Commentary on Luke (part 2 of 2)

The Venerable Bede (AD 673–735)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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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 understood, 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, ὕδωρ 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 future. 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 outward 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 oblivion 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 abundingly, 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 neces-

sary, 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 Zacchaeus 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 infirm 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 be-

cause 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. Concerning 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 neighbors. 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 ac-

tions 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 customary 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 mentioned 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 ἀργυρίῳ 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 faith-

less 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 believes 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, extortion-

ers, 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 ev-

eryone 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 history 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 salvation, 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 example) 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 exhortation 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 courtyard, 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, wishing 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 mentioned, 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 absorbs 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.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the

source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.