Commentary on Luke (part 1 of 2)

The Venerable Bede (AD 673–735)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Introduction

Translated from Migne’s Patrologia Latina, In Evangelium S. Lucae, Vol 92

Letter from Bishop Acca to Bede

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

”There is nothing said that has not been said before,” and because charity endures all things, nor has it ever been the custom of the saints to envy one another, but rather to provoke one another, and each offered what he could to adorn the house of the Lord according to his abilities. Neither did the blessed Pope Gregory fear to offend the Fathers, from whom he himself revisited many expositions of the Gospel in his homilies; nor did Augustine, nor any other of the Fathers fear, on account of preceding treatises, to explain the Psalms or other things they were asked to, or to write whatever seemed right to them, withdrawing their hand out of fear. Moreover (as Augustine also says), it is necessary for many books to be written by many people in different styles, but with no different faith, even on the same questions, so that the matter itself may reach many, thus to some in one way, to others in another. However, there are certain passages in the exposition of the blessed Ambrose on Luke that are so eloquent and sublime (which I do not doubt your holiness has also seen), that they can only be understood by scholars, but

are despised by unlearned or impatient readers (of which you will find many in the present age) because of the difficulty in comprehending what is eloquent or penetrating what is profound, and they consider them not worthy to be sought, assuming them to be beyond them or unworthy of scrutiny because they seem too strong.

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

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

Letter from Bede to Bishop Acca

To the most blessed and exceedingly desired lord Bishop Acca, Bede, humble priest, in the eternal Lord greeting.

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

And gathering from here and there almost the most distinguished and most worthy craftsmen of such an office, the works of the fathers, what the blessed Ambrose, what Augustine, what finally Gregory the most watchful (according to his name) apostle of our nation, what Jerome the interpreter of sacred history, what the other fathers have thought or said on the words of Luke, I diligently endeavored to inspect: and I immediately produced the command in small sheets as you ordered, either in their very syllables, or surely in my own words for the sake of brevity, as it seemed. Because it was laborious to insert their names one by one, and to indicate by name what was said by which author, I thought it convenient to print the first letters of their names from afar at the side, and through these individually to intimate where each father's words begin and where the discourse which I translated ends, being solicitous in all things, lest I be said to steal the sayings of the elders, and to compose them as if they were my own. And I obsecrate much,

and implore by the Lord the readers, that if perhaps any should consider these my works, however they may be, as worthy of transcription, they also remember to affix the mentioned signs of the names as they find them in our exemplar. Also some things which (to speak with the words of your holiness) the author of light opened to me, I annexed as indications of my own labor where it seemed appropriate.

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

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

And shortly after: Christ according to man (he said) was made both king and priest. To whom God gave the throne of David his father, that his kingdom might not have an end, and he might be the mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus. But Luke did not have a companion as an abridger like Matthew had Mark, and this perhaps not without some mystery, because it is the kings' way not to be without the obedience of companions. Whence he who undertook to narrate the royal person of Christ had as it were an attendant joined to him who followed in his footsteps in a certain manner. But the priest, because he entered alone into the Holy of Holies, therefore Luke (whose intent was concerning the priesthood of Christ) did not have one following as a companion, who in a way would abridge his narration. These three evangelists, however, differ mainly in those things which Christ temporally performed in human flesh. John, on the other hand, aimed mainly at the very divinity of the Lord, by which He is equal to the Father and sought to commend it especially through his Gospel as much as he believed to suffice among men. Therefore, he is carried far above these three, so that you see those in a manner living on earth with the man Christ, while he transcended the cloud which covers all the earth and reached the clear heaven, whence with the keenest and firmest eye of the mind he saw the Word of the Lord in the beginning with God, through whom all things were made, and recognized Him made flesh that He might dwell among us.

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

Whatever other things can be diligently noticed, whereby it appears that Luke had an intention around the person of the priest. But Mark, who neither wished to narrate the royal nor the sacerdotal lineage, or relation or consecration, and yet is shown to dwell on those things which Christ as man did, seems to have signified

only the figure of man in those four animals. Now these three animals, whether a lion, a man, or an ox, walk on the earth. Whence these three evangelists were primarily occupied with those things which Christ performed in the flesh, and the precepts he handed down for the exercise of mortal life to those bearing flesh. But John flies above the clouds of human infirmity like an eagle, and gazes with the keenest and most steadfast eyes of the heart upon the light of unchangeable truth. These few testimonies of the blessed Augustine, taken from many, I have inserted in the preface of this letter to repel the calumny of the querulous, which may also (as mentioned) provide protection for our old work, and may affix not an ignoble seal to the present one. May your holy paternity, praying for us, deign to preserve with the grace of the heavenly helper, and always strengthen for the defense of His holy Church.

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

Chapter 1

[Luke 1:1-4] -- Prologue. Since many have undertaken to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. This most clear prologue indicates that the chief reason for writing his Gospel was to prevent false evangelists from having the opportunity to preach falsely, who, as their memorials even today testify, tried to introduce sects under the name of the apostles. Indeed, some ascribed their writings falsely to Thomas, others to Bartholomew, some to Matthias, and even some under the title of the twelve apostles. But also Basilides and Apelles, one of whom taught of 365 heavens, the other of two opposing gods among other vile doctrines, have left Gospels defiled with their errors under their own names. Among these is to be noted what is called the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which should not be counted among the apocryphal but rather ecclesiastical histories. For Jerome, the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures himself, used many testimonies from it, and he translated it into Latin and Greek. False Gospels, however, Luke refuted with his very first preface. ”Since many,” he says, ”have undertaken to compile a narrative.

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

to write, he means not as if it seemed to himself by himself, but signifying it also seemed to him by the urging of the Holy Spirit. Just as the apostles in their letter say: ”For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us. Whose grace indeed is that what is good may also seem good to us. He then says he followed not a few things but all things carefully.

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

[Luke 1:5] -- In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. The most sacred noble lineage of the forerunner of the Lord is celebrated not only from his parents, but also from his ancestors, so that the faith in his advent, conceived not by sudden inspiration, but rather received by ancestral propagation, might be more freely proclaimed. And since indeed the dignity of Aaron, the first high priest in the law, is known to all, we should speak briefly of Abijah. When King David and the prophet sought with great devotion to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob, the Lord determined that this should be done by Solomon instead, and therefore David prepared all the expenses for the house for Solomon and gave him the measurements and description of the house, so that as the external state of cultivation increased, the peak of inner devotion might also grow. He also distributed the division of the priestly and Levitical orders among all the works of the house of the Lord. For there were leaders of the sanctuary and leaders of God, that is, high priests, from both the sons of Eleazar and the sons of Ithamar. Their courses, according to their ministries, for entering the house of God, were divided into twenty-four lots, in which the course of Abijah, the family from which Zechariah was descended, fell by lot to the eighth.

He divided the families by lots, one house which was presided over by Eleazar, and the other house which had the rest under it, Ithamar. Read the Words of the Days

and also the seventh book of Josephus' Antiquities, where it is mentioned that each generation served God according to the order of lots for eight days from Sabbath to Sabbath. There too he asserts that from the tribe of the Levites, twenty-four parts were made so that they also, by lots, served for eight days according to the custom of the priests. And it is not for nothing that the first herald of the New Testament is born in the course of the eighth lot, because just as the Old Testament is often expressed by the number seven because of the Sabbath, so the New is sometimes expressed by the number eight because of the sacrament of either the Lord's or our resurrection. Hence, because the court of the heavenly kingdom is not penetrated otherwise than by the observance of both Testaments, it is rightly said that there was a mystical ascent of fifteen steps in the temple of Solomon. And he who, calling to the Lord in tribulation, is heard, is led to the heights by the same number of psalms of steps, so that, placed at last in the courts of the house of God, he may hear: May the Lord bless you out of Zion (Psalm 133). The time of Herod, the foreign king, also attests to the coming of the Lord.

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

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

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

[Luke 1:7] -- And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in their days. It was divinely ordained that John would be born to parents of advanced age and long deprived of the fruit of marriage, so that the sudden birth of offspring might make the gift more precious to them, and the amazement of the miracle might prepare others to hear the future prophet. Hence, all who heard laid it up in their hearts, saying, What then will this child be? [Luke 1:8] -- Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood. Indeed, through Moses the Lord appointed one high priest, who, after his death, commanded one to succeed in turn, and this was observed until the times of David, from whom it was decreed that there should be several (as we have said), nevertheless by the Lord's action, who, ministering in turns, during the time of their division, each would dedicate themselves to chastity, and would not touch their household at all. Thus now Zechariah is declared to have served in the priesthood in the order of his division.

[Luke 1:10] -- By lot he was chosen to burn incense when he entered the temple of the Lord; and the whole multitude of people was praying outside at the hour of incense. He was not chosen by a new lot, for it was the incense to be burned, but he had been chosen by an ancient lot when first in the order of his priesthood he succeeded in the division of Abijah. But it was commanded that incense be carried into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, while all the people were waiting outside the temple, on the tenth day of the seventh month. And this day of atonement, or which they call the day of propitiation, which among us, due to the varied course of the moon by which the Hebrews compute their months, sometimes falls in the month of September, sometimes in October; because the month in which Passover is held, both by the ordained order and by the decree of the law, holds the beginning of the year, as the Lord said to Moses: "This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. On the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb, etc. (Exodus XII). But of this day the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, thus mentions: "Into the first tabernacle the priests always entered, performing the duties of the sacrifices;

but into the second, the high priest alone once a year, not without blood which he offers, etc. (Hebrews IX). Expanding the mystery of this day, he shows that Jesus is true high priest, who, having completed the days of his office, that is, having

fulfilled the dispensation of the flesh with his own blood, entered the secrets of heaven, to make the Father gracious unto us, and to intercede for the sins of those who are still waiting outside, praying and loving his coming. Therefore, fittingly, his descent on that day is announced by an angel, on which his ascension by the law was figured. For he who descended is the same also that ascended. (Ephesians IV): And, as the Psalm says, ”His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his meet is unto the end of it. (Psalm XVIII).

[Luke 1:11] -- But an angel appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. An angel appears well, and in the temple, and beside the altar, and on the right side, because clearly it proclaims both the coming of the true priest, and the mystery of the universal sacrifice, and the joy of the heavenly gift. For just as often the presence by the left portends evils, so by the right eternal goods are predicted. As it is sung in the praise of wisdom: Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and glory. [Luke 1:12] -- And Zacharias was troubled when he saw, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, etc. The angel comforts the trembling Zacharias, because just as it is of human frailty to be troubled by the vision of a spiritual creature, so it is of angelic kindness to soothe mortals, frightened by its presence, by immediately offering reassurance. On the contrary, it is of demonic ferocity always to shake those who are terrified by their presence with even greater horror, which is better overcome by no other reason than unwavering faith.

[Luke 1:13] -- And your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; and you shall call his name John. By saying the prayer is heard, he immediately promises the birth of his wife. Not that he who had entered to sacrifice for the people could have prayed for obtaining children, especially since no one prays for what he despairs of receiving. But so much did he despair of having children, remembering his own old age and his barren wife, that he did not believe the angel promising this; but what he says, your prayer has been heard, signifies for the redemption of the people: And your wife will bear you a son, unfolds the ordinance of that same redemption, namely that the son born to Zechariah would make way by proclaiming for that redeemer of the people. A sign of singular merit is given whenever a name is either imposed or changed by God upon men. Thus Abram, because he was to be the father of many nations, was called Abraham. Thus Jacob, because he saw God, deserved to be called Israel. Thus King Josiah, on account of the summit of his exceptional virtue, was named by God long before he was born. Therefore John is interpreted: in whom is grace, or the grace of the Lord. By this name it is declared that first, the grace is given to his parents, to whom a son would be born in their old age; then to John himself, who would be great before the Lord, and would be enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb; finally also to the sons of Israel, whom he would turn to the Lord their God.

[Luke 1:14] -- And there will be joy to you and exultation, and many will rejoice at his birth. The father rightfully rejoices because either born in old age or has received a son of such grace. Others also rejoice, to whom he will preach the hitherto unheard entrance of the kingdom of heaven. And it should be noted that many rejoice at the birth of the forerunner, but at the birth of the Lord, the angel announces great joy which will be for all the people. For evidently, this one comes to preach salvation to many, that one to grant it to all who wish.

[Luke 1:15] -- For he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. It is a great virtue before the Lord to scorn earthly delights entirely while preaching heavenly joys in the desert. But also this stands out greatly before the Lord, even though it seems to be despised by men, that he, of whom no one among those born of women is greater, was beheaded by the whim of a wanton girl. The angel, who proposed his rank of greatness, explained afterwards, "And he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." Sicera signifies drunkenness, a term used by the Hebrews for any drink that can cause inebriation, whether made from fruits, grains, or any other material. It was a specific rule in the law of the Nazarenes to abstain from wine and strong drink during the time of consecration. Thus, John, Samson, and Jeremiah, and others like them, strive to abstain from these things always, so that they may remain perpetual Nazarenes, that is, holy. For it is fitting that a vessel dedicated to heavenly grace be restrained from worldly enticements and not be inebriated with wine, in which is debauchery, but rather be filled with the new wine of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, correctly, as the inebriation of wine is taken away, the grace of the Spirit is accumulated. He showed himself to be filled with this grace (as it was foretold), when he leapt in the womb of his mother at the entrance of the blessed Mary, recognizing his office of forerunner and, as much as he could, proclaimed the coming of the Lord.

[Luke 1:16] -- And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah. When John, who bore witness to Christ, was baptizing people in his faith, he is said to have turned the children of Israel to the Lord their God; it is indeed clear that Christ is the Lord God of Israel. If, however, Christ is, or rather, since Christ is the Lord God of Israel, let the Arians cease from denying that Christ is the Lord God. Let the Photinians blush for giving Christ a beginning from the virgin. Let the Manicheans stop believing that there is one God of the people of Israel and another of the Christians. And because John is said to go before him, let them see that the eternal God before the ages was born as a man in time, and therefore is named by his precursor now as a man coming after him, now as the Son of God. He is well said to go before in the spirit and power of Elijah, for just as that one was the herald of the coming judge, so this one became the herald of the Redeemer. Whence both, following a very similar way of life, pursued the desert, lived frugally, were dressed simply, and

were regarded with contempt. Both tolerate the madness of king and queen. That one divided the Jordan when he was about to seek heaven, this one converted men to the saving bath by which heaven may be sought. This one is associated with the Lord on earth, that one is manifested with him in glory.

[Luke 1:17] -- And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient, etc. To turn the hearts of the fathers to their children means to infuse the spiritual knowledge of the holy ancients into the people through preaching. But the wisdom of the just is not to presume righteousness from the works of the law but to seek salvation through faith. So that although they observe the commands of the law, they may understand that they are saved by the grace of God through Christ. For the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1). And Peter spoke of the yoke of the law: ”Which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, just as they (Acts 15).” Because this wisdom is long imparted to the unbelievers through John and through Elijah, it is rightly said about Elijah by Malachi in almost the same words as it was said about John by the angel: ”Prepare a perfect people for the Lord.” For because it was said that Zacharias was heard when supplicating for the people, it teaches in what order that people ought to be saved and perfected, namely by the preaching of John in repenting and believing in Christ.

[Luke 1:18] -- And Zacharias said to the angel, ”How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in her days.” Hesitating because of the magnitude of the promises, he seeks a sign by which he might be able to believe, to whom the mere vision or address of the angel should have been sufficient for a sign. Therefore, he suffered the deserved punishment of silence for his disbelief, where the same silence was both the sign of the faith he sought and the punishment for the unbelief he deserved. [Luke 1:19] -- And the angel answered him, saying: I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words. It should be understood that if a man were to promise such things, it would be permissible to demand a sign with impunity; but since it is an angel who promises, it no longer becomes appropriate to doubt. And he gives a sign that is requested, so that he who spoke in disbelief may now learn to believe by remaining silent. It is to be noted here that the angel declares that he stands before God and has been sent to announce the good news to Zechariah. Because even when angels come to us, they fulfill their ministry outwardly, yet they are never absent inwardly through contemplation. And so they are both sent and present, because although an angelic spirit is circumscribed, the highest spirit himself who is God is not circumscribed. Therefore, angels are both sent and stand before Him, because whenever they come sent, they run within Him.

[Luke 1:21] -- And the people were waiting for Zechariah and were wondering at his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them. And they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple, and he was making signs to them and remained mute. And it happened that when the days of his service were completed, he went home. This is what I said: that during their turn of duty, priests, being engaged solely in the temple's duties, not only refrained from the embrace of their wives but also from entering their own homes. From this, an example of maintaining perpetual chastity is given to the priests of our time, who are always commanded to serve at the altar. For since in those days the priesthood succession was sought from the line of Aaron, it was necessary to provide for a time to produce offspring. But because now it is not a carnal succession but a spiritual perfection that is sought, consequently, priests are commanded to always abstain from wives and always maintain chastity, so they can always serve at the altar.

[Luke 1:24] -- After these days, Elizabeth, his wife, conceived. Specifically, after the days of Zacharias' duty were completed. John, the bishop of the city of Constantinople, mentioning this most holy conception, said: "These events occurred in the month of September, on the eighth day before the Kalends of October, when the moon was beginning its eleventh day, at the time when it was necessary for the Jews to celebrate the fast of Scenopegia. And it was found that the same day, the eighth day before the Kalends of October, was the equinox, on which the beginning of the night is longer than the day. For he must increase, but I must decrease," (John 3). Indeed, the light had been diminished by the darkness, when the Jews, according to the law and prophecy, offered sacrifices to God; in which time John was conceived. For these are the things that were offered for the people's sins, which were to cease when John, the Baptist, was conceived. And therefore, Zacharias, his father, a priest of the Jews, became mute, because their sacrifices, which were offered for the people's sins, had to cease and fall silent. For the only priest was coming, who from his own lamb offered as a sacrifice, would offer the sacrifice to God for the sins of all. From the words of the Blessed John, we are taught that on the first day after the day of atonement, the change of the priestly order was celebrated, and therefore on this day the conception of the Lord's forerunner occurred. This day, not by chance, is a day of fasting and affliction foretold by the angel, because through him affliction of repentance was to be preached to men.

[Luke 1:25] -- And she hid herself for five months, saying, "Thus has the Lord dealt with me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." How much care the saints take to admit nothing shameful that should make them blush is shown by Elisabeth, who is even embarrassed by the gifts she desired to receive. And although she rejoices in the removal of the reproach of sterility, she is modest regarding the birth in her advanced age. But the burden of motherhood is a cause of shame only as long as the honor of having a child remains hidden. For she who concealed herself because she had conceived a son, when the

blessed Mother of God came in, joyfully exclaimed, because she was about to bear a prophet.

[Luke 1:7-8] -- Allegorically, through Zacharias, the priesthood of the Jews is signified; through Elizabeth, the very law can be indicated, which, exercised by the teachings of the priests as if supported by a manly strength, ought to beget spiritual sons to God, but because of the insult of sterility, it was hardly able. Not that there were not many, both before the law and under the law, of the most perfect life, but because the law brought no one to perfection, which could not unlock the kingdom of heaven unless preceded by Christ. It is well said that both were righteous before God, because just as the law is good, and the commandment holy and just and good, so also the legal priesthood for the dispensation of that time is holy, good, and just. And what follows, that both walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, may be so explained, that the legal devotion flourished, as if in the adolescence or youth of its time, from the periods of Moses and afterwards: but in the oncoming of the Savior, severe old age bowed it down, when both the order of the priesthood was confused by the ambitions and contentions of the high priests, and the law itself, torn by the traditions of the Pharisees, became less able to beget sons to God.

[Luke 1:9] -- Therefore, Zacharias enters the temple because it is the duty of priests to enter the sanctuary of God and to understand the deep mysteries of the heavens. The multitude prays outside, because they cannot penetrate the secrets and mysteries, they must humbly attend to the teachings of the more learned. But while Zacharias places incense on the altar, he learns of the birth of John; for while teachers burn with a greater flame of divine reading, they find that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is to come and emerge from within the depths of scriptures, as from the womb of Elizabeth. And this rightly through an angel, because the law is ordered by angels in the hand of a mediator. [Luke 1:20] -- But he who pretends not to believe what he has heard is punished with the penalty of silence, because he is mute who does not understand the spiritual sense within the letters. Nor does such a one know how to give words to the people like a teacher, but, lacking the word and reason, he, so to speak, makes silent gestures. Such was then the priesthood of the Jews, when they did not care to understand the reason for sacrifices or the declarations of the prophets. While Zacharias remains mute, Elisabeth conceives John, because although the priests may not understand the distinction of faith, and the Pharisees and Scribes lose it, so that neither themselves enter nor permit their listeners to enter, yet the interior of the law abounds with the sacraments of Christ.

[Luke 1:24] -- And Elisabeth rightly hides her conception for five months, whether because the lawgiver Moses in five books mystically designated the mysteries of Christ, or because the entire series of the Old Testament prefigures that same

dispensation of Christ through the deeds or words of saintly people in the five ages of the world. And therefore, because the incarnation of Christ would happen either in the sixth age of the world or to fulfill the law, it is rightly in the sixth month of Elisabeth's conception that the angel was sent to Mary to announce that the Savior would be born, as the following lesson in order explains.

[Luke 1:26] -- In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. Therefore, angels are called by private names so that it may be understood by the names even in their activities what they are capable of. For neither in that holy city, which He perfects with full knowledge of the vision of Almighty God, do they thus receive proper names, nor can their persons be unknown without names: but when they come to minister something to us, they also take names from their ministries among us. To Mary the virgin, then, Gabriel is sent, who is named the strength of God. For he was indeed coming to announce Him who deigned to appear humble to wrestle down the airy powers. Of whom the Psalmist says, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (Psalm 24). And again, "The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory" (ibid.). Therefore, by the strength of God He was to be announced, who is the Lord of powers and mighty in battle, coming to war against the airy powers. Understand the sixth month as March, on the twenty-fifth day of which our Lord is said both to have been conceived and to have suffered, just as He is said to have been born on the twenty-fifth day of the month of December.

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

[Luke 1:27] -- To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. For many reasons, the Savior wished to be born not of a simple virgin, but of one betrothed. Firstly, evidently, so that through Joseph's lineage, to whom Mary was a relative, Mary's origin could also be known. For it is not the custom of Scripture to trace the genealogy of women. For it can be understood from both that it is said of the house of David. Next, lest she should be stoned by the Jews as an adulteress, preferring that some should doubt her origin rather than the chastity of the parent. At the same time, it removes the

occasion for impudent virgins, lest they say the mother of the Savior was defamed by false suspicions. Thirdly, so that while fleeing to Egypt and then returning, she would have the solace of a husband, who would exist equally as a protector and witness of her intact virginity. Fourthly, lest her birth be exposed to the devil; who if he knew he was born of a virgin, might perhaps fear to hand him over to death as eminently as other men. But Mary is called in Hebrew the star of the sea, and in Syriac lady; and rightly so, because she deserved to give birth to the Lord of the whole world, and the perpetual light for the ages.

[Luke 1:28] -- And the angel entered to her and said, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women. It is rightly that she is called full of grace, because she obviously attained the grace that no other had merited, that she would conceive and bear the author of grace himself. [Luke 1:29] -- When she heard this, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of salutation this might be. Learn the virgin by her manners, learn the virgin by her modesty, learn the virgin by her prophecy, learn the virgin by her mystery. It is the nature of virgins to be startled and to fear every man's approach, to revere every man's speech. Let women learn to imitate the resolve of modesty. Alone in her innermost chambers where no men might see her, the angel alone found her, alone without a companion, alone without a witness, lest she be corrupted by any degenerate affection, she is greeted by the angel. Learn, virgin, to avoid the wantoness of words. Even Mary feared the angel's salutation. Nevertheless, she was thinking, he said, what manner of salutation this might be. And so with modesty, because she was afraid; with prudence, because she marveled at the new formula of blessing, which had been nowhere read, nowhere before discovered.

[Luke 1:30] -- And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. Having seen that she was troubled by an unusual greeting, as it were, which was kept for her alone, calling her more familiarly by her name, he bids her not to fear. And because he had called her full of grace, he further establishes that grace and explains it more abundantly, saying: [Luke 1:31] -- Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. Jesus is interpreted as savior or saving. The angel addressing Joseph explained the sacrament of this name: For he, he said, shall save his people from their sins. He did not say the people of Israel, but his people, that is, called into the unity of faith from among the uncircumcision and the circumcision, where, gathered from different parts, there might be one shepherd and one flock.

[Luke 1:32] -- He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. It is said of John that he will be great, but he as a great man, this one however as a great God. For he will be great before the Lord, but this one, it says, will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. Therefore, the same Son of the Most High who was

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

[Luke 1:33] -- And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Isaiah said: His empire will be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it in judgement and in justice (Isa. IX). He did not say in the acquisition of earthly glories and treasures, not in the victory over many nations or the subjugation of proud cities, but in judgment and justice. For by these the kingdom of Christ is multiplied and established, both in each of the faithful and in the universal Church throughout the earth. For he calls the whole Church the house of Jacob, which, whether born from a good root or grafted in, although it was a wild olive, is rightfully grafted into a good olive tree by faith. After the triumph of his passion, the Savior addressing it says: “You who fear the Lord, praise him; all you offspring of Jacob, glorify him” (Psal. XXI). However, Jesus is not said to be great in future words and to be called the Son of the Most High, to accept the scepter of David, and to reign over the house of Jacob, because, as the heretics senselessly think and fall away from the truth, Christ did not exist before Mary, but that the man assumed into God was glorified by that glory which the Word of God had with the Father before the world was; that is, the same name of the Son would mean the same person of Christ, man with God, full of grace and truth.

[Luke 1:34] -- But Mary said to the angel: How will this be, since I do not know a man? She reverently expressed the purpose of her mind, that is, that she had decided to lead a virginal life. Because she was the first among women to devote herself to such great virtue, she rightfully deserved, by unique merit, to excel in blessedness above other women. How, she said, will this be? She did not say: How will I know this; but, How will this be, she said, since I do not know a man. She inquired about the order of obedience to which she should submit, not asking for a sign to believe. For it did not befit the virgin chosen to bear God to exist in doubtful mistrust but in cautious prudence, since man could not easily know the

mystery that was hidden in God through the ages. Therefore, because she had read, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, but had not read how it could happen, rightfully believing in what she had read, she asked the angel about what she did not find in the prophet (Isaiah VII).

[Luke 1:35] -- And the angel, responding, said to her: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Not by the seed of man, which you do not know, he said, but by the work of the Holy Spirit by which you are filled, you will conceive. There will be conception in you, desire will not be. There will be no heat of lust, where the Holy Spirit makes a shadow. Indeed, in that he said, And the power of the Most High will overshadow you, both natures of the incarnate Savior can also be indicated. For a shadow is usually formed by both light and a body. And to whom it is overshadowed, indeed by the light or heat of the sun it is refreshed as much as is sufficient, but the heat of the sun itself, lest it be unbearable, is moderated by an intervening light cloud or some other body. Therefore, to the Blessed Virgin, because as a pure human she could not fully contain all the fullness of the divinity bodily, the power of the Most High overshadowed, that is, the incorporeal light of divinity assumed a body in her of humanity. Of which the prophet beautifully says: Behold, the Lord, he says, ascends upon a light cloud, and will enter Egypt (Isaiah 19), which is to say: Behold, the Word of God coeternal with the Father, and light from light born before the ages, will assume flesh at the end of the ages and a soul not weighed down by any burden of sin, and from the virginal womb, as a bridegroom from his chamber, (Psalm 18) will come forth into the world.

[Luke 1:35] -- Therefore, the holy one to be born from you will be called the Son of God. In distinction from our holiness, Jesus is asserted to be uniquely holy in his birth. For we, even if we are made holy, are not born holy, because we are constrained by the condition of corruptible nature itself. Rightly, then, we each lament with the Prophet, saying: ”Behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 50). But He alone is truly holy who, to overcome the condition of corruptible nature itself, was not conceived from a commingling of carnal union. ”The holy one,” He says, ”will be called the Son of God.” What do you say here, Nestorian, who denies the blessed Mary to be the Mother of God, trying to attack the clearly open truth? Behold, It said that God will come, the Son of God will be born. How, then, either is the Son of God not God, or the one who bore God, how can she not be Θεοτόκος, that is, the Mother of God?

[Luke 1:36] -- And behold, your cousin Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month for her who was called barren, for with God, nothing will be impossible. Lest the Virgin doubt her ability to give birth, she receives the example of the barren old woman who is to give birth, in order to learn that all things are possible with God, even those that seem contrary to the

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

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

[Luke 1:40] -- And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. Learn, O virgin, the humility of Mary, so that you may be chaste in body and devout in heart. The younger visits the elder, the virgin greets the wife. For it is fitting that the more chaste the virgin, the more humble she should be, and by deferring to elders, she may commend the habit of chastity with the testimony of humility. Alternatively: Mary to Elizabeth, the Lord came to John, so that this one might be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that one might consecrate baptism.

The humility of the greater is indeed the exaltation of the lesser. Consequently, it follows: [Luke 1:41] -- And it happened when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. See the distinction and the proprieties of each word. Elizabeth heard the voice first, but John felt the grace first. She heard by the order of nature, he leaped by the reason of the mystery. She sensed the coming of Mary, he sensed the coming of the Lord. These speak of grace, those inwardly work, and they undertake the mystery of piety by the progress of the mothers, and with a double miracle, the mothers prophesy by the spirit of the little ones. The infant leaped, and the mother was filled. The mother was not filled before the child, but as the child was filled with the Holy Spirit, he also filled the mother.

[Luke 1:42] -- And she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. It should be noted that the prophecy about Christ mentioned previously is fulfilled not only through the miracles of events but also through the specificity of the words. For this is the fruit that is promised to the patriarch David under oath: From the fruit of your womb, I will place someone on my throne (Psalm 131). At the same time, it should be observed that Mary is blessed by Elizabeth with the same voice as by Gabriel, showing that she is to be revered by both angels and humans and rightly preferred above all other women. [Luke 1:43] -- And how has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? She does not inquire as if she does not know what she indeed recognizes to be of the Holy Spirit, namely, that she is blessed by the mother of the Lord for the advancement of her offspring, but, struck by the novelty of the miracle, she confesses that this is not of her own merit but of divine gift.

[Luke 1:44] -- For behold, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the child leaped for joy in my womb. Elizabeth was embarrassed by the burden of pregnancy as long as she did not know the mystery of the religion. But she who hid herself because she had conceived a son began to boast because she was bearing a prophet. And she who was previously embarrassed now blesses, and she who doubted before is now affirmed. For behold (she says), as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the child leaped for joy in my womb. Therefore, she cried out with a loud voice when she sensed the Lord’s coming, because she believed the birth to be religious. For there was no cause for shame where faith in the given birth of the prophet newly ascended, not affected.

[Luke 1:45] -- And blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord. You see that Mary did not doubt, but believed, and therefore attained the fruit of faith. Blessed (she says) is she who believed. And indeed she is truly blessed, who is more excellent than the priest. While the priest doubted, the virgin corrected the error. Nor is it surprising if the Lord, about to redeem the world, began His work with His mother, so that she

through whom salvation was being prepared for all, might receive the first fruit of salvation from the pledge. And it is equally noteworthy how much grace adorned the soul of Elizabeth when Mary entered, whom she enlightened simultaneously concerning the past, present, and future by the spirit of prophecy. For by saying, Blessed is she who believed, she clearly indicates that she recognized by the spirit the words of the angel that were spoken to Mary. And by adding: For there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told you by the Lord, she also foresaw what would follow in the future. And naming her the mother of her Lord, because she understood that she was carrying the Redeemer of the human race in her womb.

[Luke 1:46] -- And Mary said: My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. The Lord has raised me up to such and such an unheard-of honor, which cannot be explained by the service of any language, but can barely be comprehended by the feeling of the innermost heart, and thus I offer all the strength of my soul in praiseful thanks, I joyfully devote whatever I live, feel, and know in contemplation of His greatness, which has no end, because my spirit rejoices in the same Jesus, that is, the Savior, in whose eternal divinity my flesh rejoices in temporal conception. Similar to this is what the Psalmist says: And my soul shall exult in the Lord, and shall be delighted above His salvation (Psalm 35). For he indeed venerated the Father and the Son with equal love. [Luke 1:48] -- Because He has regarded the humility of His handmaid. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. She whose humility is regarded rightly rejoices, named blessed by all, just as on the contrary, she whose pride is condemned with disdain, Eve, that is, woe, or by the name of calamity, punished, languishes. For it was fitting that just as by the pride of our first parent death entered the world, so again by the humility of Mary the entry of life might be opened.

[Luke 1:49] -- Because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. This refers back to the beginning of the hymn, where it is said: My soul magnifies the Lord. For indeed, the soul to which the Lord deigns to do great things usually magnifies Him with fitting praises, and can exhort her companions of the same vow and purpose saying: Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together (Psalm 33). For whoever neglects to magnify the Lord, whom he has known, and to sanctify His name, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. His name is called holy because, by the peak of His unique power, He surpasses all creation and is far separated from all that He has made. This is better understood in the Greek expression in which the word itself, ἅγιον (hagion), signifies being beyond the earth. By imitation of this, we also, to the extent of our ability, are commanded to be separated from all that is not holy or dedicated to God. The Lord said: Be holy, for I am holy (Leviticus 11). For whoever consecrates himself will rightly be seen as beyond the earth and beyond the world. Such a one can also say, while walking on the earth, we have our conversation in heaven.

[Luke 1:50] -- And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. Turning from His special gifts to the general judgments of God, he describes the state of the entire human race and explains alternately what the proud deserve, what the humble deserve, what the children of Adam have by free will, and what the children of God are by grace. Therefore, he says, He who is mighty has not done great things only for me, but also in every nation and generation, he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. [Luke 1:51] -- He has shown strength with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. By His arm, He signifies the Son of God Himself. Not that God the Father is determined by the form of human flesh, and that the Son adheres to Him as a member of the body, but because all things were made through Him, therefore, He is called the arm of the Lord. For just as your arm is called by which you work, so the arm of God is called His Word, because through the Word He made the world. For why does man extend his arm to achieve something, except because what he says is immediately done? But if he had such great power that without any movement of his body what he said was done, his arm would be his word. Therefore, when we hear that the arm of God the Father is the Son of God, let not the carnal custom obstruct us, but let us consider as much as we are able the virtue and wisdom of God by which all things were made.

[Luke 1:52] -- He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. What He said with His arm, and what He promised from generation to generation, must be connected to these verses from common source, because through all the generations of the age it is evident that the proud perish and the humble are exalted by the pious and just dispensation of divine power. [Luke 1:54] -- He has taken up Israel, His servant, remembering mercy. He beautifully calls Israel the servant of the Lord, who has been taken up by Him for salvation, namely obedient and humble, as Hosea says: ”For Israel is a child, and I loved him” (Hosea XI). For whoever refuses to be humbled cannot indeed be saved, nor say with the Prophet: ”Behold, God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul” (Psalm LIII). But whoever humbles himself like a little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew XVIII).

[Luke 1:55] -- As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever. The seed of Abraham signifies not the carnal, but the spiritual, that is, not only those born of his flesh, but those who follow his footsteps in faith, whether in circumcision or uncircumcision. For he believed when in uncircumcision, and it was counted to him as righteousness. And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the same faith, so that he might thus become the father of both peoples through faith, as the Apostle most fully explains to the Romans. Therefore, the coming of the Savior was promised to Abraham and his seed forever, that is, to the children of the promise, to whom it is said: ”If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed,

heirs according to the promise" (Galatians III). It is fitting that the births of either the Lord or John are foretold by mothers prophesying, that just as sin began with women, so too should good begin with women, and that which perished through the deception of one woman, life might be restored to the world through two women proclaiming in agreement.

[Luke 1:56] -- But Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home. Mary stayed so long until, with the completion of Elizabeth's pregnancy, she saw the birth of the precursor of her Lord, especially for whom she had come. It has been said above that every pure soul which has conceived the spiritual desire of the word must soon undergo the high yoke of heavenly exercise, and remain there almost for a period of three months, until it shines with the perfect light of the chief virtues. Describing these months of the most perfect brightness, the Apostle says: "And now these three remain: faith, hope, love. But the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. XIII). [Luke 1:57] -- Now Elizabeth's time had come to give birth, and she bore a son. Holy Scripture is accustomed to use the term "fulfillment" only in the birth, or condition, or action of good things, which signifies the perfection of life. Hence it is said, "Elizabeth's time to give birth was fulfilled." "The days were fulfilled for Mary to give birth" (Luke II). "Solomon completed building the house of the Lord" (II Chron. III). "Abraham, or another of the fathers, died, full of days." And, "when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son" (Gal. IV). But on the contrary, the days of the wicked are empty and void. For men of blood and deceit will not live out half their days (Psalm LIV).

[Luke 1:58] -- And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. The birth of the saints brings joy to many because it is a common good. For justice is a communal virtue. Therefore, at the birth of a just person, a sign of future life is foretold, and the grace of the forthcoming virtue is prefigured with the joyful exultation of neighbors. [Luke 1:59] -- And it happened on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. And his mother answered and said: Not so, but he shall be called John. The holy evangelist thought it well to mention beforehand that many thought the child should be called by the name of his father, Zacharias, so that you might note that the mother did not dislike the name of some relative, but that this name was infused by the Holy Spirit, which had been foretold by the angel to Zacharias before. Indeed, he, being mute, could not intimate the name of the son to his wife, but Elizabeth learned the prophecy, which she had not learned from her husband.

[Luke 1:61] -- And they said to her: There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name. They signaled to his father, etc. "John is his name," he said, that is, we do not impose a name on him who has already received a name from God. He has his own name which we acknowledge, not which we chose. Do not be

surprised if a woman asserted the name, which she had not heard, when the Holy Spirit who commanded the angel revealed it to her, nor could she be ignorant of the announcement of the Lord, who had prophesied of Christ. And it is well added that there is no one among his kindred who is called by this name, so you may understand that the name is not one of kin, but of a prophet.

[Luke 1:64] -- His mouth and his tongue were immediately opened, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came upon all their neighbors. Because the voice of one crying in the wilderness was born, rightly was the father's tongue loosened. For it was not fitting that the father remain silent from praises, who rejoiced in the birth of the herald of the Word. Indeed, the lips bound by unbelief were now loosened by faith. But if anyone desires to scrutinize closely, these things also allegorically point to the celebrated nativity of John, the initiating sublimity of the grace of the New Testament. The neighbors and relatives preferred to name the father rather than John, because the Jews, who were connected to him by the observance of the law as if by kinship, rather desired to follow the justice that is from the law than to accept the grace of faith. But John, which means the grace of God, the mother strives to make known by words, the father by writing, because even the law itself, the psalms, and the prophets proclaim the grace of Christ with clear utterances, and the old priesthood testifies to him with the shadows of ritual ceremonies and sacrifices. And fittingly, Zacharias speaks on the eighth day after the child was born, because through the resurrection of the Lord, which happened on the eighth day, i.e., after the seventh of the Sabbath, the hidden secrets of the legal priesthood were revealed, and the tongue of the Jewish priests, which was bound by the chains of distrust, was loosened by the voice of rational understanding.

