jew, pagan, and heretic, contempt, weakness, and the cross are an insult, see that through these the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of God the Father, and being born as a human from the virgin's birth, he will come in his majesty with the clouds of heaven. Hence the Apostle, when he described the abasement of the cross, added, saying: For which reason also God exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God (Philipp. II). [Luke 22:70] -- And they all said: Are you then the Son of God? You say that I am. Thus he tempers his response, so that he both speaks the truth, and his statement provides no opportunity for calumny. For he preferred to prove himself the Christ, the Son of God, rather than to say it, so that he would be taken up for condemnation by those who acknowledge what they themselves propose.

Luke 22:71

But they said: What further need do we have for testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth. They accepted the testimony of the Lord, who himself said that he was Christ and the Son of God, in that he said: The Son of Man will be sitting at the right hand of the power of God. And to those asking: Are you then the Son of God? He answered: You say that I am. They therefore condemn themselves by their own judgment, who hand over to death him whom they know by the testimony of their own words and deeds to be God. They also condemn the Arians, who, after the Lord had

already been glorified post-death, do not understand the words announcing divine majesty, which, while he was still bound, scourged, and mocked, the very executioners who were to crucify him understood.

CHAPTER 23

Luke 23:1

And the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he had predicted concerning his death: For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death (Luke XVIII). By Gentiles, he indeed means the Romans. For Pilate was Roman, and the Romans had sent him as governor to Judea, to whom the Jews deliver the Lord to be crucified, wishing in this manner to make themselves appear as if not involved in his death, so that their cruelty might be shown, not their innocence. [Luke 23:2] -- And they began to accuse him, saying: We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a King. The Jews are convicted of impiety, because in accusing the Savior they do not even find anything plausible in the falsehood they can charge him with. And so, as Mark says: their witness did not agree (Mark XIV). However, he himself, to provide us an example of patience, just as he endured being scourged before, so now accused, he is silent and keeps quiet.

Luke 23:3

But Pilate asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answering said, Thou sayest it. By the same word, he replies to the governor, as he did to the chief priests, so that they might be condemned by their own judgment. And it is to be noted that of the two charges brought against the Lord, namely that he forbade giving tribute to Caesar and that he claimed to be Christ a king, Pilate thought it necessary to inquire only about the word concerning the kingdom. For it could have happened that that judgment of the Lord, where he said, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's (Matt. XXII), also came to Pilate's hearing, and thus deeming this accusation a manifest lie born of envy, he considered only the one concerning the kingdom as worthy of inquiry.

Luke 23:4

But Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds: I find no cause in this man. This is what he himself said to the disciples the day before he suffered among other things: For the prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me (John 14). But because the prince of the world, that is, Pilate, absolved him, in whom he found no cause to condemn, see what the Jews do, who, not out of love for justice to investigate the truth, but driven by the goad of envy, strive to condemn the just. [Luke 23:5] -- But they prevailed, saying: He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to here. This speech of the accusers teaches more that he who is accused is innocent, and that they who accuse are perverse. For to have taught the people, and by teaching to have stirred them from the indolence of former times, and by such an action to have traversed from Galilee to Judea, that is the entire land of promise from end to end, this is shown to be an indication of virtue, not of crime. For indeed some lover of the Lord, as he also did, could place this same statement in the place of praise, saying to good listeners: You know that the word was proclaimed throughout all Judea. For starting from Galilee after the baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because the Lord was with him. Finally, Pilate, not thinking it necessary to question the Savior about this, but seizing the opportunity, more desires to set him free by judging him. For it follows:

Luke 23:6

But Pilate, hearing of Galilee, asked if the man were a Galilean. And when he knew that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem in those days. Pilate, indeed, lest he be forced to sentence him, whom he knew to be innocent and handed over out of envy, sent him to Herod to be heard, so that he would rather absolve or punish him, who was the Tetrarch of his homeland: truly, by divine Providence, lest any excuse remain for the Jews, as if they had not crucified Christ but the Romans, Herod also, who by birth and religion was a Jew, was permitted to show what he thought of him with his army. At the same time, the impiety of both provinces, namely Judea, in which he was born, and Galilee, in which he was raised and lived, conspiring in his death, is shown.

Luke 23:8

But Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad. For he had wanted to see him for a long time, because he had heard many things about him, and he hoped to see some sign done by him. But he questioned him with many words, and he answered him nothing. He was silent and did nothing, because neither did his cruelty deserve to see divine things, and the Lord avoided boasting. And perhaps all the impious are signified in Herod, who, if they do not believe in the law and the prophets, cannot see the wonderful works of Christ in the Gospel. [Luke 23:10] -- The chief priests and the scribes also stood, vehemently accusing him. With the chief priests and scribes accusing him, the Lord responded little to Pilate, and answered nothing to Herod, lest by refuting the accusation he might be released by the governor, and the benefit of the cross be delayed. For it was indeed just that he should respond in part to Pilate, who reluctantly delivered the sentence: but Herod and the other Jewish leaders whom he regarded as wholly unworthy of his words, since they condemned the innocent against the decrees of their own law. Because of these things, although he refused to answer, the likeness of the Lamb was given so that in his silence he might be considered not guilty, but innocent. For when he remained silent, he displayed the patience of a lamb about to be slaughtered for the whole flock; but when he answered, he fought like a good shepherd against the threats of wolves and robbers for the sheep entrusted to him.

Luke 23:11

But Herod, with his soldiers, despised him, and mocking, arrayed him in a white garment and sent him back to Pilate. The white garment, in which he was arrayed, signifies the purity of his passion, since the spotless Lamb of God was about to take away the sins of the whole world. For he who was despised and mocked in a white garment, suffered and was buried in a pure body. Alternatively: that he was mocked here in a white garment, but according to other evangelists in a purple or scarlet garment, expresses the double type of martyrdom, with which the passions of the holy Church are adorned. Which, admiring the innocent death of her Lord and groom, says: "My beloved is white and ruddy" (Cant. V). White in action, doubtless, and ruddy in blood. And he himself, blooming with the various flowers of his members, brings forth lilies in peace, and roses in war.

Luke 23:12

And Herod and Pilate became friends on that day. For previously they had been enemies to each other. This most nefarious pact between Herod and Pilate, which they made in killing Christ, is still maintained by their successors as if by hereditary right, when pagans and Jews, although differing in race and religion as much as in mind, nevertheless agree in persecuting Christians, and in trying to destroy faith in Christ within them. [Luke 23:14] -- But Pilate, having called together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: Consider how much effort Pilate took to release Jesus. First, when the chief priests accused him, he said he found no cause in him. Then, when they persisted in their accusation, he sent him to Herod to see if he might find any crime in him, or perhaps decide to release him. Finally, having recognized his own will and not having found any wrongdoing in Jesus, he asked the people whom he was accustomed to release one person to at Passover. Again and for the third time, he wanted to release him. But the more carefully he sought a way to release Jesus, whom he found innocent, the more he accused those who unanimously desired his death:

Luke 23:14

You have presented this man to me as turning away the people, yet look, I have questioned him before you and found no basis for your charges against him. By saying this, Pilate indeed absolved Jesus, whom he found innocent, but so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, he whom he absolved by judgment, he crucified by mystery. [Luke 23:15] -- But neither did Herod. For I referred you to him, and look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. Listen, blind Jew, listen, cruel pagan. Pilate himself confesses that neither he nor Herod found anything deserving death in Christ, but in putting him to death or mocking the innocent, they only obeyed the cries of others' cruelty. Therefore, let the writings perish that, composed so long after against Christ, do not show him accused of magical arts before Pilate, but demonstrate you are to be accused before the Lord of treachery and falsehood.

Luke 23:16

Therefore, I will have him corrected and release him. I will scourge him and mock him as much as you demand, as long as you do not thirst for innocent blood. [Luke 23:17] -- Now, he had to release one to them at the feast. He

had to do so, not by the sanction of imperial law, but bound by the annual custom of the nation, whom he was pleased to gratify with such things. [Luke 23:18-19] -- But the whole crowd shouted together, saying: Away with this one, and release to us Barabbas, who for a certain sedition made in the city and for murder, was thrown into prison. The Jews' request remains with them until today, which they obtained with so much effort. For given the choice, they chose a robber over Jesus, a killer over the savior, a taker of life over the giver of life, and deservedly lost salvation and life, and immersed themselves so much in robberies and seditions that they lost their country and their kingdom, which they loved more than Christ, and until now they have not deserved to receive the freedom of either their soul or their body which they sold.

Luke 23:20

But Pilate again spoke to them, wanting to release Jesus. But they shouted back, saying: Crucify, Crucify him. How great the cruelty of the unfaithful, who not only desire to kill the innocent, but to kill with the worst kind of death, that is, by crucifixion! For those hanging on the wood of the cross, fastened to the wood by nails in their feet and hands, were killed by a prolonged death, and they were long-lived on the cross, not because a longer life was chosen, but because death itself was extended, lest the pain end quickly. But He, by dying the worst kind of death, killed all death. It was terrible to the unknowing Jews. For it was chosen by the Lord. For He was to have that very cross as His sign, He was to place that very cross as a trophy over the conquered devil on the foreheads of the faithful, so that the Apostle might say: But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14).

Luke 23:22

But he said to them the third time: "What evil has this man done? I find no cause of death in him. I will chastise him, therefore, and release him." He earnestly sought to satisfy the people with this chastisement, to prevent them from raging to the extent of crucifying the Savior, not only having offered him by pleading but even mocking and scourging, showing it to the desires of the wicked, and the words of the evangelist John, and even the column to which he is bound bears witness. He who used to free the shackled submitted

his members, full of God, to lashes. The aforementioned column, placed in the Church of Mount Zion, shows clear traces to those who behold it up to this day. But although Pilate did these things, observe what the insatiable fury of the sacrilegious desires. [Luke 23:23] -- But they insisted with loud voices, demanding that he be crucified, and their voices prevailed. Because they saw that the entire accusation they had brought against the Lord had been invalidated by the frequent and diligent interrogation by Pilate, finally, without shame, they only turned to pleas so that what they could not achieve by accusing and reasoning, they might now accomplish by demanding and shouting. This method of raging, even the persecutors of the blessed martyrs held onto, as demonstrated sufficiently by ecclesiastical history.

Luke 23:24

And Pilate adjudged that their petition be made. But he released to them the one who had been cast into prison for murder and sedition, whom they requested. Jesus, however, he delivered to their will. The seditious thief and author of murders was released to the Jewish people, that is, the devil, who long ago, due to the guilt of pride, had been expelled from the homeland of light and cast into the prison of darkness, and thus the Jews cannot have peace because they preferred to choose the leader of seditions rather than the Lord. Since Barabbas means son of the father or son of the master, he can carry the type of the Antichrist, whom those of whom it is said: "You are of your father the devil" (John VIII), will prefer to the true Son of God. The son of the devil, the Antichrist, is called not by birth from him, but by imitating him, as other sinners do.

Luke 23:26

And as they led him away, they seized a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from the countryside, and they laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. The evangelist John narrates that the Lord himself carried his own cross. From this it is understood that the cross was first carried by the Lord, and then laid upon Simon whom they perhaps met coming out, in a fitting order of the mystery. Because he suffered for us, leaving us an example so that we may follow his footsteps (I Peter II). He is well described as carrying the cross behind Jesus, according to what he himself commands: And take up his cross, and follow me (Matthew XVI). And because this Simon is said to be not from Jerusalem, but a Cyrenian, for Cyrene is a city of Libya, as we read in

the Acts of the Apostles, it is rightly through him that the peoples of the nations are designated. Those who were once strangers and foreigners to the covenants, now, by obeying faith, are citizens and members of God's household. And, as it is said elsewhere: Heirs indeed of God, but co-heirs of Christ (Romans VIII). From which it is beautifully interpreted that Simon obediently translates Cyrene as heir. Nor should it be passed over that Simon is said to have come from the countryside. For the countryside is called πάγος in Greek, from which the term pagans is derived, because they are foreign to the city of God and almost ignorant of urban conversation. But Simon, coming out from the countryside, carries the cross behind Jesus, when the people of the nations, having abandoned pagan rites, obediently embrace the footsteps of the Lord's passion.

Luke 23:27

Following him was a large crowd of people, and women who were mourning and lamenting him. But Jesus, turning to them, said: A great crowd likewise followed the Lord's cross, but not with the same mind. For the people indeed, as those who had obtained his death, looked happily upon him dying; but the women, because they desired him to live, wept at him about to die, dying, and dead. It was not, however, solely the lament of the women that followed him, because also an innumerable assembly of believing men was very sorrowful over his passion, but because the female, as the more contemptible sex, could more freely show their sentiments against them in the presence of the chief priests and magistrates. But because the Lord knows who are his, having dismissed the crowd of the raging populace, he turned his eyes and words to the women who loved and mourned him, saying:

Luke 23:28

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Do not (he says) mourn for me about to die, for whose quick resurrection can dissolve death, whose death shall destroy all death, and death's author itself. Rather, weep for yourselves and your progeny, so that you may not be damned along with the faithless to eternal death in retribution for my cross, and cleanse yourselves with worthy fountains of tears." And it should be noted when he calls them daughters of Jerusalem, that not only those who had come with him from Galilee, but also the women citizens of the same city adhered to him. And now also, as if Jesus is about to be

sacrificed, a double crowd follows him, with some reading, listening to, and recollecting his passion's story as if worthy of laughter, and others with tearful eyes as is proper. Some regard the mysteries of his flesh and blood as cheap common foods, whereas others partake of it with a heart worthy of such a great matter. But where the Lord sees a contrite and humbled heart, he soon adds the grace of salvific compunction, from which the most pleasant, sweet, and gentle comforter brings solace.

Luke 23:29

For behold, the days are coming in which they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed. Then they will begin to say to the mountains: Fall on us; and to the hills: Cover us. He signifies the days of the coming siege and captivity by the Romans. About which he previously said among other things to his disciples: Then those who are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains. And shortly after: Woe to those who are pregnant and nursing in those days (Matthew XXIV). For it is natural, with captivity imminent and hostile destruction raging in the fields and cities, for all who can escape to seek out high places or hidden refuges, where they can hide. And Josephus specifically mentions that, with the Romans pressing upon them, the Jews competitively sought out caves in mountains and hills. So much so that he himself testifies to being discovered, captured, and handed over to the enemies in a hideout in a cave with forty companions during the fall of the fortified city of Jotapata. And it can also be understood superfluously, that those sterile and not giving birth are said to be blessed, referring to those who castrate themselves in either sex for the kingdom of heaven. Saying to the mountains and hills: Fall on us and cover us, when anyone, mindful of their own frailty, during the onset of temptations, seeks to be defended by the example, advice, and prayers of men of lofty status, by virginity, martyrdom, or any other virtue.