[Luke 1:65] -- And these words were spread over all the mountains of Judaea. And all those who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying: What will this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. Great are the works of the Lord, exquisite in all his desires (Psalm 110). Behold, the silence of Zacharias alone, given to him as a punishment for disbelief and as a sign of belief, not only benefits him when it is taken away, but it also astounds all his neighbors with the miracle and fear. The fame of the born prophet spreads throughout all the surrounding mountains; it stirs up all who can hear to diligently inquire about the manner and state of the child who is born, so that by this and similar auspices, the future prophet of Christ is commended, and, so to speak, it provides signs for the herald of the forthcoming truth. And Zacharias his father was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and wrought the redemption of his people. How great is the abundance of the heavenly gift, if the piety of our faith is ready to receive it. Behold, the speech that was taken away for disbelief is restored with the spirit of prophecy to the believer. The Lord has visited his people, as if wasting away from a long infirmity, and as if sold under sin, he has redeemed them by the blood of his only son.

Because blessed Zacharias knew this was about to be done soon, he narrates it as though it were already accomplished in a prophetic manner. And it should be noted that it is said he visited and redeemed his people, not because he came and found them as his own, but because by visiting them, he made them his own. Similar to this is what is sung in the conclusion of the Proverbs about the same people: Who shall find a valiant woman (Proverbs 31)? For he did not find that same woman, namely the Church, strong, that is, devoted in faith, but by betrothing her to himself, he made her strong, because he perfected her by the sublimity of his faith.

[Luke 1:69] -- And he has raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of David his servant. A horn of salvation signifies a firm eminence of salvation. Indeed, all bones are covered with flesh, the horn surpasses the flesh, and therefore the horn of salvation is called the kingdom of Christ the Savior, whereby by which the spiritual and what is of the flesh joys are surpassed, height is proclaimed. In figure of which David and Solomon were consecrated with the horn of oil to the glory of the kingdom. [Luke 1:70] -- As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. From of old, he says, because the whole Scripture of the Old Testament proceeded as a prophecy about Christ. Not only Jeremiah, Daniel, and Isaiah, and others like them, who are specifically called prophets and spoke manifestly about his coming, but even father Adam, Abel, and Enoch, and other Patriarchs, by their own deeds bear witness to his dispensation. Whence the Lord himself, rebuking the hardness of the Jews, said: If you believed Moses, you might perhaps believe me also. For he wrote of me (John 5).

[Luke 1:71] -- Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us. It must be joined from the previous verse, ”he raised up for us,” that is, he raised up for us salvation from our enemies. For when he had briefly stated earlier: ”And he raised up a horn of salvation for us,” continuing as if explaining more openly what he had said: ”Salvation,” he says, ”from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us.” But all who hate us signify either perverse men or unclean spirits. From whose hand, both in the present with hope we have been saved, and in the future, in reality, we will be saved.

[Luke 1:72] -- To show mercy to our fathers and to remember His covenant. The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, etc. The Lord had said through the words of the prophets that He would be born in the house of David; He says the same to fulfill the covenant which He arranged with Abraham, that He would liberate us. For it was especially to those patriarchs that either the gathering of nations or the incarnation of Christ was promised from their seed. Which Matthew also briefly indicated when he began his Gospel in this way: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Where it should be noted that in both evangelists, David is preferred to Abraham. For although later in the order

of time, he is greater by the gift of promise. For to Abraham, who, although still in circumcision, left his homeland, knew God, and earned the testimony of faith, only the faith of the nations and the holy assembly of the Church was promised, with the Lord saying to him: And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. XXVIII). But to David, by a more exalted oracle, it was heard that Christ would be born from him according to the flesh: When your days are fulfilled and you go to your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall be one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me (I Chron. XVII).

[Luke 1:75] -- In holiness and righteousness before Him, all our days. Clearly and briefly, he designates how the Lord is to be served; namely, in holiness and righteousness, and before Him, and all our days. For he who either departs from His service before death, or pollutes the sincerity of his faith with any uncleanness or injustice, or strives to appear holy only before men and not also before the Lord; and just, is not yet perfectly liberated from the hand of spiritual enemies to serve the Lord, but, following the example of the ancient Samaritans, attempts to serve both the gods of the nations and the Lord. [Luke 1:76] -- And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High. For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. He spoke beautifully about the Lord, and suddenly turned his words to the prophet, to indicate that this too was a benefit of the Lord. It is indeed asked how he can speak to the infant of eight days. But how would the infant, who heard Mary’s greeting while still enclosed in the womb, not hear his father’s voice? Unless perhaps Zacharias ought to be considered as instructing those present, wanting to proclaim the future duties of his son, which he had learned long ago through an angel, as soon as he could speak. Let the Arians hear and be ashamed: let the meek hear and rejoice, that Christ the Lord, whom John preceded as a prophet, is called the Most High. As also the Psalmist, praising God and perfect man in one person, says: Mother Zion will say, a man, and a man was born in her, and the Most High himself founded her (Psalm 86). The one who founded is the same who was made, the same man whom he calls the Most High.

[Luke 1:77] -- To give the knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. As if desiring to expound and commend the name of Jesus, that is, Savior, he frequently mentions salvation, recalling to be raised the horn of salvation, salvation to come from enemies, knowledge of salvation to be given to His people. But lest you think a temporal and carnal salvation is promised, he says, in the remission of their sins. Indeed, the Jews for this reason do not receive Christ Jesus but prefer to wait for the Antichrist, because they wish to be saved not inwardly but outwardly, not from the dominion of sin, but from the yoke of human servitude. [Luke 1:78] -- Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dawn from on high has visited us. And the prophet speaking of the Lord says: Behold, a man, his

name is the Dawn (Zech. VI). He is rightly called the Dawn, who opening the rise of true light for us, made the children of night and darkness into children of light, as Blessed Zacharias consequently explains, saying:

[Luke 1:79] -- Illuminate those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace. Indeed, to illuminate those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death is for the Lord to infuse the rays of His recognition and love into those who have lived in the blindness of sin and ignorance. To such the Apostle says: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Our feet, however, are directed into the way of peace when the path of our actions in all things agrees with the grace of our Redeemer and Illuminator. It is in a fitting order, indeed, that the first thing testified is to illuminate the hearts, and then the works are to be directed, because no one is able to work peace unless they have first learned it. Hence rightly the Psalmist says: Seek (he says) peace, and pursue it (Psalm 33). Which is to say: Illuminate you who sat in darkness, and enter the way of peace from which you have long been exiled.

[Luke 1:80] -- But the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the deserts till the day of his showing to Israel. It is appropriate and just that he who is to be a future preacher of repentance follows the harshness of solitude; and so that the young man may more freely lift his listeners by instructing them from the allurements of the world, he himself also passes his early life squalid in deserts.

Chapter 2

[Luke 2:1] -- Now it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. The Son of God, about to be born in the flesh, chose for Himself His parents as He willed, and the place of His birth as He willed, and brought them to that place before He was born as He willed. Thus, also, at the time which He willed, indeed, which He, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, had decreed from ages, and had foretold through the mouths of the prophets, He entered the world to save it. For, just as He was born of a virgin mother, demonstrating that the glory of virginity and the angelic honor of purity was most pleasing to Him, so also, born at the most peaceful time of the world, He showed that He sought and loved peace greatly. He indicated that He would always deign to visit the followers of peace and love. Concerning this, He Himself promised to the faithful, saying: For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. XVIII). For what greater sign of the most perfect kingdom, and the most beautiful, as far as men are concerned, could there be of peace than that the whole world is encompassed by a single census, and that all the farthest reaches of the world are comprehended in the same monetary declaration?

Whose author and ruler, Augustus, according to the faith of histories, reigned in peace for twelve years around the time of the Lord’s birth, so that, with both foreign and civil wars being quieted throughout the whole world, he may be seen to have fulfilled even to the letter the spiritual prophecy of the prophet. The prophet indeed proclaimed with mystical voice the dispensation of Christ, saying: And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it (Micah IV). Shortly after, he also took care to describe the state of that most sacred time: And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord (Ibid.). Not only did this new census of the world testify to the advent of that supreme king who would enroll His chosen ones, gathered from all directions

of the world, in the book of eternal happiness, but it also aided the leaders of his kingdom with the peace of his governance.

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

[Luke 2:2] -- This first census was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own city. This census taken during the time of Cyrenius is also mentioned by the illustrious Hebrew historian Josephus, in the eighteenth book of Antiquities, as follows: ”Cyrenius, a man who through the consent of the Roman Senate ascended through various magistracies to the rank of consul, distinguished in other respects, came to Syria with a few companions, sent by Caesar to give law to the nations and also to be the censor of patrimonies. Therefore, the phrase: ”This first census was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria,” indicates that this census was either the first of those which encompassed the entire world, because many parts of the lands are often recorded to have been described, or certainly the first it began then, when Cyrenius was sent to Syria. And as then, under the reign of Augustus and governance of Cyrenius, everyone went to be enrolled, each to his own city, so now under the rule of the Church presiders, that is, the teachers, indeed persuaded and promised rewards by Christ, let us all go, no one being excluded from the census of justice. Let us come to Him, who toil and burdened, and He will give us rest. Let us take His yoke upon us, and learn from Him for He is gentle and humble in heart, and we will find rest for our souls (Matt. XI).

For this is our city and fatherland, namely the blessed and heavenly rest of souls, to which we were created by God Christ at the beginning of this nascent age, and to which we have been re-created by the man Christ at the end of the ages. To which, indeed, the city of peace and quietness we strive to go and offer treasures to our King, growing daily in the progress of virtue and faith, to behold the eternal joys of the heavenly light, and to despise both the prosperous and adverse things of the world for acquiring these, and having acquired them, to offer to God as a precious gift, cleansed from all defilement of flesh and Spirit (II Cor. VII). But if we more diligently inspect the type of coin that was paid to Caesar, we will also prove

ourselves not lacking in devotion to purify it, which we can better search for and find from the Gospel itself, where, being tested about rendering tribute to Caesar, the Lord said: Show me the coin for the tribute. And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them: Whose is this image and inscription? They said to him, Caesar's. Then he said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Luke XX). First, it must be noted that the denarius, which had ten coins, was paid to Caesar, titled with his image and inscription, which is even evident from the name.

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

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

[Luke 2:4] -- Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judah, to the city of David, etc. By divine arrangement, the census registration was decreed in such a way that everyone was ordered to go to their own homeland. Not only for the mystery we spoke of, but also so that the Lord, conceived elsewhere, born elsewhere, could evade the fury of Herod more easily. If He had been born to parents from Bethlehem, a cunning pursuer might have suspected their sudden flight, especially since everyone knew they were of the lineage of David, from whom Christ was to come. David himself bears witness to this with his name, homeland, and office. David, for his name means ”hand of the strong” or ”beloved. The name is derived both because he courageously struck down the giant and because he was handsome in appearance and had a pleasing face; but in a deeper mystery, prefiguring Him who was to be born of his house and family, who would singularly

conquer the prince of this world, beautiful beyond the sons of men (Ps. 44), and He Himself born in Bethlehem and a shepherd of intellectual sheep, that is, the simple souls. We must particularly observe this great and benevolent humility of Him who consented not only to incarnate for us, but also to be born at a time when He would be registered in Caesar's census and thus subject Himself to servitude for our liberation.

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

[Luke 2:6] -- It came to pass while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered, etc. Well, the Lord is born in Bethlehem not just for the indication of the royal lineage but also for the sacrament of the name. For Bethlehem indeed means "house of bread. He himself is the one who said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (John VI). Therefore, the place where the Lord was to be born was called "house of bread" beforehand, because it was surely destined that he would appear there in the material of the flesh, who would refresh the minds of the elect with inward satisfaction. But up to this day, and until the end of the world, the Lord ceases not to be conceived in Nazareth and to be born in Bethlehem, whenever any of the listeners, having received the flower of the word, makes himself the house of eternal bread. Daily he is conceived in the virgin womb, that is, in the minds of the believers through faith, born through baptism. Daily the Church, Mother of God, following her master teacher, from the wheel of worldly conversation—which Galilee signifies—ascends to the city of Judah, namely, confession and praise, and pays the tribute of its devotion to the eternal king.

Which, in the example of the ever-blessed virgin Mary, being both wedded and immaculate, conceives us a virgin from the Spirit, gives birth to us a virgin without a groan, and, as if assigned to another, but made fruitful by another, is joined visibly to the Pontiff assigned over her, but is filled invisibly with the virtue of the Holy Spirit. Whence also Joseph is well interpreted as "increased". This name clearly indicates that the earnestness of the speaking master avails nothing if it does not receive the increase of heavenly assistance to be heard. But that Mary is described as having given birth to her firstborn son is not to be taken according to the Helvidians, as though she also begot other children, as if he cannot be called firstborn unless he has brothers, just as he is usually called only-begotten who lacks brothers. Because both the testimony of the law and clear reason declare that all only-begottens can also be called firstborns, but not all firstborns can be called only-begottens. This means not only being firstborn after whom others come,

but also everyone before whom no one else has issued from the womb. Hence, because every male that opens the womb is commanded to be called holy to the Lord, whether brothers follow or do not follow, what is first born from the womb is rightfully to be consecrated as firstborn.

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

[Luke 2:7] -- And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.—What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me? For what is greater than all praise: A little child is born to us, so that we might become perfect men? He who clothes the whole world in varied attire is wrapped in cheap swaddling clothes, so that we might be able to receive the first robe. By whom all things were made, his hands and feet are bound in the crib, so that our hands might be freed for good works, our feet directed into the path of peace. To whom heaven is a seat, he is contained in the narrowness of a hard manger, so that he might open up the joys of the heavenly kingdom for us. He who is the bread of angels, is laid in a manger, so that we, like holy animals, might be fed with the grain of his flesh. He who sits at the right hand of the Father needs a place in the inn, so that he might prepare many mansions for us in the house of his Father. Although the fact that he is born not in his parents' house but in an inn and on the way can be understood more deeply through its meaning. For he himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14). Therefore, he who remains truth and life by the essence of divinity, by the mystery of the Incarnation became the way, by which he might lead us to the homeland where we could enjoy truth and life.

[Luke 2:8] -- And there were shepherds in the same region, watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of God shone around them. With the most beautiful reason, with the Lord born, the shepherds watch, and by guarding their flock from the dangers of the night, they protect it. To show indeed also through this that that time has arrived, which the true and only good Shepherd once promised, saying: "Behold, I myself will seek out my sheep, and I will visit them, just as a shepherd visits his flock, and I will rescue them from all places where they were scattered on a cloudy

and dark day. And a little later: ”And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will feed them, and I will make the evil beasts cease from the land” (Ezekiel 34), etc. What was wondrously foretold by the prophet, we see more wondrously fulfilled by the Lord. The prophet Micah also remembers this time and place, saying: ”And you, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come, and the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Zion” (Micah 4).

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

[Luke 2:9] -- And they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Do not be afraid. Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Not for all the people of the Jews, of whom many were rebellious, but for all the faithful people gathered into one Church of Christ from all tribes, nations, and tongues, eternal and great joy is proclaimed.

[Luke 2:11] -- For today a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. This is the first power, this is the kingdom of the daughter of Zion, which by the testimony of the aforesaid prophet was promised to come in the tower of the flock. Where it is noteworthy that the angel who indeed speaks to the shepherds in the watches of the night, did not say: This night but Today a Savior has been born to you. Indeed, for no other reason, but because he came to proclaim great joy. For where sorrow is signified to have been done or to be done at night, there often the night either is joined, or even alone is named. As it is said: All of you will fall away because of me this night (Matthew 26). And elsewhere: Truly I tell you, today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times (Mark 14). For it is not without reason that the angel appeared surrounded by such great light, so that it is said that the glory of God shone around

the shepherds, that is, rays of light shone from every part of them, which is never added in the entire series of the Old Testament as so often when angels appeared. But mystically, he forewarned what the Apostle later openly warned, saying: The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light, let us walk properly, as in the day (Romans 13).

[Luke 2:12] -- And this will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The infancy of the Savior and the proclamations of angels and the testimonies of the evangelists have often been impressed upon us, so that it might be firmly fixed in our hearts what He became for us. For He was wounded for our iniquities, and He was made weak for our sins (Isaiah 53). And it should be noted more carefully that the sign of the born Savior is given, a baby not clothed in Tyrian purple, but wrapped in shabby clothes, not found in gold-adorned bedding, but in a manger. This is that not only the appearance of humility and mortality, but also of poverty, He took on for us. Because although He was rich, He became poor for us, so that through His poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8). Although He was the Lord of the heavens, He became poor on earth, so that He might teach the earthly ones that through the poverty of the Spirit the kingdom of heaven can be acquired.

[Luke 2:13-14] -- And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will. When one messenger announced that God was born in the flesh, immediately a multitude of the heavenly host flew down, breaking forth with one mouth in praise of the Creator, so that they may offer their service and devotion to Christ as usual, and at the same time instruct us by their example, whenever any of the brothers resound the words of sacred teaching, or when we ourselves recall to mind things read or heard that are of piety, we should diligently render praises to God with mouth, heart, and deed. And appropriately the arriving chorus of angels receives the title of the heavenly host, who humbly obey that mighty leader in battle, who appeared to overthrow the powers of the air, and themselves vigorously drive away those opposing powers with heavenly weapons, so that they may not be able to tempt mortals as much as they wish. For just as all places are fortified against hostile invasion by the provision of the finest emperor’s hand, so too God, since unclean spirits everywhere aim to overturn peace, has established the armies of angels for our protection, whose presence both breaks the audacity of demons and bestows upon us the grace of peace. And because God and man is born, rightly is peace sung to men and glory to God.

The angels glorify God incarnate for our redemption, because while they see us being received, they rejoice that their own number may be replenished. They wish peace to men, because those whom they previously despised as weak and outcast,

with the Lord being born in the flesh, they now venerate as companions. They proclaim peace to men, especially to men of good will, that is, to those who receive the born Christ, and not to Herod, the priests, and Pharisees, and other antichrists, who were troubled upon hearing of His birth and pursued Him with swords as much as they could. For there is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord. But great peace is given to those who love Your name, O Lord, and nothing prevents them (Isaiah 48). To whom fittingly applies what follows: I hoped for Your salvation, O Lord (Psalm 118), that is, I longed for the coming Advent of Christ with the prolonged expectation of my desires.

[Luke 2:15] -- And it happened that as the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds spoke to one another. Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this word that has happened, which the Lord has made and shown to us. Consider carefully how reasonable are the words of the shepherds, and worthy of the pastors of the Church. For indeed, as if keeping watch, they did not say: Let us see the child, let us see what is said, but: Let us see the word that has happened: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh (John 1). Let us see the Word that has always been, how it has been made for us, what the Lord has made and shown to us. This Word, it made itself: inasmuch as this very Word is the Lord. Let us see, therefore, how this very Word, that is, the Lord himself, made himself, and showed his flesh to us. For what we could not see while it was the Word, let us see made because it is flesh. It is similar to what John says: What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the word of life, and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you eternal life which was with the Father, and appeared to us (1 John 1).

[Luke 2:16] -- And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. The shepherds hasten to Christ whom they recognize, desiring with all the intent of their mind to see His coming. For Christ’s presence is not to be sought with idleness. And therefore, perhaps some seeking are not worthy to find because they seek Christ sluggishly. Therefore these shepherds found Him without delay because they ran to Him with unfeigned faith, to whom hastening to go is not to quicken the steps of the feet, but to advance always in faith and virtue. They found, it says, Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. But also the shepherds of the Lord’s flock, as they are more frequently and sweetly elevated by the heavenly oracle amid the darkness of this life, so more fervently they approach the sublime life of the preceding fathers, in which the bread of life is always preserved and refreshes, as contemplating they enter the gates of Bethlehem, and they find nothing else in it than the virginal beauty of the Catholic Church, as Mary, the virile company of spiritual teachers, as Joseph, and the humble coming of the Mediator between God and man, the man

Jesus Christ, inserted in the pages of Holy Scripture, as a babe lying in a manger, Christ in the first vision they encounter.

From the manger of the holy Scriptures that eminent animal and most sacred host was fed, which exultingly proclaimed: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures (Psalm 23). And a little later: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies (Ibid.). And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child, because it is indeed of just order that, having known, loved, and celebrated with worthy honor the Incarnation of the Word, by the sharpness of a prolonged exercise of the mind more capable, one may eventually attain to behold the glory of the Word Itself.

[Luke 2:18] -- And all who heard were amazed at what was spoken to them by the shepherds. By the shepherds, the people are driven to the reverence of God. Do not consider this example of faith to be trivial, nor the person of the shepherds to be insignificant. Certainly, the less they are esteemed for their prudence, the more precious they are for their faith. The Lord chose not the wise but the simple, who would not know how to embellish what they heard, to be His heralds; He appointed fishermen, not orators, to evangelize. Indeed, even in the Old Testament, He ordained shepherds as the primary messengers of His dispensation. The first martyr Abel, who dedicated the innocent conduct of his pastoral duty with his own blood and whose blood, in the figure of the Lord’s passion, cries out from the ground, offered the first fruits of his flock to the Lord as a devoted shepherd. Abraham, the father of faith, who rejoiced to see the day of Christ and saw it and was glad, is described not as seeking gold mines to obtain ornaments for his worship but as digging to find water sources to water his flocks. Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, was tormented by heat and frost for twenty years while tending the flocks, a figure of the true shepherd who, with the variety of his virtues shown between the waters of salvific doctrine, was elevated to a higher state.

Moses, the lawgiver, who first, as a type of the sevenfold Church, defended seven sisters who were pasturing from the outrage of the shepherds until they could water their flock, and later, in the pastures of the desert, earned the privilege of seeing and speaking with the Lord, performing signs with the pastoral staff, and liberating God’s people. David himself, whom our Lord deigned to be called and to be the son of, by rescuing his father’s ram from the hand of the bear or the lion, showed that from his stock and city the one would be born who, unrivaled, would rescue the poor from the hand of the stronger one, and the needy and poor from those who prey upon them. Therefore, the witness of the shepherds should not be considered of little value, who then were worthy not only to see but also to hear the hymn of angelic exultation, when, leaving the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, the Good Shepherd appeared to seek the hundredth sheep. The whole flock of the

faithful, always longing for His coming, implores: I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, Lord (Psalm 118).

[Luke 2:19] -- But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. What does it mean when it says, ”pondering”? It should have said, ”considered in her heart,” and ”kept in her heart,” but because she had read the holy Scriptures, and knew the prophets, she compared those things that happened to her regarding the Lord with those things she knew were written by the prophets about the Lord, and having compared them with each other, she recognized as the cherubim of heaven the unity of her own vision. For Gabriel had said: ”Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son” (Luke 1). Isaiah had foretold: ”Behold, a virgin will conceive, and bear a son” (Isaiah 7). Micah had foretold the daughters of Zion coming to the tower of the flock, and that the first dominion would then come. The shepherds said that the cohorts of the heavenly city appeared to them in the tower of the flock, who were singing that Christ was born. Mary had read: ”The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib” (Isaiah 1). She saw in the manger the Son of God as a baby crying, who saves both men and animals; and in these individual things and such, she compared what she had read, and compared with what she heard and saw.

[Luke 2:20] -- And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. The shepherds glorify and praise God for all the things they had heard from the angels, and seen in Bethlehem, as it was told unto them, that is, they glorify also in this, that upon coming they found nothing else than what had been told unto them; or as it was told unto them, they give glory and praise to God. For indeed the angels commanded them to do this, not with commanding words, but offering the form of their devotion, when they resonated with unanimous exultation ”Glory to God in the highest.” For he who says: ”I bring you good news of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Here above), indeed provokes to glorify and praise God. But also the shepherds of spiritual flocks, while the others are sleeping, sometimes ascend by contemplation of the heavens, sometimes go around surveying the camps of the faithful and seeking examples of virtue, and sometimes return to the public duties of the pastoral office by teaching, so that they may proclaim to their neighbors the memory of the abundance of the sweetness of God, which they had tasted by a fleeting vision (Psalm CXLV).

[Luke 2:21] -- And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. The rite and religion of circumcision took its beginning from the blessed patriarch Abraham. Since he, still being in uncircumcision, believed perfectly in God, it was accounted to him as righteousness, and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith while in uncircumcision.

From him also arose the custom that on the day of circumcision, a name would be given to infants. For he himself, when he received the covenant of circumcision from God, on that very day, along with his wife, merited an augmentation of his name: he who was originally called Abram, which means 'exalted father,' would henceforth, on account of the merit of his faith, be called Abraham, which means 'father of many nations;' likewise, Sarai would be called Sarah.

[Luke 2:21] -- Circumcision was also a type and figure of many things. For it was a seal (as stated) of the righteousness of the faith of Abraham and his seed, an indication for chastening those who belong to this seed and faith, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, a prophecy of the Savior who would be born from this seed, who would both in the present purify us from all pollution of deadly action through baptism and in the future liberate us from all corruption of death itself through resurrection forever, and it especially - pleased the Grace and Law-giver to administer the gift of remission, which would release from the sin of Adam's transgression at that time. For he who now says, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3), also then said, "The soul that has not had the flesh of his foreskin circumcised will be cut off from his people, for he has broken my covenant" (Genesis 17). Surely not the covenant of circumcision, which not an infant, who could not yet discern this, but elders, who knew how to observe it, could and should have kept unbroken; rather, the covenant which God made with the first man, which every man who has lived even one day on earth is found to have transgressed, and therefore, it is evident that everyone is in need of some remedy for salvation.

For those who became faithful from foreign nations either before the time of circumcision or even after the giving of circumcision, such as the example of Job's patience and his friends and children, they saved themselves and theirs from original sin, either by sacrifices of victims or certainly by faith alone, because "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. I), and "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. XI). But these remedies are needed by those who are propagated by the lineage of sin, conceived in iniquities, and born in pleasures. However, our Redeemer, who came into the world without sin to take away the sins of the world, not only provided remedies for us by his baptism, that is, consecrating the waters of which he underwent the washing for cleansing our crimes, but also by the circumcision which he received, he did not purify his own sins (since he had none), but taught that the old nature in us should be renewed, and now visibly it should be purged from vice through him, and on the last day signifying that it will be completely restored from the pest of varied mortality and death. Hence, it is fitting that Jesus is said to have been circumcised on the eighth day, which we hardly read about anyone being done in the Old Testament, although it was often commanded to all, except only Isaac, who is reported to have received circumcision on the eighth day as the first son of promise.

Well, I say, Jesus is circumcised on the eighth day. Because evidently, this refers to both the renewals we mentioned, that is, both the present and future, both of spirit and flesh, which were prefigured in his resurrection and are to be accomplished in ours someday. Indeed, concerning our first resurrection, which is meanwhile celebrated by a reformation of life and faith, the Apostle says: ”For as many of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. VI). Regarding the second, which is hoped for at the end, he says: ”For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so too God will bring with him those who sleep through Jesus” (I Thess. IV). It is clear almost universally that the number eight corresponds to the glory of resurrection. For the Lord also rose on the eighth day, that is, after the seventh of the Sabbath, and we ourselves will rise after the six ages of this world and the seventh Sabbath of souls, which now in the meantime is carried out in another life, almost as in the eighth time, then truly circumcised, that is, stripped of all the vices and corruptions of carnal desire, in which lust mostly reigns, truly the foreskin is cut off. For, as the Lord says: ”The children of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are accounted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection” (Luke XX).

[Luke 2:21] -- His name was called Jesus, said he, which was named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. Jesus means Savior, a name in which the faithful and elect rejoice to participate in each of their circumcisions, as has been sufficiently said, so that as Christians are named from Christ, so also are those who are saved named from the Savior; now indeed saved in hope through faith, but then in reality through the vision of the glory which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, a name which was given to them by God not only before they were conceived in the womb of the Church through faith, but also before the secular times. The sacred name’s etymology and the numerical value it carries are redolent of the mysteries of our perpetual salvation. For it is written with six letters in Greek Ἰησοῦς, namely ι, η, σ, ο, υ, ς, whose numbers are 10, 8, 200, 70, 400, and 200, which together make 888. This number, which signifies the figure of resurrection, has been sufficiently discussed above. For what eight simply placed means, the same also multiplied by ten or a hundred signifies. Or certainly, the perfection of numbers believed to indicate firmness. We can also say that the name of the Savior contains the number eight completed, because he provided the example of resurrection to mortals by rising on the eighth day.

It also contains the number tenfold, because the Decalogue of the law, as it should be fulfilled, is instituted and helped by the figures of his resurrection. Just as he,

rising from the dead, dies no more, death no longer has dominion over him, so we also must consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. VI). It also contains the number a hundred times, because showing the glory of his resurrection, which follows us in the future, portends retribution. The number one hundred, which after so many on the left side of the course of numbers first seeks the right, aptly fits the depiction of the joys of that age when the last enemy, death, will be destroyed (1 Cor. XV), when we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with those who have risen, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. IV). Hence beautifully, in the type of all the elect, the first son of promise, born and circumcised to a hundred-year-old father, was called, according to the Lord's prediction, Isaac, which means laughter or joy, prefiguring in all respects the right hand felicity of that time of which the Lord said: I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you (John XVI).

But because the discussion is about circumcision, it is pleasing to inquire why Moses himself, who presents the law of circumcision both as given by God to the fathers and repeatedly impressed upon himself, did not wish anyone to be circumcised during the entire time of his leadership, except only one, his own son, whom his mother circumcised with a sharp stone to prevent him from being struck by the Lord, and left all who were born in the wilderness to be circumcised by Joshua; evidently, a divinely commanded custom, observed for four hundred and six years and handed down by ancestral succession, he discontinued for forty continuous years. I would not believe this was done in vain, but rather with great mystery. About this, preserving the understanding of the elders, I will briefly say what I think. Moses preaches circumcision, but Joshua fulfills it, because the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ (John 1). And the letter that commands is of no benefit unless the grace that helps is present. With Moses preaching, the foreskin grows, because, as the Apostle says, by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3). And elsewhere: For until the law, sin was in the world. But sin is not imputed when there is no law (Rom. 5). And again: The law came in so that the offense would increase.

For I would not have known coveting if the law had not said, "You shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind (Rom. 7). But Joshua, having led the people into the promised land, cuts off with stone knives the foreskin that had grown while Moses was alive. Because where sin abounded, grace abounded much more (Rom. 5). For anyone who reads understands why Joshua uses stone knives for circumcision, because the rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10), and upon this rock, He says, I will build My church (Matt. 16). For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, con-

demned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8). But this grace of Christ not only justifies the faithful of the New Testament but also all those who were made perfect under the law, not by works of the law, but by the same grace of Christ who was to come in the flesh, they were saved through faith.

And these people circumcised by Joshua represent those who with the severity of the law forced themselves to learn to implore the grace of Christ, as if avoiding the impending sword of the Lord, they avoided circumcision by the stone, with Peter attesting who, speaking of the yoke of the law, says: Which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15). And the Psalmist, who, as though enclosed in the custodial prison of the law and finding no way of escape except in the grace of Christ, exclaims: When my heart was overwhelmed, You led me to the rock that is higher than I. You have been a refuge for me, a tower of strength against the enemy (Psalm 61). Surely no one who hears of circumcision preaching would think that only one part of the body is commanded to be continent, as if it were sufficient to exist safe from fornication, temperate in lawful marriage, or glorious in virginity, without adding other virtues, but rather that the chastisement of all our senses, both of the heart and the body, is commanded. For even Moses, receiving the most pure words of God, complained that he was uncircumcised in lips, and Stephen, saying to the disbelieving Jews, “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears; you always resist the Holy Spirit” (Acts VII).

Therefore, he is cleansed by true circumcision, who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed (Isaiah XXXIII), and shuts his eyes so as not to see evil, who guards his ways so as not to sin with his tongue (Psalm XXXVIII), and keeps himself vigilant so that his heart is not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness (Luke XXI), who, as long as breath is in him and the Spirit of God is in his nostrils (Job XXVII), does not speak iniquity with his lips (Ibid.), who washes his hands in innocence (Psalm XXVI), and refrains his feet from every evil way (Psalm CXVIII), who disciplines his body and brings it into subjection in all things (I Cor. IX), and with all diligence keeps his heart because from it flow the issues of life (Prov. IV). He, after circumcision, is brought to Jerusalem and presented to the Lord, who, according to the one who says: “Turn from evil and do good” (I Pet. III), after ceasing from sins, begins to abound in good works. Who can say: “My eyes are ever toward the Lord, and I will go about your altar, O Lord, that I may hear the voice of your praise” (Psalm XXVI). Who says: “We are the aroma of Christ to God” (II Cor. II), and “I have lifted my hands to your commandments, and have turned my feet to your testimonies” (Psalm CXVIII). Who, whether he eats, or drinks, or does anything else, does everything to the glory of God (I Cor. X), and says:

“How sweet are your words to my taste” (Psalm CXVIII); and finally: “My heart and my flesh exult in the living God” (Psalm LXXXIII). But even his good action, which is hidden, no less needs circumcision, so that when I fast, pray, give alms, I seek glory from within. For if I stand on the street corners, disfiguring my face, sounding a trumpet before me to be seen and praised by men (Matt. VI), I appear circumcised outwardly, but remaining impure in heart, I incur the penalties of feigned holiness. As an example indeed, the Shechemites, who appeared to imitate the circumcision of the patriarchs, but not for the covenant of the Lord, but for the sake of lust, did not gain any reward. Rather, on the third day when the pain of their wounds was most severe, they perished among the ruins of their city. Such people, having forgotten the prophetic warning: “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and remove the foreskins of your hearts” (Jer. IV), when the time of resurrection comes, having been stripped of the virtues in which they trusted, will be cast into eternal death. Therefore, the Apostle also diligently commends the hidden circumcision in the heart, whose praise is not from men, but from God (Rom. II).

[Luke 2:22] -- And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. It was indeed a decree of the law that a little one, on the thirty-third day after his circumcision, be brought to the temple of the Lord and an offering be given for him; and that the firstborn male be made holy to the Lord. Mystically, as we have said, implying that no one except one circumcised from vices is worthy of the Lord’s view, and no one except one released from the bonds of mortality can perfectly enter the joys of the heavenly city. For it is said: ”The wicked will not dwell near you; the unjust shall not remain before your eyes” (Psalm V). And the Apostle: ”Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor will the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Cor. XV). Truly, if you inspect the words of the law more diligently, you will surely find that not only the incarnate Lord was free from the contamination of sin and the condition of the law, which he condescended to take upon himself more precisely to prove that it was holy, righteous, and good, and to free us from its servitude and fear by the grace of faith, but also that the Mother of God herself, being free from male involvement, was also immune from the legal requirement. For Moses says:

”If a woman has conceived seed and borne a male child, she shall be unclean seven days, according to the days of her menstruation separation, and on the eighth day the infant shall be circumcised. She shall then remain thirty-three days in the blood of her purification. She shall touch no holy thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed, etc. (Leviticus XII), which concerns the rite of the childbirth woman. Note therefore that not every woman who gives birth, but she who has conceived seed and borne, is designated unclean, and is taught by the law to be cleansed, to distinguish thus the one who conceived as a virgin and bore a son, and called his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted ”God with us”

(Isa. VII). Therefore, the Son who is God with man, and the Mother who bore by the working of the Holy Spirit, did not need the offerings of sacrifices for purification, but that we might be freed from the bond of the law, as the Lord Christ, so also the blessed ever-virgin Mary was willingly subject to the law.

[Luke 2:23] -- As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. Which means: Every male that opens the womb, including the firstborn of both man and beast, because both are called holy to the Lord, and therefore it is commanded that they belong to the priest. Specifically, he should take a redemption price for the firstborn of man, and redeem every unclean animal. Its redemption, he says, shall be one month old for five shekels of silver (Leviticus 27). Here, without delving into a more detailed discussion, it should be briefly indicated that all those firstborn were either a figure of Him, who, though He was the only-begotten Son of God, deigned to become the firstborn of all creation, truly and singularly holy to the Lord, because He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth (Isaiah 53), or they were surely a sign of our devotion, who ought to attribute all beginnings of good action, which we as if give birth in our hearts, to the grace of the Lord, and redeem those actions done ill, offering worthy fruits of repentance for each of the five senses of body or soul. Therefore, the phrase ”that opens the womb” follows the usual manner of speaking of birth.

It does not imply that our Lord, who sanctified the sacred womb He entered, should be believed to have despoiled it when He exited, as heretics claim, who say that blessed Mary was a virgin until childbirth but not after childbirth, but rather, according to the catholic faith, that He emerged from the closed womb of the virgin as a bridegroom proceeding from his chamber. Concerning which the Prophet beautifully says: And He turned me towards the way of the sanctuary’s outer gate, which looked to the east, and it was closed, and the Lord said to me: This gate will be closed, it will not be opened, and no man will pass through it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered through it; and it will be closed for the prince, the prince shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord (Ezekiel 44). Although it can also be mystically understood that no one besides the Lord can open the virgin womb of the Church through water and the Holy Spirit for generating children to God, and hence this male is called holy to the Lord with incomparable dignity.

[Luke 2:24] -- And to offer a sacrifice, according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. It is said in the law that for a child, if it is a male, as I have said before, on the fortieth day, if it is a female, on the eightieth day of birth, a year-old unblemished lamb for a burnt offering, and a turtledove or a young pigeon will be offered for a sin offering. However, if his hand cannot find it or he is unable to offer a lamb, he shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering (Leviticus XII). Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, although He was rich, became poor for us

and desired a poor sacrifice to be offered for Him. That by His one poverty He might make us wealthy in faith here and heirs of the kingdom there, which God has promised to those who love Him. Morally, whether someone has performed valiant works or created weak ones, which are distinguished by the names male and female, so that these might legitimately be consecrated to the Lord, it is necessary to offer a lamb of innocence and equally a turtledove or a pigeon of compunction. For since these birds have moaning instead of singing, they rightfully signify the tears of the humble, by which we greatly need even in our good works.