Luke 23:31

For if they do these things to the green wood, what will happen to the dry one? The green wood signifies himself and his chosen ones, while the dry one signifies the impious and sinners. Therefore, if I, he says, who have not committed sin, who has rightly been called the tree of life, bring forth the fruits of grace twelve times a year, without leaving the world without the fire of passion, what torment do you think awaits those who are empty of fruits and

furthermore do not fear to give the very tree of life to the flames? If now is the time for judgment to begin with the house of God, and all who wish to live godly in Christ suffer persecution, what will be the end of those who do not believe the gospel of God? [Luke 23:32] -- And two other criminals were also led away with him, to be put to death. So that what was said might be fulfilled: And he was numbered with the wicked. But he was numbered with the wicked in death, so that he might justify the wicked in the resurrection, who, being in the form of God, was made man for the sake of men, to give men the power to become children of God (John 1).

Luke 23:33

And after they came to the place that is called Calvary, there they crucified him. Outside the city of Jerusalem and outside the gate there were places where they beheaded the condemned, and they took the name Calvary, that is, of the beheaded. Therefore the Lord was crucified there, so that where the area of the condemned had been before, the standards of martyrdom might be raised. And just as he was made a curse for us on the cross, and was scourged, and crucified, so for the salvation of all he was crucified among the guilty as if he were guilty, so that where sin abounded, grace might abound all the more. Certainly, how the Lord was placed on the cross, and what the position of that most sacred body signifies in itself as a royal type, Sedulius beautifully expressed in verses in his Paschal poem: "That no one may be unaware of the form of the cross to be revered, which carried the Lord exultantly with powerful reasoning, gathering the four regions of the squared world. The resplendent East shines from the head of the creator, the sacred feet are bathed by the star of the West. The right hand holds the North, the left elevates the middle axis, and the entire nature of the creator lives from the members. And Christ controls the world, embraced by the cross, everywhere. The Apostle also describes the moral figure of the most holy cross, where he says:

"Rooted and grounded in love, that you might comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, to know also the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge" (Ephesians 3). In the breadth indeed he signifies good works of charity, in the length the perseverance of a holy life unto the end, in the height the hope of heavenly rewards, in the depth the unsearchable judgments of God, from which this grace comes to men. And these are so connected to the sacrament of the cross, that in the

breadth it is understood the transverse beam to which the hands are outstretched, for the signification of works. In the length, from itself down to the earth, where the whole crucified body seems to stand, which signifies persistence, that is, long perseverance. In the height, from the same transverse beam upwards, which stands out toward the head, because of the expectation of what is on high, lest those good works and perseverance in them are believed to be done for earthly and temporary benefits of God, but rather for that which faith, working through love, hopes eternally from above.

In the depth also, the part of the wood that is hidden and fixed in the ground, but from which all that emerges arises, just as from the hidden will of God man is called to the participation of so great a grace in one way or another, but above all the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, where indeed there is that peace which surpasses all understanding.

Luke 23:33

And the thieves, one on the right and the other on the left. The thieves who are crucified with the Lord on either side signify those who, under the faith and confession of Christ, either undergo the struggle of martyrdom or the discipline of stricter continence. But as many as do these things solely for eternal and heavenly glory, these are rightly designated by the merit and faith of the right-hand thief. But those who renounce the world either with a view to human praise or for any less worthy intention, not unreasonably imitate the mind and actions of the blasphemous and left-hand thief. Of such the Apostle says: If I give my body to be burned, if I give all my goods to feed the poor, if I do many other things, but have not charity, it profits me nothing (I Cor. XIII). But blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. V).

Luke 23:34

But Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. Because Luke, through the type of the calf, intended to write of the priesthood of Christ, rightly with him the Lord both intercedes as a priest for his persecutors and opens the gate of paradise to the confessing thief by the same office. For it is not to be thought that he prayed to the Father in vain, but that in those who believed after his passion he obtained what he prayed for. It should be noted that he did not offer prayers for those who, driven by envy and pride, preferred to crucify Him whom they understood to be the Son of

God rather than confess Him, but certainly for those who, having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. X), did not know what they did (Luke XXIII). But also, the Apostle John says: There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he should pray for it (I John V). Therefore, imitate your Lord, intercede for your enemies, and if you cannot yet do so, at least take care not to presume to pray against them. For thus, increased by daily progress, and at some time, with the Lord's help, you will reach that point, where you can even intercede for them.

Luke 23:34

Dividing his garments, they cast lots. And the people stood watching. This Evangelist John expounds more fully, because, namely, the soldiers divided the rest of the clothes into four parts, according to their number, but for the tunic which was seamless, woven from the top throughout, they cast lots. The divided garment of the Lord, however, symbolized his Church divided into four parts, spreading over the entire earth, which consists of four parts, and equally, that is, harmoniously distributed in all these parts. However, that tunic which was cast lots for signifies the unity of all parts, which is held together by the bond of charity. For if charity, according to the Apostle, both has a more excellent way, surpasses knowledge, and is above all commands (Ephes. III), rightfully the garment by which it is signified is indicated to be woven from above. But what is commended in the lot if not the grace of God? Thus, indeed, it came to all in unity through one, since the lot pleased all, and the grace of God reaches all in unity, and when a lot is cast, it is attributed not to any person's merit, but to the hidden judgment of God.

Luke 23:35

And the rulers mocked him, along with them saying: He saved others, let him save himself if he is the Christ, the chosen one of God. Even unwillingly, the rulers and people of the Jews confess that he saved others. Therefore, your own sentence condemns you. For he who saved others could indeed save himself if he wished. "Let him save himself," they say, "if he is the Christ, the chosen one of God." On the contrary, he did not want to save himself by descending from the cross precisely because he is the chosen one of God. For he, who came to be crucified for us, neglected to save himself by descending from the cross because, along with the other sinners, he also took care to save those who crucified him through dying. [Luke 23:36] -- But

the soldiers also mocked him, approaching and offering him vinegar, and saying: If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. The vinegar itself was the Jews, degenerating from the wine of the patriarchs and prophets. With this vinegar, indeed, the soldiers gave the Lord to drink, whom they handed over to death at their suggestion. And it is to be noted, that the Jews, blaspheming, mockingly rejected the name of Christ and the Son of God, credited to them by the authority of Scripture. But the soldiers, being ignorant of the Scriptures, mocked not Christ the chosen of God, but the king of the Jews.

Luke 23:38

There was also an inscription written above him in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew letters: This is the king of the Jews. Appropriately, the title which testifies to Christ as king is placed not below but above the cross, because although he suffered on the cross in human weakness for us, he shone above the cross with the majesty of the king. Who fittingly also, because he is both king and priest, as he offered to the Father the excellent sacrifice of his flesh on the altar of the cross, displayed the dignity of the title of king which he held, that it might be known to all who wished to read, that is, to hear and believe, that he did not lose but rather confirmed and strengthened his kingdom by the cross. Whence the Apostle, having described the ignominy of the cross, added: Therefore God also exalted him, and gave him the name which is above every name, etc. (Philippians II). For the fact that this name was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, this is what the same Apostle subsequently added: And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Ibid.). As far as the letter is concerned, these three languages stood out above others. Hebrew for the Jews glorying in the law, Greek for the wisdom of the nations, Latin for the Romans who were then ruling over many and almost all nations. Therefore, whether the Jews like it or not, every kingdom of the world, every worldly wisdom, all the sacraments of the divine law testify that Jesus is the king of the Jews, that is, the emperor of those who believe and confess God.

Luke 23:39

But one of the criminals hanging there blasphemed him, saying: If you are the Christ, save yourself and us. Some may be troubled by how the other evangelists say that the criminals who were crucified with him reproached

him. Indeed, one of them, according to the testimony of Luke, rebuked him, but then looked at him and believed in God. But let us understand that they, briefly covering this matter, used the plural number for the singular. Just as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: They shut the mouths of lions (Heb. XI), although Daniel alone is meant. And it is said in the plural: They were sawn asunder (ibid.), even though it is handed down about Isaiah alone. Also in the psalm where it is said: The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers gathered together (Psalm II), the plural number is used for the singular, as found in the Acts of the Apostles. For kings is understood to mean Herod, and rulers to mean Pilate, who applied the testimony of the same psalm. But what is more common (for example) than for someone to say, The peasants mock me, even if only one mocks? [Luke 23:40] -- But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying: Do you not fear God, seeing that you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving due reward for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Who would not marvel at the spirit of this thief? Rather, who could marvel worthily at the aid given by the grace of the Lord? Let him be venerated with due thanks. On the cross, nails had bound his hands and feet, leaving nothing free from punishment except his heart and tongue. By God's inspiration, he offered to God all that he found free in himself so that, as it is written: With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. X). Moreover, the Apostle testifies that three virtues remain greatly in the hearts of the faithful, saying: And now abides faith, hope, charity (I Cor. XIII). All of these the thief received by sudden grace and kept on the cross. For he had faith, who believed that the Lord would reign, although he saw Him dying together with him. He had hope, who asked for entrance into His kingdom. He also held onto charity vividly in his death, who rebuked his brother and fellow thief for dying for similar wickedness and preached to him the life he had come to know. He who came to the cross guilty, behold what kind of person leaves the cross by grace. He confessed the Lord whom he saw dying beside him in human weakness, even when the apostles, who had seen Him perform miracles through divine power, denied Him.

Luke 23:43

And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to you: Today you will be with me in paradise. A most beautiful example of the conversion to be sought, that so quickly the thief is forgiven, and the grace is more abundant than the prayer. For the Lord always gives more than he is asked. For he asked that the Lord remember him when he came into his kingdom. But the Lord said: Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. For life is to be with Christ, because where Christ is, there is the kingdom. Some fit the two thieves crucified with the Lord to the two kinds of the baptized. For whoever has been baptized into Christ Jesus, has been baptized into his death (Rom. VI). For both are similarly crucified, but one is worse in blasphemy on the cross, the other is made a martyr by confession. Because through baptism, by which we sinners are washed, some praise God suffering in the flesh with faith, hope, and charity, and are crowned; others, while they either refuse to have the faith or the works of baptism, are deprived of the gift they received.

Luke 23:44–45

It was about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour, and the sun was obscured. The brightest light of the world withdrew its rays so that it might not see the Lord hanging, or that the impious blaspheming might not enjoy its light. And it is to be noted that the Lord was crucified at the sixth hour, that is, when the sun was about to leave the center of the world; and at dawn, that is, when the sun was already rising, he celebrated the mysteries of his resurrection. For the time signifies what he exhibited by the effect of the work. Because he died for our sins and rose for our justification (Rom. IV). For when Adam sinned, it is written that he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at the breeze after midday (Gen. III). After midday, indeed, with the light of faith declining, and at the breeze, with the warmth of charity cooling: he was heard walking because he had withdrawn from the sinning man. The order of reason therefore required that at the same time of the day at which he then closed for sinning Adam, now the Lord should open the gate of paradise to the repenting thief.

Luke 23:45

And the veil of the temple was torn in two. This happened as the Lord expired, as Matthew and Mark attest, but Luke relates it in advance. For, wish-

ing to add miracle to miracle, when he had said "The sun was darkened," he immediately considered it appropriate to add: "And the veil of the temple was torn in two." The veil of the temple is torn, so that the secrets of the covenant and all the sacraments of the law, which were previously covered, may appear and be accessible to the nations. For it had been said before: "God is known in Judah, in Israel His name is great" (Psalm 76). But now: "Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and let your glory be over all the earth" (Psalm 57). And in the Gospel, he first said: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles" (Matthew 10). But after the passion: "Go and teach all nations" (Matthew 28).

Luke 23:46

And crying out with a loud voice, Jesus said: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and saying this, he expired. By invoking the Father, he declares himself to be the Son of God. By commending his spirit, he does not suggest the weakness of his power, but demonstrates the confidence of the same authority as the Father. For he loves to give glory to the Father, so that he might instruct us to give glory to the Creator. Therefore, he commends his spirit to the Father, in accord with the words spoken with a joyful heart and lips exulting with the hope of resurrection, in another psalm: "For you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor let your holy one see corruption" (Psalm 16).

Luke 23:47

But when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Truly this man was righteous." Not only did the centurion glorify God, but also the soldiers who were with him guarding Jesus (as Matthew writes), having seen the earthquake and the things that were happening, were greatly afraid and said, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27). Therefore, how great is the blindness of the Jews, who, though so many miracles were performed by the Lord, and so many signs appeared at His death, refused to believe, and were more insensitive than the Gentiles who scorned to glorify or fear God. Hence, rightly through the centurion the faith of the Church is designated, which, with the veil of heavenly mysteries torn open by the death of the Lord, immediately affirms Jesus as truly a righteous man and truly the Son of God while the synagogue remains silent. For even the sum of one hundred, which in the bending of the fingers, as was previously men-

tioned, from the left hand passes to the right, perfectly corresponds with the sacraments and faith of the Church, to which the Gospel is believed in place of the Law, and the heavenly kingdom is promised in place of earthly riches.

Luke 23:48

And all the multitude of those who came together to this spectacle, and saw the things that happened, returned beating their breasts. That they beat their breasts, because it is a sign of repentance and mourning, can be understood in two ways. For either they mourned unjustly for the one whose life they loved, being killed, or they trembled as they remembered having obtained his death, seeing him more glorified in death. But whether this, or that, or both reasons together caused various and dissenting persons in the crowd to beat their breasts, the distinction between the nation and the nation must be noted. For the Gentiles, fearing God with the death of Christ, glorify with open confession, while the Jews, only beating their breasts, silently return home. [Luke 23:49] -- But all his acquaintances stood at a distance, and the women who followed him from Galilee, seeing these things. This is what the Lord Himself laments to the Father in the psalm, explaining the series of His passion, saying, "You have taken from me friend and neighbor, and my acquaintances from misery" (Psalm 88).

Luke 23:50

And behold, there was a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deeds. He is called a Council member because he belongs to the order of the council and administers the office of the council, and he is also often called a Curialis for managing civil duties. [Luke 23:51] -- From Arimathea, a city of Judea, who also awaited the kingdom of God. From Arimathea, the same is Ramathaim, the city of Elkanah and Samuel in the Thannite region near Diospolis. [Luke 23:52] -- He approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Joseph, indeed, was of great dignity in the world, but he is praised for having greater merit before God, so that by the righteousness of his merits he was worthy to bury the Lord's body, and by the nobility of his worldly power he could receive the same body. For not just anyone unknown could approach the governor and obtain the body of the crucified.