For although we know that our works are good, we do not know with what strictness they must be examined by the Lord or with what perseverance they must be completed by us. But whoever does not have the wealth of virtues, about which the Apostle said to the Corinthians: “For you have been made rich in everything in Him, in all speech and in all knowledge” (1 Corinthians 1), if he does not find in the flock of his deeds a lamb of innocent life, let him at least offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons, that is, let him seek the aid of tears. And rightly two, one for sin and one for a burnt offering (Leviticus XII). For a burnt offering is called wholly burnt; because there are surely two kinds of compunction. The soul longing for God is first pricked by fear, then by love. First, it is moved to tears because, recalling its evils, it greatly fears to suffer eternal punishments for them. But when the anxiety of prolonged sorrow has consumed the fear, a certain security of presumed forgiveness is born, and the soul is inflamed with the love of heavenly joys. The mind contemplates what those choirs of angels are, that very assembly of blessed spirits, the majesty of the eternal vision of God, and weeps more because it is deprived of eternal goods, than it wept before when it feared eternal evils. Therefore, he who at first wept not to be led to punishment offered a turtledove for sin;

of the other, he makes a burnt offering when afterward he begins to weep bitterly because he is deferred from the kingdom. He offers a dove for sin who labors in his groaning, washes his bed every night, that is, in each darkness of striking guilt, with good works, in which he should rest, he does not cease to wash with tears. They bring the young of doves as a burnt offering, who lamenting the absence of the heavenly fatherland say: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered you, Zion” (Psalm 137). For as doves delight to sit beside the flowing waters, so that they might foresee and evade the advent of the hawk in the shadow’s swift flight over the waters: thus indeed, thus the souls of the poor in spirit, surpassing the waves of the world in their minds, the more they are nourished by their lamentations in this Babylon, the more they see the examples of the wicked enemy, the more frequently they raise their wings to the eternal of their desire. Certainly, there is this difference between the signification of the turtledove and the dove, that the dove, which is accustomed to associate, fly, and coo in flocks, demonstrates the frequency of active life: of which it is said: “Now the multitude

of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4).

But the turtledove, which delights in solitude, so much so that if it loses its mate by chance, it remains alone thereafter, signifies the heights of contemplative life, because this virtue is for the few, and attributed to them individually. Isaiah alone sees the Lord of hosts, contemplates the praises of the Seraphim, and because he has spoken ill, he groans like a solitary turtledove. Moses, when the people are trembling afar, ascends alone to the Lord, and lest the same people be struck, he obtains by tearful prayers. Daniel is alone among the angels when his companions flee. Ezekiel alone marvels at the chariots of the Cherubim and the lofty buildings of the celestial city. Paul alone is caught up to the delights of paradise and to see the secrets of the third heaven. Likewise, when I enter the chamber, closing the door, I pray to the Father in secret, I offer the turtledove. But when I seek companions of the same work, by singing with the Prophet: "Come, let us worship and bow down before the Lord, who made us" (Psalm 95), I offer doves on the altar. And because both sacrifices are equally acceptable to the Creator, Luke wisely does not say whether turtledoves or young pigeons were offered for the Lord, lest he prefer one form of living to another, but teaches both are to be followed, both to be offered in divine worship.

Therefore, since the discourse on purification has been extended, what the number of days of purification contains of mystery, and why the same is ordered to be doubled in the purification of the woman who has given birth will be more suitably explained in Leviticus.

[Luke 2:25] -- And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. When the Lord was born in the flesh, not only did angels from heaven, but also every age of mortals and both sexes, bear witness. For it was fitting that the Savior of all, as he was to come in the flesh, be foretold by the deeds or words of all the faithful throughout the ages, and thus also coming, be proclaimed by the common praise of all, fulfilling the prophecy which says: Praise the Lord from the heavens (Psalm 148), etc., up to where it says: Young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted. His majesty is above heaven and earth. Just, it says, and devout (Ibid.), because justice is difficultly kept without fear. I do not refer to that fear which under penal law dreads the loss of temporal goods, which perfect love is accustomed to cast out, but the holy fear of the Lord which remains forever, by which the just man, the more ardently he loves his God, the more diligently he avoids offending Him.

[Luke 2:26-27] -- And he had received a response from the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ; and he came in the Spirit into

the temple. Observe the expressions of the Scriptures: he said to see death. How is it seen, and with what eyes, that thing which, upon coming, closes the very eyes so that they may see nothing? But to see death signifies to experience it. And very fortunate is he who will see the death of the flesh, whoever first strives to see the Lord's Christ with the eyes of the heart, having his conversation in the heavenly Jerusalem, frequently visiting the thresholds of God's temple, that is, by following the pious examples of the saints in whom the Lord dwells, yearning with the Psalmist: One thing I have asked of the Lord; this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may behold the Lord's delight (Psalm 26). For thus he will also be worthy to receive in his hands the word of God, and to embrace it with the arms of his faith and charity. But when he says: And he came in the Spirit into the temple, it signifies that through the same grace of the Spirit by which he had previously known beforehand that he would come, he also now recognized that he himself was coming and was now about to see the Savior.

[Luke 2:27] -- And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also took him into his arms. Indeed, the power of the Lord is great, but his humility shines no less, so that he who is not contained by heaven and earth is carried wholly in the arms of an aged man. But Simeon also tropically takes Christ, the old man the infant, to teach us to put off the old man who is corrupted by his deeds, and to be renewed in the spirit of our mind to put on him who, according to God, is created in righteousness and holiness and truth (Ephesians 4), that is, putting away lying, to speak the truth, and to perform the rest of what pertains to the state of the new man, by mouth, heart, and deed. The righteous and devout elder according to the law takes the child Jesus into his arms to signify the justice of the works that was from the law (For who does not know that works are always represented by the hands and arms?), indeed humble, but to be changed by the grace of the salvific faith of the Gospel. The elder takes the infant Christ to suggest that this age as if already worn out and fatigued by long life, will return to the innocence and (if I may say so) infancy of Christian conduct, and like the youth of an eagle, his youth will be renewed.

[Luke 2:29] -- And he blessed God and said: Now you dismiss your servant, Lord, according to your word in peace. You see that not only the just of the New, but also of the Old Testament had the desire of future life in hope, to be released from the body, indeed they considered the way of peace to be laying down the earthly burden, as they did not doubt that they would have perpetual rest in the bosom of Abraham. Finally even Idithun, that is, the one who leaps over secular desires, after he had long silently contemplated many evils of the world, and had become fervent with internal meditation of the heart, finally spoke with his tongue, disclosing what he had done inwardly: Make known to me, O Lord, my end, and the number of my days, what it is, that I may know what is lacking in me. Behold, you have made my

days old (Psalm 38). With these words, without a doubt, he reveals how greatly he hopes to attain solace in the end from the present calamities, which he desires to arrive as soon as possible.

[Luke 2:30-31] -- For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples. Blessed are the eyes that see what Simeon saw: blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed (John 20). That very thing, he says, which you have prepared to be beheld with mind and faith by all nations, peoples, and tongues afterward, and which you foresaw was to be sought with hope and love, I now contemplate your salvation, long desired, with the eyes of both flesh and heart. [Luke 2:32] -- A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. Light indeed for both the peoples, God's salvation, that is, Christ prepared by God the Father. Who is rather the glory of Israel, long hoped for by them, from whom pre-announced he has come, but he is said to be the revelation for the Gentiles, whose eyes of mind sunk in deep blindness and raised by no hope of the Lord's coming, he himself has deigned to visit, reveal, and illuminate alike. And it is well that the revelation of the Gentiles is preferred to the glory of Israel, because when the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, then all Israel will be saved. As the Psalmist also says: The Lord hath made known his salvation; he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the nations (Psalm 97); he joined on and says: He hath remembered his mercy to Jacob, and his truth to the house of Israel (Psalm 98).

[Luke 2:33] -- And his father and mother were marveling at what was said about him, and Simeon blessed them. He calls Joseph the father of the Savior, not that he was truly his father according to the Photinians, but since he was considered by all to be the father for the preservation of Mary's reputation. Nor did the Evangelist forget that he told she had conceived by the Holy Spirit and given birth as a virgin, but expressing the opinion of the people, which is the true law of history, he calls Joseph the father of Christ. Although in that way, he can rightly be called his father, as he is rightly understood as the husband of Mary without physical union, by the marriage bond itself, much more closely united indeed than if he had been adopted from elsewhere. For neither should Joseph be called the father of Christ because he had not begotten him through intercourse, since he would rightly be the father even if he had adopted someone not born from his wife elsewhere.

[Luke 2:34] -- And he said to Mary his mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that will be spoken against. Blessed indeed in the rising for he is the light, the glory of the people of Israel, as he said: I am the resurrection and the life: he who believes in me, though he were dead, shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die (John XI). But how is he set for the fall, except that he is also a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense? That is to say, a downfall to those who stumble upon the word and do not believe.

Of whom he himself says: If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin (John XXII). He is set not only in himself, but also in his preachers for the fall and rising of many, as the Apostle testifies who says: For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one, we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life (II Cor. II). For whoever hears the word preached by the Apostle and follows it in love rises with a good aroma and is saved. Whoever follows it in hatred falls and perishes by the same aroma. But the sign that will be spoken against, understand as the faith in the Lord's cross. Of which the Apostle Paul says Jews: For as concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere (Acts XXVIII). And the Apostle himself: For we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness (I Cor. I).

[Luke 2:35] -- And a sword shall pierce through your own soul also. No history teaches that blessed Mary departed from this life by the sword's killing, especially since it is not the soul, but the body that is usually killed by iron. Hence it must be understood that this sword, of which it is said: And a sword is in their lips (Psalm LVIII), passed through her soul, meaning the sorrow of the Lord's passion. Even though she knew Christ to be the Son of God and thus would not doubt he would overcome death, she, however, could not without sorrow witness her flesh and blood being crucified. For the iron that is said to have transpierced Joseph's soul is best understood as severe mental tribulation.

[Luke 2:35] -- That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. It was uncertain once who among the Jews would accept the grace of Christ, which they surely knew was to come, and who would rather reject it. But upon hearing of His birth, with the thoughts of hearts soon revealed, King Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. The shepherds, with fear and joy, resounded praises to God, announced the message of peace to men. With His teaching and power being spread abroad, some flocked to Him as a teacher of truth, others fled from Him as a deceiver. With His sign of the cross raised, some mocked blasphemously as if justly condemned to death, others mourned bitterly as if the author of life were dying. And even to this day, and to the end of the present age, the sword of most severe tribulation does not cease to pierce through the soul of the Church, while it considers many hearing the Word of God and rising with Christ, but many more falling away from belief. With the thoughts of many hearts revealed, where the best seed of the Gospel is sown, there the weeds of vices either prevail more than they should or, gravely to say, alone germinate and reign.

[Luke 2:36] -- And there was Anna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher; she had advanced in many days, etc. According to the history of her devout conversation and equally venerable age, and worthy in all aspects to

bear witness to the incarnate Lord, Anna is taught to have been. According to the mystical understanding, because she signifies the Church, which in the present is as if widowed by the death of her spouse and Lord, the number of her years of widowhood also designates the time of the Church, when established in the body, she journeys as a pilgrim away from the Lord, and with the affection of great devotion, keeping the thresholds of the heavenly temple, awaits that daily coming of the Lord. Concerning this He says: We shall come and make our abode with him (John 14). For seven times twelve make eighty-four. And indeed seven refers to the course of this world, which revolves in seven days. Twelve, on the other hand, pertains to the perfection of apostolic doctrine. Therefore, whether it is the universal Church, or any faithful soul who cares to dedicate the entire span of their life to apostolic institutions, it is praised as if multiplying seven by twelve, and serving the Lord in the figurative eighty-four years. Also as the time of seven years, during which she stayed with her husband, most fittingly corresponds to the time of the Lord's incarnation. For by the number seven (as I said), the perfection of time is usually indicated.

But there, due to the privilege of the Lord's majesty by which He taught in the flesh, the simple number of seven years is expressed. Here, on account of the apostolic summit of dignity, seven years are multiplied by twelve. However, it pleases the mysteries of the Church that Anna is interpreted as grace and that she is the daughter of Phanuel, which means face of God, singing with the Psalmist: The light of your face, O Lord, is signed upon us (Psalm 4). And she descends from the tribe of Asher, which means blessed, which among the twelve patriarchs is the eighth in the order of birth. About which number, because it is sacred to the New Testament, it has been repeatedly emphasized.

[Luke 2:38] -- And coming up at that moment she gave thanks to the Lord and spoke about him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. [Simeon prophesied, the one joined in marriage prophesied, the virgin prophesied, and the widow should also prophesy, so that no state of life or sex should be wanting. And therefore, Anna is introduced with the merit of widowed life and such behavior that she is plainly believed to be worthy to announce that the Redeemer has come for all. [Luke 2:39] -- And when they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their city Nazareth. In this place, Luke omitted what he knew to be sufficiently explained by Matthew, namely that the Lord, after these things, so that he would not be found and killed by Herod, was taken by his parents to Egypt, and after Herod's death, he thus returned to Galilee, and began to inhabit his city Nazareth. For the evangelists individually are accustomed to omit certain things that they either saw were mentioned by others, or foresaw would be mentioned by others in the spirit, so that in the continuous series of their own narrative, they appear to have omitted nothing. Nevertheless,

a diligent reader can find out at what point omissions were made by considering the writing of the other evangelist.

[Luke 2:40] -- And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. The distinction of the words is notable, because the Lord Jesus Christ, in that he was a child, that is, had assumed the condition of human frailty, had to grow and become strong. But in that he was also the Word of God and the eternal God, he did not need to become strong nor did he need to grow. Hence, he is very rightly said to be full of wisdom and grace. Wisdom because in him dwells all the fullness of deity bodily. Grace because to the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, great grace was given, so that from the moment he began to be man, he might be perfect and God. Similar to this is what John writes, that he is full of grace and truth, he himself setting forth that same excellence of divinity of truth, which Luke commends under the name of wisdom.

[Luke 2:41] -- And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of Passover. You see this evangelist, among the four creatures, not without reason compared to the calf, which, as if designated for sacrifices, revolves around the temple and Jerusalem with the course of his narrative. For indeed at the beginning he places a priest praying at the altar, establishes a multitude of people in the courts of the temple, soon sends Mary, having conceived the Lord, to Jerusalem, introduces her into the house of the High Priest. There he recounts the birth of the Baptist, and immediately after the birth, transfers the Lord with an offering. He leads him there every year with his parents, and at the age of twelve inserts him into the choir of doctors in the temple. Where among other things, he says astonishing things to the wise: Because it behooves me to be in the things of my Father (Luke 2). And after such things, he concludes his Gospel with the disciples praising God in the temple.

[Luke 2:42] -- And when he was twelve years old, as they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast day, and having completed the days as they returned, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem. The one who, from birth, indeed from human conception, was approved by clear signs of miracles showing that he is God, even then, as soon as the time of age was appropriate, began reverently to reveal and open both his natures, namely, what in truth of divine majesty belonged to the Father, and what, according to the frailty of human assumption, belonged to the mother. Nor without foresight did he reveal the first rudiments of his faith at twelve years old, which by the ministry of the twelve apostles was to be revealed and elucidated throughout the world. We can also say this, that as with the number seven, similarly the number twelve, which consists of the multiplied parts of seven, may designate the totality and perfection of things or times. And for this reason, that it is fitting for all places or times to be occupied, the light rightly takes its

beginning from the number twelve. Therefore, it is not idly said that he appeared to have been unmindful of his parents, but that he instructs us, because not only before his own parents, but even before Abraham was made, he is, he delights rather to reside in the city and temple of God, as if by paternal right.

[Luke 2:43] -- And his parents did not know. But assuming that he was in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought him among relatives and acquaintances, and not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem searching for him. Someone might ask how the Son of God, reared with such care by his parents, could have been forgotten and left behind as they went away. To this, it must be answered that it was the custom of the sons of Israel that during festive times, whether they converged on Jerusalem or returned to their own places, the men and women would walk separately in choruses, and infants or children could go with either parent indifferently. And thus, the blessed Mary or Joseph might have thought by turns that the boy Jesus, whom they did not see accompanying themselves, had returned with the other parent. [Luke 2:46] -- And it happened after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, listening to them and asking questions. As a fountain of wisdom sits in the midst of the doctors, but as an example of humility, he first seeks to listen and ask questions of the doctors rather than to teach the unlearned. So that the little ones may not be ashamed to learn from their elders, and he himself, for the sake of human age appropriateness, is not ashamed to listen to men, though he is God. So that the weak may not dare to teach, he, as a boy, wished to be taught by asking questions, who by the power of divinity provided the word of knowledge to his very doctors.

[Luke 2:47] -- And all who heard him were astonished at his wisdom and answers, and seeing him, they were amazed. Note the distinction of words, and diligently examine the mysteries of your salvation and faith. They were astonished at what they heard from him, and seeing him, they were amazed. And they were all the more astonished at the wisdom of his answers, the more they despised the fewness of his years seeing it. His tongue revealed divine wisdom, but his age pretended human infirmity. Truly, let these things astound the doctors of the Jews as if they were new, and let them be disturbed by a doubtful amazement among the high things they hear and the weak things they see. But let us, knowing that this is he of whom the Prophet once rejoiced, saying, "A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God" (Isaiah 9); let us in no way wonder at him, who has been made a little child and yet has always remained what he was, namely, God and mighty, displaying at times signs of his divinity, at times signs of his humanity to those he wished to instruct. But let us give thanks to him with faith, hope, and charity, because he who was great and exceedingly praiseworthy, though we did not know him, was born as a little child for us, so that by growing and advancing among the little ones, he might gradually lead them to embrace the secrets of his virtue and greatness.

[Luke 2:48] -- And his mother said to him: Son, why have you done this to us? Behold, your father and I, sorrowing, have been seeking you. And he said to them: Why were you seeking me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? Not Joseph, who provided nothing for his generation except service and affection, whence he is called father both by the evangelist and by Mary herself for his faithful service; Christ does not deny him as his parent, but simply and openly indicates who is his true Father, equally to us and to them. He does not reproach them for seeking him as a son, but rather compels them to raise the eyes of their mind to what is owed to him who is the eternal Son. For as he is both God and man, he now exhibits the heights of divinity, now the depths of human frailty. As a man, he questions the elders, as God he responds to matters which astonish the elders and the learned. As the Son of God, he dwells in the temple of God, and as the son of man, he returns with his parents where they command.

[Luke 2:50] -- And they did not understand the word that he spoke to them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. How much an example of piety and humility in the Lord! His parents did not understand the word that he spoke to them about his divinity, and yet he, not ungrateful for their human diligence towards him, descended to where they commanded, and was subject to them. For what would the teacher of virtue be if he did not fulfill the duty of piety? What else among us than that he would do what he wanted us to do? He deferred to a man, he deferred to a maidservant. For she herself says: Behold the handmaid of the Lord (Luke 1). He deferred to the simulated father, he deferred to the true father who is God. And indeed he had preserved his mother, born of a virgin, as a virgin and chaste; indeed, he did not differ from the father by will, by act, or by time. In order that, being admonished by his example, we might recognize what we owe to our parents, who suffer so much for us. The Arians are wont to say that the Son was imperfect because he said, The Father is greater than I (John 14). But what marvel if from human reception he asserts himself lesser than the Father in heaven, from which he was also subject to his parents on earth?

[Luke 2:51] -- And his mother kept all these words in her heart. Whether what she understood, or what she could not yet understand of the words of the Gospel, she kept all in her heart to be pondered upon and diligently examined. Let us then learn the chastity of the holy virgin in all things, who, no less modest in speech than in body, kept the arguments of faith in her heart. And if she kept silent before the apostolic precepts, why do you, after the apostolic precepts, more desire to teach than to learn? [Luke 2:52] -- And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. This passage refutes both the Manichaeans and the Apollinarians alike, showing that the Lord truly had flesh and a true soul. For as stature pertains to the body, so wisdom and favor pertain to the soul. And indeed, it would not have increased in wisdom if it did not have the natural understanding that was granted to humans for the sake of reason. Not because the God who

assumed this needed it, especially since He is described above as having been full of wisdom even as a child, but because He chose this as part of the remedy for our salvation, through the effect of a loving assumption, so that while flesh and a rational soul were assumed by God, both would be equally saved.

Chapter 3

[Luke 3:1] -- Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene. Herod, Philip, and Lysanias, who governed Judea with the Roman prefect Pilate, were the sons of that Herod under whom the Lord was born, among whom also their brother Archelaus reigned for ten years. He was accused by the Jews before Augustus because of his intolerable cruelty, and he perished in eternal exile at Vienna. Augustus took care to divide the kingdom of Judea into tetrarchies so that it would become less powerful. Moreover, Pilate, in the twelfth year of Tiberius Caesar, was sent to Judea and took over the administration of the nation, and he continued there for ten consecutive years until almost the very end of Tiberius's reign.

[Luke 3:2] -- During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the desert. Both indeed, at the beginning of John's prophecy, that is, Annas and Caiaphas were the chief priests; but Annas held the office for that year, while Caiaphas administered it in the year when the Lord ascended the cross, and indeed with three others in between completing the pontificate, but especially with those mentioned by the evangelist who were related to the passion of the Lord. For at that time, legal precepts having ceased through force and ambition, the honor of the pontificate was conferred neither on account of life nor lineage, but by Roman authority it was conferred upon some now, and again upon others. Indeed, Josephus reports in this manner, saying: Valerius Gratus, having removed Annas from the priesthood, appointed Ismael, son of Fabo, as high priest. But soon after rejecting him as well, he substituted Eleazar, son of Ananus, to the high priesthood. After one year, he also removed him from office and bestowed the ministry of the high priesthood upon one Simon, son of Camith. He too fulfilled the office scarcely for the breadth of a year and then received Joseph, whose name was also Caiaphas, as a successor. And thus, the whole time in which our Lord is described as teaching on earth is confined within a span of four years. In this time, the four successions of high priests that Josephus mentions are described, scarcely ministering for individual years.

Because John was coming to preach about Him who would redeem some from Judea and many from the Gentiles, the times of his preaching are designated by the king of the nations and the princes of the Jews. Because the Gentiles were to be gathered, and Judea, for its fault of unfaithfulness, was to be scattered, the very account of earthly authority also shows that in the Roman republic one is described as presiding, and in the kingdom of Judea, many ruled by quarters. For our Redeemer's voice says: "Every kingdom divided against itself will be desolate" (Matthew XII). Therefore, it is clear that the kingdom of Judea had come to an end since it was subjected to division under so many kings. It is fittingly demonstrated not only by which kings, but also by which priests the events took place. So that because John the Baptist was to preach about Him who would also be king and priest at the same time, Luke the evangelist designated the times of his preaching by the kingdom and the priesthood.

[Luke 3:3] -- And he went into all the region around Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. To all readers it is clear that John not only preached the baptism of repentance, but also gave it to certain people, yet he could not grant his baptism for the remission of sins. For indeed, the remission of sins is granted to us by the baptism of Christ alone. It should be noted, therefore, what is said, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, since he could not give a baptism that would absolve sins, he preached it. Just as he preceded the incarnate Word of the Father with the word of preaching: so the baptism of repentance, by which sins are absolved, would precede his baptism, by which sins cannot be absolved. [Luke 3:4] -- As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: The voice, etc. The same John the Baptist, being asked who he was, answered, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, who is therefore called a voice by the prophet because he preceded the word; who also cries in the wilderness, because he announces the comfort of redemption to the abandoned and destitute Judea. What he cried out is made clear when it is added: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Whoever preaches true faith and good works, what else is he doing but preparing the way for the Lord to come to the hearts of the listeners? That the power of grace may penetrate these, and the light of truth may illuminate, making straight paths for God, by forming pure thoughts in the mind through the word of good preaching.

[Luke 3:5] -- Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low. What else is meant by the term valley in this place but the humble; what else by mountains and hills but proud men? At the coming of the Redeemer, therefore, the valleys were filled, and the mountains and hills were made low. Because according to his word, everyone who exalts himself will be humbled: and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 14). For a valley filled grows, but a mountain and a hill made low decrease. Because in the faith of the mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, both the gentiles received the fullness of

grace, and Judea through the error of perfidy, lost that by which it was arrogant. [Luke 3:5] -- The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth. The crooked are made straight when the hearts of the wicked, twisted by injustice, are guided to the rule of justice. The rough ways are made smooth when harsh and irascible minds are brought back to gentleness through the infusion of heavenly grace. For when the word of truth is not received by an irascible mind, it is as if the roughness of the path repels the steps of the one advancing. But when the irascible mind, corrected through the grace of gentleness, receives the word of reproof or exhortation, the preacher finds a smooth way there, where previously he could not step forward due to the roughness of the path, that is, where he could not engage in the steps of preaching.

[Luke 3:6] -- And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Because ”all flesh” is understood as every human being, but not every human being could see Christ, the salvation of God, in this life. So where does the prophet direct the prophetic eye in this sentence if not toward the day of the final judgment? When the heavens are opened, the angels minister, and the Apostles are seated, and Christ appears on His throne of majesty, all will see Him, the wicked equally with the just, so that the just may rejoice forever in the reward of their recompense, and the unjust may eternally groan in the punishment of vengeance. For this sentence intends that He will be seen by all flesh at the final judgment, and rightly it is added. [Luke 3:7] -- He said therefore to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him: ”Brood of vipers,” etc. For the coming wrath is the judgment of final retribution. The sinner will not be able to escape this judgment who now does not turn to the laments of penance. And it is to be noted that the offspring of the wicked, imitating the actions of their evil parents, are called a brood of vipers. Because by envying the good and persecuting them, by repaying evil to others, by seeking to harm their neighbors, in all these things they follow the ways of their carnal predecessors, as if venomous offspring born of venomous parents. But since we have already sinned, since we are entangled in the habit of evil custom, let him tell us what we must do to be able to flee from the coming wrath.

[Luke 3:8] -- Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance. In these words, it is notable that he advises not only producing fruits of repentance but also those worthy of repentance. For it is one thing to produce a fruit of repentance and another to produce one worthy of repentance. Indeed, the fruit of good work ought not to be equal for one who has sinned less and one who has sinned more, or for one who has not fallen into any sins and one who has committed certain crimes. Therefore, by the phrase ”produce fruits worthy of repentance,” each person’s conscience is addressed, so that one seeks greater gains of good works through repentance, to the extent that they have brought upon themselves greater losses through their faults. But the Jews, boasting in the nobility of their lineage, refused to acknowl-

edge themselves as sinners because they were descended from Abraham's lineage. To them, it is rightly said:

[Luke 3:8] -- And do not begin to say, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones. For what were stones, if not the hearts of the Gentiles, insensible to the knowledge of the Almighty God? Just as it is said to some Jews: 'I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh' (Ezekiel 36). And it is not unreasonably that the Gentiles are signified by the name of stones, as they worshipped stones. Whence it is written: 'Let those who make them become like them, and all who trust in them' (Psalm 113). Indeed, from these very stones children of Abraham have been raised up, for as the hard hearts of the Gentiles believed in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, they became his children, united to his seed. Hence, it is said to these same Gentiles by the valiant preacher: 'And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed' (Galatians 3). So, if we through faith in Christ now exist as the seed of Abraham, the Jews, due to their unbelief, have ceased to be Abraham's children.

[Luke 3:9] -- The ax is already laid at the root of the tree. The tree of this world is the entire human race. The ax, however, is our Redeemer, who is held, as it were, by a handle and iron from humanity, but cuts from divinity. This ax is already laid at the root of the tree, because although He awaits patiently, it is evident what He is about to do. [Luke 3:9] -- Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. For every perverse person quickly finds the prepared burning of hell, who here scorns to bear the fruit of good work. It should be noted that the ax is said to be laid not next to the branches, but at the root. For when the children of the wicked are taken away, what else is it but the branches of the unfruitful tree being cut off? But when the whole progeny is taken away together with the parent, the unfruitful tree is cut off at the root, so that there no longer remains any source from where the wicked offspring could sprout again. In these words of John the Baptist, it is evident that the hearts of the listeners are disturbed, when it is immediately added:

[Luke 3:10] -- And the crowds asked him, saying: What then shall we do? For they were struck with terror, seeking advice. [Luke 3:11] -- And he answered them, saying: He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise. Because a tunic is more necessary for our use than a cloak, it pertains to the fruit worthy of repentance. That we ought not only to share our exterior and less necessary things but also those very necessary to us with our neighbors, namely either the food by which we live carnally or the tunic by which we are clothed. For it is written in the law: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mark XII), he is convicted of loving his neighbor less who does not share with him in his necessity even in those things that are necessary to himself. Therefore, the command is given to share two tunics with a neighbor because this could not be

said of one since if one tunic is divided, no one is clothed. For in a half tunic, both he who receives and he who gives remain naked. Among these things, it must be known how much the works of mercy avail, since they are particularly commanded as worthy fruits of repentance. Hence also Truth itself says: Give alms, and behold all things are clean for you.

[Luke 3:12] -- Then publicans also came to be baptized and said to him: Master, what shall we do? And he said to them: Do nothing more than what is appointed to you. The great power that the word of the blessed Baptist had and how much it stirred the minds of the hearers is proven here, as it compelled even the publicans and soldiers to seek counsel for their salvation. To whom he, no differently than to the crowds, advises the practice of mercy according to their appropriate situation. He commands the publicans not to exact more than what is prescribed. Publicans, as their name suggests, are those who collect public taxes, or who are contractors of the treasury's revenues or public properties. Additionally, those who pursue the profits of this world through trading are also so called. He restrains all of them equally in their respective statuses from engaging in fraud so that while first refraining from the desire for what belongs to others, they may at last reach the point of sharing their own goods with neighbors.

[Luke 3:14] -- But soldiers also questioned him, saying: What shall we do? And he said to them: Do not accuse anyone falsely, etc. The most just teacher, of exceptional moderation, advises that they should not extort money by falsely accusing those they ought to benefit by defending. He teaches that the wages of military service are therefore established so that one does not become a plunderer while seeking sustenance. No office, no type of activity should be exempt from showing mercy, which is the fullness of virtues, and alone liberates from death and confers eternal life. The judge himself attests, who promised to say: Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom. For I was hungry, and you gave me food, etc. [Luke 3:15] -- But as the people were expecting, and all were pondering in their hearts about John, whether perhaps he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying. How did he respond to those who were considering him, and secretly in their hearts were thinking that he might be Christ? Except that they not only were thinking but also, as another Evangelist declares, they sent priests and Levites to him to inquire if he was Christ. From this, it is evident that at that time the Jews were very much aware from the Scriptures that the time of the Lord's incarnation was at hand. But a marvelous blindness, that what they believed willingly in John, they did not believe in the Savior, approved by so many signs and virtues, and testified to by John himself.

[Luke 3:16] -- I indeed baptize you with water. However, one mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie. John does not baptize with the spirit, but with water, because he, being unable to absolve sins, washes the

bodies of the baptized with water but does not wash the mind through forgiveness. So why does he baptize who does not remit sins through baptism? Except that by maintaining the order of his forerunning, he who was born before Christ by birth would also be a forerunner to the Lord by baptizing Him, and thus he who was made the forerunner of Christ by preaching would also become His forerunner by baptizing in imitation of the sacrament. It was a custom among the ancients that if anyone did not wish to take as his wife the one who was properly his to take, the one who came as a suitor by the right of kinship would untie his sandal. What, then, was Christ among men except the bridegroom of the holy Church? About whom the same John also says, ”He who has the bride is the bridegroom” (John III). But because people thought John to be the Christ, which John himself denies, it is proper that he declares himself unworthy to untie His sandal strap. As if he said openly: I cannot lay bare the feet of the Redeemer, because I, unworthy, do not usurp the name of the bridegroom. However, this can be understood in another way:

for who does not know that sandals are made from dead animals? When the Lord incarnate came, He appeared as if shod, who in His divinity assumed the mortality of our corruption. But the mystery of this incarnation the human eye is not able to penetrate. For it cannot at all be investigated how the Word is made flesh, how the supreme and life-giving Spirit is animated in the womb of the mother, how He who has no beginning both exists and is conceived. Therefore, the sandal strap is the binding of the mystery. Thus, John cannot untie the strap of His sandal, because the mystery of the incarnation he also cannot sufficiently investigate, he who recognized it through the spirit of prophecy.

[Luke 3:16] -- He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. This is both the cleansing of sanctification and the testing of tribulation. However, the same Holy Spirit can also be understood as signified by the name of fire. Because He both enkindles through love and illuminates the hearts which He fills with wisdom. Hence, to those to whom it was said, ”John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts XI), the same baptism of the spirit is perceived in the vision of fire. Some explain it in this way, that in the present we are baptized in the spirit, and in the future we will be baptized in fire. Namely, just as now we are reborn in the remission of all sins from water and the spirit, so also then, from certain light sins which have adhered to us as we go from here, we are cleansed by the baptism of purgatorial fire before the final judgment. As the Apostle says: ”If anyone builds on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will be made clear by fire. If anyone’s work remains which he has built on it, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, though as through fire” (I Corinthians III).

Although this can also be understood of the fire of tribulation applied to us in this life, yet if anyone takes this as referring to the fire of future purification, it should be carefully considered, because he said that he can be saved through fire, not someone who builds on the foundation of Christ with iron, bronze, or lead, that is, greater and harder sins which are already unresolvable, but with wood, hay, and straw, that is, the smallest and lightest sins, which fire easily consumes. Nevertheless, it should be known that no one will obtain any purification even from the smallest sins there, unless he has acted with good deeds in this life so that he may deserve to obtain it there.

[Luke 3:17] -- His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor. By winnowing fork, that is, openly, the discernment of just judgment is meant; by the threshing floor, the present Church is prefigured. In which undoubtedly, which is sorrowful enough, many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew XX). Few grains are to be received into the heavenly mansions, in comparison to the weeds, which are to be consigned to perpetual flames. The purification of this threshing floor is also carried out now individually, when any perverse person is either cast out from the Church by priestly censure for manifest sins, or condemned after death by divine strictness for hidden sins, and it will be universally completed in the end, when the Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all scandals. Therefore the Lord has the winnowing fork in hand, that is, the discernment of judgment in his power, because the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.

[Luke 3:17] -- And he will gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. And the Lord himself ended the parable of the good seed, upon which the enemy man sowed tares, by saying: And in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: Gather first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn (Matthew XIII). Clearly teaching that the impious and sinners will be delivered to the fire of Gehenna, while the holy will be crowned with heavenly glory. Indeed, this differs between the chaff and the tares: for the chaff comes forth from no other seed than the wheat, although it degenerates from the nobility of a good root. However, the tares differ not only by their fruit but are also generated from entirely different origins. The chaff are those who are imbued with the mystic rituals of the same faith as the elect, but they differ from their solid perfection, either by the lightness of their works or by the emptiness of their faithlessness. The tares, however, are those who are not even worthy to hear the words of faith, and thus, they are separated from the lot of the good, both in deeds and profession.

And so, in this world’s field, one is of the elect, and two are the fruits of the reprobate, since all that the enemy sows is subject to flames, and what is graver, many of those things which the good sower casts are either snatched by birds, dried out

by the sun, choked by thorns, or certainly turned into chaff and perish. Only the wheat, created of good soil and proven worthy by patience, will be stored in the heavenly barn of the elect. Similarly, according to another parable, not only the fishes that decline the nets of Apostolic faith reside in the deep darkness of sinners, but many, dragged to the shore of extreme discretion among the good, then deserve to be sent to outer darkness because of their wickedness. He calls the fire of Gehenna unquenchable in two ways: that it can never be extinguished, nor will it ever cease to torment those whom it punishes, but will inflict (so to speak) an immortal death. This is in distinction to that most sacred fire, which he had earlier mentioned the elect of Christ would be baptized with. Concerning this, the Psalmist also says: You have tested us by fire, as silver is tested by fire (Psalm LXV). And a little later: We did not stay in that state forever, but we passed through fire and water, and you brought us into refreshment.

I will enter into your house with burnt offerings (Ibid.), that is, the distresses of pressures conquered, I will penetrate the courts of your heavenly kingdom with thanksgiving.

[Luke 3:19] -- However, Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and concerning all the evil deeds which Herod had done, added this above all, and shut John up in prison. These matters are more fully recounted by Matthew and Mark, who narrate that John, by the schemes of Herodias, was not only bound but also beheaded. This is to be understood as not having occurred at that time but, according to John’s Gospel, after some signs had been performed by the Lord and his baptism having already become widely known, yet mentioned here by this Evangelist to emphasize Herod’s wickedness. For while the unlearned populace thronged to John’s preaching, the soldiers believed, the publicans repented, and the whole populace received baptism in general, on the contrary, he not only despised him but did not hesitate to kill him. Through the deeper understanding of the mystery, because John the Evangelist undertook to write about the divinity of Christ, while the other three about his ministry in humanity, John the Baptist, indeed holding the type of the old law (which is the precursor of grace), beautifully attesting that while John the Evangelist was still preaching and baptizing as the precursor of the Lord, the Lord himself made and baptized more disciples. Mystically teaching him to have been the eternal God throughout the ages and the teacher of the faithful peoples through the law before he was born in the flesh. Beautifully also do the other Evangelists begin the Lord’s preaching after John was handed over to prison, whose role it was, after the law corrupted by the Jews and defiled as if by the darkness of prison’s ignorance and the savage tradition, to reveal the heavenly doctrine of the Lord appearing in the flesh and acting through the flesh, as if coming into Galilee.

[Luke 3:21] -- It happened, however, when all the people were being baptized, and Jesus having been baptized and praying, heaven was opened. The Lord was baptized not to be cleansed by the waters himself, but desiring to cleanse the waters themselves, which having been washed by his flesh, of course ignorant of sin, might assume the right of baptism, and what so many baptisms under the law could not do against the evil of transgression, might conceive the power of regenerative sanctification. Hence, when he said the entire people had been baptized, he added nothing great. But having said that Jesus was baptized and praying, he stated heaven was opened. Because while the Lord descended into the waters of the Jordan in the humility of the body, by the power of his divinity, he opened the gates of heaven for us. And while the innocent flesh was dipped in the cold waters, the fiery sword, once opposed to the guilty, was extinguished. For indeed, was heaven opened to Him at that time, whose eyes beheld the innermost parts of the heavens? But the power of baptism is shown there, from which anyone who emerges, the gate of the heavenly kingdom is declared to him.

Also as that which Jesus, whose are all things that are of the Father, is remembered to have prayed when baptized, it is not doubted that it was done to instruct us, for whom after the bath of baptism, so that the hall of heaven may be opened, it is necessary to live not idly but to persevere in fasting, prayers, and almsgiving. For although all sins are released in baptism, yet the frailty of the flesh is not yet strengthened. For as after crossing the Red Sea we indeed rejoice over the Egyptians slain, but in the desert of worldly conversation, other enemies come upon us who, with the leading and cooperating grace of Christ, are conquered by our efforts until we reach the promised country of eternal life.

[Luke 3:22] -- And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon him. Truly in bodily form, because in the nature of divinity it could not be seen by mortals. Truly like a dove, because the spirit of discipline will flee deceit, nor will it dwell in a body subjected to sins. And because some, after the example of Simon, persist in the bitterness of gall and in the bond of iniquity, they can have no part or share in it. Hence, when the world's crimes were once purged by the flood in the figure of baptism, not by a raven, but by a dove bearing the olive branch in its mouth was peace announced as restored to the world. Mystically teaching that the anointing of the Holy Spirit will be present only to those who have been baptized in the simplicity of heart. For no one should think that the Lord after baptism was first anointed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, or that anyone has achieved progress in divine nature over time, but rather should know that from the very moment of human conception, the one who is true man, the same exists as true God. However, with the arrival of the dove, it was shown that in his body, that is, the Church, those especially who are baptized receive the Holy Spirit.