Luke 23:53

And he wrapped it up in a shroud and placed him in a hewn tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. And from the simple burial of the Lord, the ambition of the rich is condemned, who cannot be without wealth even in their tombs. But we can also, according to spiritual understanding, sense this: that he wraps Jesus in a clean shroud who receives Him with a pure mind. Moreover, He is placed in a new tomb, so that after the resurrection, with other bodies remaining, another would not be pretended to have risen. It is well remembered that the tomb was hewn from rock, so that if it had been built from many stones, it might be said to have been stolen with its foundations dug up. Otherwise: The Lord is enclosed alone in the tomb, so that His unique burial, unlike ours, as well as the other mysteries of His dispensation, differing from the frailty of our nature, signifies His unique resurrection. For the old man appeared, but conceived and born from a virgin mother. And He was tempted in all things, but without sin for likeness. And He died, but in the manner that He wished. And He was buried, but as long as He wished. And He was raised, but when He wished. Therefore, this is what He said: I am singular until I pass (Psalm 140). And elsewhere about the unique burial: In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, have set me in hope (Psalm 4), meaning, with the resurrection of other mortals reserved for the end, you promised me by a unique gift to rise from the dead on the third day.

Luke 23:54

And it was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was drawing near. Preparation is interpreted as preparing, by which name the Jews who lived among the Greeks called the sixth day of the week, which is now called Friday by us, because on that day they prepared what was necessary for the Sabbath. According to what was once commanded concerning manna: "On the sixth day you shall gather double," etc. (Exodus 16). But the Jews who lived among the Romans more commonly called it in Latin, "the pure supper. Because man was made on the sixth day, and the whole creation of the world was perfected, and on the seventh the Creator rested from his work, hence he commanded it to be called the Sabbath, that is, rest, rightly the Lord was crucified on the same sixth day, fulfilling the mystery of human restoration. Therefore, when he had received the vinegar, he said: "It is finished" (John 19), that is, the work of the sixth day, which I undertook for the resurrection

of the world, is entirely completed. On the Sabbath, resting in the tomb, he awaited the event of the resurrection which was to come on the eighth day. Here shines the example of our devotion, for whom it is necessary to suffer for the Lord in this sixth age of the world, and to be crucified as it were to the world;

but in the seventh age, that is, when one joyfully pays the debt, the bodies indeed remain in the tombs, but the souls remain in secret peace with the Lord, and it is fitting to rest after good works, until finally in the coming eighth age even the bodies themselves, purified by the resurrection, receive incorruptibility of eternal inheritance together with the souls. Hence it is aptly read that the seventh day in Genesis did not have an evening, because the rest of souls which now exists in that age shall not be consumed by any sorrow, but shall be increased by the fuller joy of the future resurrection.

Luke 23:55

But the women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid. Above it is written that all his acquaintances stood at a distance, and the women who had followed him. Therefore, after his acquaintances of Jesus had returned to their own homes after his body was taken down, the women alone, who loved him more closely, followed the funeral to see how he was laid, so that at the appropriate time they might offer their gift of devotion to him. And even until now, holy women do the same on the day of Preparation, when humble souls, and those who are more conscious of their greater fragility, fervent with greater love for the Savior, diligently follow the footsteps of his passion in this world, where rest is to be prepared in the future, and carefully consider with diligent curiosity in what order the same passion was accomplished if perhaps they might be able to imitate it.

Luke 23:56

And they returned and prepared spices and ointments. And indeed they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. The commandment was that the Sabbath silence be observed from evening to evening, and therefore the devout women, after the Lord was buried, were occupied in preparing ointments as long as it was permitted to work, that is, until sunset. Which they had done not only on the day of Preparation but also, after the Sabbath, that is, at sunset, as soon as the permission to work returned, they

bought spices so that coming early in the morning they might anoint his body, as the Evangelist Mark testifies. For they did not wish to visit the tomb on the evening of the Sabbath, when night was already approaching. But after seeing the burial of the Lord and returning, they prepare spices and ointments, those who, having read, heard, recalled the passion of the Lord, immediately turn to perform works of virtue by which Christ is pleased, and indeed on the Sabbath, with the spices prepared, they rest, waiting to come to the Lord after the Sabbath with their offerings, when, with the preparation time of this present life completed, they joyfully expect in blessed rest, when appearing at the time of resurrection, fragrant with the spiritual actions of Christ as if with spices, they will meet him.

CHAPTER 24

Luke 24:1

But on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. The first day of the week, or the first day after the Sabbath, is the day which Christians call the Lord's Day because of the Lord's resurrection. That the women came to the tomb very early in the morning shows, according to the historical account, the great fervor of love in seeking and finding the Lord. In a mystical sense, it gives us an example of approaching the most holy body of the Lord with an enlightened face and the darkness of vices dispelled. For that venerable tomb had the figure of the Lord's altar, on which the mysteries of His flesh and blood are celebrated. Hence the ecclesiastical custom holds that these mysteries should be consecrated not in silk, not in dyed cloth, but in pure linen similar to the shroud in which Joseph wrapped Him. Just as He offered the true substance of his earthly and mortal nature to death for us, so we also, in commemoration of the same dreadful and venerable sacrament, place pure linen from the earth's produce, white, and, as it were, chastened by many types of mortification, on the altar. Moreover, the spices which the women bring signify the fragrance of virtues and prayers with which we should approach the altar. Hence John in his Apocalypse, having described the golden bowls in the hands of the angels, that is, the pure consciences in the hearts of the elect, full of incense, added explaining, and said: "Which are the prayers of the saints."

Luke 24:2–3

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, and upon entering, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. How the stone was rolled away by the angel, Matthew has sufficiently explained. But the rolling away of the stone mystically signifies the revelation of the sacraments which were hidden under the veil of the letter. For the Law is written on stone. When its covering is removed, the dead body of the Lord is not found but is proclaimed as living. For even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know Him that way. [Luke 24:4] -- And it came to pass, while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. They were perplexed, because they were astonished at the stone of such immense size having been rolled away, and grieved at not finding the body of such great reverence. Just as when the Lord was tempted in the wilderness, immediately after the completion of victory, angels came and ministered to Him, so also after the Savior had suffered in the flesh, following the contests of conquered death, angels came who announced the glory of the triumphant not only with comforting words but also with shining attire. Just as it is read that when the Savior's body was placed in the tomb, angels stood by, so it is also believed that during the consecration of the most sacred mysteries of His body, angels are present, with the Apostle urging women to wear a veil in the Church because of the angels (I Cor. XI).

Luke 24:5

But as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the ground, they said to them: Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Do not (they say) seek among the dead, that is in the tomb, which is properly the place of the dead, him who has already risen to life from the dead. And therefore, when we enter the Church following the example of the women devoted to God, and approach the heavenly mysteries, either because of the presence of angelic power or because of the reverence of the holy offering, we ought to enter with all humility and fear. Indeed we bow our faces to the ground in the sight of the angels, humbly remembering that we are dust and ashes, when contemplating the eternal joys of the heavenly citizens. Just as blessed Abraham said: I will speak to my Lord, though I am dust and ashes (Gen. XVIII). And it should be noted that the holy women, with the angels standing before them, are not said to have fallen to the

ground, but to have bowed their faces to the ground. And we do not read that any of the saints, at the time of the Lord's resurrection, either when the Lord himself or the angels appeared to them, worshipped prostrate on the ground. From this, the ecclesiastical custom has arisen, that either in memory of the Lord's resurrection or in hope of our own resurrection, on all Sundays and throughout the entire period of Pentecost, we pray not on bended knees, but with faces bowed to the ground.

Luke 24:6

Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." On the third day, the Lord, as He predicted to His disciples and also to the women who followed Him (which we learn from this passage), celebrated the triumph of His resurrection. Indeed, on the day of the Preparation, He handed over His spirit at the ninth hour, was buried in the evening, and rose on the morning of the first day of the week, as the evangelist Mark clearly indicates. Therefore, it is not unjust that He lay in the tomb for one day and two nights, because He joined the light of His simple death to the darkness of our double death. For He came to us who were held in the death of both spirit and flesh, He brought us His one death, that is, of the flesh, and dissolved the two deaths He received from us. If He had taken on both, He would have delivered us from neither, but He mercifully accepted one and justly condemned both. He conferred His simple death to our double death and, by dying, overcame our double death.

Luke 24:8

And they remembered His words. The women standing at the Lord's tomb remembered the words He had previously spoken about His dispensation, providing us a model, that during the celebration of the mysteries of the Lord's passion, we should always remember with worthy veneration not only His blessed passion, but also His resurrection from the dead and His glorious ascension into heaven. [Luke 24:9] -- And having departed from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and to all the others. Just as in the beginning the woman was the author of the fault to man, and man the executor of the error, so now the one who first tasted death saw resurrection first, and so that she might not bear the reproach of perpetual guilt among men, the grace she had conferred upon man she also conferred upon herself.

[Luke 24:10] -- Now it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary of James, and the others who were with them, who told these things to the apostles. Mary Magdalene herself is the sister of Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment. Joanna, wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod, about whom it has been read above. Mary of James is the mother of James the Less and Joseph, as the evangelist Mark says, the sister of the Lord's mother, hence James himself deserved to be called the Lord's brother.

Luke 24:11

And these words appeared to them as an idle tale, and they did not believe them. That the disciples were slow to believe in the Lord's resurrection was not so much their weakness as our (so to speak) future firmness. For the resurrection itself was shown to them with many proofs while they doubted. As we acknowledge these things by reading, what else are we but strengthened by their doubt? [Luke 24:12] -- But Peter arose and ran to the tomb, and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths alone, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. Luke briefly mentions Peter's run; but how this happened is more fully detailed by John, who also says that the disciple whom Jesus loved ran with Peter, thus implying himself. Therefore, it is asked how Luke says of Peter: "And stooping down, he saw the linen cloths alone" (Luke 24), while John signifies that he himself did this, but that Peter, upon entering the tomb, saw not only the linen cloths but also the napkin that had been on his head. It must be understood that Peter, stooping down, saw what Luke records, which John is silent about; but after entering, to more carefully discern the interior, he entered, yet before John entered.

Luke 24:13

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about sixty stadia from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things which had happened. A stadium, as the Greeks say, with Hercules as the author, is the measure of distances and is an eighth part of a mile; therefore, sixty stadia signify seven thousand and five hundred steps. This distance well suits those who were certain of the death and burial of the Savior, but doubtful of the resurrection. For who could doubt that the resurrection, which happened after the seventh Sabbath, harmonizes with the eighth number? Therefore, the disciples who

were speaking of the Lord as they went and had completed the sixth mile of their journey, because they mourned that he had lived without reproach up to his death, which occurred on the sixth Sabbath, also completed the seventh, since they did not doubt that he had rested in the tomb. But of the eighth, they only completed half, because they did not yet fully believe in the glory of the celebrated resurrection. Now Emmaus is the same as Nicopolis, the famous city of Palestine, which after the expulsion of the Jews was restored under Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, having changed both its status and its name.

Luke 24:15

And it happened that while they were conversing and questioning, Jesus himself, approaching, walked with them. The Lord, approaching, accompanied them while they were speaking of him, so that he might both kindle their faith in his resurrection in their minds and always fulfill what he had promised by the hidden presence of his majesty. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there (he says) I am in the midst of them. [Luke 24:16] -- But their eyes were held, so that they might not recognize him. And he said to them: What are these words which you discuss with each other while walking, and are sad? Indeed the Lord appeared, but he did not show them the appearance that they might recognize. Therefore, the Lord externally did in the eyes of the body what was being done among them internally in the eyes of the heart. For among themselves internally they both loved and doubted; but to them the Lord was externally present, and did not show who he was. Thus, to those speaking of him he showed his presence, but to those doubting about him he concealed the appearance of his recognition.

Luke 24:18

And one of them, named Cleophas, answering, said to him: Are you alone a stranger in Jerusalem, and do not know the things which have happened there in these days? They thought him to be a stranger, whose face they did not recognize. But truly, he was a stranger to them, from whose perception the glory of the resurrection already obtained was far removed from their frail nature. He was a stranger to them, from whose still uninformed faith, as yet ignorant of his resurrection, he remained a foreigner. [Luke 24:19] -- To whom he said: What things? And they said to him: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, powerful in work and word before God and all the

people. They confess him as a prophet and great, they are silent about him being the Son of God, either as not yet believing perfectly, or being anxious lest they fall into the hands of the persecuting Jews, because they did not know who it was they were speaking to, while hiding what they truly believed.

Luke 24:20

And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to the sentence of death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Rightly they walked sorrowfully, for they were also somewhat blaming themselves that they had hoped for redemption in him whom they saw now dead, and did not believe that he would rise again. And they grieved especially that he was killed without guilt, because they knew him to be innocent. [Luke 24:21] -- And now, on top of all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women among us amazed us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find His body, they came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. They are said to have rightly terrified those, whose minds, already filled with sorrow over the Lord's body not being found, could not yet see the joy in the announcement of His resurrection by the angels.

Luke 24:24

And some of us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see. Although Luke previously mentioned that Peter ran to the tomb, now Cleopas says that some of them ran to the tomb, which suggests that two went to the tomb. But he first mentioned Peter alone because Mary had initially reported to him. [Luke 24:25] -- And He said to them: "Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" And starting with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. In this place, we are not obliged to interpret any Scripture, but we are doubly humbled, who are neither sufficiently taught in the Scriptures nor as intent on fulfilling what we might have learned as we ought to be. For if Moses and all the prophets spoke concerning Christ, and that He would enter into His glory through the suffering of His passion, by what reason do those who, according to the measure of their abilities, neither investigate the

Scriptures as to how they pertain to Christ nor desire to attain the glory they wish to have with Christ through the sufferings of tribulations, boast themselves to be Christians?

Luke 24:29

And they approached the village to which they were going, and He made as if He would go further, and they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is evening, and the day is now far spent. And He went in to stay with them. The truth did nothing simple through duplicity, but what is said: He made as if He would go further, He appeared to the disciples in such a body, as was in their mind. However, they had to be tested to see if those who, even if they did not yet love Him as God, could at least love Him as a stranger. But because those with whom the Truth walked could not be estranged from charity, they invited Him to the lodging as if He were a stranger. Why do we say they invited, when it is written there: And they constrained Him? From which certainly it is understood, that strangers are not only to be invited to lodging, but also to be compelled.

Luke 24:30

And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. Whom they did not recognize in the explanation of Holy Scripture, they recognize in the breaking of the bread. They were not enlightened by hearing the commandments of God, but by doing they were enlightened. Because it is written: Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified (Rom. II). Therefore, whoever wishes to understand what they have heard, let them hasten to fulfill by action what they have already understood.