[Luke 3:22] -- And a voice came from heaven: You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased. Rightly John is second to none among those born of women, to whom Christ showed himself to be baptized, the invisible Spirit appeared to be seen, and the Father commended his Son from heaven. For it was not revealed to the Son himself what he already knew well, but it was shown to John or to the others who were present, what they might know. From this it is to be noted that the same John, who until then proclaimed a man stronger than himself and Christ, henceforth being admonished by the descent of the Spirit or the Father's attestation, openly preached the Son of God: He is, he says, of whom I said, after me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me, and I did not know him (John 1). And again about the dove: And I saw, and I testified that this is the Son of God (ibid.). Thus the mystery of the Trinity is shown in the baptism of the Savior, that we too may be taught to be baptized in his name. And what is said: In you I am well pleased, is as if he says: In you I have established my good pleasure, that is, to do through you what pleases me. But what is said according to Matthew: In whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3) is thus explained:

That everyone who, by repenting, corrects what they have done, by that very fact indicates that they have displeased themselves by repenting, who amends what was done. And because the Almighty Father, as he could be understood by men, spoke in a human manner about sinners saying: It repents me that I have made man on the earth (Genesis 6), as if he displeased himself in the sinners whom he created. But he was well pleased in his only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ alone. For it did not repent him to have made this man among men, in whom he found no sin at all, thus it is said of him through the Psalmist: The Lord has sworn and will not repent; you are a priest forever (Psalm 110).

[Luke 3:23] -- And Jesus himself was beginning to be about thirty years old, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph. Jesus is baptized at thirty years of age, and then finally begins to perform signs and teach, thereby showing the legitimate and mature time of age, to those who think any age, whether for a priest or for teaching, is appropriate. Who also, as was read above, at the age of twelve, sitting in the midst of the teachers in the temple, not teaching but asking questions, wanted to be found. For so that men would not dare to preach in an immature age, he at twelve years old asks people on earth, who by his divinity always teaches angels in heaven. Nor should anyone be moved against these things, that Jeremiah and Daniel received the spirit of prophecy as boys, because miracles are not to be drawn as examples of operation. For Almighty God makes even the tongues of infants eloquent, and out of the mouth of infants and sucklings perfected praise. But what we say with the practice of teaching is one thing, what we know from a miracle is another. However, the forty-year-old age of the baptized Savior can also intimate the mystery of our baptism, for the faith, namely of the Holy Trinity and

the operation of the legal Decalogue. For the Decalogue indeed, with the grace of faith revealed, the more sublimely it is understood, the more devoutly it is fulfilled.

For as some kind of sacred triennial time, he taught those to be baptized who said: Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. XXVIII). As if he ordered this same triennium to be multiplied by ten when he added: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Ibid.). In whose figure also the brazen sea, in which the priests about to enter the temple washed, is said to have been encompassed outwardly by a thirty cubit cord, and inwardly to hold three thousand baths. Because (with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. This sense is supported by the apostles baptizing three thousand souls first after receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit. And because the mention of the brazen sea has arisen, it is pleasing to also inquire how the rules of baptism agree in other respects. From lip to lip (it says) ten cubits (3 Kings VII), because it is fitting for us not to be constrained by earthly anxiety, but to be expanded by the expectation of the heavenly denarius. Its lip is as the lip of a cup or an unfolded lily leaf: with one of which the cup of the Lord's passion is expressed, with the other the brightness of his resurrection is revealed. For that the Apostle says: Whoever is baptized into Christ Jesus is baptized into his death (Rom. VI), pertains to the lip of the cup.

But that he adds: That as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Ibid.), looks to the flower of the unfolded lily. Its thickness is of three fingers, so that the strength of all baptized is solidified by the perfection of faith, hope, and charity. It had a height of five cubits, because whatever is sinned by sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch, is all washed away by the water of regeneration. The oxen that bear it look in threes to each quarter of the sky so that the whole world is baptized in the faith of the Holy Trinity. It stood on the right side of the priest's court facing east towards the south, because with the grace of the New Testament standing, it was given by him who visited us the day spring from on high (Luke I). But also in countless places of Holy Scripture, the number thirty is found fitting for the sacraments of Christ and the Church. For even Joseph, who in the figure of resurrection and of the New Testament defended the Egyptians from famine for eighty years, took up the government of the kingdom purified of the filth of the dungeon at thirty years, and David at the same age began the kingdom, which he completed as a seventy-year-old, that is, worthy of perpetual rest, and Ezekiel received the gifts of prophecy with the heavens opened at thirty years.

And because by faith both adversities should be patiently borne, and rewards should be highly hoped for, both the height of the ark or the temple and the length of the tabernacle are measured by thirty cubits.

[Luke 3:23] -- As was supposed (he says) the son of Joseph. He placed this phrase on account of those who thought he was born from Joseph like other men are born. Hence, if it troubles anyone that since Mary conceived Christ by the Holy Spirit, and Joseph is called his father not truly, but supposedly, why not rather is Mary's lineage described than Joseph's, who seemed to have no relation to him, let them first know that it is not customary in the Scriptures to set forth the order of women in genealogies. Next, Joseph and Mary were from one tribe, whence the law compelled him to take her as a relative. And that they are registered together in Bethlehem indicates they are born from one stock, and thus through Joseph's genealogy, the origin of Mary is also shown. Certainly, Luke beautifully begins the genealogy of Christ by introducing the Father speaking: You are my beloved Son (Mark 1), so that by divine testimony he confirms the same as the true Son of God, whom by the order of human succession he proves to be the true son of man.

[Luke 3:23] -- Who was Heli, who was Mathat, who was Levi, who was Melchi, etc. It rightly raises the question of how Joseph could have had two fathers coming from different lines of ancestors, one whom Luke mentions and the other whom Matthew mentions. For Matthew says: "And Mathan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary. But this knotty question, Africanus explained very clearly when writing about the harmony of the Gospels. He said, "Mathan and Mathat, at different times, each fathered children from the same wife named Estha. Because Mathan, who descended from Solomon, had first taken her as his wife, and upon leaving behind a son named Jacob, died. After his death, since the law does not forbid a widow from marrying another man, Mathat, who was descended from Nathan and of the same tribe but not of the same lineage, took the widow of Mathan as his wife, from whom he also fathered a son named Heli. Through this, Jacob and Heli are brothers, though from different fathers. Of these, Jacob, following the law, took the wife of his brother Heli, who died childless, and begot Joseph, who is naturally his son, which is why it is written: 'And Jacob begot Joseph.' But according to the law, Joseph is also considered the son of Heli, since Jacob, as his brother, had taken Heli's wife to raise up seed for him, as mandated by the law.

Thus, both genealogies, Matthew's saying 'And Jacob begot Joseph', and Luke's with the proper observation stating 'He was supposed the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli,' are validated and intact. Moreover, Africanus conveyed these same ideas in these very words, except he wrote 'Melchi' instead of 'Matthat,' because either his copy had it so, or in the history where he learned these things, he found the same Matthat had two names. Since Matthew established the royal persona of the Lord, and Luke the priestly persona, where the strongest of the beasts, the lion, signifies the former, and the calf, the offering of priests, signifies the latter, both maintained their purpose in tracing the genealogy of the Savior. Thus, it has been observed that Matthew, who set forth the royal persona in Christ, listed forty men in his genealogical series, excluding Christ Himself. Now this number signifies

the time in which we ought to be ruled by Christ in this world and on this earth according to a laborious discipline, by which God chastises (as it is written) every son whom He receives (Heb. XII). For there are not forty-two generations, which make up thrice fourteen, but due to Jeconiah being counted twice, there are forty-one generations, if we also include Christ, who presides over our temporal and earthly life to be rightly governed by the number forty.

For since the number is a sacrament of this laborious time, during which we fight under the discipline of Christ the King against the devil, it is also signified by the fact that He consecrated the fast of forty days, which is the humiliation of the soul. Both the law and the prophets through Moses and Elijah, who fasted for forty days, and the Gospel through the fast of the Lord Himself, who was also tempted by the devil for forty days, what else do they prefigure but the temptation of our flesh throughout all the time of this world, which He deigned to assume from our mortality? Therefore, this number signifies this temporal and earthly life because the times of the years run in fourfold seasons, and the world itself is bounded by four parts. Forty, however, contains ten four times. Furthermore, the number ten is completed by progressing from one to four. And because Matthew wished to signify Christ descending to partake in our mortality, he therefore recounted the generations from Abraham to Joseph and up to the nativity of Christ by descending from the beginning of his Gospel. Luke, however, did not recount the generations from the beginning of his Gospel, but from the baptism of Christ, not by descending but ascending, assigning Him more as a priest in expiating sins, where a voice from heaven declared Him, where John himself bore witness, saying: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

By ascending, however, he passes from Abraham and arrives at God, to whom we are reconciled, purified and expiated. Rightly, he also took up the origin of adoption, because we are made sons of God by adoption through believing in the Son of God. But by carnal generation, the Son of God rather made the Son of Man. But he sufficiently demonstrated that he did not call Joseph the son of Heli because he was begotten from him, but because he was adopted by him, since he also called Adam the son of God, even though he was made by God, but by the grace which he later lost by sinning, he was constituted as a son in paradise. Therefore, in the generations of Matthew, the acceptance of our sins by the Lord Christ is signified: in the generations of Luke, the abolition of our sins by the Lord Christ is signified. Therefore, he recounted them descending, and the latter ascending. For what the Apostle says: He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. VIII), this is the acceptance of sins. But what he adds: In order to condemn sin in the flesh by means of sin, this is the expiation of sins. Hence Matthew descends from David through Solomon, in whose mother he sinned. But Luke ascends to David through Nathan, through whose name the prophet God expiated his sin.

[Luke 3:32] -- Who was (he says) Mathan, who was David, who was Jesse. This number which Luke follows certainly indicates the abolition of sins, about which you will see in its place. Do not be surprised if Luke lists more successions from David to Christ, and Matthew fewer: that is, the former forty-three, the latter twenty-eight, admitting that the generation runs through different persons. For it can happen that some lived a long life, while men of another generation died prematurely, since we see many old men living with their grandchildren, but other men die as soon as they have begotten sons.

[Luke 3:36] -- Who was Sela, who was Cainan, who was Arphaxad. The name and generation of Cainan, according to Hebrew truth, is found neither in Genesis nor in the Words of the Days; but it is claimed that Arphaxad begat Sela or Sale as a son without any intermediary; for it is written: Now Arphaxad lived thirty years and begot Sale (Gen. XI). And likewise in Chronicles: Arphaxad begot Sala, who also begot Heber (1 Chronicles I). Therefore, understand that blessed Luke took this genealogy from the edition of the seventy interpreters, where it is written that Arphaxad at the age of one hundred and thirty-five begat Cainan, and Cainan, when he was one hundred and thirty years old, begat Sela. But which of these is true, or if both can be true, God knows. We simply remind the reader that such a great discrepancy exists between the two codes in the series of time that from the flood to the birth of Abraham in Hebrew truth there are found to be 292 years, but in the translation of the seventy interpreters, 1,077 years are comprehended. And some chronographers, taking a middle course, removing only the generation of Cainan, and without correcting the other years according to the Hebrew example, describe 942 years of the same period.

[Luke 3:37] -- He was Methuselah, he was Enoch. Beautifully the order of generations ascending from the baptized Son of God to God the Father, in the seventieth degree holds Enoch, who, with death delayed, was translated to paradise, to signify those who, regenerated in the grace of adoption of sons by water and the Holy Spirit, will in the meantime, after the absolution of the body, be received into eternal rest (since the number seventy, on account of the seventh Sabbath, most fittingly signifies the rest of those who, aided by the grace of Christ, have fulfilled the Decalogue of the law) and at the time of the resurrection, will be shown to be joined to the immutable wisdom of God, contemplating through the ages.

[Luke 3:38] -- Who was Seth, who was Adam, who was of God. Because no iniquity of Christ, who had none, is of course joined with the iniquities of men, which he took upon himself in his flesh; therefore, the number according to Matthew, except for Christ, is forty. But because he unites us, cleansed and purged from all sin, to his own righteousness and that of his Father, as the Apostle says: “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (I Cor. VI), therefore in that number according to Luke, both Christ himself, from whom the enumeration begins, and God, to whom

it leads, are included, and the number becomes seventy-eight, signifying the complete remission and abolition of all sins. For the Lord also made mention of this number when Peter asked him about forgiving a brother's sins. For he said: not only seven times, but seventy times seven must be forgiven (Matt. XVIII). Whence it is rightly believed that by the mention of this number, he ordered all sins to be forgiven. Nor did the Lord come in the seventieth and seventh generation to abolish all sins without reason or in vain, except because something lies hidden in that number which pertains to the signification of all sins. This is to be considered in the number eleven and seven. These numbers, when multiplied by each other, reach such an amount. For eleven times seven, or seven times eleven, make seventy-seven. But eleven signifies the transgression of ten.

And if in ten is signified the perfection of blessedness, whence also it is that all those hired to the vineyard are rewarded with a denarius (Matt. XX), which happens when the seven-fold creature is joined to the Trinity of the Creator, it is clear that the transgression of ten signifies sin, by the proud desire of having something more and losing the integrity and perfection. This is multiplied by seven because that transgression made by the movement of man is signified. For the incorporeal part of man is signified by the number three. Whence it is that we are ordered to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind (Mark XII). But the body is four; for many ways the nature of the body is found fourfold. Therefore, man, consisting of these combined, is not absurdly signified by the number seven. And movement is not expressed in numbers when we say one, two, three, four, etc., but when we say once, twice, thrice, four times. Accordingly (as I said), not seven and eleven, but seven times eleven signifies the transgression, made by the movement of the sinning man, that is, overstepping the stability of his perfection by the desire for having more. Therefore, suitably by multiplying eleven by seven, all sins reach the number seventy-seven.

In which number also is found the full remission of sins, atoning us by the flesh of our priest, from whom this number now begins, and reconciling us to God, to whom this number now extends, through the Holy Spirit who appeared in the form of a dove in this baptism, where this number is mentioned. But if anyone wishes to dispute the exposition given above, by saying that Matthew listed not forty-one but forty-two generations, because, according to the account of the Chronicles, Jechoniah should be counted for two persons, namely father and son, let him understand that the same number nonetheless intimates the present time of the Church, which, with the Lord's cooperation, labors in the hope of the future Sabbath. For seven times six makes forty-two. And it is rare to find anyone who doubts that six pertains to work and seven to signaling rest. Wherefore, rightly, the people saved from the land of Egypt remained forty years in the desert, but because they diligently strove under the hope of entering into rest, they camped in forty-two exceedingly narrow paths. At the last of these, when they received Jesus as leader, immedi-

ately through the opening of the Jordan, they entered the promised seats, having conquered their enemies. Just as the Lord Jesus, in the forty-second generation, coming in the flesh since the world dispelled the shadows of ancient blindness with Abraham believing, opened to us the gates of heaven through the washing of baptism.

And we ourselves, through the perfected course of virtues, in which we wait with patience, hoping for what we do not see (Romans VIII), under the sacrament of the same number (as has been said), will arrive at the promised kingdoms of the heavenly homeland, joyfully crossing the river dried up by Christ as leader. And since by that same baptism which He began at thirty, He is about to cleanse the stains of the entire Church, the mystical connection of these numbers also reveals this. Because, evidently, the number thirty, computed with its equal parts, adds up to twelve, which is the number of patriarchs and apostles, and becomes forty-two. For its equal parts are: thirty one, one; fifteenth, two; tenth, three; sixth, five; fifth, six; third, ten; half, fifteen. Which, joined together, make forty-two. Where mystically (as we said) it is indicated that the entirety of the Church's perfection consists in the faith and grace of Christ, which was first recognized by the patriarchs and more widely proclaimed by the voice of the apostles. Nor is there any other name under heaven in which we must be saved (Acts IV), just as in forty-two there is no part that is not contained in the parts of the number thirty. Therefore, the number thirty, with its parts, completes forty-two, because the Lord, through the sacraments of His baptism, both presently fortifies the Church laboring temporally and, after the labors are finished, leads it to eternal rest.

Chapter 4

[Luke 4:1] -- Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days. This, immediately after the baptism of the Lord, Matthew and Mark designate. One of them, after describing His baptism, immediately subjoined: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil (Matthew IV). The other wrote thus: And immediately the Spirit drove him into the desert, and he was there for forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan (Mark I). Indeed, lest anyone should doubt by which spirit he was led or driven into the desert, Luke prudently wrote first that Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and then added, and was led by the Spirit into the desert, so that nothing might be thought to have prevailed against Him from an unclean spirit, who, full of the Holy Spirit, walked as He willed and did what He willed. For even later, where it is clearly stated that He was taken up or set up on high by the devil, it reflects not on His weakness, but on the enemy's arrogance who thinks to impose necessity on the Savior's will. Therefore, Jesus is not driven into the desert by the power of any evil spirit, but by the will of His own good Spirit, He enters the place of combat, certain of victory, to defeat the adversary. Here He also rightly shows us the order of virtuous living, so that after receiving in baptism the remission of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may gird ourselves more tightly against new snares of the ancient enemy, withdraw our mind from the world, and, like the manna in the desert, learn to hunger only for the joys of eternal life.

[Luke 4:2] -- And he ate nothing during those days, and when they were ended, he was hungry. The forty-day fast has authority both in the old books from the fast of Moses and Elijah, and from the Gospel, because the Lord fasted for the same number of days, demonstrating that the Gospel does not dissent from the law and the prophets. For the law is perceived in the person of Moses, and the prophets in the person of Elijah. Among them, he appeared gloriously on the mountain, so that it might more clearly stand out what the Apostle says about him: "Having a witness from the law and the prophets" (Romans 3). But in which part of the year is it more fitting that the observance of Lent should be established, if not adjacent and contiguous to the Lord's Passion, because in it is signified this laborious life,

which requires continence, to fast from the friendship of this world. Otherwise: the Lord fasted while he was tempted before death, still needing food. However, he ate and drank after the resurrection, already not needing food. For here he was showing our labor in himself, but there his consolation in us, defining both in forty days. For this number seems to signify the course of this age, in those who are called by grace, to him who did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5).

For there are ten commandments of the law, now diffused by the grace of Christ throughout the world, and the world is fourfold, and ten times four makes forty. Because those redeemed by the Lord, he has gathered from the regions. From the East, and the West, and the North, and the sea. Thus fasting for forty days before the death of the flesh, as if he were crying out: Abstain from the desires of this world (1 Peter 2). But eating and drinking for forty days after the resurrection of the flesh, as if he were crying out: Behold, I am with you until the end of the age (Matthew 28). Fasting is indeed in the tribulation of struggle, because he who is in the contest abstains from everything. But food is in the hope of peace, which will not be perfect until our body, whose redemption we await, puts on immortality, which we do not yet attain by glory, but are nourished by hope. The Apostle shows that we engage in both together, saying: Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation (Romans 12). As if that were in food, this in fasting. For simultaneously, as we tread the Lord's way, we fast from the vanity of the present age, and are refreshed by the promise of the future, not setting our hearts here, but feeding our hearts above.

But the fact that the Lord was hungry after the days of fasting were ended, whereas nothing of the sort is written of Moses or Elijah when they fasted, happened so that he, fearing the temptation, would not flee away sad, whom he saw proclaimed with so many heavenly signs, and equal to the most excellent men in abstaining. For the humble God-man was hungry, so that he might not reveal to the enemy the sublime man-God.

[Luke 4:3] -- The devil said to him: If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread. The ancient enemy recognized that the redeemer of the human race had come into the world, his conqueror, and thus said through a possessed man: What have we to do with you, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? (Matt. VIII). However, when he first saw Him as vulnerable, observed Him able to endure mortal things due to His humanity, everything he suspected about His divinity came into doubt out of the pride of his arrogance. For nothing wise, except for the proud, doubted that He was God when he saw Him humble. Therefore, he turned to the means of temptations. But not like us who are pure humans, often shaken by attacking temptation, was the soul of our Redeemer troubled by the necessity of temptation. For our enemy, even if he was

permitted to take Him to a high mountain, even if he proclaimed he would give Him the kingdoms of the world, even if he showed stones that could be turned into bread, still he could not shake the mind of the Mediator between God and men with temptation. For He graciously endured all these things outwardly, such that His mind inwardly, remaining attached to His divinity, remained unshaken. Even when it is said that He was troubled in spirit and groaned, He Himself divinely arranged how much He would be troubled humanly.

[Luke 4:4] -- And Jesus answered him: It is written that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. The Lord replied in this way because it was his purpose to conquer the devil with humility, not with power. It should also be noted that the devil would not have had the occasion to tempt unless the Lord had begun to fast. According to that: Son, when you come to serve God, prepare your soul for temptation (Ecclesiasticus 2). But also, the very response of the Savior indicates that it was a man who was tempted: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Therefore, if anyone does not feed on the word of God, he does not live. Otherwise: Our enemy, while we are still placed in this life, the more he sees us rebelling against him, the more he strives to conquer us. For he neglects to strike those whom he feels he possesses in quiet right. Against us, however, he is incited all the more violently, because he is driven out of our hearts as if from the right of his own dwelling. For the Lord figured this in Himself under a certain dispensation, who did not allow the devil to tempt Him except after baptism, to indicate to us a certain sign of the future course of life, that His members would bear the sharper snares of temptations once they had progressed to God.

[Luke 4:5] -- And the devil led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. When God, made man, is said to be led by the devil, the mind recoils, human ears shudder to hear this. Yet we recognize these things are not incredible, if we consider other deeds in him. Certainly the devil is the head of all the wicked, and all the wicked are members of this head. Therefore, what wonder if he allowed himself to be led by him to a mountain, who also endured being crucified by his members? It is not unworthy of our Redeemer, who willed to be tempted, having come to be killed. For it was just that he should overcome our temptations with his own temptations, just as he came to conquer our death with his death. But indeed, worldly and temporal things are shown in a moment of time. For it does not so much indicate the speed of sight, as it expresses the fragility of fleeting power. For in a moment all these things pass away, and often the honor of the world departs before it arrives. For what can be long-lasting in the world, when even the ages themselves are not long-lasting?

[Luke 4:6] -- And he said: I will give you all this power and their glory, for they have been delivered to me, and I give them to whom I will. Therefore, if you will fall down and worship before me, all will be yours. Arrogant and proud, he even speaks this

out of boastfulness, not that he holds power over the whole world, such that the devil could give all kingdoms, since we know that many holy men were made kings by God. He says, if you will fall down and worship before me. Therefore, he who will worship the devil has already fallen.

[Luke 4:8] -- And Jesus answered him, saying: It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. The devil said to the Savior: If thou wilt fall down and worship me, but hears in return that he ought rather to worship Him, the Lord and his God. Perhaps someone might ask how it agrees that here it is instructed that the Lord alone is to be served, with the Apostle's word which says: But by love serve one another (Galatians V). But this is easily resolved by considering the origin of the Greek language from which the Scripture is translated, in which servitude is named in two ways with different meanings. It is called λατρεία, and it is called δουλεία. However, dulia is understood as common servitude, that is, whether offered to God or to anyone in the order of nature. From which also, servant, that is, δοῦλος, takes its name in Greek. Latria, however, is called that servitude which is due only to the worship of divinity, and is not to be shared by any creature. Hence also idolaters are named who spend vows, prayers, and sacrifices which were owed to God alone, upon idols. Therefore, we are commanded to serve one another by love, which is in Greek δουλεύειν. We are commanded to serve only God, which is in Greek λατρεύειν. Hence it is said: And Him only shalt thou serve, which is in Greek λατρεύσεις. And again: For we are the circumcision, serving the Spirit of God (Philippi. III), which is in Greek λατρεύοντες.

[Luke 4:9] -- And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple. So that whom neither gluttony nor avarice could overcome, he might tempt with vain glory, if perhaps by boasting of his victory he might cast him down. [Luke 4:9] -- And he said to him: If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence. In all temptations, the devil aims to understand if he is the Son of God, but the Lord so moderates his answer that he leaves him uncertain. Cast thyself down. The voice of the devil, by which he always desires all to fall downwards. Cast thyself, he says: he can persuade, but he cannot precipitate. [Luke 4:10-11] -- For it is written that he has commanded his angels concerning you, to keep you, and that they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. We read this in the ninetieth Psalm. Indeed, the prophecy there is not about Christ, but about a holy person. Therefore, the devil interprets the Scriptures wrongly. Certainly, if he had truly known it was written about the Savior, he should have quoted what follows in the same Psalm against himself: "You will tread on the asp and the basilisk, and you will trample the lion and the dragon" (Psalm XC). He speaks of the help of angels as if to a weak person, but he is silent about the trampling of himself, like a trickster.

[Luke 4:12] -- And Jesus answering said to him: It is said: You shall not tempt the Lord your God. The devil's false arrows from the Scriptures, he breaks with the true shields of the Scriptures. And it is to be noted that he brought forth necessary testimonies only from Deuteronomy, to show the sacraments of the second law. You shall not tempt, he says, the Lord your God. For it was suggested to him as if to a man, that he should test by some sign how great he was, that is, how much he could do with God. This is done wrongly, when it is done. For it pertains to sound doctrine, when a man has something to do, not to tempt the Lord his God. For the Savior himself could indeed protect his disciples, to whom he said: If they persecute you in one city, flee to another (Matt. X). He provided an example of this beforehand. For though he had the power to lay down his life, and would not lay it down except when he wanted, yet as an infant he fled to Egypt with his parents carrying him. And he went up to the feast not openly, but secretly, while at other times he spoke openly to the angry Jews and to those listening with the most hostile intention, who yet were unable to lay hands on him because his hour had not yet come. So he who, by teaching and rebuking openly, and yet not allowing the rage of his enemies to have any effect on him, demonstrated the power of God, but by fleeing and hiding, he also taught the weakness of man, so that man should not dare to tempt God, when he has something to do to escape what must be avoided.

[Luke 4:13] -- And when all temptation was finished, the devil departed from him for a time. You see, the devil himself is not persistent in effort, but usually yields to virtue. And although he never ceases to envy, he fears to persist, because he often flees from being triumphed over. Therefore, hearing the name of God, he departed (he says) for a time. Later, he came not to tempt, but to openly fight. Although often the ancient enemy, after he has inflicted the struggle of temptations on our mind, retreats temporarily from his own contest, not to end the malice he has inflicted, but so that, returning suddenly, he may burst in more easily and unexpectedly on hearts made secure through peace. It should be noted, however, that after the three deceptions of the tempter were exposed, he says that all temptation was finished. Because indeed, in these are embraced the origins and sources of all vices. With John attesting who said: For all that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2). And in the gospel parable, only three affairs of the reprobate exclude them from the feasts of eternal life. The first (he says) said: I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

The desire for a wife, like gluttony, concerns the lust of the flesh. The purchase of a villa, which is not devoid of greed, pertains to the pride of life. The trial of five yokes, that is, curiosity about physical things, which is vain glory, is related to the lust of the eyes. For curiosity prevails mostly through the eyes, and the Lord Himself is indeed tempted face to face as if by a stronger one. But we, having received the

grace of the Spirit in baptism, enter the desert of virtues, when we undertake the Lenten fast, that is, determining to abstain from worldly enticements throughout our life, we are either tempted by hidden snares or sometimes even struck closer. He who, persuading, says: You are a strong man, eat and drink, and remain the same, should be guarded against, lest he unknowingly offers us the serpent's old poison. And it must be said: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God. Indeed, many who have overcome the lust of the flesh are immediately tempted by greed and are often also overcome, so much so that they do not fear to worship the devil for the gifts offered.

When many praise their continence, and even greater persons honor them, giving gifts, it happens that the victors over pleasures are conquered by love of money, and with growing madness over time, they not only do not refrain from consorting with the demon-filled rich whom they recognize through blatant crimes, but also bow their heads in worship and embrace them. Hence the Apostle says that greed is idolatry. If, following the Savior's example, they triumph over this by worshiping the Lord, their God, and serving Him alone for eternal joys, the third pestilence of vain glory will come, which exalts the victors over the previous vices because of their own strength, presuming that those placed on the height of virtues can no longer fall. And this is clearly to tempt God with curious eyes, boasting of one's merits. Against this, the Lord, increasing the disciples' faith, said: When you have done all that is commanded you, say: We are unworthy servants; we have done what we ought to do (Luke XVII). For when He elsewhere commanded that we do not perform our righteousness before men, He added only fasting, almsgiving, and prayer in the same definition, opposing three weapons of defense against the triple weapon of the enemy: that fasting may drive away the lust of the flesh, almsgiving may drive away greed, and prayers may drive away the boast of merits. It is sufficient to have said these things about the principles of the gospel dispensation in one book;

however, considering both our own peace and the benefit of the readers, let us look at the following deeds or words of the Savior more attentively from another beginning. For, as Augustine says, in some way the reader's concentration is refreshed at the end of a book, like the traveler's strength at a hostel.

BOOK TWO. The ecclesiastical history relates that the most blessed Apostle John, up until almost the last moment of his life, preached the Gospel without any written indicators. But when, it says, knowledge of the three Gospels came to him, he is said to have approved the faith and truth of what was said, yet saw that some things were lacking, especially those that the Lord had done at the beginning of His preaching. For it is certain that in the first three Evangelists these seem to contain only those things which were done in that year when John the Baptist was either imprisoned or punished. Indeed, if you observe, immediately at the begin-

ning of their narratives, after Matthew reports about the forty days of fasting and His temptation, he immediately added, saying: ”But after John was delivered up, Jesus withdrew into Galilee” (Matthew 4:12). Similarly, Mark says: ”After John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee” (Mark 1:14). And even Luke, before he begins to report any of Jesus’ actions, says that Herod added this to all his other evils and shut John up in prison (Luke 3:20). Because, I say, these things seemed omitted by them, the Apostle John is said to have been asked to describe those things omitted before John’s imprisonment by the Savior. And thus he says in the Gospel: ”Jesus did this beginning of signs” (John 2:11). And again in another place indicating it, he says: ”For John had not yet been cast into prison” (John 3:24).

And it is clear that he describes those things that were done by Jesus before John was handed over. With the sayings of this recalled history, we took care to provide the prologue of this second book of ours, that is, to Luke, so that none of the readers would think that the things to be expounded in order were done immediately after the eleven days of fasting, but rather would understand that they followed after some miracles performed by the Lord, either in Judea or in Galilee.

[Luke 4:14] -- And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding region. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. The power of the Spirit here means the signs of miracles. As also elsewhere, the Jews marveled. ”Whence,” they say, ”does this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?” (Matt. XIII). That is, they refer wisdom to teaching, and power to deeds. Both are equally combined in this passage, as it declares that Jesus, having entered in the power of the Spirit, also taught in their synagogues. Hence, deservedly, he was magnified by those present and his fame spread through the absent ones. This could not happen unless by the evidence of his deeds or words manifest to those present. But anyone searching for the time and order of these events will find it in the Gospel of John, as has been mentioned. Setting aside other details, I will quote one testimony: ”When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast” (John IV). It should be noted that first Jesus demonstrated the power of the Spirit and later dispensed the grace of doctrine; he recalls that first fame spread because of the miracles, and then the teaching was magnified. According to the order briefly commended in the Acts of the Apostles: ”Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts I). For he first began to do, and then to teach, lest any teacher should presume to command his hearers things which he himself has not yet accomplished.

[Luke 4:16] -- And He came to Nazareth, where He was brought up, and, according to His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Synagogue, in Greek, means congregation in Latin, which term was used to mean not only the assembly of many people, but also the house where the Jews gathered to hear or

speak the word of God. Hence the Lord said to the high priest Annas: I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. Just as we also call the churches of the faithful both places and choirs. However, there is a difference between synagogue, which means congregation, and church, which means convocation, in that the people of the Old Testament were known by both terms, but the people of the New Testament are called only church. For, evidently, even animals and inanimate things can be gathered into one, but only those using reason can be called together. Therefore, it seemed proper to the apostolic writers and teachers that the people of the new grace, endowed with greater dignity, be called into the unity of the faith, rather than gathered, namely, to be referred to as the Church, and not the Synagogue. They would gather on the Sabbath in the synagogues, so that, as the Lord commanded: Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46), they would set aside worldly affairs and rest with a quiet heart to meditate on the teachings of the law.

To this day, the indication of this devotion endures in the Church, which in some places, in memory of the ancient religion, is accustomed to recite on the Sabbath the song of Deuteronomy in which is contained the entire state of the ancient people, what they deserved when God was offended, and what when He was appeased. Otherwise, it would be out of order to recite the last song of Moses on the earlier days of the week after the sayings of the prophets. Therefore, Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day to complete the rite of the Mosaic law with the fullness of heavenly grace.

[Luke 4:17] -- And he stood up to read, and the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Indeed, it is a sign of the most humble dispensation, by which God had come among men to serve, not to be served, that he did not disdain to take up the office of the reader. But with a higher providence, Luke began the account of the Lord’s deeds with the reading and explanation of the prophet, because all the Scriptures of prophecy reaching up to him were to be revealed through him to us, and in him were to be fulfilled. Wherefore he also explains both of these more clearly at the end of his Gospel, when, after first setting down the saying of the Savior: “For it is necessary that all things written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms about me be fulfilled” (Luke 24); then he immediately added: “Then he opened their understanding, so that they might understand the Scriptures” (ibid.). Therefore, Jesus stood up to read, in order to correct those whom he had not converted by the new operation of signs, with the testimony of prophetic reading.

[Luke 4:17] -- And as he unrolled the book, he found the place where it was written. Beautifully does he receive the closed book of the prophet, but he reads it unrolled, for the mystery of his Incarnation was foretold by the voice of the prophets, and he first undertook to exhibit it and afterward opened it to be understood by mortals.

[Luke 4:18] -- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, etc. Speaking previously about the calling of the Gentiles and the confirmation of the Church through the prophet, the Savior, among other things, said: I am the Lord, in its time I will do this swiftly (Isaiah 60), and immediately he added this, which has been read here: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Not because the Lord God has a Lord God, but because, according to the dispensation of the assumed flesh, He says those things which are humble. To whom the Psalmist had already said: You loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions (Psalm 45). For when companions are mentioned, understand it to mean the nature of the flesh, by which God has us as companions of His substance. And because it was a spiritual anointing, and by no means of a human body, as it was with the priests of the Jews, therefore He is remembered as having been anointed above His companions, that is, other saints. This anointing was fulfilled at that time when He was baptized in the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and remained on Him. Therefore, He was anointed with the oil of the spirit and heavenly power, so that He might enrich the poverty of human condition with the treasure of the eternal resurrection, remove the captivity of the mind, and enlighten the blindness of souls. Blessed are the poor, he says, because yours is the kingdom of God (Luke 6). And again: If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8). And again: Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (ibid.).

[Luke 4:18] -- Release the broken into forgiveness. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of retribution. The sacrifice, he says, to God, is a broken spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 50). And therefore he calls himself sent or anointed to heal the broken or contrite of heart; as also the Psalmist says of him: He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147). Or certainly to release the broken into forgiveness, to relieve those who had been oppressed by the heavy and unbearable weight of the law, and to admit them into the remission of spiritual grace. And this is to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Then indeed the true year of Jubilee, that is, the year of liberty, was at hand, the time, namely, of the Church, which journeyed as a pilgrim in the body away from the Lord. About which the Psalmist sings: You crown the year of your goodness (Psalm 65). For it was not only that year in which the Lord preached that was acceptable but also this one in which the Apostle preaches saying: Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6). After the acceptable year of the Lord, he also proclaims the day of final retribution, saying: For the Son of Man is going to come in his glory with his angels, and then he will render to each according to his work (Matthew 16). Therefore, to evangelize all these things, he says he is sent because the Spirit of the Lord is upon him.

[Luke 4:20] -- And when he had folded the scroll, he gave it back to the minister, and sat down. The Lord read the scroll aloud to all those present, and having read it, gave it back to the minister. For as he testifies elsewhere, when he was in the world, he spoke openly to the world, always teaching in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews were accustomed to gather. But as he was about to return to heaven, he entrusted the duty of preaching to those who from the beginning had seen him and had been ministers of the word. And it is right that he read while standing, but after returning the book, he sat down. For standing is the posture of one who is working; sitting is the posture of one who is resting or judging. For the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to make known to us the way of knowledge that was written about him, deigned to work in the flesh for a time. But after completing the duty of his holy dispensation, he chose disciples to follow his teaching, and restored himself to the throne of heavenly rest, from where he now dispenses all things with hidden judgment, and will appear as the manifest judge at the end of the whole age. At the same time, he mystically sets forth an example, that each preacher of his word should also be a doer of the same. Let him rise, read, and sit down:

that is, let him work, preach, and thus expect the rewards of rest. And it is to be noted that he himself read the unfolded book, but gave it back to the minister closed. For he also taught his Church, through the Spirit of truth sent from the Father, in all truth, and yet admonished by his own example that not everything is to be said to everyone, but the word is to be dispensed by the teacher according to the capacity of the listeners, when he said: ”I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”

[Luke 4:20] -- And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. And he began to say to them: ”Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Indeed, it was fulfilled in that, as it had predicted: ”And the Lord did great things, and preached even greater things.” What greater testimony do we seek, therefore, than that he, who spoke in the prophets, confirmed with his own voice that he was the one? Removing the sacrileges of the faithless, who say there is one God of the Old Testament, another of the New, or who say that Christ began from the Virgin. For how could he begin from the Virgin, who spoke before the Virgin? [Luke 4:22] -- And all bore witness to him and marveled at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth. They bore witness to him, attesting truly, as he had said, that he was the one whom the prophets had sung about, truly anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that they themselves, the poor, the blind, the captives, and the broken, needed his gifts in every way.