Luke 24:31

And he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled (Luke 12:49)." The Lord indeed sent fire upon the earth when he kindled the hearts of the carnal with the breath of the Holy Spirit. And the earth burns when the hearts of the carnal, previously cold in their own pleasures, abandon the desires of the present age and are set aflame with the love of God. "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us

on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" they ask. For indeed, upon hearing the word, the mind ignites, the coldness of the body recedes, the mind becomes anxious with a desire for the heavenly, alien to earthly desires. True love which has filled this mind torments in tears. But while it is tormented with such ardor, it is fed by its very torments, it delights in hearing heavenly precepts, and as it is instructed by each commandment, it is as if it is set on fire by so many torches.

Luke 24:34

And they got up that very hour, returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered the eleven and those who were with them, saying that the Lord has truly risen and has appeared to Simon. By now, there was a report that Jesus had risen, made by those women, and by Simon Peter to whom He had already appeared. For indeed, these two found them speaking when they arrived in Jerusalem. Therefore, it could be that out of fear they did not want to say on the way that they had heard He had risen, when they only said that the women had seen angels. For they did not know with whom they were speaking, and rightly could be anxious that, by carelessly proclaiming Christ's resurrection, they might fall into the hands of the Jews. Therefore, it is understood that the Lord first appeared to Peter among all the men, at least from all those whom the four evangelists and the apostle Paul have mentioned. For Paul speaks to the Corinthians about the Lord, saying that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the eleven.

Luke 24:35

And they recounted what had happened on the road, and how they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. Besides the fact that because of their still ignorant understanding, it was necessary for Christ to die and to rise again, their eyes experienced something similar, not because truth was deceiving, but because they themselves were unable to perceive the truth, and thought something different from reality. Also, for the reason of a certain mystery, it happened that another form was shown to them in him, so that they would not recognize him except in the breaking of the bread, lest anyone suppose that he recognized Christ if he is not a partaker of his body, that is, of the Church, whose unity in the sacrament of the bread the Apostle commends, saying: One bread, one body, we are many (Rom. 12), so that

when he gave them the blessed bread, their eyes would be opened, and they would recognize him. Their eyes were indeed opened to his recognition, the hindrance by which they were held being removed, so that they did not recognize him. However, we may not unreasonably consider that this hindrance in their eyes was from Satan so that Jesus would not be recognized, yet Christ permitted it up to the sacrament of the bread, so that by sharing in the unity of his body, it may be understood that the enemy's hindrance is removed, so that Christ may be recognized.

Luke 24:36

While they were talking about these things, Jesus stood in their midst, and said to them: Peace be with you. It is I, do not be afraid. This appearance of the Lord after the resurrection is also understood to be mentioned by John, who speaks thus: So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were closed where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them: Peace be with you, etc. But what John says, that Thomas was not with them at the time, agrees with the account according to Luke, when the two, of whom one was Cleopas, returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, it is undoubtedly to be understood that Thomas had gone out from there before the Lord appeared to them while they were speaking these things.

Luke 24:37

They were troubled and terrified, thinking they were seeing a spirit. This is what the Manichean heretics suspect and believe about Christ, that He was not true flesh, but a spirit. This first thought arose in the hearts of the apostles. And indeed those Manicheans never believed that Jesus was a man. However, the disciples knew the man with whom they had conversed for such a long time. But after He died, could they believe that what they knew could be raised again if it could die? Therefore, He appeared to their eyes as the one they knew. And not believing that true flesh could rise from the grave on the third day, they thought they were seeing a spirit. This error of the apostles is the sect of the Manicheans. However, when these things are objected to them, they usually respond in this way: What harm do we believe? We believe Christ as God, we believe He was a spirit, we do not believe He was flesh. Spirit is better than flesh. We believe what is better; we do not

wish to believe what is worse. If there is nothing wrong with this statement, let Jesus leave His disciples in this error. What harm did the disciples believe too? They believed Christ to be a spirit. For they did not think He was nothing, but a spirit. If you think you are at risk from a small sickness, listen to the doctor's sentence.

Luke 24:38

And He said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? What kind of thoughts, if not false, morbid, pernicious? For Christ would have lost the fruit of His passion if the truth of the resurrection did not exist. Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? As a good farmer would say: What I planted there, I will find there, not thorns which I did not plant. Let it descend into your heart, because it is from above. But these thoughts did not descend from above, but in the very heart like a bad herb they arose.

Luke 24:40

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. Not only the hands and feet, which bore the marks of the nails, but also the side which had been pierced by a spear, as attested by John, he showed. So that by showing the scars of his wounds, he might heal their wound of doubt and unbelief. Indeed, just as after the resurrection he graciously revealed the places of the nails and the spear to strengthen the faith and hope of his disciples, so in the day of judgment he will come revealing the same signs of his passion and the very cross itself to confound the wickedness and unbelief of the proud. Clearly, that he might show to all, angels and men alike, that it is him who died for the impious and by the impious, and they shall see (as it is written) him whom they pierced, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him (Rev 1:7). Certainly, it must be noted that the Gentiles are accustomed to raising a challenge in this place, and foolishly ridicule the faith in our hoped-for resurrection. For if your God (they say) could not heal the wounds inflicted by the Jews on himself, but as you say, took the marks of the scars with him to heaven, with what boldness do you believe that he will restore your bodies from dust to their entirety?

To which the response must be that our God, who raised his flesh, glorified now with perpetual immortality, from the sepulcher when and how he chose, also restored it as he willed. For it does not follow that he who is

proven to have done greater things would be unable to do lesser ones. But certainly, out of grace of his dispensation, he who did the greater chose not to erase the lesser, that is, he who destroyed the realms of death chose not to obliterate the signs of death. First, evidently, so that through these he might establish the faith of his resurrection for the disciples. Then, so that while interceding with the Father for us, he might always show what kind of death he endured for the life of mortals. Third, so that he might always renew the signs of the same death by which they have been redeemed, generously aiding them, so that they might never cease to sing the mercies of the Lord eternally, but let those say, who have been redeemed by the Lord, that he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Finally, so that, in the judgment, he might also demonstrate to the faithless how justly they are condemned, by showing, among other crimes, even the scars of the wounds he received from them.

Just as if some most valiant man, by the command of his King, striving in singular combat for the salvation of the entire people, should receive many wounds but nonetheless kill the enemy, plunder his spoils, and bring victory to his people; and when asked by the physician tasked with his care whether he desires to be healed in such a way that no traces of the wounds remain or rather that the scars should remain while all deformity and filth are completely absent, he would reply that he prefers to be healed in such a way that, having fully recovered his former state of health and glory, he perpetually carries with him the signs of such a great triumph. Likewise, the Lord, for the perpetual sign of victory, preferred to bring the scars of the wounds of his passion with him to heaven, rather than to erase them. Yet, none of this detracts from the faith in our resurrection, concerning which it is prophesied with true promise: Not a hair of your head will perish (Luke 21:18).

Luke 24:41

But while they still did not believe for joy and marvelled, he said: "Have you anything here to eat?" To show forth the truth of his resurrection, he not only allowed himself to be touched by the disciples but also deigned to eat with them. Not indeed because he needed food after the resurrection, nor signifying that in the resurrection which we await we will need food, but so that he might confirm the nature of the resurrected body in such a manner that they would not think it a mere spirit, nor believe he appeared to them in semblance alone. He ate by power, not necessity. For the thirsty earth ab-

sorbs water differently from how the burning rays of the sun draw it; the former out of need, the latter by power.

Luke 24:42

Then they offered him a piece of broiled fish, and a honeycomb. And when he had eaten before them, he took the remains and gave them to them. What do we believe the broiled fish to signify, if not the Mediator between God and men, himself suffering as a man? For he deigned to hide in the waters of the human race and willed to be caught in the snare of our death, and as it were, to be roasted by the fire of his passion. But he who deigned to become a broiled fish in his passion, was to us a honeycomb in his resurrection. Or does the one who willed in the broiled fish to symbolize the tribulations of his passion, in the honeycomb wish to express both natures of his person? For the honeycomb is honey in wax. The honey in the wax is divinity in humanity. Thus, the Redeemer manifests his own, so that he might lay out for us the path to follow. For behold, he wished to join a honeycomb with his broiled fish because assuredly he receives into eternal rest in his body those who here endure tribulations for God and do not withdraw from the love of interior sweetness. When a honeycomb is taken with a broiled fish, it means that those who here take on affliction for the truth are there satisfied with true sweetness.

Luke 24:44

And he said to them: These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you. That is, while I was still in the mortal flesh in which you also are. For then he had been resurrected in the same flesh, but was not with them in the same mortality. And indeed he was with them for forty days after he rose again (as it is read) by the exhibition of bodily presence, but he was not with them in the fellowship of human frailty. [Luke 24:44] -- Because it is necessary to fulfill all things that are written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me. See how he dispelled all doubts. He was seen, he was touched, he ate, he was indeed himself. Yet, lest he should appear to deceive human senses in any way, he directed them to the Scriptures. Let the pagans say what they will, he was a magician, he could show himself in this way. But could a magician have prophesied about himself before he was born? Produce the Scriptures, because what you see was

foreseen, what you behold was foretold. Hear, daughter, see (Psalm 44); hear what was foretold, see what was fulfilled.

Luke 24:45–46

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he said to them: Because it is written thus, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. He offers himself to be seen with the eyes, he offers himself to be handled by the hands. It is not enough to read, he recalls the Scriptures. And this is not enough, he opens the mind, so that what you read you understand. Then after commending the truth of his body, he commends the unity of the Church.

Luke 24:47

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The rage of the heretics is not hidden in a corner; the Church is spread throughout the whole world; all nations have the Church, let no one deceive us, it is the true one, it is catholic, it began at Jerusalem, it reached us, and it is there and here. For it did not leave there to come here. It grew, it did not migrate. And rightly it is written among the other sacraments of the Lord's mercy, and it was fitting that the ministers of the word, who were to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ crucified and risen from the dead among all nations, should begin at Jerusalem, not only because the oracles of God were entrusted to them, because theirs is the adoption of sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises, because theirs are the fathers, and from them is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever (Rom. IX), but also so that the nations, entangled in various errors and crimes, might be called to the hope of obtaining pardon, by this very sign of Divine mercy, which they would see granted even to those who crucified the Son of God, not only the pardon of guilt by the Father, but also the joy of eternal life.

Luke 24:49

But you are witnesses of these things, and I send the promise of my Father upon you. The grace of the Holy Spirit is called the promise of the Father, and in the Gospel of John it is more fully and also briefly intimated here when it follows:

Luke 24:49

"But you, stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. About which power, that is, the Holy Spirit, the angel also says to Mary: And the power of the Most High shall overshadow you (Luke 1). And the Lord himself elsewhere says: For I know that power has gone out from me (Luke 8). And even Luke more openly mentions in the Acts of the Apostles that the promised power from on high and the commanded stay in the city. He commanded them (he says) not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard from my mouth. Because John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (Acts 1). And a little later: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses (Ibid.). It should be noted indeed that there are those who are prevented from the office of preaching either by imperfection or by age, and yet are driven by rashness, who should be warned to consider that Truth itself, which could suddenly strengthen those whom it wished, as an example to followers so that the imperfect would not presume to preach, after fully instructing the disciples in the power of preaching, immediately added: But you, stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. We indeed stay in the city if we confine ourselves within the enclosures of our minds, so that speaking outwardly we do not wander, so that when we are perfectly clothed with divine power, then we may go out as if from ourselves also instructing others."

Luke 24:50

He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. And it happened that while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. Omitting all that could have been done by him with the disciples over forty days, he silently joins the first day of his resurrection to the last day on which he ascended into heaven. Beautifully, as he was about to ascend into heaven, he led the disciples whom he blessed out to Bethany. Firstly, because of the name of the city, which is called the house of obedience. Because he who descended due to the disobedience of the perverse, ascended surely due to the obedience of the converted: For he died, as the Apostle says, for our offenses, and rose again for our justification (Romans 4). Secondly, also because of the location of the same village, or little city, which

is said to be situated on the side of the Mount of Olives. Because evidently the house of the obedient Church, worthy of apostolic hospitality, has established its foundations not elsewhere but on the very side of the high mountain, that is, the side of Christ, faith, hope, and love. From which indeed, through the lance-opened side, it delighted to see the sacraments of blood and water, by which it is both born and nourished, flow forth.

From whose most abundant peak, that is, from the summit of divinity, it desires the gifts of spiritual anointing, and eagerly expects the promises of perpetual light and peace. Thirdly, because as John writes, Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off (John 11). This number, indeed, due to the seven and eight which comprise it, fits the mysteries of the Scriptures, whether representing the life that is now or the life to come, or the Old and New Testament, or the rest of souls in the future and the resurrection of the flesh, or certainly something else entirely containing a heavenly and spiritual secret. And therefore rightly, to those to whom he opened the knowledge of both Testaments, whom he also taught every rule of living and hoping, he led out to the place where he would bless them and give them teaching commands, fifteen furlongs away. Rightly he separated the place of his glorious ascension from the place of his most victorious passion by fifteen furlongs, so that he might strengthen all who desire to live or die for him, with both the desire and love of first resting after death and finally being resurrected from the dead.

Luke 24:52–53

And they worshiped and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. As the Lord ascended into heaven, the disciples worshiping in the place where His feet had last stood, immediately returned to Jerusalem, because there they were commanded to wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard through the mouth of the Lord. They bring great joys, because they rejoice that their God and Lord, after the triumph of the resurrection, has also penetrated the heavens. They remain continually in the temple praising and blessing God, so that, in the place of prayer and among the devotions of praises, they might wait with ready and prepared hearts for the promised coming of the Holy Spirit. And we, following the example of the disciples, after celebrating in Jerusalem, and this in the vision of peace, the solemnities of the Lord's passion and resurrection, let us soon seek the fields of Bethany

with Christ as our guide, so that with a peaceful mind, and already calmed from every whirlwind of discord, we might be imbued with the sacraments of His body and blood: let us ensure that we exist in the house of obedience, truly following His footsteps, who, to give us a form of living, was made obedient unto death (Philippians II).

Thus indeed we also daily deserve to be exalted by His blessing, if, daily mindful of His triumphant ascension into heaven, praising and blessing God, in Jerusalem, that is, in the already and greatly desired vision of the heavenly peace, we rest, like men awaiting their lord when he returns from the wedding feast (Luke XII). Since the blessed evangelist Luke, among the four animals of heaven, is received as signified by the calf, by whose sacrifice those chosen for the priesthood were commanded to be initiated, because he undertook to set forth the priesthood of Christ more fully than the others, beautifully beginning his gospel from the ministry of the temple through the priesthood of Zechariah, he completed it in the devotion of the temple, when he concluded with the apostles there, namely, future ministers of the new priesthood, not in the blood of victims, but in the praise and blessing of God. Amen.

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Commentary on Mark

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Commentary on Luke

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