[Luke 4:22] -- And they said: Is this not the son of Joseph? What blindness of the Nazarenes, who, though they recognize him by his words and deeds to be the Christ, despise him solely on account of his lineage. However, their error is our

salvation and the condemnation of heretics. For they saw Jesus Christ so much as a man, that they called him the son of Joseph, and according to other evangelists, the carpenter, or the son of the carpenter. Among these things, it should be observed why Christ, appearing in the flesh, wanted to be called the son of a carpenter, or rather the carpenter himself. It is to be understood with sound intellect that even by this he taught that he was the son of the one who, before the ages, created God, who in the beginning made the heaven and the earth. For even if human things cannot be compared to divine things, it is still a perfect symbol because the father of Christ works with fire and spirit. Wherefore his precursor said of him as the carpenter's son: He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke II). He who in this great house of the world makes vessels of different kinds. Indeed, he transforms vessels of wrath into vessels of mercy by softening them with the fire of the spirit. Hence Malachi rightly said, speaking in the person of the Father:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me, and suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple, and then he added shortly after: And he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and silver. But the Jews, ignorant of this sacrament, despise the works of divine power by contemplating his carnal lineage, as is evident not only from their preceding actions but also from the Lord's subsequent words, when it is added:

[Luke 4:23] -- And he said to them: Certainly you will quote me this proverb: Physician, heal yourself: whatever, etc. Their insane perfidy, although ignorant of sound faith, confesses it, calling the Lord Christ both a craftsman and a physician. For he is indeed the true craftsman, because all things were made through him. He is a physician, because all things were restored through him in heaven and on earth. And as he himself testifies about himself: Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick (Mark II). And since we have said by what instrument he works as a craftsman, let us also say by what method he heals. Passing by, he saw a man blind from birth, he spat on the ground, and made mud with the saliva, and applied it to his eyes, and said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which means Sent. So he went and washed, and came back seeing (John IX). Recognize then the greatness of his healing method, and rejoice because through this you have deserved to be enlightened. The mud from the earth is the flesh of Christ. The saliva from the mouth is his divinity, because the head of Christ is God. The saliva mixed with the mud enlightens us when baptized in the pool of Siloam, because the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory (John I), which we could not comprehend before, being hindered by darkness.

Therefore, you were created through the craftsman Christ, so that you might exist. You were recreated through the physician Christ, so that after wounds you might be healthy. Although he is advised by the scornful citizens to heal himself, that

is, to perform miracles in his own country, he is not excused in vain by another Evangelist, because he could not perform any miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. Lest anyone should think that a lesser affection should be given to one's own country. Therefore, he loved the citizens, but they themselves deprived themselves of the love of their fatherland through spite.

[Luke 4:24] -- He said: Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. That the Lord Christ is called a prophet in the Scriptures, Moses is a witness, who said: God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers like me (Deut. XVIII). Not only he who is the head and Lord of the prophets but also Elijah, Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophets were held in less regard in their own country than in distant cities. For it is almost natural that citizens always envy their fellow citizens. For they do not consider the man's present works, but remember his fragile childhood, as if they themselves had not reached mature age through the same stages of life.

[Luke 4:25] -- Truly I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elijah in Israel when the sky was closed for three years, etc. It is not (he says) that I withhold divine benefits from the disdainful citizens, contrary to the deeds of the prophets. For just as when famine once afflicted the whole land, no one in Judea was found worthy of hospitality to Elijah, but a widow of a foreign nation was sought, who, by the grace of faith, should be visited by such a great prophet. And just as among the many lepers there, only Naaman the Syrian, because he sought devoutly, deserved to be cured by the prophet Elisha, so here you will be deprived of the heavenly gift for no other reason than envy and faithlessness. If you were to critically examine the deeds of the prophets, and now allegorically study them, you would indeed find that the Lord, in the faithlessness and arrogance of His own homeland, from which He was not received, has noted the pride of the Jews. But by the name of Capernaum, which is interpreted as the field of consolation, He foretold the salvation of the Gentiles, where greater signs are daily performed by the apostles and the successors of the apostles, not so much in the healing of bodies as in the healing of souls.

Therefore, the widow to whom Elijah was sent represents the Church of the Gentiles, which, long deserted by its Maker, nurtured with meager provision, that is, taught with the word devoid of fruit, the people ignorant of the true faith—as if it were a poor son—until the prophetic word came, which, when the fleece of Israel was dried up, with the door of heaven closed, was in danger of famine in Judea, would be nourished there and would simultaneously nourish, and thus, received by those who believed, would both refresh the believers and be refreshed by them. Hence, it is fittingly said that this same widow lived in Sarepta of Sidon. Sidon means useless hunting; Sarepta, on the other hand, denotes fire or famine of bread.

For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5). Where efforts were directed to acquiring superfluous things, like a concern for hunting, where there was a dire thirst and a famine of spiritual bread, there the flour and oil are blessed by the prophetic word, that is, the fruit and joy of charity, or the grace of the Lord's body and the anointing of chrism, were enriched by the inexhaustible gift of the heavenly word. So far the oil of spiritual joy and the flour of blessing in the vessels has not run out, while the rest of the nations who do not believe are in misery for the lack of divine bread, and are devoted to useless hunting.

For she herself, wonderfully intending to make a mystical bread before she died, testified that she wished to gather two sticks, expressing the sign of the cross not only by the name of the wood but also by the number of the woods, by which the bread of eternal life was prepared for us.

[Luke 4:27] -- And there were many lepers in Israel under Elisha the prophet, and none of them were cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian. Because the story is well-known, it is necessary to disclose a few things about the mystery. And thus Naaman the Syrian, who is interpreted as "beauty," represents the people of the nations, once stained by the leprosy of unbelief and sins, but purified from all foulness of mind and body through the sacrament of baptism. Advised by a captured girl, which is the grace of divine inspiration, which the Jews could not keep but the Gentiles seized, he was urged to hope for salvation and to be washed seven times. Because obviously, the only type of baptism that regenerates by the Holy Spirit saves. Hence it is rightly remembered that his flesh appeared like the flesh of a small child after the washing. Either because grace as a mother begets all baptized in Christ to a single infancy, or more likely he is to be understood as the child of whom it was said: A child is born to us, a son is given to us (Isaiah 9). By whose body through baptism the whole offspring of believers is united. And so that you may know all the prefigured sacraments of baptism here, in which we are commanded to renounce Satan and to confess faith, Naaman declares that he will no longer make offerings to foreign gods, but will serve the Lord alone in all things.

He also rejoices to take with him a portion of the Holy Land, because the baptized must also be confirmed by participation in the body of the Lord. Therefore, worthily, Naaman, whose body is washed by water while his heart is washed by faith, that is, the people of the nations, is preferred to the Jews, who are sullied by the leprosy of obstinacy. Worthily, the widow of Zarephath, that is, the Church, desiring to be renewed by the wood of the cross, is refreshed with the bread of the holy body and the anointing of the life-giving Spirit, while the Jews perish from the famine of the word. And it is proven that the Lord denied the gifts of virtues to His fellow citizens not because of His inability, but because of their envy, and by this example the whole nation was ultimately forsaken by Him, not because they were not loved, but because they themselves did not desire to be loved, evidently, as the teachers

dispersed throughout the whole world for the salvation of the nations. But what the Lord declared about the Jews, they themselves testified by deed about themselves. For it follows:

[Luke 4:28] -- And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue upon hearing these things, and they rose up and drove Him out of the city. Indeed, the sacrileges of the Jews, which the Lord had foretold long before through the prophet, saying: ”They repay me evil for good” (Psalm 35), He teaches in the Gospel to have been completed. For while He was spreading benefits among the people, they inflicted injuries. Nor is it surprising that they lost salvation, who drove the Savior out of their borders. For the Lord is moral, and He who taught His apostles by His own example to become all things to all men, neither rejects the willing, nor binds the unwilling, nor resists those who cast Him out, nor fails those who ask. Thus, elsewhere, He left the Gerasenes, as they could not bear His powers, as if they were weak and ungrateful. At the same time, understand that it was not out of necessity but a voluntary passion of the body; not captured by the Jews, but offered by Himself. For indeed, when He wills, He is captured; when He wills, He escapes; when He wills, He is suspended; when He wills, He is not held.

[Luke 4:29] -- And they led him, it says, to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way. O inheritance worse than the disciples’ teacher! The devil tempts the Lord with words, the Jews with deeds. The former says, Throw yourself down; the latter attack to throw him down. Indeed, the Lord had ascended to the brow of the hill to be thrown down, but through the midst of them, with the mind of the furious suddenly changed or stunned, he descended, for he preferred to heal rather than to destroy them, so that seeing their wicked attempts frustrated, they might desist from demanding his death henceforth. For the hour of his passion had not yet come, which was not to be on any Sabbath, but on the Preparation of the Passover. Nor had he yet approached the place of passion, which was not in Nazareth, but prefigured in Jerusalem by the blood of sacrifices. Nor had he chosen the kind of death, which was proclaimed from the beginning as crucifixion. Therefore, he wished not to be thrown down by the Nazarenes, not to be stoned by the Jerusalemites, not to be killed among the Bethlehemite children by Herod, nor to be consummated by any other death. For what sign of regal power would shine forth in such a death, whereby the forehead of the faithful might be armed?

But only the banner of the cross was awaited, the figure of which could be traced with the swiftest motion of the right hand against the temptations of the malignant enemy, and the same figure could also be considered a type of singular monarchy. As the Apostle, expounding the triumph of the cross, says: At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth

(Philippians 2). For this is why the peaks of the same cross extend to the heavens, the depths reach the underworld, and the arms cover the earth.

[Luke 4:31] -- And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath. Behold the mercy of the Lord the Savior: neither moved by indignation, nor offended by wickedness, nor violated by injury, he does not abandon Judea; rather, forgetting the injury, but mindful of mercy, sometimes teaching, sometimes liberating, sometimes healing, he soothes the hearts of the faithful people. But that he especially grants the gifts of his healing and teaching on Sabbaths, shows that he is not under the law, but above the law, who also came to fulfill the law, not to dissolve it, choosing not the Jewish Sabbath, on which it is not lawful to light a fire or move hand and foot, but the true Sabbath and the rest beloved to the Lord, if, caring for the salvation of souls, we abstain from servile work, that is, from all illicit things.

[Luke 4:32] -- And they were amazed at his teaching, because his word was with authority. The word of the teacher is made with authority when he performs the things he teaches. For he who destroys his own words with deeds is scorned. Whom, on the contrary, the Apostle instituting against the teacher says: Let no one despise your youth (1 Tim. 4). But uniquely the Lord and principally alone spoke from good authority, because he committed none from bad weakness. For from the power of divinity he had that which he ministered to us through the innocence of his humanity. In another way, his word was with authority, or as another evangelist says, he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Because the scribes were giving the people the precepts they learned through the law. But he, as the author and fulfiller of the law, either by changing or by augmenting what seemed less, acting freely, substituted them.

[Luke 4:33] -- And in the synagogue there was a man having an unclean demon. Rightly in the synagogue was the man who had the unclean spirit, because he had lost the Holy Spirit. For the devil had entered where Christ had left. As even now some say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. [Luke 4:34] -- And he cried out with a loud voice saying: Leave us alone; what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Pause a little (he said), cease tormenting me, to whom there is no fellowship with our deceit. And indeed: For what partnership has light with darkness? Or what fellowship has Christ with Belial? (II Cor. VI.) [Luke 4:34] -- Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God. This is not a confession of will, for which the reward of confessing follows, but an extortion of necessity which compels the unwilling. And just as if runaway slaves, after much time, see their master, they plead for nothing but to be spared the lashes, thus also the demons, seeing the Lord suddenly dwelling on earth, believed that he had come to judge them. The presence of the Savior is torment for the demons.

[Luke 4:35] -- And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Be silent, and come out of him. Since by the envy of the devil death entered into the world (Wisdom II), therefore against the very author of death, the remedy of salvation had first to operate: firstly, the serpentine tongue, so that no longer might it spread its venom, had to be stopped; and then the woman who was first deceived, to be cured from the fever of carnal desire; thirdly, the man who listened to the words of the deceitful wife, to be chastised from the leprosy of his error. That there might be the same order of restoration in this gospel as there was of the fall. [Luke 4:35] -- And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, it came out of him, and did not harm him at all. By divine permission, the man to be liberated from the demon is cast down in their midst, so that the power of the Savior shown might invite more to the faith and to the way of salvation. But as it is said, it did not harm him at all, it seems to contradict Mark, who says: And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him (Mark I). Unless we understand that Mark said convulsing him, which Luke said: And when it had thrown him in the midst, that what follows: And it did not harm him, is understood to mean that this throwing about of his limbs and torment did not weaken him, as demons are accustomed to leave even with some limbs cut off or torn out. Hence those who were present, trembling at such integral restoration of health, though not yet believing, rightly said to one another:

[Luke 4:36] -- Because he commands unclean spirits with authority and power, and they depart. For holy men also can expel demons, but they do so by the word of God, whereas the Word of God itself performs miracles by its own power. [Luke 4:38] -- Rising from the synagogue, he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a severe fever. If we say that a man delivered from a demon signifies a mind morally cleansed from unclean thoughts, it follows that the woman afflicted with a fever, but cured by the command of the Lord, represents the flesh restrained from the fervor of its own desires by the precepts of continence. For all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and blasphemy are the fury of unclean spirits. And fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Eph. IV), represent the fever of enticing flesh. [Luke 4:38] -- And they asked him concerning her. Standing over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. Now the Savior, being asked, sometimes cures the sick voluntarily, showing that he always responds to the faithful for the passions of sins by prayers, and grants understanding in things they least comprehend in themselves, or even absolves the things not understood. As the Psalmist requests: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults" (Ps. XVIII).

[Luke 4:39] -- And immediately she rose and served them. It is natural for those recovering from fever, as health begins, to feel faint and sense the discomfort of their illness, but the health granted by the Lord's command returns fully at once. Not only does it return entirely, but it comes with such strength that she immedi-

ately serves those who had aided her. And, according to the laws of allegory, the members that served impurity unto iniquity to bear fruit unto death should now serve righteousness unto eternal life (Rom. VI). [Luke 4:40] -- When the sun was setting, all those who had sick people with various diseases brought them to him. And he, laying hands on each of them, cured them. The setting of the sun signifies the passion and death of the one who said: ”As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” And as the sun sets, more demoniacs than before, more sick are healed. Because he, living temporally in the flesh, taught few of the Jews, but having trampled the kingdom of death, he transmitted the gifts of faith and salvation to all the nations throughout the world. Of which ministers, as if heralds of life and light, the Psalmist sings: ”Prepare the way for him who rides upon the sunset.” (Psalm 67). Indeed, the Lord ascended upon the sunset, because from where he lay down in the passion, from there he manifested his greater glory by rising again.

[Luke 4:41] -- Demons also went out from many, crying out and saying: ”You are the Son of God.” And rebuking them, he would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. Demons confessed the Son of God, and, as the evangelist bears witness, they knew he was the Christ. For the devil, having recognized a man exhausted by fasting for forty days, and being unable to tempt him, even to find out if he were the Son of God, now, through the power of signs, either understood or rather suspected that he was the Son of God. Therefore, he did not persuade the Jews to crucify him because he thought he was not Christ or the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that he would be condemned by his death. Indeed, about this mystery hidden from ages, the Apostle says: ”None of the rulers of this age understood it; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2). And why the Lord forbids demons to speak about him, the Psalmist reveals, who says: ”To the sinner, however, God said: Why do you recount my ordinances?” (Psalm 49) and so on: lest anyone, while hearing the preacher, follow the one who errs. For the devil is an unworthy teacher, who often mixes falsehood with truth, to cover the testimony of fraud with the appearance of truth. But at other times, not only demons who unwillingly confessed are commanded to be silent about Christ, but also those who willingly wanted to confess after being healed by him. Indeed, even the apostles, who were to preach about him throughout the whole world after the resurrection, were absolutely commanded to be silent about him before his passion, lest, once his divine majesty was proclaimed, the dispensation of the passion be deferred, and, with the passion delayed, the salvation of the world, which was to come through this, be denied.

[Luke 4:42] -- But when the day came, he went out to a deserted place, and the crowds sought him, and came to him. If the death of the Lord is expressed by the setting sun, why is not his resurrection indicated by the returning day? The light revealed by which he is sought by the crowds of believers, found in the desert of

the nations, is detained, lest he go away. Especially since this happened on the first day of the Sabbath, on which the resurrection was celebrated, the departure, the search, and the finding occurred.

Chapter 5

[Luke 5:1] -- Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing upon Him to hear the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. The lake of Gennesaret is said to be the same as the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias. But it is called the Sea of Galilee from the adjoining province, the Sea of Tiberias from the nearby city, which was formerly called Chinnereth, but restored by Herod the tetrarch and named Tiberias in honor of Tiberius Caesar. Furthermore, Gennesar is said to derive from the nature of the water itself, as it is reputed to generate a breeze for itself with its rippling waves, being almost called in Greek ”generating breeze for itself.” For the water is not spread out as in the manner of a pond, but is stirred by frequent winds, sweet to drink, and suitable for drinking. But by the custom of the Hebrew language, any gathering of waters, whether sweet or salty, is called a sea. This lake, with the Jordan flowing through it, extends one hundred forty stades in length and forty in width. Therefore, since the present age is designated by the lake or the sea, the Lord stands by the sea, after overcoming the mortality of the fleeting life, having attained in the same flesh in which He suffered the stability of eternal rest. The gathering of the crowd to Him is a type of the nations running together in faith. Concerning which Isaiah says: ”And all nations will flow to Him, and many peoples will go and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord” (Isaiah 2).

[Luke 5:2] -- And He saw two boats standing by the lake. The two boats placed by the lake symbolize the circumcision and the foreskin. It is well said that Jesus saw them, for the Lord knows who are His in both peoples. And He leads their heart from the waves of this world to the tranquility of future life, as if to the solidity of the shore, by living, that is by mercifully avoiding. [Luke 5:2] -- But the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. The fishermen are the teachers of the Church, who, having caught us in the net of faith and raised us from the depths to the moon, bring us to the land of the living like fish to the shore. For just as the nets are entwined, so are the words of the preachers, which do not lose those they have caught in faith. Hence, the nets are called ”retenia” as if they are retaining. But these nets are sometimes let down for a catch, sometimes washed and folded,

because not every time is suitable for teaching, but now the teacher's tongue must be exercised, now he must take care of himself.

[Luke 5:3] -- But ascending into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And sitting down, he taught the crowds from the boat. Simon's boat is the early Church, about which Paul says: "For he who worked through Peter for the apostleship of the circumcised worked also through me for the Gentiles" (Galatians II). It is aptly called one, because the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one (Acts IV). From which he taught the crowds, because he teaches the nations today through the authority of the Church. [Luke 5:4] -- But when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon: Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. That he first asked Simon to put out the boat a little from the land signifies either to use the word cautiously with the crowds, so that neither earthly things are prescribed to them nor they are removed so deeply from earthly things into the depths of the sacraments that they do not understand them at all, or first to preach to the nearby regions and peoples, so that when he later says again to Peter, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch," it pertains to the more distant nations to whom the preaching was later extended.

[Luke 5:5] -- And responding, Simon said to him: Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. But at your word, I will let down the net. --Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalm CXXVI). Unless the Lord illumines the hearts of the listeners, the teacher labors in the night. Unless the instruments of discourse are let down through the word of divine grace, the preacher casts the javelin of his voice in vain. Because the faith of the peoples is not produced by the wisdom of composed words, but by the gift of divine calling. [Luke 5:6] -- And when he had done this, they enclosed a large multitude of fish. However, their net was breaking. By the great number of fish, the net was breaking, for now even reprobates, together with the elect, enter in such a number at the confession of faith, who also tear the Church itself with heresies. The net breaks, but the fish do not slip away, for the Lord preserves his own even among the scandals of persecutors.

[Luke 5:7] -- And they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. The other boat (as we have said before) is the Church of the Gentiles, which also, with one little boat not being sufficient, is filled with elect fish, because the Lord knows who are his, and with him the number of the elect is certain. And when he did not find as many in Judea as he knew to be predestined to faith and eternal life, as if seeking receptacles for his fish in another boat, he also fills the hearts of the Gentiles with the grace of faith. And it is well that, with the net being broken, the partner boat is called, for before Judas the betrayer, before Simon Magus, the abominable fish, were caught, before Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceitfully enter the net of faith, as John testifies, many of his disciples went back and walked

no more with him (John VI). And then Barnabas and Paul were set apart for the apostleship to the Gentiles (Acts XIII).

[Luke 5:7] -- And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. The filling of these boats increases up to the end of the age. But that being filled they begin to sink, that is, they are pressed down in submersion (for they are not submerged, but are, however, endangered), the Apostle explains, saying: In the last days perilous times will come, and men will be lovers of themselves, etc. (II Tim. III). For boats sinking means that people, having been lifted up through faith, fall back into corrupt behavior in the world. This is also demonstrated by Peter himself in this place, still in a state of weakness. Hence it follows: [Luke 5:8] -- When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For the carnal ones in the Church somehow repel the governance of the spiritual ones in whom the persona of Christ clearly shines. They do not say this with the voice of the tongue to the good ministers of God, to repel them, but they advise with the voice of their morals and deeds to withdraw, lest they be governed by the good ones, and the more vehemently as they show them honor. Yet, they admonish with their deeds to withdraw, just as Peter signified this honor falling at the feet of the Lord; but showed the morals in what he said: Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man. However, since the Lord did not do this – He did not depart from them but led them to the shore with the drawn-up boats – it signifies that in good and spiritual men there should not be this will, to be so disturbed by the sins of the crowds that, to live as if more securely and peacefully, they abandon the ecclesiastical duty.

[Luke 5:10] -- And Jesus said to Simon: Fear not. The Lord strengthens the fear of the carnal ones and uplifts the spirits of the frail. By giving comfort, He raises them, lest anyone, trembling at their own consciousness of guilt, or stunned by the innocence of others, fears to undertake the path of holiness. But what follows, [Luke 5:10] -- And from now on you will be catching men, pertains specifically to Peter himself. For the Lord explains to him what this catching of fish signifies. Namely, just as he now catches fish with nets, so someday he will catch men with words. And the whole order of this action shows what is daily done in the Church, of which he holds the figure. What is added:

[Luke 5:11] -- And having drawn the ships to land, leaving everything behind, they followed him, which can signify the end of time, during which those who cling to Christ will entirely depart from such a sea. However, it should be known that this reading is not the same as the one in which Matthew and Mark narrate that two fishermen from their boats, first Peter and Andrew, then the sons of Zebedee, were called by the Lord. For Luke does not now suggest that they were called by the Lord, but only indicates that it was foretold to Peter that he would catch men. This was not said in such a way as if he would never catch fish again. For even after

the resurrection of the Lord, we read that they went fishing. Whence it is given to understand that they returned to fishing as usual, so that what Matthew and Mark narrated would happen later, when he called them two by two. For then, not drawing their ships to land as if concerned with returning, but thus they followed him, as one who was calling and commanding them to follow.

[Luke 5:12] -- And it came to pass, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man full of leprosy. And seeing Jesus, and falling on his face, he besought him, saying, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Well, where the leper is cleansed, the specific place is not expressed, to show that it was not one people of a specific city, but the people of all nations that were being healed. And since the Lord said: I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5), he who was excluded by the law, presuming to be cleansed by the power of the Lord, judged that grace to be above the law, which could wash away the leprosy. Indeed, just as the authority of power is in the Lord, so in him the constancy of faith is declared. He fell on his face, which is a sign of humility and shame, so that each one may blush at the stains of his own life. But shame did not suppress his confession; he showed his wound, asked for a remedy. And this very confession is full of religion and faith. If you are willing (he said), you can make me clean. He attributed power to the will of the Lord. Concerning the will of the Lord, however, he did not doubt as if unbelieving in his mercy, but, aware of his own filth, he did not presume.

[Luke 5:13] -- And extending his hand, he touched him saying: I am willing; be cleansed. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. There is nothing between the work of God and the command, because in the command is the work. For he said, and they were made. You see therefore that it cannot be doubted because the will of God is power. If therefore his will is power, those who assert one will, certainly assert one power. Therefore, as having the power to heal, and the authority to command, he did not avoid the testimony of working. For he says ”I am willing” because of Photinus; he commands, because of Arius; he touches, because of Manichaeus. And indeed the law prohibits touching the leprous, but he who is the Lord of the law does not obey the law, but makes the law. Therefore he did not touch because he could not cleanse without touching, but to prove that he was not subject to the law, nor did he fear infection as men do, but because he who could not be contaminated and freed others, the leprosy was driven away by the touch of the Lord, which used to contaminate the one touching. Likewise, it is miraculous that he healed in the manner in which he was beseeched: If you wish, you can cleanse me. ”I am willing,” he said, ”be cleansed.” You have the will, you also have the effect of piety.

[Luke 5:14] -- And he commanded him to tell no one. Why is he commanded to tell no one, unless to teach that our benefits are not to be made public, but kept

hidden? So that we may abstain not only from the reward of money, but also of grace.

[Luke 5:14] -- And go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them, etc. He is ordered to show himself to the priest, so that the priest might understand that he was cured not by the order of the law, but by the grace of God above the law; however, to offer a sacrifice, so that the Lord might show that he did not abolish the law, but fulfilled it: for walking according to the law, he healed those above the law whom the remedies of the law had not healed. And well he added, As a testimony to them, that is, if they believe in God, if the leprosy of impiety departs. But if it moves someone how the Lord seems to approve a Mosaic sacrifice, as the Church has not received it, let them remember that the holy sacrifice of sacrifices, which is his body, had not yet begun. For he had not yet offered his own holocaust in the Passion. But it was not fitting to remove the significant sacrifices before that which was signified was confirmed by the witness of the preaching apostles and the faith of believing peoples. Because this man typically designates the languid human race by sins, rightly he is described not only as a leper but also as full of leprosy. For all have sinned and need the glory of God (Rom. III).

That is, so that, with the Savior's hand extended, that is, with the incarnate Word of God, and touching human nature, they might be cleansed from the diversity of the ancient error, and might be able to hear with the apostles: Now you are clean, because of the word that I have spoken to you (John XV); and those who were separated from the camp of God's people as abominable for a long time, might once again be rendered to the temple and offered to the priest, of course to the one to whom it is said: You are a priest forever (Psalm CIX), hearing from the Apostle: For the temple of God is holy, which you are (I Cor. III); and they might offer for their cleansing as Moses commanded, that is, they might present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God (Rom. XII).

[Luke 5:15] -- The word about him spread all the more, and great crowds came together to hear him and to be cured of their infirmities. The complete salvation of one urges many crowds to the Lord. For, in order to show that he was healed both outwardly and inwardly, he by no means keeps silent about the benefit received or about the one from whom he received it. Rather, as Mark the Evangelist narrates, having fulfilled the duty of a herald, he immediately began to proclaim and spread the word, so much so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a city, but stayed outside in deserted places; yet people came to him from every direction (Mark 1). Therefore, it is rightly asked why the Lord commanded some things he did to be kept hidden, and they could not be hidden even for a moment. Did the eternal Son, co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, desire something that he could not accomplish in this matter? But it should be noted that our Redeemer,

through his mortal body, provided us with an example in all that he did. For when performing a miracle, he ordered silence, and yet it could not be kept silent. He thereby indicated that his chosen followers, by following his examples of teaching, should indeed wish to remain hidden in their great deeds, but be revealed against their will for the benefit of others: so that it may be an example of great humility to desire their works to be hidden, and an example of great exaltation that their works cannot be hidden. Therefore, the Lord did not wish to do anything that he could not achieve, but he provided an example of what his members ought to desire and what should be done about them even against their will, by the teaching of his example.

[Luke 5:16] -- He himself would withdraw to the desert and pray. Do not attribute his withdrawal to pray to the nature that says, ”I will, be cleansed,” and healed from infirmities, but to the nature that stretched out its hand and touched the leper: not that, according to Nestorius, there are two persons of the Son, but that the same person has two natures and thus also two operations. Alternatively: because he performs miracles in the city but spends the night praying in the desert or the mountain (as it is later read), he offers to us examples of both lives, the active and the contemplative, so that no one, engrossed in contemplation, neglects the care of his neighbors, nor someone overly bound by the care of his neighbors abandons the pursuit of contemplation: so that neither the love of neighbor impedes the love of God, nor the love of God, which transcends, rejects the love of neighbor. For to pray on the mountain is, having forsaken the cares of weak thoughts, for anyone to hasten with the whole mind to the eternal joys of highest contemplation. To withdraw to the desert and pray is to suppress the rising internal clamor of earthly desires, and to seek a certain secret place with the Lord within oneself, where, with external tumult ceasing, one silently speaks to him through inner desires.

[Luke 5:17] -- And it happened on one of the days, and he was sitting teaching, and there were Pharisees sitting, etc. Where the Lord, sitting and teaching, cured the paralytic when the scribes and Pharisees were sitting, Luke omits for brevity’s sake, but Matthew and Mark, who narrate it, seem to question it. Since indeed Matthew testifies that he did this in his own city, and Mark in Capernaum. Which would be more difficult to resolve if Matthew also named Nazareth. Now, however, either Galilee itself, where Nazareth was, should be understood as the city of Christ, in distinction from the region beyond the sea of the Gerasenes, from which, crossing over, as Matthew writes, he came to Galilee. Or certainly Capernaum itself is called the city of Christ, which he made his own not by being born there, but by illuminating it with his miracles. [Luke 5:18] -- And behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Him. The healing of this paralytic indicates the salvation of a soul sighing for Christ after a long period of carnal indolence. First of all, it needs ministers to lift it and bring it to Christ, that is, good teachers who offer the hope of healing and the help

of intercession. These, according to Mark, are found to be four, either because the strength of all preachers and every word is confirmed by the four books of the Gospel, or because there are four virtues by which the confidence of the mind is uplifted to obtain healing. About which it is said in praise of eternal wisdom: “For she teaches temperance and prudence, justice and courage, which are more profitable than anything in life for men” (Wis. 8). Some refer to them with other names: prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice.

[Luke 5:19] -- And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof through the tiles. They desire to offer the paralytic to Christ but are excluded on all sides by the interposed crowd. Often, a soul, after the sloth of the lowly body, turns back to God and desires to be renewed by the remedy of heavenly grace but is delayed by the obstacle of old habit. Often, amidst the sweetness of secret prayer and a seemingly pleasant conversation with the Lord, a crowd of thoughts intervenes, blocking the gaze of the mind so that Christ is not seen. What should be done in such instances? Surely not remain in the lower parts where the crowds tumultuously gather, but ascend to the roof of the house where Christ teaches, that is, strive for the sublimity of Holy Scripture, and meditate on the law of the Lord with the Psalmist day and night. For how indeed does the young man correct his way? By keeping, he says, your words (Psalm 119).

[Luke 5:19] -- And they let him down with the bed into the midst before Jesus. When the roof was opened, the sick man was let down before Jesus, because with the mysteries of the Scriptures revealed, one arrives at the knowledge of Christ, that is, one descends to His humility through the piety of faith. And well is the house of Jesus described as covered with tiles, because under the contemptible covering of letters, if there is one who uncovers this, the divine spiritual power of grace will be found. But the fact that he is let down with the bed signifies that Christ must be acknowledged by a man still established in this flesh. [Luke 5:20] -- When He saw their faith, He said, ”Man, your sins are forgiven you.” The Lord, about to cure the man of paralysis, first dissolves the bonds of sins, to show that he was condemned to the loosening of his limbs by the bonds of faults, and that the members could not be restored to health unless these were relaxed. Likewise, to that paralytic who long awaited the stirring of the water by the pool of Bethesda in vain, when he was healed by the Lord, it is said: ”Behold, you are made well; sin no more, lest something worse happen to you” (John 5). And well is he whose sins are forgiven called a man, for by this very thing that he was a man, he could not say, ”I have not sinned,” and at the same time so that He who forgave the man might be understood as God. Indeed, we must consider how much each one’s own faith is worth before God, when the faith of another was worth so much that the whole man, that is, being saved externally and internally, suddenly arose, and by the merit of others, the errors of others were forgiven.

[Luke 5:21] -- And the scribes and Pharisees began to consider, saying, ”Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” The scribes speak the truth, because no one can forgive sins except God, who also forgives through those to whom He has granted the power to forgive. And therefore Christ is proved to truly be God, because He can forgive sins as God. They truly bear witness to God, but by denying the person of Christ, they are deceived. Thus, the Jews err, who believe that Christ is both God and capable of forgiving sins, but do not believe that Jesus is the Christ. But the Arians err much more foolishly, who, though conquered by the words of the Gospel that Jesus is the Christ and is able to forgive sins, do not dare to deny it, yet nevertheless do not fear to deny that He is God. But He, desiring to save the unfaithful, and by the knowledge of hidden things and the power of His works, manifests that He is God.

[Luke 5:22] -- For He said, answering them, ”Why do you think in your hearts?” For to the same God who says, ”I am, I am He who blots out your iniquities” (Isaiah 43), the wisest speaker says, ”For You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men” (1 Kings 8). Therefore, He said, by the same majesty and power with which I observe your thoughts, I can also forgive men’s sins. Understand from yourselves what the paralytic receives. [Luke 5:23] -- What is easier to say, ”Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, ”Rise and walk”? Whether the paralytic’s sins were forgiven, only He who forgives them knows. But ”rise and walk,” both he who rises and those who see him rising can confirm. Therefore, a physical sign is performed to prove the spiritual one. [Luke 5:24] -- But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. If He is also God, according to the well-known testimony of Isaiah, who blots out our iniquities (Psalm 50), and the Son of Man has the power on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9), therefore He Himself is both God and the Son of Man, so that Christ as man by the power of His divinity can forgive sins, and the same Christ as God can die for sinners through the frailty of His humanity.

[Luke 5:24] -- He says to the paralytic: I say to you, rise; take up your bed, and go into your house. Spiritually to rise from the bed is to draw the soul away from carnal desires, where it lay sick. To take up the bed is to deprive the flesh itself, thus corrected by the reins of continence, of earthly delights by the hope of heavenly rewards. For the same bed that is washed every night by David, that is, chastised with a worthy flood of penitence for the stains of each sin. But taking up the bed and going to the house is to return to paradise. For that is the true home, which first received man, not lost by right but by fraud, and finally restored by Him who owed nothing to the fraudulent enemy. Alternatively, the one who was sick returns home with the bed when the soul, having received the remission of sins, returns with the body itself for the inward custody, lest after forgiveness it commits something for which it might justly be struck again.

[Luke 5:25] -- And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay, and went to his house glorifying God, etc. Wondrous is the power of divine potency, where no delay of time intervenes, the health commanded by the Savior follows swiftly. Rightly those who were present, condemning the darts of blasphemy, converted their astonished hearts to the praise of such great majesty.

[Luke 5:27] -- And after these things, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and he said to him: Follow me. The same Levi who is Matthew, but Luke and Mark, out of respect and honor for the evangelist, did not want to use the common name. However, Matthew himself, according to what is written, ”A righteous man accuses himself” (Prov. XVIII), at the beginning of his own discourse calls himself Matthew and a tax collector: so that readers understand that no one who has been converted should despair of salvation, since he himself changed suddenly from a tax collector into an apostle, from a toll collector into an evangelist. And leaving everything behind, he arose and followed him. Understanding truly what it means to follow the Lord, Matthew leaves everything and follows him. To follow is to imitate. Therefore, that he might follow poor Christ not so much in step as in affections, he left behind his own goods who used to seize others’ property, and giving us the perfect example of renouncing the world, not only did he leave the profits of the tax office, but also disregarded the danger that could come from the rulers of the world, because he had left behind the incomplete and disorganized accounts of the taxes. For he was so driven by the desire to follow the Lord, that he did not retain for himself any regard or thought for this life. Because of this, deservedly, while diligently abandoning human affairs, he earned the reward to be a faithful steward of the Lord’s talents.

[Luke 5:29] -- And Levi made him a great feast in his house. He who receives Christ within his home is nourished with the greatest joys far surpassing pleasures. Thus the Lord gladly enters and reclines in the affection of the one who has believed, and this is the spiritual feast of good works, which the rich crowd lacks, and the poor one feasts on. [Luke 5:29] -- And there was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them. They had seen a tax collector converted from sins to better things, finding a place of repentance, and because of this they too do not despair of salvation. [Luke 5:30] -- And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured, saying to His disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners? While publicans were dining with the Lord, the Pharisees murmuring boasted about fasting. Here is first declared how great is the distance between the law and grace. Because those who follow the law endure the eternal hunger of a fasting mind. But those who have received the word in the innermost parts of the soul, being refreshed by heavenly nourishment and the abundance of the fountain, cannot hunger and thirst. Then the type of future retribution is prefigured, when the perfidy of the proud will be tormented by fasting, while the chosen are feasting with Christ. To whom it is said, Prostitutes and publicans will precede you in the

kingdom of God (Matt. XXI). And if through the election of Matthew the faith of the gentiles is expressed, who previously were greedy for worldly gains, but now refresh the body of Christ with diligent devotion, it undoubtedly indicates the arrogance of the Pharisees, the jealousy of the Jews, tormented by the salvation of the gentiles.

[Luke 5:31] -- And Jesus, answering, said to them: Those who are well do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He castigates the scribes and Pharisees, who, considering themselves just, avoided the company of sinners. For he calls himself a physician who, by a marvelous method of healing, was wounded for our iniquities, and by his bruises we are healed (Isa. LIII). He calls those healthy and righteous who, ignorant of God's righteousness and wanting to establish their own, are not subject to the righteousness of God, who, presuming from the law, do not seek the grace of the Gospel. On the other hand, he calls sick and sinners those who, defeated by the consciousness of their own frailty, and seeing that they cannot be justified by the law, submit themselves to Christ's grace by repenting. Here it is shown at the same time that publicans have come to Jesus performing repentance, not remaining in their former sins, as the Pharisees and scribes murmured: and Jesus himself also deigned to go to the feasts of sinners to have the opportunity of teaching and offering spiritual food to his hosts. Finally, while it is frequently described that he went to banquets, nothing else is reported except what he did there, what he taught, so that both the humility of the Lord in going to sinners and the power of his teaching in the conversion of penitents might be shown.

[Luke 5:33] -- But they said to him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make supplications, likewise also the Pharisees; but yours eat and drink?" Matthew reports that the disciples of John themselves said this to the Savior, whence it is clear that both groups combined to question him with this. Here, the disciples of John are especially to be reproved, not only for the boastfulness of their fasting but also because they malign what they knew to be taught by their master, and they joined with the Pharisees who they knew were condemned by him. Spiritually, however, the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but the disciples of Christ eat and drink, because whether one follows the works of the law or the traditions of men, or even receives the preaching of Christ with the ear of the body alone, abstaining from spiritual goods, they waste away with a fasting heart. But he who faithfully incorporates with the members of Christ out of love cannot fast, because he feasts on his flesh and blood.

[Luke 5:33] -- Alternatively: John drinks neither wine nor strong drink; the Lord eats and drinks with publicans and sinners, because he increases merit through abstinence, where there is no strength of nature. The Lord, however, to whom it naturally belonged to forgive sins, why would he avoid those whom he could make

purer by the abstainers? But Christ also fasted, so that you might not avoid the commandment. He ate with sinners, so that you might see grace and recognize power.

[Luke 5:34] -- To whom he himself said: Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? But days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days. The bridegroom is Christ, the bride is the Church. From this holy and spiritual union, the apostles were created. Hence, Mark the evangelist rightly calls them children of the wedding, not only of the bridegroom but also of the bride, wishing it to be understood that through the baptismal regeneration, they were taken into the right of divine generation. They cannot fast or mourn as long as they see the bridegroom in the chamber and know that he is with the bride. But when the wedding is over, and the time of the passion and resurrection arrives, then the children of the bridegroom will fast. However, Luke did not say like the others: Can the children of the bridegroom or the wedding fast or mourn, but can you make the children of the bridegroom fast (Luke 5)? He elegantly hinted that those who were speaking were the ones who would make the children of the bridegroom mourn and fast, since they were the ones who would kill the bridegroom. It is to be noted that this mourning of the absence of the bridegroom is not only now, that is, after the death and resurrection of the same bridegroom, but before his incarnation throughout the whole time of this age.

For the early times of the Church, before the birth of the Virgin, had saints who desired the advent of the incarnation of Christ. But these times, since he ascended into heaven, have saints who desire his manifestation to judge the living and the dead. Nor did this desirable mourning of the Church rest somewhat, except as long as he was here with the disciples in the flesh. According to the laws of tropology, it is to be known that as long as the bridegroom is with us, we are in joy, and neither can we fast nor mourn. But when he has departed and fled from us because of sins, then fasting is to be proclaimed, then mourning is to be received.

[Luke 5:36] -- He also spoke a parable to them: No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. When the Lord was asked why his disciples did not fast, he replied that those still carnal, not yet strengthened by the faith in his passion and resurrection, could not bear the stricter fasting and continence commands, lest through excessive austerity, they lose even the faith they seemed to have. Therefore, he refers to his disciples as old garments, to which a new patch is sewn inappropriately, that is, any part of the doctrine that pertains to the moderation of a new life. Because if this is done, even the doctrine will somehow be torn, whose part about the fasting of food is inappropriately given. That doctrine teaches general fasting, not only from the desire for food but from all delight in temporal joys,

the patch of which, that is, a part concerning food, he says should not be imparted to men still given to old habits. Because it seems that there would be a tearing, and it does not match the old.

[Luke 5:37] -- And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new skins, and both are preserved. He also compares them to old wineskins, which, with new wine—that is, spiritual precepts—would burst more easily than they could contain it. But they will be like new wineskins, when after the Lord's ascension, they are renewed with the desire for his consolation by praying and hoping. Then they received the Holy Spirit, which filled them to speak in all tongues; from the Jews who did not understand, it was truthfully attested: These men are full of new wine. For new wine in new wineskins meant the fervor of the Holy Spirit filling spiritual hearts. Alternatively. A teacher must beware not to commit the secrets of the new mysteries to souls not yet renewed, but persisting in the old malice.

[Luke 5:39] -- And no one having drunk old wine, immediately desires new, for he says, "The old is better." This signifies the Jews, to whom, being steeped in the dregs of an old way of life, the precepts of new grace had become tainted. For indeed, being defiled by the traditions of their ancestors, they were by no means able to perceive the sweetness of spiritual words.

Chapter 6

[Luke 6:1] -- And it happened on the second-first Sabbath, as he was passing through the cornfields, his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands, and did eat. This is what Mark says, that because of the great number of those who came to be healed, the disciples did not even have time to eat, and thus were as hungry men. But that they plucked the ears of the crops with their hands, and comforted their hunger, is an indication of a more austere life, not seeking prepared feasts, but simple food. And note that the first apostles of the Savior break the letter of the Sabbath, against the Ebionites, who, while accepting the other apostles, reject Paul as a transgressor of the law. Wherefore Luke properly calls this day, when the letter of the Sabbath began to be dissolved, a second-first Sabbath, wishing to intimate that the observance of the legal Sabbath ought henceforth to cease, and the freedom of the natural Sabbath, which was similar to the other days up to the times of Moses, ought to be restored. So that just as the Church is saved not by circumcision or the ceremonies of the law, but by the faith of Abraham, who was justified while uncircumcised through love working, so also this ought to be commended as nothing other than a spiritual Sabbath, in which even Abraham always rested from servile, that is, sinful action, through the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit to God.

Therefore, the Sabbath of this time, in which it is lawful to do useful things as on the other days, to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath, on which it was not allowed to travel, to gather wood, or to do other necessary things, is called second-first. Namely, this is preferred to the first in the order of time, because it was observed by the fathers in countless ages before the law, as it is now. Or certainly it signifies by the grace of the gift that nothing else is meant by second-first than that the superior Sabbath is understood to be above the inferior. For the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven, heavenly. Nor is it wrong to call the Lord Jesus Christ the second-first Adam, who by merit and grace certainly preceded the first Adam by no human birth order, according to what his precursor said of him: ”He who comes after me is preferred before me, for he was before me” (John 1). It can also be understood that the second-first Sabbath, the same Sabbath of the New Testament, is both the second and the first. Second, because

it is observed by us after the legal Sabbath. First, because it was observed by the ancient just ones before the decrees of the law. Mystically, the disciples pass through the cornfields, those of which the Lord said, ”Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields;

for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages” (John 4). And it is better to hunger for this than to understand it as the salvation of men, for whom the foremost of the reapers, once hungering in prayers, shortly heard, upon the dishes being shown which he desired, ”Arise, Peter, kill and eat” (Acts 10). And the wonderful concord of the sacrament is that there, beasts are ordered to be killed and eaten, and here the ears of corn are reported to be rubbed and nonetheless eaten. This means: Mortify your members which are upon the earth, and put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3). For no one otherwise transitions into the body of Christ, nor does a teacher otherwise feed on the fruits of his advancement. Thus, to pluck the ears of corn is to remove men from an earthly intention, where they had only fixed the root of their mind, as it were. To rub them with hands is to strip the purity of mind from carnal concupiscence, like husks and chaff. To eat the grains is for each person cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit to be incorporated into the members of the Church through the mouths of preachers. And it is well reported that the disciples did this before the Lord in Mark, preceding him, for it is necessary that the preacher’s word precedes, and thus illuminates the heart of the listener by the grace of heavenly visitation.

[Luke 6:2] -- But some of the Pharisees said to them: ”What are you doing that is not lawful on the Sabbaths?” Other Evangelists narrate that this was rather objected to the Lord Himself. But whether these words were said to them, or to His disciples, or by many accusing both here and there (for no Evangelist could write falsely), nevertheless, because whatever is done by the disciples, reflects upon Him whose teaching they follow in acting, He immediately, according to what Isaiah says, ”And He shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth” (Isa. XI), overcomes the false defenders of the law with true examples of the saints. For He says:

[Luke 6:3] -- Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God and took the showbread, and ate, and gave it to those who were with him, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests alone? The history of the Kings recounts that blessed David, avoiding Saul’s traps, came to the priest Abimelech in Nob and asked for food for himself and his followers. But finding no common bread, and only after learning that the young men had been clean from women since the day before yesterday, the priest did not hesitate to give the consecrated bread, deeming it better, in the prophet’s words: I desire mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. IX), to save men from the danger of hunger than to offer a sacrifice to God. For the sacrifice pleasing to God is the salvation of men. Therefore, the Lord opposes the calumniating Pharisees and says:

If David is holy and Abimelech the high priest is not reproached by you, but each is excused with a plausible explanation for breaking the command of the law, and hunger is the reason, why do you not approve the same hunger in the apostles as you approve in others? Although there is much difference in this too, these rub the ears of grain with their hands on the Sabbath, those eat the Levitical bread and approached the Sabbath solemnity.

For the showbread was baked before the Sabbath and laid on the sacred table on the Sabbath morning, twelve in pairs facing each other, with two golden bowls full of incense placed on top. They remained until the next Sabbath, and then others were brought in their place, and those were given to the priests. With the incense burned in the sacred fire where all holocausts used to be made, more incense was added on top of the other twelve loaves. Thus, when David arrived and took the consecrated loaves, it figuratively showed that the priestly food was to be transferred to the use of the people. Whether because we all ought to imitate the priestly life, or because all the children of the Church are priests. For we are anointed into a holy priesthood, offering ourselves as spiritual sacrifices to God.

[Luke 6:5] -- And he said to them, because the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. If, he said, King David who was fed with priestly food is excusable, and according to the faith of another Gospel, the priests violating the Sabbath through temple service are without crime, how much more the Son of Man, who is the true King and true Priest, and therefore the Lord of the Sabbath, is not held liable for the offense of plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath.

[Luke 6:6] -- And it came to pass on another Sabbath, as he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man whose right hand was withered. The Lord taught particularly on the Sabbaths in the synagogue, and performed miracles, not only to insinuate the spiritual Sabbath, but also because of the more celebrated gathering of the people on that day. Then it was the custom from the ancient institution of the Fathers, which was commanded by the law to rest from labor, to give time to reading and listening to the Scriptures. According to what James speaks in the Acts of the Apostles. For Moses from ancient times has those who preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every Sabbath. For just as those whose art is hunting, where they have learned that wild animals, fish, and birds abound, they set their nets there the most: so also the Lord always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews gathered, wishing all to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Surely the man who had the withered hand signifies the human race shriveled by the barrenness of good work, but cured by the Lord’s mercy. Whose right hand, which in the first parent withered while plucking the fruit of the forbidden tree, is restored to the health of good works by the grace of the Redeemer, while he stretched his innocent hands on the tree of the cross. And

it is well that the hand was withered in the synagogue, because where the gift of knowledge is greater, there the danger of the inexcusable sin is more serious.

[Luke 6:7] -- But the scribes and Pharisees watched whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find something to accuse him of. Because the destruction of the Sabbath which they accused in his disciples, the teacher excused by a probable example, now they want to censure the teacher himself by observing him, that if he heals on the Sabbath, they might accuse him of transgression; if he does not heal, of cruelty or weakness. [Luke 6:8] -- He himself knew their thoughts, etc. This is what we read: The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain (Psalm XCIII). And what follows: Blessed is the man whom you instruct, Lord, and teach him out of your law (Ibid.). This is said about those who have learned that the law fulfilled through Christ, not to be a carnal commandment for us, but a spiritual Sabbath. [Luke 6:9] -- But Jesus said to them: I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath? The Lord, anticipating the calumny of the Jews which they had prepared for him with a treacherous mind, reproached them because they violated the commandments of the law with a twisted interpretation, thinking that even good works should be refrained from on the Sabbath, whereas the law commands to abstain from evil works saying: You shall do no servile work on it (Levit. XXIII), that is, sin: For everyone who commits sin is a servant of sin (John VIII). By the same commandment, at the same time foreshadowing the form of the future age, where those who have done good through the six ages of this world, in the seventh rest, will have holidays only from evil, but not also from good. For although secular works rest, nevertheless the act of good work is not idle in resting in the praise of God.

[Luke 6:9] -- To save a soul, or to lose it? This is to care for a man, or not. It is the same as what was previously stated: To do good, or to do evil. Not that God, supremely good, could be the author of evil or destruction for us, but because His not saving, according to the custom of Scripture, is said to destroy. As it is said that He hardened Pharaoh’s heart, not that He hardened a soft one, but that He, not mercifully softening what was already hardened by preceding merits. And when we pray, lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6), immediately adding: but deliver us from evil (ibid.), we are plainly taught that His not leading into temptation is nothing other than delivering from evil; His destroying a soul is not to save it from destruction. If anyone is moved by the question of why the Lord, when He was going to heal the body, asked about the salvation of the soul, let him understand either that the soul is put forth for the man by the manner of the Scriptures, as it is said: these are the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob (Exodus 1); or that those miracles were performed for the health of the soul, or that the healing of the hand itself signified the health of the soul, which seemed to have a certain dry right hand, ceasing from good works (as I have foretold).

[Luke 6:10] -- And looking around at all of them, He said to the man: Stretch out your hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The dry hand to be healed is commanded to be stretched out, because the barrenness of an unfruitful soul is cured by nothing better than the generosity of almsgiving. Hence John the Baptist, when asked by the crowds what they should do so as not to be cast into fire like barren trees, only gave this command: He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise (Luke 3). And in Ecclesiasticus, it is said: Son, let not your hand be extended to receive, and shut when it should be giving (Ecclesiasticus 4). For in vain does one stretch out his hand to God to pray for sins, who does not extend it to bring benefit to a begging widow.

[Luke 6:11] -- But they themselves were filled with foolishness and conversed among themselves about what they might do to Jesus. Great foolishness indeed, consorting about the death of the Savior, when they themselves were in great need of salvation. Their devotion to wickedness is shown when they consider it a crime that a person restored his withered hand at His word. As though not each of them committed greater tasks on the Sabbath, by carrying food, extending a cup, and performing other necessary acts for sustenance. For neither could He who spoke and they were made be proven to have labored on the Sabbath. [Luke 6:12] -- But it happened in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray. Not everyone who prays ascends to the mountain. For there is a prayer that brings about sin. But he who prays well, who seeks God in prayer, ascends from earthly things to higher things, reaching the peak of higher concern. But he who earnestly prays about riches, or worldly honor, or even about the death of an enemy, he, lying in the depths, sends vile prayers to God. The Lord, however, prays not for Himself, but to intercede for me. For even if the Father has put all things in the Son’s power, the Son still deems it necessary to beseech the Father on our behalf because He is our advocate. For He says, ”We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ” (1 John 2). If He is an advocate, He must intervene for my sins. Therefore, He pleads not as a weak person, but as a pious one. Do you want to know how capable He is of accomplishing everything He wishes? He is both advocate and judge. In one, the function of piety; in the other, the symbol of power.

[Luke 6:12] -- And He was spending the night in prayer to God. A model is prescribed for you to emulate. What should you do for your own salvation when Christ spends the night in prayer for you? What should you do when you wish to undertake an office of piety, when Christ ensured to pray first before sending the apostles? Do you want to know how, He prayed for me, not for Himself? [Luke 6:13] -- And when day came, he says, he called his disciples, and chose twelve of them. It should be noted here that the Gospel and Apostolic Scripture not only calls those twelve the disciples of Christ, but also all who, believing in him, were instructed by his

teaching toward the kingdom of heaven. For disciples are called so from learning, from whose multitude he chose those whom he himself wanted.

[Luke 6:13] -- Whom he also named apostles. Apostles in Greek, in Latin means sent. Whose sacrament the evangelist Mark explains by name, saying: ”And he made twelve to be with him, and to send them out to preach the Gospel.” And the Lord himself says: ”As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The twelve are well chosen, in order to mystically commend also by their number the salvation of the world which they would preach by word. For three times four is twelve, a noble computation. Hence it is that, as I also said above, when Solomon built a temple to the Lord in the typology of the Church, he made a bronze sea in which the priests would wash, and placed it on the backs of twelve oxen, three of which faced north, three west, three south, and three east, figuratively indicating that the apostles and their successors would cleanse all the regions of the world with the faith and confession of the Holy Trinity from the stain of sins.

[Luke 6:14] -- Simon, whom he surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother. Not now for the first time did he give Simon the surname Peter, but long before, when, having been brought to him by his brother Andrew, he looked at him and said: ”You are Simon, son of Jonah, you shall be called Cephas,” which is translated as Peter (John I). But when Luke, wanting to enumerate the names of the twelve apostles, had to mention Peter, he wished to briefly note that he was not previously called by this name, but the Lord surnamed him thus, even though it was not then, but when John recorded the very words of the Lord, evidently making the listeners attentive. For if he had been previously called this, you would not see the mystery of the rock in the same way, thinking he was so named by chance, and not by God’s providence. Therefore, he wished him to be called by another name first, so that through the very change of name, the liveliness of the sacrament might be commended. Therefore, in Latin it is Peter, in Syriac Cephas, and in both languages, the name is derived from rock, undoubtedly that which Paul said: ”The rock was Christ” (1 Cor. X). For just as Christ, the true light, granted the apostles to be called the light of the world, so also to Simon, who believed in Christ the rock, he granted the name Peter. Referring to another etymology, he said:

”You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Matt. XVI). Hence, some violently seeking a Hebrew etymology for the Latin or Greek name say that Peter is interpreted as ”one who loosens,” or ”one who takes off his shoes,” or ”one who recognizes,” although both the exposition of John’s Gospel, which I recalled, and the Hebrew language itself, which does not sound the P letter at all, testify that this name is not Hebrew. For those who abusively write Fetrum for Peter, as well as Faulum for Paul, and Filatum for Pilate, violently attach a false interpretation to a fictitious name. Simon, however, is interpreted as obedient. Moreover, Andrew is a Greek name, derived from ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρός, that is from ”man,” meaning manly.

These names rightfully adorn the first of the apostles, who soon recognized the Lamb of God from John and took care to see and hear him. But the fact that Simon is interpreted as ”putting aside sadness” or ”hearing sorrow,” fits that time when, after the resurrection, having seen the Lord, he put aside the sadness of his death or his denial, but immediately heard the sorrow of his own death, with the Lord saying: ”But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and lead you where you do not wish to go” (John XXI).

[Luke 6:15] -- James, and John, Philip, and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. Luke fittingly and reverently, in the catalog of apostles, uses the name Matthew, but in the account of the calling from the tax office, as I previously noted, he preferred to call him Levi. He indeed is Matthew himself, as it is written: “Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified”; and he clearly calls Matthew from the tax office, and classifies himself as a publican in the order of apostles, but he also places himself under his fellow Thomas, though he is placed before him by the other evangelists. Certainly, James and John, who for their eminent virtue and spirit’s peak, were called the sons of thunder, that is, Boanerges, or more correctly written, Banereem, by the Lord. Not in vain. One of whom, thundering from above, issued that theological voice, which none had known to utter before: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” etc. (John 1). Which he left filled with such power, that if he had chosen to thunder more, even the world itself could not have contained it. Yet both frequently separately, and led up the mountain by the Lord, sometimes deserved to hear the terrible voice from the cloud: “This is my beloved Son. They also bore ancient names most fitting to their merits. For James means supplanter. John, in whom there is grace, or is called the grace of the Lord.

For he joyfully supplanted the care of the flesh, when called by the Lord, and rejoiced to disdain the flesh itself when murdered by Herod. He, for the grace of unique love deserved by virginal glory, reclined on the breast of his Redeemer at the supper. Philip is interpreted as the mouth of the lamp. And rightly so, because when called by the Lord, having found Nathanael he immediately proclaimed the light he had recognized, saying: “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. (John 1). And later, feeling his knowledge of the light was less, he earnestly asked: “Lord, show us the Father, and it will suffice us. (John 14). Bartholomew is a Syrian name, not Hebrew, and means the son of one who suspends the waters, that is, Son of God. Who suspends the minds of his preachers to contemplate heavenly things, so that the higher they freely fly, the more richly they inebriate the hearts of earthly things with the drops of their words. Hence well does Moses speaking mystically of the Church say: “For the land to which you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where when seed is sown water is led in irrigation, but looking up for rains from heaven, which God visits at all times. For

worldly wisdom crawls like a serpent on the ground, but divine wisdom thunders from above.

Matthew is called given, namely, because by the great gift of the Lord he was delegated from being a tax collector and publican to the office of an apostle and evangelist. Thomas, meaning abyss or twin. Thus, he is called Didymus in Greek, because by doubting longer than the others, he learned more deeply the truth of the Lord's resurrection. About whom Paulinus the Bishop of Nola beautifully sang: This Thomas, doubtful and named Didymus, lay down, Christ allowed him to doubt with a trembling mind, For our faith, so that, strengthened by this guide, And trembling, we may confess that the true Jesus Lives after death, showing the wounds on his living flesh.

[Luke 6:15] -- James of Alphaeus, and Simon who is called the Zealot. These he placed with an addition, to distinguish them from James of Zebedee and Simon Peter, or even Judas the traitor. For John also shows that this Simon was called, who said: And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot. And James indeed of Alphaeus, he is the one who in the Gospel is called the brother of the Lord, because Mary, the wife of Alphaeus, was the sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord, whom John the Evangelist also calls Mary of Cleophas. Perhaps because Alphaeus was also called Cleophas, or Mary herself, after the death of Alphaeus, married Cleophas after James was born. The ecclesiastical history records that she gave birth to a son Simeon, who being the cousin of the Lord, because Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, ruled the church in Jerusalem after James; whether this apostle Simon, or any other Simeon it may have been. Because indeed James, deservedly called the son of Alphaeus, that is, the learned one, the apostles testify, who immediately made him bishop of Jerusalem after the Lord's passion. Because even before the shedding of blood, he himself is also shown to be a true supplanter of carnal desire, attested by Hegesippus, the historian near the times of the apostles. He says, James was received by the church of Jerusalem after the apostles, the brother of the Lord, surnamed the Just.

Many indeed are called James, but this one was called holy from his mother's womb, he drank no wine or strong drink, ate no flesh, was never shaved, nor anointed with oil, nor used a bath. To him it was customary to enter the Holy of Holies. Indeed, he did not wear woolen clothes, but linen, and he alone entered into the temple, and with knees fixed, he prayed for the people. So much so that his knees were believed to have acquired the hardness of camels. But Simon the Zealot, he is also Simon the Canaanite from the village of Cana in Galilee, where the Lord turned the water into wine. For Cana indeed means zeal, and Canaanite interprets as Zealot.

[Luke 6:16] -- Judas of James, and Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor. And for the sake of distinction, he doubled the names. One of whom, as he himself writes in the catholic Epistle, is the brother of James, who was also called Thaddaeus.

The other took his name either from the village in which he was born, or from the tribe of Issachar as a premonition of his condemnation. For Issachar, which means ”reward,” hints at the price of betrayal. But Iscariot, which is interpreted as ”memory of death,” shows that he did not suddenly decide, but meditated longer on committing the sin of betraying the Lord. He was chosen among the apostles not by imprudence but providence. How great is the truth, which even an adversarial minister cannot weaken? How great is the morality of the Lord, who preferred to risk His judgment among us rather than His affection? For He had taken on human frailty, and therefore did not refuse even these parts of human weakness. He wanted to be deserted, wanted to be betrayed, wanted to be handed over by His own apostle, so that you, deserted by a companion, betrayed by a companion, might bear your misjudgment and lost benefit with moderation.

[Luke 6:17] -- And he descended with them and stood on a level place, and a crowd of his disciples, and a great multitude of people. The Lord went up into the mountains to choose the apostles, but he returned to the plains to teach the crowds, for the crowds can only see Christ in humility. For this is the standard which the Apostle followed when he said: I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as carnal ones. As infants in Christ, I fed you with milk, not solid food. For you were not yet able, but even now you are not able (I Cor. III). However, the apostles themselves, according to Matthew, being more perfect, are said to have been taught both on the mountain and with the mouth of the Savior open. Where, if anyone wishes to examine both evangelists more carefully, it can be understood that when on the mountain he chose the twelve disciples from among the many, whom he also named apostles, which Matthew omitted, then he delivered the address which Matthew included and Luke omitted, that is, on the mountain. And then when he descended, in the level place he delivered another similar address, about which Matthew was silent, but Luke was not, and both addresses concluded in the same way.

[Luke 6:17] -- From all Judaea and Jerusalem and the maritime regions, and Tyre and Sidon, etc. I consider the maritime multitude not to be from the nearby Sea of Galilee (for he would not place this among miraculous locations), but from the great sea, in which even Tyre and Sidon could be included. Truly, because they are cities of the Gentiles, given indeed to the Jews by lot, but not possessed by them, since the enemies could not be exterminated, they are specifically mentioned by name, so that the fame and power of the Savior may be hinted at, which summon even foreign cities to obtain health and doctrine. It should be noted here that although the Lord had mercy on the Gentiles coming to him, as he healed the centurion’s boy and the daughter of the Canaanite woman upon approving their faith, he is not found to have entered their cities, lest he provide a reason for complaint to the fault-finding Jews, but he rather reserved the perfect salvation of the Gentiles for the time of his passion and resurrection. When that time was imminent, and the

Gentiles sought to see him, he said: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit (John XII).

[Luke 6:19] -- And all the crowd sought to touch him, because power went out from him and healed all. And before, the leper was cleansed by the Lord's touch, and here, the whole crowd that could touch him is healed by the power of his spirit. The touch of the Savior, therefore, is the work of salvation. To touch him is to believe in him faithfully. To be touched by him is to be strengthened by his gift. But each person abounds in their own understanding. The crowds that come from afar to hear are cured by the touch of the Lord descending into the plain. The disciples who are already trained in lesser things are brought to greater things upon the mountaintop. From these, there are also chosen those who will secretly witness his transfiguration on the mount. One above all, as if to be inebriated from the fountain of higher wisdom, rests upon the master's chest. And you will rarely find either crowds following the Lord to higher things, or anyone sick being cured on the mount, but with the fever of lust extinguished, and the light of knowledge kindled, each one gradually climbs to the pinnacle of virtues. For in the Old Testament, Moses alone ascended the mountain of God with Joshua; to govern the people in the plain until they returned, he appointed Aaron and Hur. Aaron, indeed, who is interpreted as "mountain of strength," signifies the unparalleled excellence of the Lord's Incarnation. Hur, who is called "fire," represents the gift of the Holy Spirit. For many in the Church, though they cannot accompany the teachers to penetrate the mysteries of the highest Divinity, can nonetheless be redeemed by the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation and be marked by the fervor of the Holy Spirit.

[Luke 6:20] -- And he, lifting his eyes towards his disciples, said, Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. And although he speaks generally to all, yet he more specifically lifts his eyes towards the disciples, so that to those who perceive the word with the attentive ear of the heart, he may more broadly reveal the light of inward savor. This is similar to what Matthew says: And when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. V). For those to whom he opens his mouth while sitting on the mountain to hear lofty things, he directs his eyes standing in the plain, so that they may plainly understand what they have heard. Therefore, blessed are the poor. Certainly not all, but only those who regard all the heights of the present age as nothing, even if they may seem lofty. Who are rightly deemed worthy of the gift of the heavenly kingdom, because they are found to be stripped of the desire for human delight. Such poverty as King David, declaring the poverty he endured, said: But I am poor and needy. And elsewhere, not only considering earthly things as trivial, but even the heavenly ones for the Lord's sake, saying: For what is there for me in heaven, and what have I desired on earth besides thee (Psalm LXXII)? Soon, when he had fixed the anchor of his hope, he manifests by adding: But for

me it is good to cling to God, to put my trust in the Lord God. Otherwise, some in the most wretched condition of poverty, both here lack the joys of the world due to the scarcity of things, and there lack the kingdom of God due to the wickedness of their deeds.

[Luke 6:21] -- Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Matthew explains what it means to hunger, that is, to thirst for righteousness. He teaches us very clearly that we should never consider ourselves sufficiently righteous, but should always love and even burn for daily progress in righteousness. The Psalmist, burning with desire for heavenly things, shows that perfect satisfaction cannot come in this age but in the future, saying: As for me, I shall appear in righteousness before your face; I shall be satisfied when your glory is revealed (Psalm 17:15). It can also simply be understood: Blessed are you who hunger now, who discipline your body and make it a slave (1 Corinthians 9:27), who give yourselves to the word in hunger and thirst (2 Corinthians 11:27), because you will then enjoy the fullness of heavenly joys.

[Luke 6:21] -- Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Those who weep not for the losses of temporal goods but for the detriment of spiritual virtues will be consoled by eternal bliss. Here we are commanded not only to weep for our own sins but also for the sins of our neighbors. If we love them as ourselves, we must consequently rejoice at their progress and grieve at their failings; and not only grieve but be moved to tears. Thus Samuel and David mourned the sin and death of Saul. Thus the Lord Himself wept over the sinful city, and, moved with compassion for the grieving sisters, wept over Lazarus, whom He was to resurrect by His divine majesty, showing human pity first. Mystically, this signifies that those who are dead in sin should be mourned by their neighbors so that they may revive. The promise that those who weep now will laugh should not be understood childishly; in the language of Scripture, laughter signifies inner exaltation and joy of the mind. As Sarah said: God has brought me laughter (Genesis 21:6). And in Job it is said: The lips of the truthful shall be filled with laughter. By these names, as I said, the inward joy of the soul is depicted.

[Luke 6:22] -- Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they separate you, and reproach you. He who for the sake of the wealth of the inheritance of Christ in the saints, for the sake of the bread of eternal life, and for the hope of the heavenly joys, desires to suffer weeping, hunger, and poverty, is blessed. But much more blessed is he who does not fear to keep these virtues amidst adversities. For although men may hate with a wicked heart, they cannot harm the beloved heart of Christ. Let them separate and expel from the synagogue, Christ will find and strengthen. Let them reproach the name of the Crucified, He Himself raises the dead with Him and makes them sit in the heavenly places (Ephesians II). [Luke 6:22] -- And they will cast out your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. The name he

says signifies the name of Christians, which, as far as their memory goes, has very often been erased and cast out by the Gentiles and Jews, with no longer any cause for hatred except for the Son of Man, because, evidently, believers would want to make the name of Christ their own surname; and therefore the persecutors of the highest name are, not unjustly, marked by the name of men. Blessed (He says) are you when men hate you, teaching them that they will be harassed by men, but will be blessed beyond men.

[Luke 6:23] -- Rejoice in that day, and exult. For behold, your reward is great in heaven. This command can be fulfilled not by anyone suffering, but by him who suffers solely with a view to the heavenly reward. Thus, amidst the hatred of hearts, amidst the insults of tongues, amidst the very hands of persecutors, one can remain with an equally, or even more joyful heart. Not to this are those like us capable, but those who went rejoicing from the presence of the council, because they were deemed worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus (Acts V). Therefore, whoever endures many adversities on earth for Christ, will receive many gifts in heaven from Christ. However, how many javelins of words did the false prophets endure from Elijah, who, mocking them, said: Shout with a louder voice: For Baal is a god, perhaps he is talking, or he is in an inn, or on a journey, or certainly he is sleeping, so that he must be awakened (1 Kings XVIII). What a great massacre did those who were eight hundred and fifty in number suffer when they were all killed! But because Baal and not Christ was the cause, neither did the mocked ones rejoice, nor did the slain ones deserve a palm, but an eternal punishment.

[Luke 6:23] -- For such things their fathers did to the prophets. He encouraged well by example, because those who speak the truth usually suffer persecution. Nevertheless, the ancient prophets did not fail in their preaching of truth out of fear of persecution. It should be noted indeed that just as Matthew, through the eight beatitudes he set forth, insinuates the eighth as the perfection of our hope dedicated to the glory of the resurrection, so Luke embraces the four cardinal virtues. For blessed are the poor, who are restrained from the enticements of the world through temperance. Blessed are the hungry, who, reminded by their own hunger, show mercy to the hungry, and themselves show mercy through justice as much as they can. For the alms which we give to Christ, not out of our own, but as His, the Psalmist rightly testifies as being called justice, saying: He has distributed to the poor; his justice endures forever (Psalm 111). For it is justice when we give what is rightfully due to each, owing no one anything except to love each other. Blessed are those who, through prudence, discern good from evil, who mourn for what is transitory, and long for what is eternal. Blessed are those who, through fortitude of faith, are able to endure all hardships. Thus, those who are not yet able to ascend the pinnacle of consummate virtue, are to be cherished with the blessedness of general perfection.

So that, progressing gradually from good to better, while they willingly listen to the Lord who stands on the plain, they may someday ascend to Him who sits on the mountain in sublimity. For those whose hearts He is still taming and instructing, He addresses them as one standing, which is the position of laboring. But those He finds ready and teachable from long spiritual exercise, He, in the freedom and dignity of the teacher, seated as the peaceful Savior, imparts mystical things of the higher realms. This difference in spiritual progress is beautifully expressed in the attire of the Israelite people. Where all the common folk, using whatever garments, are commanded to make for themselves fringes of blue in the four corners of their garments. Priests are to have four garments, distinguished in wonderful variety by as many mystical colors. And high priests are to bear both what the priests have and four other kinds of garments, of the same colors, but with greater dignified grace, interspersed with glittering gold, and bearing the name of the patriarchs and of the Lord Himself. To explain or even to merely present these details pertains to the diligence of its own work.

[Luke 6:24] -- However, woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. The fact that woe will come to the rich is better understood by contrast, where it is said that the kingdom of God belongs to the poor. Those who seek consolation here in every way alienate themselves from that kingdom, hearing from the just judge: ”Children, remember that you received good things in your lifetime” (Luke 16). It should be noted here that it is not so much the riches, but the love of riches that is at fault. For not everyone who has riches, but as Ecclesiastes says: ”Those who love riches will not benefit from them” (Eccl. 5), because those who do not know how to disdain temporal things or to give them to the poor, indeed delight in their use for the present, but will lack the benefit that could be obtained by giving in the future. And elsewhere we read: ”Blessed is the rich person who is found without blemish, who has not gone after gold, nor hoped in money and treasures” (Eccl. 31).

[Luke 6:25] -- Woe to you who are full now, for you shall hunger (Luke 6:25). The rich man clothed in purple was full when he feasted sumptuously every day, but he endured a dire woe when he was hungry and sought a drop of water from the finger of Lazarus, whom he had despised. Another interpretation is that if those who hunger always for the works of justice are blessed, in contrast, those who are pleased with their own desires, suffering no hunger for the true and steadfast good, must be considered unfortunate, thinking themselves blessed if they are not deprived of their pleasure for the moment. [Luke 6:25] -- Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. And Solomon says: ”Laughter will be mixed with pain, and the end of joy is sorrow” (Prov. 14). And again: ”The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth” (Eccl. 7). Clearly teaching that foolishness is to be assigned to those laughing, and wisdom, as we have taught above, to those who are always weeping.

[Luke 6:26] -- Woe when all men speak well of you. This is what the Psalmist laments, because the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul, and he who does unjust things is blessed (Psalms Hebr. X). For whom it is not the least part of the punishment that his crimes are not only not censured, but are moreover praised as well done. Hence the Lord prudently does not say: Woe, because men speak well of you, as if the fault should be followed by the punishment at some other time, but woe (he says) when all men speak well of you. Because the flattery itself is the nurse of sin; just as oil to flames, so it is usually the fuel supplied to those burning in guilt, and certainly it is the greatest punishment of sinners. For just as the hungry and weeping poor ought to be weighed down by the wickedness of evildoers, so those indulging in riches, feasts, and laughter are by the anger of a strict judge more fueled by their courtiers to greater punishment.

[Luke 6:26] -- For such things indeed did their fathers do to the prophets. He means false prophets, who are also often called prophets in sacred scripture, because they seek the favor of the people by predicting the future, that is, by attempting to foretell it. Hence Ezekiel says: Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing. Like foxes in the deserts, your prophets were, O Israel (Ezek. XIII). Therefore the Lord on the mount sets forth the blessings only of the good, but in the plain he describes also the woes of the reprobate. Because as yet uncultivated listeners must necessarily be driven to good through threats and fears, but the perfect may be sufficiently invited by rewards. [Luke 6:27] -- But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Because He had said earlier what they might suffer from their enemies, now He shows in what way they themselves ought to act towards these same enemies. Many, however, think it is enough virtue not to hate enemies, but to love them is commanded as more than what human nature can bear, not seeing that Moses, Samuel, and Stephen prayed for their enemies, and David mourned his dead enemies. For the Lord does not command impossibilities, but perfection. Therefore, not faltering while there is time, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

[Luke 6:28] -- Bless those who curse you, pray for those who slander you. And the Apostle testifies that he and his like have done this, saying: We are reviled, and we bless. We are persecuted, and we endure it (I Cor. IV). But here the question arises, how this command of the Lord is not opposed to the fact that many imprecations against enemies, which are considered curses, are found in the prophets, such as: Let their table become a snare before them, and other things said there. The apostle John says: If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death, I do not say that he should pray about that. First, it must be seen that the prophets, by way of imprecation, sang what was to come, not by the will of the one wishing, but by the spirit of foreseeing, who are accustomed to predict future things in the figure of one who is imprecating, just as often they

sang of things to come in the figure of past time. Second, it must be understood from the words of the Apostle that there are certain brothers for whom we are not commanded to pray, since the Lord also commands us to pray even for our persecutors. This question cannot be resolved unless we admit that there are some sins among the brothers graver than the persecution by enemies.

That brothers, however, signifies Christians can be proven by many teachings of the divine Scriptures. Therefore, I believe the sin of a brother leading to death is when, after the knowledge of God by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, someone opposes the brotherhood, and against the very grace by which he was reconciled to God, he is agitated with the flames of envy. However, the sin not leading to death is if someone has not alienated love from a brother but has not exhibited the duties of brotherhood due to some weakness of mind. Wherefore the Lord also said on the cross: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke XXIII). For they had not yet become partakers of the grace of the Holy Spirit, nor had they entered the fellowship of holy brotherhood. And blessed Stephen prays for those who were stoning him, because they had not yet believed in Christ, nor were they fighting against that common grace. And for this reason, I believe, the apostle Paul does not pray for Alexander because he was already a brother, and had sinned to death, i.e., oppressing the brotherhood with envy. But for those who had not broken off love but had succumbed out of fear, he prays that they be forgiven. So he says: Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works; you too must beware of him, for he has greatly withstood our words (II Tim. IV). Then he adds, for whom he prays, saying:

At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them (Ibid.). This is the distinction of sins, separating Judas who betrayed from Peter who denied.

[Luke 6:29] -- If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. He does not say, do not strike the one who strikes you, although this is also a great commandment, but he says: prepare yourself to be struck again. This pertains to mercy, as understood especially by those who serve like fathers, or those who serve those dearest to them, such as sick ones, little ones, or the mentally disturbed, from whom they often suffer many things. And if their health requires it, they even offer themselves to suffer more, until the weakness of age or illness passes. Therefore, the Lord, the physician of souls, instructed those who would heal others, what else could he teach them but to bear with the infirmities of those whose health they wish to care for with a calm mind? For all wickedness comes from weakness of spirit, because nothing is more innocent than one who is perfect in virtue. Many know how to offer the other cheek, but do not know how to love the one who strikes them. But the Lord himself, who certainly first fulfilled the precepts he taught, did not offer the other cheek to the servant of the priest who struck him, but moreover

said: If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me? (John XVIII). Yet he was not unprepared in heart, not only to be struck on the other cheek for the salvation of all, but even to be crucified with his whole body.

[Luke 6:29] -- And from one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. What has been said about the cloak and tunic is not just about these, but should apply to all things which we say are temporarily ours by some right. For if this has been commanded about necessities, how much more fitting it is to disdain superfluities. [Luke 6:30] -- To everyone who asks of you, give. He says, to everyone who asks, not to everyone requesting everything, but to give that which you can give honorably and justly. For what if he asks for money to oppress the innocent? What if in the end, he asks for a disgraceful act? But without going into many details, which are innumerable, certainly that should be given which neither harms you nor another, as far as can be known or believed by man. And to whom you have justly denied what he asks for, the justice itself should be indicated, so that you do not send him away empty-handed. Thus, you will grant to everyone who asks of you, though not always that which is requested, you will grant. And sometimes you will grant something better, when you correct one asking for unjust things.

[Luke 6:30] -- And from him who takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. He speaks of clothing, house, estate, beast of burden, and generally of all money. However, whether this should apply to slaves is a great question. For a Christian ought not to possess a slave in the same manner as a horse or silver. Although it may happen that a horse is worth more than a slave, and something golden or silver far more. But if that slave is being educated or governed more correctly, honorably, and in a manner more fitting to God’s worship by you the master, than by the one who desires to take him away, I do not know whether anyone would dare say that he should be disregarded like a garment. For a man ought to love his fellow man as himself, upon whom the Lord of all commands also to love even enemies.

[Luke 6:31] -- And as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise. Because charity is patient, kind, it not only bravely endures the injuries of an enemy but also most graciously anticipates the kindness of a friend. For reciprocating the love of a lover, nature taught all. But to compel someone who does not love to love through benefits, only the perfect doctrine of Christ has taught. When He commanded us first to do to others as we would have done to us, He immediately confirmed the same notion more broadly, saying:

[Luke 6:32] -- And if you love those who love you, what grace is it to you? For even sinners love those who love them, etc. If even sinners, publicans, and pagans know how to be kind to their lovers, led by nature, how much more must you (he says) who, as your profession is nobler, so is the necessity that your virtue be more abundant, embrace with broader affection even those who do not love? Whence it

seems worthy of inquiry how, when the Lord testifies that those who love only those who love them, do good only to those who do good to them, lend only to friends, not only do not have perfect charity but are equated with sinners, that beloved disciple who leaned on Jesus' chest, concluding his Epistle on the love of God and neighbor, nowhere admonishes to love enemies, but absolutely says: Because if we love one another, God abides in us, and God's love is perfected in us (1 John 4). And if this troubles anyone, let them know that he did not omit the love of enemies, but also included them under the name of brothers and instructed that they should be loved with the perspective of brotherly love and that prayers should be offered for them. Certainly, that they may not always remain enemies but may come to their senses from the snares of the devil and be united to us in a genuine covenant.

Nor should it seem harsh that we say those who do not yet believe can be called brothers because of the hope that they will believe. For the same John is recorded to call them children of God. Because Jesus (he says) was about to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but that He might gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad (John 11). For as long as they are scattered, they are not yet children of God, but by coming together in one, they are made children.

[Luke 6:35] -- Nonetheless, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. For the love and benefit of mutual sinners, which is fruitless, now shows how these should be fruitfully done by the faithful. Indeed, anyone who receives borrows, even if he himself is not to repay. For when God restores more to the merciful, everyone who offers a benefit lends. Or if it is not pleasing to accept the borrower, except him who is to repay, it is to be understood that the Lord has embraced these two kinds of giving. For we either give as a gift what we give benevolently or we lend to someone who will repay. Because many (as it is written) have considered interest a gain and have made a nuisance of themselves to those who help them, many have not lent out of wickedness but feared to be defrauded without charge. The divine authority also remedies this weakness, saying: And lend, expecting nothing in return (Luke VI). That is, not fixing the hope of reward on man. For whether he repays what you have lent, or God repays what you did at His command, your inheritance will be eternal. For the sinner borrows and does not repay, but the righteous is merciful and lends (Psalm CXI). For those who bless him shall possess the land (Psalm XXXVI). And elsewhere when he said: The man who is gracious and lends, he shall be remembered forever (Psalm CXI).

[Luke 6:35] -- And your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. No greater reward can there be than for the sons of men, born of the earth, to become the sons of the Most High, who is in the heavens. Therefore, what he says: And you will be sons of the Most High, is to be understood from that rule by which John also says: He gave them power to become children of God. For there is one

who is naturally the Son, who does not know sin at all. But we, having received the power, are made sons, to the extent that we fulfill those things commanded by him. Hence the apostolic discipline calls it adoption, by which we are called into eternal inheritance, so that we might be co-heirs. Therefore, he does not say: Do these things because you are sons, but do these things, and you will be sons. When, however, he calls us to this through the Only Begotten, he calls us to his likeness.

[Luke 6:35] -- Because he himself is kind (he says) to the ungrateful and the wicked, etc. God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked, either by his manifold mercy, by which he even saves animals, granting temporal goods, or by the singular grace of heavenly gifts, by which he glorifies only the elect, inspiring them. But whether you understand this, or that, or both, it is done by the great goodness of God, which is commanded to us to imitate, if we wish to be sons of God.

[Luke 6:37] -- Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. I believe nothing else is commanded to us in this place, except that we interpret acts, whose intention is doubtful, in a better sense. For it is written: By their fruits you shall know them, this is said of manifest things, which cannot be done with a good intention, such as debaucheries, or blasphemies, or thefts, or drunkenness, and such things, about which it is permitted for us to judge. However, concerning foods, because any human food can be taken indifferently without fault of concupiscence with a good intention and simple heart, the Apostle prohibits us from judging those who ate meat and drank wine, by those who abstained from such foods. He who eats (he says) should not despise the one who does not eat; and he who does not eat should not judge the one who eats (Rom. XIV). This also pertains to what he says elsewhere: Do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will also illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts (I Cor. IV). Therefore, there are certain actions, which we do not know with what intention they are done, which can be done with both good and bad intentions, about which it is rash to judge, especially to condemn. The time will come, however, for these to be judged, when the Lord will illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and reveal the counsels of the hearts (Ibid.). There are two things, however, in which we should avoid rash judgment, when it is uncertain with what intention anything is done, or when it is uncertain what someone will become, who now appears either good or evil.

[Luke 6:37] -- Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. He commands us to forgive injuries, to give benefits, so that our sins may also be forgiven, and eternal life may be given to us. By this, brief but excellent sentence, he comprehensively concludes all the commands about dealing with enemies that he had given extensively. [Luke 6:38] -- A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. This is similar to what he says elsewhere: That they may receive you into eternal dwellings (Luke 16). For it

is not the poor themselves, but Christ who will give the reward to those who have given alms. Nevertheless, they are said to give it into the bosom because they provided the occasion for that merit, either by being pitiable in need or by being harsh in insolence, the stronger enduring them with patience and supporting them with kindness, and sometimes calling them sweetly to the faith.

[Luke 6:38] -- For the same measure you use will be measured to you. And the Apostle, urging the Corinthians to give alms, says among other things: ”But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9). It can also be understood of all things we do in mind, by hand, or with tongue. ”Because you will render to each,” he says, ”according to their deeds.” [Luke 6:39] -- He also gave them this parable: Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? The sense of this saying depends on the preceding, where he instructs about giving alms and forgiving injury. If (he says) anger against the violent and greed against the petitioner has blinded you, can you cure his fault with your corrupted mind? Or will not only he who committed the injury but also you, who could not endure it, be considered guilty? But if his wickedness finds you gentle and with a tranquil heart, both he will be moved to repentance, and you will be given the reward of patience, because you are endeavoring to lead the blind with a seeing eye—that is, a serene heart—towards the light.

[Luke 6:40] -- A disciple is not above his teacher. But everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. If the teacher, who could almost like God, did not seek to avenge his own injuries but preferred to make his pursuers gentler by enduring them, it is necessary that disciples, who are pure humans, follow that rule of perfection. [Luke 6:41] -- Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye? And this looks back to the previous point, where it was warned that a blind man cannot lead a blind man, that is, a sinner cannot chastise another sinner. For many, out of pride, or hatred, or love of money, or greed, or any other crime, judging these things as trivial or nothing, very harshly rebuke those whom they see disturbed by sudden anger, as if the eye of the mind has changed from its usual state of purity, like a speck suddenly falling in, and forgetful of the Lord’s precept, which says: ”Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned” (Luke 6), they prefer to blame and condemn rather than amend and correct.

[Luke 6:42] -- And how can you say to your brother: Brother, let me cast out the speck from your eye, when you yourself do not see the beam in your own eye? You do this with your brother if (for example), what he sins by anger, you criticize by hatred. And just as a beam is to a speck, so is hatred to anger. For hatred is anger long-standing, which with the passage of time has so grown that it is rightly called a beam. It can happen that if you are angry with a man, you wish him to

be corrected. But if you hate a man, you cannot wish him to be corrected. And therefore it is said to be impossible for one to remove the speck from his brother's eye who carries the beam in his own eye.

[Luke 6:42] -- Hypocrite, first take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. That is, first expel hatred from yourself, and then you will be able to correct the one whom you love. And it is truly necessary and troublesome to beware of the hypocrites, that is, the disguised kind, who take up accusations of all vices with hatred and envy, and also want to seem advisers. And therefore it is necessary to carefully and piously watch so that when necessity begins to blame or reprove someone, we first think whether it is a vice we never had or one from which we have already abstained. And if we never had it, let us think that we too are human, and could have had it. If indeed we had it and do not have it now, let common weakness touch memory, so that the reproof or correction is preceded not by hatred but by mercy. So that whether it works for his correction, for which we do it, or to his confusion (since the outcome is uncertain), we may be secure in the simplicity of our own eye. But if thinking to ourselves we find that we are in the same vice as the one whom we intended to reprove, let us not reprove or correct but rather sigh and invite him to strive together, not so that he conforms to us. Therefore, reproofs should be used rarely and with great necessity, yet in such a way that in these very matters we urge not ourselves but to serve God; for He is the end, to do nothing with a double heart, removing the beam of envy, malice, or disguise from our eye, so that we may see to take the speck out of our brother's eye.

[Luke 6:43] -- For a good tree does not produce bad fruit; nor does a bad tree produce good fruit. He continues against the hypocrite he began with. If you want, he says, to have true and not feigned righteousness, what you show in words also care to compensate with deeds, that being a good tree, you may be adorned with good fruits. For even if the hypocrite pretends, he is not good who does bad deeds. And if he reprehends the innocent, he is not therefore evil who does good deeds.
[Luke 6:44] -- For each tree is known by its own fruit. Which fruit it is by which a tree should be distinguished as good or evil, the Apostle shows, saying: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, quarrels, jealousies, wraths, strifes, dissensions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and such like. I forewarn you, as I have forewarned you, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continence (Galatians 5). Furthermore, almsgiving, or prayer, or fasting, are indeed properly fruits of the good, but sometimes are simulated and even usurped by the wicked. About these the Lord says: "For they have received their reward" (Matthew 6). And elsewhere: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7).

But for this reason, sheep should not hate their clothing, because wolves often hide themselves with it, showing one thing to deceive, and another to prey upon or kill those who cannot see the wolves under this sheep's clothing. Therefore, it is not this fruit by which he warns the tree should be known, but that which is shown above.

[Luke 6:44] -- For they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they harvest grapes from a bramble. I think thorns and the bramble are the cares of the world and the pricks of vices, about which it was said to the sinful man: Your land will produce thorns and thistles for you (Gen. III). But the fig and the grape, the sweetness of a new way of life which the Lord hungered for in us, and the fervor of love, which gladdens the heart of man. About which, with the Gospel shining, the voice of the turtledove resonates far and wide on the earth, the fig tree has put forth its figs, the flowering vines have given their fragrance (Cant. II). But figs are not gathered from thorns, nor grapes from a bramble. Because a mind still oppressed by the habit of the old man can pretend, but cannot bear the fruit of the new man. But if anyone wishes to object and say that Moses harvested a grape from a bramble when he received useful counsel from a gentile relative, and that they gathered figs from thorns, to whom it was said about the Pharisees: Do what they say, but do not do what they do (Matth. XXIII); let them know that just as a true vine sometimes reclines entangled in a hedge, bearing its fruit, the thorn does not keep its fruit for human use, so the words or actions of the wicked, if they sometimes profit the good, it is not the wicked who make this happen, but it is done by the providence of the supreme plan.

[Luke 6:45] -- A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil. The same treasure of the heart, which is the root of the tree. And what is brought forth from the heart, is the same as the fruit of the tree. Therefore, he who possesses the treasure of patience and perfect love in his heart, undoubtedly bringing forth the best fruits, loves his enemy, does good to the one who hates him, blesses the one who curses him, prays for the one who slanders him, does not oppose the one who strikes him or takes his things, gives to everyone who asks, does not demand back his own once taken, desires not to judge, not to condemn, corrects the erring patiently and lovingly, and other things which the Savior taught above. But he who keeps an evil treasure in his heart, hates his friend, curses the one who loves him, curses the one who blesses him, and performs other things contrary to the good treasure, as the Lord's word rebukes. So that he may not flatter himself in vain for what follows:

[Luke 6:45] -- For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. As if not the fruit of the tree, but leaves, that is, words alone, and not more so deeds, of either the true Christian or the hypocrite are sought, consequently the Lord adds: [Luke 6:46] -- Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? As

if he were saying in other words: Why do you boast of producing the leaves of correct confession, you who show no fruits of good works? From which the Apostle, separating the precious from the vile, that is, the good treasure from the bad, the good tree from the bad, the perfect disciple of a good teacher from a hypocrite, the seeing guide from the blind one, said: ”But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4). Therefore, through the speech of the mouth, the Lord signifies everything that we bring forth from the heart by deed, word, or thought, which are more than what is nakedly and openly said to men before his eyes. For it is also the custom of the Scriptures to put words in place of things. Hence the Psalmist says: ”Say to my soul, ’I am your salvation’” (Psalm 35). And Hezekiah: ”There was nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them” (Isaiah 39). Surely he revealed to the Chaldeans the secrets of things, not words. Likewise, the Apostle: ”And no one can say ’Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12). For as he meant to say, no one perceives the Lord Jesus by understanding, no one embraces him by will, except through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

[Luke 6:47] -- Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a house. The Lord has spoken much above about openly good or evil things and has discussed much about truly and hypocritically good things, by which three persons I think the whole class of humans is comprehended. He concludes his whole speech with a simultaneously terrifying and delightful parable, by which he likens some listeners of the word to the devil, others to Christ, each of whom never ceases building his own house in the subjection of men throughout the whole time of this age. Therefore, whoever hears and does Christ’s words will be compared to Christ. Because just as Christ builds, instructs, and governs one universal church for himself out of various persons, dedicating it sometime to eternal life, so too does the useful listener, according to his own measure, advance towards the heights through various pursuits of virtues, building for himself a dwelling of eternal habitation, in the present busily working to shape, polish, and bind together the stones with the glue of charity, but in the future rejoicing in the dedication with Christ.

[Luke 6:48] -- He who digs deep and laid the foundation upon the rock. When foundations are given in the plural in the mystery of the Church, they signify the teachers, of whom it is said: ”Her foundation is in the holy mountains” (Psalm 86). But when the foundation is given in the singular, Christ Himself is expressed as the teacher of teachers and the foundation of all foundations. Of whom it is said: ”For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3). Therefore, this foundation was laid not upon the earth, but upon a rock by the wise architect because the minds of sublime men were established by Christ, not in earthly desires, but in His invincible faith, hope, and charity. But the rock

(he says) was Christ (1 Cor. 10). He who digs deep because by the precepts of humility he tears out all earthly things from the hearts of the faithful, lest they serve God for some lowly or temporal advantage. Morally, the foundations of the house are the intentions of good conversation, which the perfect hearer of the word, having cleared away by Christian humility the debris of vain and fragile thoughts, firmly inserts in the fulfillment of Christ's commandments. This he does, namely, with Christ specially cooperating within himself, which Christ generally does in the universal Church. Rejoicing with the Psalmist: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, etc." (Psalm 40).

[Luke 6:48] -- However, when the flood came, it struck that house, and it could not move it. For it was founded upon a rock. The flood of the river, which elsewhere he calls the gates of hell, saying: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. XVI); it is the same thing of which he mentioned above: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they separate you, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil" (Luke VI). These firm corners of the Church, although they rush upon them, could not, however, destroy them. Because they rejoiced on that day and exulted, thus encouraging each other against the rage of the waves: "Behold, we bless those who have endured. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord" (James V). And again: "The river's rush makes glad the city of God, the Most High sanctified his tabernacle. God is in her midst; she shall not be moved" (Psalm XLV). But also, according to the laws of tropology, the separate houses of ours are daily beaten by either unclean spirits, or wicked men, or by the very restlessness of their own mind or body, and they are leaned as much as they trust in their own strength. But as much as they adhere to that invincible rock, they cannot be shaken.

[Luke 6:49] -- But he who has heard and not done is like a man building his house upon the earth without a foundation. The house of the devil, the world which is placed in the wicked one, is called not by the dignity of the Creator but by the magnitude of the delinquent. He builds it upon the earth because he drags those who obey him from the heavens to the earthly. He builds without a foundation because every sin does not have a foundation, so that it does not subsist by its own nature. For evil truly is without substance, which however in some way exists, coalesces in the nature of the good. Since the foundation is truly said to be from the bottom, we can also not unreasonably take the foundation as placed for the bottom. Just as hearing is said from the ear, and yet often the very ear itself is designated by the name of hearing. Therefore, just as he who sinks into a well is held by the bottom of the well, so the soul, as if it were standing in a certain place at the bottom when falling, would, if once fallen, retain itself in some measure of sin. But since it cannot be content with the sin in which it slips, while it is daily

cast into worse, it does not find a bottom in the well into which it has fallen, as is figured. Hence it is well said elsewhere:

When the wicked man has come into the depths of evils, he despises (Prov. XVIII). For he feigns to return because he despairs that he can be shown mercy. But when he sins more by despairing, he, as it were, removes the bottom from his well, lest he might find where he could be held. Therefore, he who hears the words of Christ and does not do them, whether initiated into the mysteries of Christ or wholly alien from Christ, because he builds himself badly, is like a foolish man of whom it is said: An enemy has done this (Matt. XIII).

[Luke 6:49] -- Into which the river crashed, and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great. It is clear that with the onset of any temptation, both the truly wicked and the falsely good soon become worse, until at last they slip into eternal punishment. Moreover, it should be said morally that each person is tempted by their own lust, drawn away and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Also, the extreme judgment at the last day can be understood through the rush of the river, when, both houses having been completed, all who exalt themselves shall be humbled, and those who humble themselves shall be exalted; and the wicked shall go, not only people but also angels who belonged to the devil’s house, into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25).

Chapter 7

[Luke 7:1] -- When he had completed all his words in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. Here it must be understood that, when he had indeed completed all his words in the hearing of the people, Christ entered Capernaum, meaning that he did not enter before these words had been finished, but it is not stated after what interval of time, once he had finished these discourses, he entered Capernaum. Within that interval, that leper was cleansed whom Matthew interposes in his own place, but this one anticipates beforehand. [Luke 7:2] -- Now a certain centurion's servant, who was sick and about to die, who was precious to him. Someone might ask, either piously to find out or impiously to criticize, on what grounds the evangelist said of a servant who was not dead but was healed that he was about to die. To which a brief response should be given that he truly was about to die if he had not been restored to life by the faith of his beseeching master and the compassion of Christ. In the same way, King Hezekiah was about to die according to a certain manner of human nature, when he heard the words of the true prophet: "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live" (2 Kings 20); but by the hidden judgment of divine providence, which has arranged all things in measure, number, and weight, he was to obtain fifteen more years of life through tears and prayers.

[Luke 7:3] -- And when he heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. By divine dispensation it happened that the elders of the Jews were sent to the Lord, and while they stood by, the one who was ill was healed, so that they would be without excuse if, while a Gentile man believed, they did not believe. However, it is asked how it agrees that Luke says the Centurion sent messengers, but Matthew narrates that he himself approached the Lord. But to those seeking piously, it easily becomes clear that Matthew, for the sake of brevity, said that he himself approached, whose desire and will were truly conveyed to the Lord, even though others were carrying it, also mystically commending to us what is written: Come to him, and be enlightened (Psalm 34). For because the faith of the Centurion, by which one truly approaches Jesus, he praised so much that he said: I have not found such great faith in Israel (Matthew 8), the prudent evangelist wanted to say that he himself rather approached Christ,

rather than those through whom he had sent his words. But furthermore, Luke revealed the whole event as it happened, so that from this we might be forced to understand how the other, who could not lie, said he had approached. For just as that woman who suffered from the issue of blood, although she touched the hem of his garment, yet more because she believed, touched the Lord, than those crowds by whom he was pressed, so also the centurion, the more he believed, the more he approached the Lord.

[Luke 7:5] -- For he loves our nation, and he himself built our synagogue. Those who report the synagogue built for them by the centurion clearly show that just as we call the Church, so also they were accustomed to call the synagogue, not only the assembly of the faithful, but also the place where they gathered, as we have also taught above. [Luke 7:6] -- Jesus, however, was going with them. Great is the loftiness of the Lord, who could heal by a word alone, but no less is the humility, who deigned to visit a sick servant. For as a powerful and kind one, he was going to save when asked, and in the midst of the journey, he saved by a word when requested, lest it be thought that he went bodily not due to a lack of power but as an example of humility. Elsewhere, he wished to come to heal the son of a royal official, lest he be seen honoring wealth. Here, lest it be thought he despised a servile condition, he agreed immediately to go to the centurion’s servant.

[Luke 7:6] -- And when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying: Lord, do not trouble yourself. For I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. Conscious of his Gentile life, he thought himself burdened more by the Lord’s condescension than helped, and he felt he could not host Christ, who, though endowed with faith, was not yet instructed in the sacraments. But because what our weakness does not dare to presume, divine grace knows how to give; and another centurion, who, like him, prefigures a believing people from the Gentiles, received the gift of the Holy Spirit by the merit of great faith and justice before he was baptized. And this one, though not yet catechized, earned both the praise of his faith from the Lord and the salvation of his servant. About whom it is beautifully said through allegory that Jesus was not far from the house, even if he did not dare to invite him under his roof, because salvation is near to those who fear him. And whoever uses natural law rightly, whereby he performs the good he knows, thereby comes closer to him who is truly good. But those who added crimes to the errors of paganism could be applied to what the Lord said elsewhere to the crowds flocking to him: For some of them have come from afar.

[Luke 7:7] -- For which reason I also did not consider myself worthy to come to you. And we, who from the Gentiles have believed, cannot come to the Lord ourselves, whom we are now by no means able to see in the flesh, but whoever has recognized the passions of our servitude, ought now through faith to approach Him who is seated at the right hand of the Father, now to send the elders of the Jews, that is,

the chief men of the Church, who have gone before us to the Lord, to earnestly beseech to acquire patrons, who, bearing witness for us, that we love the Church, and as much as it is in us, strive to edify it, interceding with the Lord for our sins and those of ours. [Luke 7:7] -- But say the word, and my servant will be healed. Great is the faith of the centurion, who professes the work of the word in Christ, and apt for the mysteries of our healing, who, if we knew Christ according to the flesh, but now no longer know Him (II Cor. V).

[Luke 7:8] -- For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. He declares himself a man and subject to authority, whether of a tribune or of a governor, yet able to command those lower, so that it is understood all the more that He, who is God, and powerful above all, has an innumerable host of angelic virtue to obey His commands. [Luke 7:8] -- And I say to this one: Go, and he goes, and to another: Come, and he comes, to my servant: Do this, and he does it. He wants to show that the Lord can accomplish what He wills not only through the coming of His body but through the ministry of angels. For either the infirmities of the bodies or opposing forces, to which man is often given over in weakness, must be repelled, both by the word of the Lord and by the ministries of angels. Alternatively. The soldiers and servants who obey the centurion are natural virtues. Many who come to the Lord bring with them no small abundance of these. Of which it is said in the praise of Cornelius the centurion: Because he was a just man and fearing God with all his house, doing many alms to the people, and always praying to God (Acts X).

[Luke 7:9] -- When Jesus heard this, he marveled. He marveled because he saw the centurion understand his majesty. But who had made that faith or understanding in him, except himself, who marveled at it? But if someone else had made it, what would he marvel at, who was prescient? Therefore, it must be noted that whatever the Lord marvels at, he signifies that we should marvel at, because we still need to be admonished in this way. For all such emotions, when they are said about God, are not signs of a disturbed mind, but of a teaching master. [Luke 7:9] -- And turning to the crowds following him, he said: Amen, I say to you, I have not found such faith even in Israel. He speaks not of all the past patriarchs and prophets, but of the people of the present age. For this reason, the centurion’s faith is preferred because they were taught by the warnings of the law and prophets, whereas he, having been taught by no one, believed spontaneously.

[Luke 7:10] -- And when those who had been sent returned home, they found the servant, who had been sick, well. The faith of the master is proven, and the health of the servant is restored. Therefore, the merit of the Lord can also benefit the servants, not only by the merit of faith but also by the zeal of discipline. Matthew explains this more fully when the Lord said to the centurion: Go, and let it be done for you as you have believed (Matthew 8), and the boy was healed from that hour. But it is the custom of blessed Luke to abbreviate what he has seen fully

explained by other evangelists, or even intentionally to pass over; what he knows to have been omitted or briefly touched upon by them, he elucidates more diligently. Mystically, as I have said, the centurion, whose faith is preferred to that of Israel, undoubtedly represents those chosen from among the Gentiles, who, as if surrounded by a centenary military contingent, are exalted in the perfection of spiritual virtues and seek nothing earthly from the Lord but only the joys of eternal salvation for themselves and their own. For the number one hundred, which is transferred from the left to the right, is customarily placed in the signification of heavenly life. Hence it is that Noah's ark is built in one hundred years, Abraham received the son of promise at one hundred years; Isaac sowed, and found a hundredfold in that year; the courtyard of the tabernacle is one hundred cubits long; in the one hundredth psalm, mercy and judgment are sung to the Lord, and other things of this kind. Therefore, men of such merit must pray to the Lord for those who are still oppressed by the spirit of servitude in fear, so that as they are gradually advanced to higher things, perfect love may cast out fear (1 John 4).

[Luke 7:11] -- And it happened afterward, he went to a city called Nain. Nain is a city of Galilee in the second mile of Mount Tabor towards the south near Endor, which is a large village in the fourth mile of the same mountain to the south.

[Luke 7:11] -- And his disciples were going with him, and a great crowd. As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother. This deceased, who was being borne out of the gate of the city with many looking on, represents a man lulled by the lethal funeral of sins, and this same death of the soul, no longer hidden in the chamber of the heart, but made known to many by the indication of speech or action, as if disclosed through the gates of his city. He is rightly said to have been the only son of his mother, because, although composed of many individuals, the one perfect and immaculate virgin is the mother Church, and each individual among the faithful rightly acknowledges himself as a child of the universal Church. For any chosen one, when instructed in faith, is a son; when instructing others, a mother. Was he not acting with maternal affection towards the little ones who said: My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you? (Galatians 4:19). The gate of the city through which the deceased was being carried, I believe to represent some bodily sense. For he who sows discord among brothers, he who speaks iniquity in high places, is dragged out dead through the gate of his mouth.

He who looks at a woman to lust after her (Matthew 5:28), produces the marks of his death through the gates of his eyes. He who willingly opens his ear to idle tales or obscene songs or slander, makes this gate of his soul a passage of death, and to those who do not guard their senses, he himself provides the way to death. I beseech you, Lord Jesus, to make all the gates of my city gates of justice, so that entering into them I may confess to your name (Psalm 118:19), and to your

majesty, frequently visiting it with heavenly ministers, let not the stench of a decaying corpse meet you, but let salvation occupy its walls, and praise its gates.

[Luke 7:12] -- And this woman was a widow, and a large crowd of the city was with her. Every soul acknowledges the Church to be a widow, which remembers herself redeemed by the death of her spouse and Lord. By divine command, a great crowd followed the Lord, and a great crowd the widow, so that upon seeing such a miracle, many witnesses, many would become praisers of God. [Luke 7:13] -- When the Lord saw her, he was moved with compassion for her and said to her, ”Do not weep.” He said, ”Cease to weep, as if for the dead whom you will soon see rising alive.” Here, mystically, the doctrine of Novatian is confounded, who proudly boasted about his own purity, tries to nullify the humble purification of penitents, and denies that Mother Church should be consoled by the hope of life to be restored, weeping over the spiritual extinction of her reborn ones. And beautifully, the evangelist testifies that the Lord was first moved with compassion for the mother, and so revived the son, so that in one instance he showed us an example of imitable piety and in the other, confirmed faith in his wondrous power.

[Luke 7:14] -- And he approached and touched the bier. But they who carried it stood still. The bier, on which the dead person is carried out, is the badly secure conscience of a desperate sinner. And those who carry it out for burial are either the unclean desires which drag a person to perdition or the poisonous flatteries of deceitful companions, which indeed augment sins while they elevate them with favors, and bury the sinners under contempt, like a heap of earth. Of these it is said elsewhere: ”Let the dead bury their own dead” (Matthew 8). Indeed, the dead bury the dead, when sinners seduce others like themselves with harmful favor, and with a heap of worst flattery, oppress them so that they may never have the hope of rising again. Therefore, the pallbearers stood still when the Lord touched the bier, because the conscience touched by the fear of divine judgment often restrains and returns upon itself, and hastily responds to the Savior calling it to life. Rightly follows:

[Luke 7:14] -- And he said, ”Young man, I say to you, arise.” And he who was dead sat up and began to speak, and he gave him back to his mother. Indeed, he who was dead sat up when a sinner revives with internal compunction. He begins to speak, showing to all who had lamented the sin the signs of returning life. He is given back to his mother when, by the decree of priestly judgment, he is restored to the communion of the Church. [Luke 7:16] -- And fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet has arisen among us. The more desperate the death of the soul that is recalled to life, the more numerous are those corrected by the same example. Consider the prophet David, consider the apostle Peter. The higher their rank, the graver their fall. However, the graver the fall, the more pleasing the piety of the one who raises them. And the greater the piety of the

Lord appeared in them, the more certain the hope of salvation appeared to all the penitent, so that all who hear may rightly say:

[Luke 7:16] -- Because God has visited his people. Not only by once incorporating his word, but also by always sending it into our hearts, so that we must rise. [Luke 7:18] -- And his disciples reported to John concerning all these things. Not with a sincere heart, I think, but driven by envy, John's disciples reported to him the virtues and miracles of Christ. For elsewhere they are found complaining to him thus: Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, behold, he is baptizing, and all are coming to him (John III). To which John then replied: A man cannot receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven, etc. And he clearly declares both that he is a mere man and that Christ is the Son of God. But since envy and jealousy remained, and could not be expelled, observe what the excellent teacher still did to correct them.

[Luke 7:19] -- And John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord, saying: Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another? Namely, so that at least through this occasion, by seeing the signs he was doing, they might believe in him, and, with the master asking, learn for themselves. Therefore he does not say, Are you the one who has come, but are you the one who is to come? And the meaning is: Command me, because being about to be killed by Herod, and to descend to the underworld, whether I should announce you even in the underworld, as I announced you to those above, or whether it is not fitting for the Son of God to taste death, and you will send another to these sacraments. [Luke 7:21] -- In that very hour, He cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and He granted sight to many who were blind. John had sent his disciples to ask: Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another? Christ demonstrated signs, not by directly answering what was asked, but to address the concerns of the messengers.

[Luke 7:22] -- "Go," He said, "and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and, which is no less important, the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Either the poor in spirit, or certainly the poor in wealth, so that there is no distinction in preaching between the noble and the common, the rich and the needy. These things display the rigor of the Master and attest to the truth of the Teacher, as all are equal in His sight who can be saved. As He said: [Luke 7:23] -- "And blessed is he who does not take offense at me." He reprimands John's messengers, who did not believe He was the Christ, for their scandal of unbelief, and He explains to John what he had asked, that God brings salvation, and the Lord delivers from death (Psalm 67). For, when so many signs and mighty deeds have been seen, no one could take offense but rather marvel. Yet the mind of the unfaithful bore a great scandal when they saw Him die even after so many miracles. So what does

it mean to say: ”Blessed is he who does not take offense at me,” except to openly indicate the rejection of His death and humility? As if He were plainly stating: ”Indeed, I do wondrous things, but I do not disdain to endure contempt. Therefore, since I follow in death, it is greatly necessary for people to be cautious, lest they despise in me the death they revere in signs.”

[Luke 7:24] -- And when John’s messengers had departed, He began to speak to the crowds about John. Because the surrounding crowd did not understand the mystery of the question and thought that John doubted Christ, whom he had pointed out, to clarify that John had not questioned for his own sake but for his disciples, He added to John’s praise. [Luke 7:24] -- Why did you go out into the desert? To see a reed shaken by the wind? He indicated this, not by asserting, but by denying. For a reed is, immediately upon being touched by the air, bent to one side. And what is designated by the reed if not a carnal mind, which, as soon as it is touched by favor or reproach, inclines to any direction? For if an aura of favor blows from a human mouth, it is glad, is exalted, and bends itself entirely to the grace. But if the wind of detraction bursts forth from where the breeze of praise was coming, immediately it inclines this as if to the other side to the force of fury. But John was not a reed shaken by the wind, for neither did favor make him gentle, nor did anyone’s anger make him harsh; neither did he know how to be elevated by prosperity nor to be inclined by adversity.

[Luke 7:24] -- But why did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft garments? Behold, those who are in precious clothing and in luxury are in the houses of kings. For John is described as having been clothed in camel’s hair. Therefore, he says, not those who endure hardships for God but those who avoid hardships and give themselves only to exterior things, seeking the softness and pleasure of the present life, do not fight for the heavenly kingdom but for the earthly one. Let no one, therefore, think that there is no sin in luxury and pursuit of clothing because if this were not a fault, by no means would the Lord have praised John for the roughness of his clothing. Although this, that John was said not to be dressed in soft garments, can be understood differently through symbolic interpretation. For he was not dressed in soft garments because he did not indulge the life of sinners with gentleness but rebuked them with the vigor of harsh invective, saying: ”Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Luke III).

[Luke 7:24] -- But why did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For the role of a prophet is to tell what is to come, not also to reveal it. Therefore John is more than a prophet, because he not only foretold by running before Him but also announced by showing Him. [Luke 7:27] -- This is he of whom it is written, ”Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way before you.” What is called angel in Greek, is called messenger in Latin. Therefore rightly, he who is sent to announce the divine judge is called an angel, so

that he maintains the dignity in name which he fulfills in deed. Indeed it is a high name, but the life does not fall short of the name. But also all who are rated by the name of priesthood are called angels, the prophet attesting, who says: ”The lips of a priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts” (Malachi II). And indeed every one of the faithful, as much as he is able, as much as he receives the infusion of supernal grace, if he calls back his neighbor from wickedness, if he takes care to exhort to good works, if he announces the eternal kingdom or punishment to the erring, when he expends the words of holy announcement, he indeed becomes an angel.

[Luke 7:28] -- For I say to you: Among those born of women there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist. Among those born of women, he says. Therefore he is preferred to those men who are born of women and from the intercourse of a man, and not to the one who is born of a Virgin and the Holy Spirit. Although in judgment he preferred John to all other prophets and patriarchs, and to all men, yet he equated the others to John. For it does not immediately follow that if others are not greater than him, he is greater than others, but rather that he has equality with the other saints.

[Luke 7:28] -- Whoever is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. This sentence can be understood in two ways. Either he called the kingdom of God what we have not yet received and in which we are not yet, whence at the end he will say: ’Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom’ (Matthew XXV); and where there are so many holy angels, any one of whom, being the least, is certainly greater than any holy and just man who bears the body which is corrupt and weighs down the soul (Wisdom IX). Or, if he intends the kingdom of God to mean the Church of this time, whose children are all from the foundation of the human race to the present, as many as could have been just and holy, surely the Lord signified himself, who at the time of birth was lesser than John, but greater in the eternity of divinity and the dominion of power. Therefore, according to the former explanation, it is thus distinguished: Whoever is least in the kingdom of God. And then it is added: is greater than he. According to the latter, thus: Whoever is least, and then it is added, in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.

[Luke 7:29] -- And all the people, hearing this, and the tax collectors, justified God, baptized with the baptism of John. God himself is justified through baptism, as men justify themselves by confessing their own sins, as it is written: ’Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified.’ And He is justified in that He is not refuted through obstinacy, but His gift is acknowledged by the justice of God. For the Lord is righteous, and He loves justices (Psalm X). Therefore, the justification of God is in this, that He appears to have transferred His gifts not to the unworthy and harmful, but to those made innocent and just through purification. David also says: ’Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may

be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged' (Psalm L). Therefore he who sins and confesses his sin to God justifies God, yielding to Him who prevails, and hoping for grace from Him. In baptism, therefore, God is justified, in which there is both confession and forgiveness of sins.

[Luke 7:30] -- But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not being baptized by him. What it says "for themselves" or "against themselves," signifies that he who rejects the grace of God acts against himself, or the counsel of God sent by themselves is rebuked by the foolish and ungrateful for refusing to accept it. Therefore, the counsel of God is that through the passion and death of the Lord Jesus, He decreed to save the world. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected this, spurning the secret and saving mystery, the beginnings of which had gone before in the preaching and baptism of John, but nevertheless unknowingly and unwillingly serving that same counsel, as the apostle Peter, speaking of the Lord, says to them: "This one, delivered up according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of lawless men, you nailed to a cross and put to death" (Acts 2).

[Luke 7:31] -- To what, then, shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace, calling to one another and saying: We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We wailed, and you did not weep. The generation of the Jews is compared to children sitting in the marketplace because they used to receive the prophets as teachers. Of whom it is said: Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies, you have perfected praise (Psalm VIII). And elsewhere, The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple (Psalm CXVIII), that is, to the humble in spirit. The Lord's marketplace or the synagogue, or even Jerusalem itself is where the laws of heavenly precepts were established. Where these children, according to Matthew, spoke to their equals, because they used to reproach their people daily with their own voices, they would not listen to the Psalms, first of David, nor after being corrected by the reproaches of the prophets. Whenever victory over the enemy was foretold or commemorated, they did not rise to the works of virtue. For by the word of dance is not meant the bodily gyrations of actors with swaying movements but the devotion of a zealous heart and the piety of agile members. Whenever the prophecies of calamities caused by future or present enemies resounded, and yet the listeners did not care to take refuge in remedies for penitence. The Psalmist sings:

Shout with joy to God our helper, rejoice to the God of Jacob, take up a psalm, and bring the tambourine (Psalm LXXX), and so forth. But what follows? My people did not listen to my voice, and Israel did not attend to me (Ibid.). The prophet cries out: Thus says the Lord: Turn to me with all your heart, in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments (Joel II). And again: My

belly, my belly! I writhe in pain. The heart of my thoughts troubles me. I will not remain silent, for my soul has heard the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war (Jeremiah IV). And a little later: For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are senseless children, without understanding (Ibid.).

[Luke 7:33-34] -- For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ”He has a demon.” The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ”Behold, a glutton, and a wine-drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.” Just as (he says) then, so now you will not accept either path of salvation. For when he says, ”We mourned, and you did not weep,” it pertains to John, whose abstinence from food and drink signified the mourning of repentance. But when he says, ”We played the flute for you, and you did not dance,” it pertains to the Lord himself, who, by partaking in food and drink with others, symbolized the joy of the kingdom. But they wished neither to humble themselves with John, nor to rejoice with Christ, saying he has a demon, and calling this one a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners. But what he adds:

[Luke 7:35] -- ”And wisdom is justified by all her children,” shows that the children of wisdom understand that righteousness does not consist in abstaining or in eating, but in the equanimity of enduring lack, and in not corrupting oneself with abundance through temperance, and in suitably partaking or not partaking of those things whose misuse, not their use, is to be condemned. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy. And because people are accustomed to take much pleasure in carnal feasts, he added, ”In the Holy Spirit.” Otherwise. ”Wisdom is justified by all her children,” that is, the dispensation and doctrine of God, which resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James IV), is proved just by his faithful. Among their number are those of whom it is said above: ”And all the people hearing, and the tax collectors, justified God. Amen.”

BOOK THREE. The most holy history of the penitent Mary, which is the third book of our work on Luke, even though it begins anew to lessen the effort of readers, nonetheless reflects the end of the second book in its connection of events. For since it had previously been said either from the perspective of the evangelist or the Lord Savior (as some have thought): And all the people who heard, and the publicans, justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. If you interpret this as being said by the Lord, it is understood to designate the people listening to John. If it was inserted by the evangelist, it remains to be understood as referring to those listening to the Lord Himself disputing about the greatness of John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not being baptized by him. The same Evangelist proceeds to confirm by actions what he had proposed with words, namely the justification of wisdom by all its children, that is, by both the righteous and those repenting after injustice, proving this with a very fitting example.

[Luke 7:36] -- He asked him, he said, one of the Pharisees, to eat with him. And he entered the house of the Pharisee, and sat down. And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner, knew that he was lying down in the Pharisee's house; she brought an alabaster jar of ointment. Alabaster is a type of white marble, marked with various colors, which they usually hollow out for ointment vessels, because it is said to preserve them best incorrupt. It is found around Thebes in Egypt and Damascus of Syria, whiter than others, the best being from India. Some say that this woman was not the same one who, at the approaching Lord's passion, anointed his head and feet with ointment, because this one washed with tears and wiped with her hair, and is clearly called a sinner; about that other one, nothing similar is written, nor could a prostitute immediately be deemed worthy at the Lord's head. However, those who investigate more diligently find this same woman, namely Mary Magdalene, the sister of Lazarus, as John narrates, having been engaged in the same act of service twice. Once indeed in this place, when first approaching with humility and tears, she merits the forgiveness of sins. For John, although he did not narrate how, as Luke did, points out this very Mary, commending her where he begins to speak about her brother raised from the dead. "There was a certain man," he said, "Lazarus, sick from Bethany, from the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

(Mary, however, was the one who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair [John XI]). Secondly, in Bethany (for it happened first in Galilee), she is found not as a sinner now, but as a chaste, holy, and devoted woman to Christ, no longer anointing just his feet but also his head. This also agrees beautifully with the rules of allegory. Because each faithful soul, first humbled at the Lord's feet and freed from sins, bends; then, as merits grow over time, with the joy of fervent faith, it perfumes, as it were, the Lord's head with the scent of spices. And the universal Church itself, in the present indeed, by celebrating the mysteries of his incarnation, which is designated by the name of feet, renders devoted service to its Redeemer. But in the future, perceiving both the glory of his humanity and the eternity of his divinity, because the head of Christ is God, simultaneously with the perpetual praises of confessions, it glorifies him as with genuine nard. Therefore, he said, she brought an alabaster jar of ointment.

[Luke 7:38] -- And standing behind him at his feet, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. And she kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. It is clear to everyone that the woman, previously engaged in illicit acts, had used the ointment for the scent of her own flesh. So what she had previously exhibited shamefully for herself, she was now offering praiseworthily to God. She had coveted earthly things with her eyes, but now, through penitence, she was weeping. She had used her hair for the composition of her face, but now she was wiping her tears with her hair. She had spoken arrogantly with her mouth, but kissing the feet of the Lord, she was now fixing this in the footsteps of her Redeemer. Therefore, as many pleasures as she had in herself,

so many holocausts she found of herself. She converted the number of her crimes into a number of virtues, so that everything she had served in guilt against God, she now served in penitence for God.

[Luke 7:39] -- But when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself: If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what kind of woman she is who is touching him, for she is a sinner. Behold, the Pharisee was truly proud in his own mind, falsely just, reproaching the sick woman for her sickness, and the physician for his assistance, while he, too, suffered from the wound of arrogance and was unaware of it. Hence, it is always necessary that when we see any sinners, we first lament ourselves in their calamity. For perhaps we have similarly fallen, or we can fall if we have not fallen. And although the discipline of masters should always pursue vices with the power of teaching, it is nevertheless important that we carefully discern, because strictness is due to vices, compassion to nature. But now let us hear with what sentence this proud and arrogant one is convicted.

[Luke 7:41] -- Two debtors, he said, were to a certain creditor. One owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. Not having them from where they could repay, he forgave both. Which of them therefore loves him more? Simon answering, said: I suppose the one to whom he forgave more. In which matter it is to be noted that while the Pharisee is convicted by his own judgment, as if a madman, he carries the rope by which he is bound. The goods of the sinful woman are enumerated, the evils of the false righteous are enumerated, when it is said: [Luke 7:44] -- I entered your house, you did not give water for my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss. But she, since she entered, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. After the enumeration, the sentence is added:

[Luke 7:47] -- Therefore I say to you, her many sins are forgiven, for she loved much. What do we believe love to be, if not fire? And what are faults, if not rust? Hence it is said: Her many sins are forgiven, because she loved much. As if it were openly said: She completely burned off the rust of sin, because she burns strongly with the fire of love. For as much as the rust of sin is consumed, as much as the sinner’s heart is thoroughly burned with the great fire of charity. Behold, the one who came sick to the physician is healed, but concerning her health others still fall ill; for it follows: [Luke 7:49] -- And those who sat at the table with him began to say within themselves: Who is this who even forgives sins? But the heavenly physician does not regard those who are sick, for he even sees some becoming worse from the medicine. He confirms the one he had healed by the sentence of his compassion, saying:

[Luke 7:50] -- Your faith has saved you; go in peace. Indeed, faith has saved, because she did not doubt she could receive what she asked for, but had already

received the certainty of hope from him from whom she sought salvation through hope. She is commanded to go in peace so that she might not be diverted from the path of truth to the way of scandal. These words may be understood historically, but let us now examine the mystical secrets. Whom does the Pharisee, presuming on false righteousness, represent if not the Jewish people? Whom does the sinful woman, coming to the feet of the Lord and weeping, signify if not the converted gentiles? Now, the Pharisee asked the Lord to dine with him because the same people who did not want to believe in His coming never stopped hoping for His arrival, indeed praying fervently that He might come, saying: ”Stir up Your power and come to save us” (Psalm 79). To dine with the Pharisee is, for the Lord, to accept the devotion of the believing people. Hence, elsewhere, directing his speech to the believing Samaritans, He says: ”I have food to eat that you do not know about” (John 4). And when they were mystified by His words, He explained: ”My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work” (Ibid.).

[Luke 7:36] -- And He entered, it says, the house of the Pharisee and reclined at the table. The house of the Pharisee is the guardianship of the law and the prophets, in which the Jewish people gloried as their continual abode of conversation. The Lord entered it because, appearing in the flesh temporally, He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. He reclined because the one who could not be comprehended in the height of His majesty assumed the humility of the form of a servant, by which He could be seen. [Luke 7:36-50] -- The woman who was a sinner in the city recognized that He was reclining in the house of the Pharisee, for the gentiles, previously bound by unclean deeds in worldly ways, learnt through the preaching of the apostles that God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law (Galatians 4). And in the house of the Pharisee, it is not the Pharisee but she who is justified, as the Jewish people adhered only to the letter of the law while we follow both the law and the grace of the Spirit. The Pharisee considers Jesus not a prophet because He receives sinners, while we acknowledge this one as even the true God who can justify sinners.

[Luke 7:37] -- But the woman brought an alabaster jar of ointment. What is expressed by the ointment but the aroma of good reputation? Thus Paul says: ”We are the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (2 Corinthians 2). If we do good works, by which we sprinkle the Church with the aroma of good reputation, what do we pour on the Lord’s body except ointment? But the woman stood behind His feet. We stood against the feet of the Lord, when bound in sins, we were held captive by worldly ways. But if after sins we turn to true repentance, we are now standing behind His feet, for we follow the footsteps of Him whom we once opposed. The woman washed His feet with her tears, a true act indeed if we also incline towards the lowest members of the Lord with the affection of compassion, if we share in the sufferings of His saints in tribulation, if we consider their sorrow as our own.

[Luke 7:38] -- The woman wiped the feet she had washed with her hair. Hair naturally abounds on the body. And what is the superfluous earthly wealth but resembles hair? It can be cut off without pain. We wipe the feet of the Lord with our hair when we extend that which is superfluous to us to His saints out of charity, so that our compassion inwardly feels pain, while our generosity outwardly shows it. The woman kissed the feet she had wiped. We also fully accomplish this if we diligently love those we support with our generosity, so that the need of our neighbor does not burden us heavily, nor does their sustained indigence become burdensome, so that when the hand gives what is necessary, the spirit does not grow slack in love. [Luke 7:38] -- The very mystery of his incarnation can also be understood by the feet, by which divinity touched the earth, because it assumed flesh. For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us (John 1). We therefore kiss the feet of the Redeemer when we love the mystery of his incarnation with all our heart. We anoint the feet with ointment when we praise the very power of his humanity with the good opinion of sacred eloquence. But the Pharisee sees this and envies. For when the Jewish people see that the gentiles preach God, their malice within melts away.

But our Redeemer recounts to him the deeds of the woman, as if listing the good of the gentiles, so that he may recognize in what evil he lies. I entered into your house, you did not give water for my feet. But she has washed my feet with tears. Indeed, water is outside us, the moisture of tears is within us. For that unfaithful people never offered for the Lord even those things which were outside themselves; but the converted gentiles not only poured out the substance of things for Him, but also their blood. You did not give me a kiss. But since she entered, she has not ceased kissing my feet. For a kiss is the sign of love. And that unfaithful people did not give a kiss to God, because they did not want to love God out of charity, to whom they served out of fear. But the called gentiles do not cease to kiss the footsteps of their Redeemer, because they constantly sigh in his love. You did not anoint my head with oil. If we understand the feet of the Lord to signify the mystery of the incarnation, appropriately through his head divinity itself is designated. Hence it is said through the Apostle: the head of Christ is God (1 Cor. 11). For the Jewish people professed to believe in God and not in themselves as in a man.

But it is said to the Pharisee, you did not anoint my head with oil, because he neglected to praise with due glory the very power of divinity in which the Jewish people professed to believe. But she has anointed my feet with ointment. For while the gentiles believed in his mystery of incarnation, they praised with great glory even his lowest parts. Also, the two debtors, about whom the parable of Simon is put forth, designate both peoples, namely the Jews and the gentiles, who, to one lender, that is, to their Creator, owed not material money, but the coin of their own salvation. For our Creator, whom He created to His image and likeness, elevated them almost with a loaned coin to be preserved. For the coin is usually formed with

the image and name of the king. But from everyone to whom much is given, much will be required; and from him to whom they much committed, they will ask the more. And indeed, the debt of both peoples is multiplied through the number five. [Luke 12:48] -- For there are evidently five senses, with which, while using them in this life, we must cultivate the image of our Creator that we have received: but the people to whom the Decalogue of the law was given through a servant ought to cultivate less. Much more, however, those to whom the grace of eternal life has been entrusted through the Son.

And therefore, the gain of this accumulates through the number ten, the gain of that through the number hundred, which no one doubts pertains to the signification of the kingdom of heaven, about to be given to the right. For it is not in vain that, with the same flexure of the fingers, the ten is figured on the left and the hundred on the right. Unless it is because both now the works of the Decalogue, which the letter could not complete, faith perfects, and in the future, it will render to each one according to his works, to those indeed who, according to the patience of good works, seek for glory, honor, and incorruption, eternal life. But, because neither by our own strengths, but by His grace we have been saved through faith, it is rightly said: He forgave both, not having anything whose due they could repay. And indeed, he loves more, to whom more is forgiven. But to whom less is forgiven, he loves less. Because whether you wish to understand the good of the knowledge we received to be perfected, or the foolishness to be avoided that we incurred, much more indeed is granted to the Church than to the Synagogue, which was once defiled by baser, as none of its teachers prohibited it, the filth of idolatry was corrupted, but where sin abounded, grace superabounded (Roman V), and it is now exalted with the higher proclamation of evangelical perfection. To which it is said:

Because many prophets and just men desired to see what you see, and did not see; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear (Matthew XIII). Certainly, in this place, it fits what the history of Numbers recounts, that with the spoils of the Medianites divided equally, those who came from the battle gave the five-hundredth head of their portion to the Lord, while the rest gave the fiftieth to the Lord. Because both he who keeps himself safe from hostile incursion by exercising virtue in the camps offers much, but he who, wielding the sword of the word, strikes down countless hosts of the adversary offers much more.

Chapter 8

[Luke 8:1] -- And it happened afterward, that he was traveling through cities and villages, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God, and the twelve were with him. We see in Christ's disciples the fulfillment of what we read said about that ancient people of the Hebrews. Nor is it surprising, because the same God of both Testaments will give blessing through the Son, who gave the law through the servant. As it says, a (mother) eagle provoking her young to fly, and hovering over them, spreads her wings, takes them up, and bears them on her shoulders (Deut. XXXII). For just as the young birds, newly born, cannot yet conquer the air by flying until they become feathered: so all the faithful, to be able to fly to heavenly things, must first clothe themselves with the wing of virtues in the nest of faith. Thus the apostles themselves, teachers of the faithful, gradually ascend to the heights, so that they can also preside over the teaching of others. First indeed the Lord teaches in synagogues, performs miracles, spreads renown everywhere, receives the crowds coming to him, heals, instructs. Hence he makes disciples, refreshes at the wedding of the bridegroom, leads them through fields, and defends them from the bites of serpentine Pharisees, like the young eagles with the stone brought against the bites of serpents. From these he chooses twelve, whom he names apostles, but he first teaches them in the presence of the crowd, giving to the usual benefits to the wretched along with the threatening crowd.

Afterward, however, as it has been read herein, preaching through cities and villages, he retains only those who might hear him more intimately, explaining to them alone the mysteries of the kingdom of God, which he had spoken to others in parables. As if finally, with the manifestation of his virtues, firm as with the protection of wings, he gives them the power to heal, and sends them out to preach the kingdom of God.

[Luke 8:2] -- And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, who is called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out. Mary Magdalene, she is the one whose silent name the next reading relates as one who repented. For the evangelist, beautifully and reverently, when he mentions her traveling with the Lord and ministering to him from her resources, reveals her

by her known name. But when he describes the sinful, yet repentant woman, he generally says ”woman”; for otherwise, the name of such great fame, by which she is venerated today in all the Churches, would be stained by the mark of ancient error. Of whom it is reported that seven demons went out, showing that she was full of countless, indeed all, vices. For because the ages proceed by the seven days, the number seven often in the Scriptures signifies universality. Hence also the prophet embraces the grace of the Holy Spirit with the distinction of seven virtues.

[Luke 8:3] -- And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward. If Mary suggests the Church cleansed from the filth of sins among the nations, why should not Joanna designate the same Church, once indeed subject to the worship of idols, but now redeemed by the piety of Christ? For any evil spirit, prompt to deceive the human race, while it acts for the kingdom of the devil, is almost like the steward of most impious Herod.

[Luke 8:3] -- And Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to him from their resources. It was a Jewish custom, nor was it considered blameworthy, according to an ancient custom of the nation, that women should minister food and clothing to teachers from their substance. Because this could cause scandal among nations, Paul mentions that he refrained: ”Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as the other apostles do?” (1 Cor. IX). They ministered to the Lord from their substance, that they might reap their carnal things, whose spiritual things they were reaping. Not because the Lord of creation needed food, but to show a type of teachers, that they should be content with food and clothing from their disciples. Susanna is interpreted as lily, or her grace. But better, if the female name is symbolized by the lily, I believe on account of the fragrant whiteness of heavenly faith and the golden ardor of inner love. Joanna, the Lord is her grace, or the Lord is merciful; namely because all that we live is from him. Maria, bitter sea, doubtless because of the implanted wailing of repentance, by which either Mary herself, or each of us, bewails the old vices, that we may deserve to attain eternal grace and splendor. Magdalene, tower; but better, just as from mountain comes montanus, so from tower comes turrensis. That is, to whom the Psalmist sings: ”You led me forth, for you have been my hope, a tower of strength from the face of the enemy” (Psalm LX).

[Luke 8:4] -- When a very large crowd was gathering, and people from the cities were coming to him, he spoke by way of a parable: ”A sower went out to sow his seed.” The Lord deemed it worthy to explain this parable himself so that it would be evident that he was speaking figuratively, and to teach that the meanings of things should be sought even in matters that he did not wish to explain himself. But because the Lord himself revealed that the seed, which represents the word of God, and the various types of soil, which signify the different hearts of the listeners, he

left us the duty of identifying the sower. There can be no better understanding than interpreting the sower as the Son of God, who went out to sow his seed, because he came forth from the Father's bosom, which creatures could not access, and came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Therefore, according to other evangelists, he is rightly said to have left the house, gone to the sea, and boarded a ship, indicating this by the movement of his body as well as by the progress of his speech.

[Luke 8:5] -- "And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it." What the Lord explained must be received with pious faith. But those things that he left silent for our understanding must be briefly mentioned. The seed that fell along the path perished due to a double injury: it was trampled underfoot by passersby and snatched away by birds. Thus, the path is a heart worn and hardened by the frequent passage of evil thoughts, so it cannot accept and germinate the word's seed. Therefore, whatever good seed reaches the vicinity of such a path is trampled upon by wicked thoughts and taken away by demons. These are called the birds of the air, whether because they have a celestial and spiritual nature, or because they fly through the air. [Luke 8:6] -- "And some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, it withered because it had no moisture." Here he correctly identifies the rocky ground as a hard and unyielding heart, unpenetrated by the plow of true faith. Moisture at the root of the seed is akin to the oil for the lamps of the virgins in another parable, meaning love and the perseverance of virtue.

[Luke 8:8] -- And others fell on good ground. And it yielded fruit a hundredfold. He speaks of fruit a hundredfold, perfect fruit. For the number ten is always taken for perfection, because the keeping of the law is contained in the ten commandments. For both the active and the contemplative lives are joined together in the mandates of the decalogue, because in it both the love of God and the love of neighbor are commanded to be kept. The love of God pertains to the contemplative, but truly the love of neighbor pertains to the active life. However, the number ten multiplied by itself rises to one hundred. Hence, a great perfection is rightly designated by the hundred, as it is said of the one who leaves his earthly possessions for the Lord: He will receive a hundredfold and will possess eternal life (Matthew XIX). For whoever despises temporal and earthly things for the name of God, both here receives the perfection of mind, so that he no longer desires those things which he despises, and in the next age he attains the glory of eternal life. Therefore the good ground is enriched with a hundredfold fruit, when a docile heart is endowed with the perfection of spiritual virtues.

[Luke 8:8] -- Saying these things, he cried out: He who has ears to hear, let him hear. As often as this admonition is interposed, either in the Gospel or in the Apocalypse of John, it is shown to us more attentively that what is said is mystical and should

be sought out by us more intently. [Luke 8:9] -- But his disciples asked him what this parable might be. No one should think that the disciples immediately asked the Savior about these things as soon as the parable was finished, but as Mark says, when he was alone, those who were with him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. [Luke 8:10] -- But to the rest (He spoke) in parables, so that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Mark says it thus: But to those who are outside, everything is done in parables (Mark 4). Therefore, let us also enter into the sanctuary of God with the disciples of Christ, so that we may understand the final mysteries of the kingdom of God. For those who approach His feet will receive from His teaching, saying with the Psalmist, ”Reveal our eyes, and we will consider the wonders of Your law” (Psalm 119). Rightly therefore do they hear in parables and in a riddle, who with closed senses of heart neither care to enter nor to know the truth, having forgotten the Lord’s command: ”He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11).

[Luke 8:12] -- But those by the wayside, they are the ones who hear. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, lest they should believe and be saved. Of this seed, Mark writes thus: ”These are they by the wayside where the word is sown. But when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes it away.” Matthew says it thus: ”Everyone who hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.” From this it is clearly taught that those sown by the wayside are those who hear the word but are not worthy to comprehend it, lacking faith, understanding, or even the attempt at any utility. Furthermore, on rocky ground and among thorns (as the Lord explains), are sown those who indeed approve of the usefulness of the word they have heard and taste desire for it: but so that they may not attain what they approve, the adversities of this life or its prosperities delay them, either by frightening them or by alluring them. Against both these damages, the one who received the seed took care to protect it by saying, ”Through the weapons of righteousness on the right and on the left; through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true” (2 Corinthians 6). So know that in these three types of ground are designated all those who do not do the word they have heard. From all these, however, the good ground is the one who keeps the received seed. The Jews and Gentiles, who are not even worthy to hear, are certainly excluded.

[Luke 8:14] -- But that which fell among thorns, these are they who have heard, and going forth are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection. It is remarkable how the Lord interpreted thorns as riches, since thorns prick, and these delight. And yet they are thorns because with the pricks of their thoughts they cut the mind, and when they lead to sin, they wound with inflicted injury. Which in this place, another evangelist witnessing, the Lord

does not call riches, but deceitful riches. For they are deceitful, which cannot remain with us for long. They are deceitful, which do not expel the poverty of our mind. Only those riches are true, which make us rich in virtues. It is also to be noted that when the Lord explained, He said that cares and pleasures and riches choke. For they choke, because with their importunate thoughts they strangle the throat of the mind: and while they do not allow the good desire to enter the heart, they as it were kill the entrance of vital breath. It is also to be noted that there are two things which He joins to riches, namely cares and pleasures, because indeed through care they oppress the mind, and through abundance they loosen it: for by contrary action, they make their possessors both afflicted and unstable. But because pleasure cannot agree with affliction, indeed at one time they afflict through the anxiety of their care, and at another through abundance they soften into pleasures.

[Luke 8:15] -- But that on the good ground, these are they who, having heard the word in a good and excellent heart, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience. Good ground (as we have said before) is contrary to all three varieties of bad ground, both by willingly receiving the seed of the word and by keeping what it receives amidst adversities and prosperities patiently unto the times of fruit. Differently. Good ground yields fruit through patience, because indeed no good things that we do, if we do not even endure the evils of our neighbors with equanimity. For the higher anyone progresses, the more he finds in this world what he must bear more difficultly. For while the affection of our mind withdraws from the present world, the adversity of the same world increases. Hence it is that we see many both doing good and yet sweating under the heavy burden of tribulations. But according to the voice of the Lord, they yield fruit through patience. For when they humbly receive chastisements, they are afterward sublimely received to rest after the chastisements. But that which is said according to Matthew: And bears fruit, and yields some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty, thirty refers to marriage. For even the conjunction of the fingers, as if embracing and uniting with a soft kiss, represents the husband and the wife. Sixty refers to widows, because they are placed in distress and tribulation. Hence they are also pressed down on the upper finger.

And the greater the difficulty in abstaining from the enticements of formerly experienced pleasure, the greater the reward. But the hundredfold number, I ask you, reader, to note diligently, is transferred from the left hand to the right, with the same fingers, but not the same hand, in which on the left hand wives and widows are signified, making a circle, expresses the crown of virginity. Differently. The thirtieth fruit brings forth the word, which builds the faith of the Holy Trinity. The sixtieth, which teaches the perfection of work. For there are six days in which it is necessary to work. The hundredth, which preaches eternal life at the right hand of the kingdom.

[Luke 8:16] -- No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed; instead, they put it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. Because he had previously said to the apostles, ”To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables,” he now shows that through them the same mystery would eventually be revealed to others as well, and the hearts of all those who would enter the house of God would be illuminated by the flames of faith. Through these words, he also symbolically teaches the confidence to preach, so that no one would hide the light of knowledge they know out of fear of worldly hardships. For by the name of vessel and bed, he designates the flesh; but by the name of lamp, he designates the word. Whoever conceals it out of fear of worldly hardships, as I have said, indeed places the flesh ahead of the manifestation of truth and thus covers the word which they are hesitant to preach. He puts the lamp on the lampstand, who subjects his body to the service of God, so that the preaching of truth is above and the service of the body is below, and through the very service of the body, the doctrine shines more excellently, which is insinuated in good works through bodily offices, that is, through the voice and tongue and other bodily movements. Therefore, he puts the lamp on the lampstand when the Apostle says: ”Thus I do not fight like one beating the air, but I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. IX).

[Luke 8:17] -- For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be known and come to light. Do not (he says) be ashamed of the Gospel of God, but among the darkness of persecutors, lift the light of the word above the lampstand of your body, retaining with a steadfast mind that day of final retribution, when God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will reveal the thoughts of hearts (1 Cor. IV). Then also you will receive praise from God, and punishment awaits the adversary of truth for eternity. [Luke 8:18] -- Therefore, see how you hear. He earnestly teaches us to listen to the word so that we may continuously ponder it in our own hearts and be able to give out to others as well.

[Luke 8:18] -- For to him who has, it will be given. And whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him. With full intention (he says), pay attention to the word that you hear. Because whoever has a love for the word, it will be given to him and the understanding of what he loves. But whoever does not have a love for hearing the word, even if he thinks himself clever by natural talent or literary exercise, will not enjoy the sweetness of true wisdom. And even if it seems to be said particularly about the apostles, to whom, endowed with love and faith, it was given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, and about the faithless Jews, who seeing did not see, and hearing did not understand, that is, they would lose the letter of the law in which they gloried, it can nevertheless be understood generally, because often an ingenious reader, through neglect, deprives himself

of wisdom, which a simple but diligent person tastes by striving for it. Therefore, often a lazy person receives talent, so that he may be punished more justly for his neglect, because he despises knowing what he could have obtained without labor. And sometimes a diligent person is burdened with slowness of understanding, so that he finds greater rewards in return, the more he labors in the effort of discovery.

[Luke 8:19] -- However, his mother and brothers came to him and could not reach him because of the crowd. The brothers of the Lord are neither the sons of the blessed ever-virgin Mary according to Helvidius, nor the sons of Joseph from another wife according to some, but rather they should be understood to be his relatives, as we have discussed above. Surely, when the Lord, requested by his mother and brothers, refrains from leaving his duty of preaching the word, he is not rejecting the obligations of maternal piety, for the commandment is, "Honor your father and mother" (Exodus 20); but he demonstrates that he owes more to his Father's mysteries than to maternal affections, recommending to us by example what he commands by word, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10). He does not disdain his brothers out of disrespect, but by preferring spiritual work over carnal kinship, he teaches that the bond of hearts is more religious than that of bodies. Mystically, however, this reading is in harmony with the higher one, where it is said about the Jews who only look at the letter of the law: "And whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." For the mother and brothers of Jesus represent the synagogue from whose flesh he was born, and the people of the Jews: who, while the Savior is teaching within, coming cannot enter because they neglect to understand his spiritual teachings. For the crowd preoccupying indeed enters his house, because while Judea was differing, the gentiles flocked to Christ, and they drank in the internal mysteries of life, the closer in faith, the more capacious in mind. Thus, the Psalm says: "Come to him, and be enlightened" (Psalm 34).

[Luke 8:20] -- And it was announced to him: "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." The word is inside, the light is inside; whence above: "So that those entering may see the light." So if even parents standing outside are not recognized, and perhaps they are not recognized as an example for our sake, how will we be recognized if we stand outside? For those standing outside wish to see the Lord, who not seeking a spiritual sense in the law, have stationed themselves outside in the guardianship of the letter, and as if they force Christ to go out to teach carnal things, rather than consent to enter to learn spiritual things. [Luke 8:21] -- He answered and said to them: My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it. The whole perfection of heavenly life is comprised in these two things, namely, to hear the word of God and to do it. Hence the Lord above, expounding the parable of the sower, said that they who receive the word only by hearing are the bad ground; but the good ground are those who with a good and excellent heart retain the word which they

hear and bring forth fruit with patience. Those who are called the mother of the Lord, because they daily give birth to Him either by example or by word in the minds of others, are also his brothers when they also do the will of His Father who is in heaven.

[Luke 8:22] -- And it came to pass on one of those days, that he went into a ship with his disciples, and he said unto them: Let us go over to the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. In this voyage, the Lord deigns to show both natures of His one and the same person, in that He, as a man, sleeps in the boat, but as God, with a word, He calms the fury of the sea. Furthermore, according to the allegory, the sea or lake which He desires to cross with His own symbolizes the dark and bitter tides of this present world. However, the boat they board is best understood as the tree of the Lord's passion. By the advantage of which, all the faithful, assisted, having passed through the waves of the world, obtain the habitation of the heavenly homeland as the security of a stable shore. That the Savior Himself boarded a boat with the disciples means elsewhere, as He reveals when He, foretelling the mystery of His passion and resurrection, immediately said to everyone: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

[Luke 8:23] -- As they were sailing, He fell asleep. Christ fell asleep while the disciples were sailing because, as the faithful tread the world and contemplate in their minds the rest of the future kingdom, and, either by the favorable breath of the Holy Spirit or by their own arduous rowing efforts, cast behind them with zeal the infidel pomp of the world, suddenly the time of the Lord's passion arrived. Hence, Mark rightly attests that this happened at the imminent hour of night to signify not only the Lord's sleep but also the very hour of the declining light. [Luke 8:23] -- And a storm of wind descended on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. As the Lord was ascending the stern of the cross, where He would embrace the sleep of death, the waves of blasphemous persecutors, stirred by demonic agents, rise up. Yet, it is not His patience that is disturbed by these waves, but the weakness of the disciples is shaken, terrified, and endangered.

[Luke 8:24] -- They approached and woke Him up, saying: Master, we are perishing! The disciples awaken the Lord to prevent them from perishing due to the savagery of the waves while He sleeps, for they who had seen His death sought His resurrection with the greatest of desires, so that if He were to linger longer in the sleep of the flesh, their minds would perish forever in spiritual death. Hence, it rightly follows: [Luke 8:24] -- But He, rising, rebuked the wind and the raging water, and they ceased, and there was calm. Rising, He rebuked the wind, because, having celebrated the resurrection, He struck down the pride of the devil when He destroyed the one who had the power of death through His own death. He also made the raging water cease after rising, because by emerging from the grave,

He quashed the insane rage of the Jews who had shaken their heads crying: If He is the Son of God, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. Here it should be noted literally that all creatures perceive the Creator. For those whom He rebukes and commands perceive the one giving commands, not by the error of heretics who think all things are animated, but by the majesty of the Creator, for what is insensible to us is sensible to Him.

[Luke 8:25] -- But he said to them: Where is your faith? They are rightly reproved who feared with Christ present, since indeed he who clings to him cannot perish. Similar to this is that after the sleep of death, appearing to the disciples, he reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him risen. And again he said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and so enter into his glory (Luke 24)? As if by a metaphor of the ship he were saying: Was it not necessary for the Christ to be asleep, while the waves were tossing the ship in which he was resting here and there, and so with the swelling heaps of the abyss immediately calmed, to reveal to all the power of his divinity?

[Luke 8:25] -- Those who feared were amazed, saying to one another, ”Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the sea, and they obey him?” Matthew writes thus: ”But the men were amazed, saying, ’What sort of man is this?’ etc.” Therefore, it was not the disciples, but the sailors and others who were on the ship who marveled. However, if anyone contentiously insists that those who marveled were the disciples, we will rightly respond that men are called those who had not yet known the power of the Savior. And we too, when individually imprinted with the sign of the Lord’s cross, set out intending to leave the world, undoubtedly board the ship with Jesus, attempting to cross the lake. But He who neither slumbers nor sleeps, always guarding Israel (Psalm 121), although He seems to slumber for us often while sailing amidst the roaring of the sea, when amidst the efforts of virtues, or the repeated assaults of unclean spirits or wicked men, or the very rush of our thoughts, the splendor of faith grows dim, the height of hope fades, the flame of love cools. However, in such storms, it is necessary to flee to that helmsman, to diligently rouse Him who does not serve but commands the winds. He will soon quell the tempests, restore tranquility, and grant the harbor of salvation.

It is pleasing in these circumstances to briefly examine the variety of apostolic voyages, to see how the mixture of good and bad people either helps to carry out their secret mission or causes disturbance. Behold indeed, to begin with the more perfect ones, after the solemnities of the Lord’s resurrection are celebrated, seven chosen disciples board a ship to fish, and because they were not far from the shore of eternal rest, but were, as it were, about two hundred cubits away, that is, they detached their minds from the world as much as double love demanded, since Peter

had already stripped himself of secular affairs. They deserved already to see the Lord standing on the shore of mortality, already to dine with Him, already to receive their nets filled with the mystical number of large fish as morning light from above was dawning, yet without them being torn, and to draw them out from the lower waves of the world.

Elsewhere, Peter, as read above, at the Lord's command, lets down the nets for a catch and captures a multitude of fish. But because he himself was still of a fragile mind, so that trembling he would say to Christ, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5), the nets were then torn, and if the companions had not helped, the ships would have even been submerged. Again, in this place, the disciples board a ship with the Lord, they go to the sea, but because Judas was among them, it is said that the Lord slept in the stern, which was the seat of the one steering, and the wind and sea raged outside. For although many merits of the disciples were sailing there, at that time, the treachery of the traitor was still agitating it: and those who were firm by their merits were troubled by the merits of another.

Likewise, Paul, sailing with brothers to Jerusalem, hastening to celebrate there the day of Pentecost and the joys of the Holy Spirit, traverses everything on a straight course. But when relegated from Jerusalem to Rome, because he travels with unbelievers, the sea rages, the winds oppose, the rain threatens, cold wearies, the stars are obscured, land is denied, wheat is thrown into the sea, the ship's equipment is taken away, finally the ship itself, dashed against the sands, is dissolved. Nature, which they do not recognize, they seek swimming to land. And those who had undertaken the waves of the world burdened with desires, with the world itself opposing them, scarcely escape naked. In accordance with what the same apostle says: "But he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). [Luke 8:26] -- And they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. Gerasa is a notable city of Arabia beyond the Jordan, adjacent to the mountain Gilead, which was held by the tribe of Manasseh, not far from the lake of Tiberias, into which the swine were cast down. However, it signifies the nation of the Gentiles, which, after the sleep of the Passion and the glory of His Resurrection, the Savior deemed worthy to visit by sending preachers. Hence, it is fitting that Gerasa or Gergesa (as some read) is interpreted as 'casting out the colonist' or 'the stranger approaching.' Specifically indicating that the people of the Gentiles both cast out from their hearts the enemy who wickedly occupied it, and those who were far off were made near by the blood of Christ.

[Luke 8:27] -- And when He had come out onto the land, a certain man who had a demon for a long time met Him. This man represents the people of the Gentiles, who for many times, that is, from nearly the very beginning of the world's birth, were vexed by a furious madness. [Luke 8:27] -- And he was not clothed with a

garment. Because he lost the covering of his nature and virtue. For, indeed, our first parents, after sinning, are read to have been stripped of the garment of faith and charity. The prodigal son was clothed with this first robe after he returned repentant to the father. [Luke 8:27] -- Nor did he stay in a house, but in tombs. Because he did not rest in his conscience but delighted in dead works, that is, in sins. For what indeed are the bodies of the faithless if not certain sepulchers of the dead, in which not the word of God dwells, but the soul, dead in sins, is enclosed?

[Luke 8:28] -- When he saw Jesus, he fell down before Him and cried out with a loud voice, saying, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" How great is the madness of Arius to believe that Jesus is a creature and not God, when even the demons believe and tremble at Him as the Son of the Most High God! What impiety of the Jews to say that He cast out demons by the prince of demons, when the demons themselves confess that He has nothing in common with them? Moreover, that which they then clamored in fury through the demoniac, they do not cease to say and confess afterwards in the shrines of idols, namely, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Most High God, and that they have nothing of peace or association with Him. [Luke 8:28] -- "I beg you, do not torment me." For He commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For many times it had seized him. The enemy of human salvation considers it no small torment to cease harming the man; the longer he has possessed him, the more difficult it is to agree to let him go. Hence, we must strive with the utmost effort that if ever we are overcome by the devil, we immediately strive to avoid his snares, lest if we resist his rule too late, he might be expelled more laboriously at some point.

[Luke 8:29] -- And he was bound with chains and shackles. Chains and shackles signify the severe and harsh laws of the Gentiles, by which in their republic sins are also restrained. [Luke 8:29] -- And having broken the bonds, he was driven by the demon into the desert. For having even transgressed those laws, he was led by desire to such crimes as already exceeded common custom.

[Luke 8:30] -- But Jesus asked him, saying: What is your name? And he said: Legion, because many demons have entered into him. He does not inquire the name as if ignorant, but so that the confessed fury endured in front of witnesses, the power of the healer might more gratiously shine forth. But also priests of our time, who know to cast out demons through the grace of exorcism, are accustomed to say that those suffering cannot otherwise be cured unless they can confess everything that they have endured from unclean spirits in sight, hearing, taste, touch, and in any other sense of body or mind, waking or sleeping. And especially when, appearing either to men in the form of women or to women in the form of men, the demons, whom the Gauls call Dusii, falsely pretend by monstrous miracle to seek and accomplish intercourse with the human body. They command the name of the demon by which he has said he is known, and the bonds of their mutual pact of love by which they

have sworn, to be exposed in confession. This matter, very much like a lie, is so true and well known by the testimony of many, that a certain priest, my neighbor, related to me that he began to cure a certain nun afflicted by a demon, but as long as the matter was hidden, he could achieve nothing with her.

However, once she confessed which phantom tormented her, he soon drove it out with prayers and other necessary purification methods, and healed the woman's body, afflicted with sores contracted by the demon's touch, with blessed salve as a medical remedy. But while one of the sores, deeply embedded in the side, could not close without continuously opening, he received advice from the very same woman he sought to heal on how she could be healed. "If," she said, "you sprinkle consecrated oil for the sick on the same wound and anoint me thus, I will immediately be restored to health. For I once saw in spirit, in a certain distant city I have never seen with bodily eyes, a certain girl suffering from a similar distress, being healed in this manner by a priest. He did as she suggested, and immediately the sore accepted the remedy it had previously resisted. I have cared to explain these things against the frauds of demons briefly, so that you may understand why the Lord did not ask for the name of the spirit He was going to expel in vain. But that many demons are remembered to have entered the man signifies that the people of the nations are enslaved not to one, but to innumerable and diverse idolatries. To which it is written, that the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one (Acts IV). Hence it is well that the unity of tongues was scattered in Babylon, and the variety of tongues was united in Jerusalem;

that confusion is interpreted as vision of peace: because evidently, among many tongues and nations, the chosen ones are confirmed in one faith and piety by peace, while the reproved are confused by even more sects than tongues, being dissociated.

[Luke 8:31] -- And they begged him not to order them to go into the abyss. The demons knew that eventually, through the advent of the Lord, they would be sent into the abyss, not by foretelling the future themselves, but by recalling the words of the prophets spoken about them, and thus they thought that the Lord's advent, whose glory they marveled at, would tend to their own destruction. [Luke 8:32] -- Now there was there a herd of many pigs, feeding on the mountain, and they begged him to permit them to enter them: and he allowed them. He permitted this because he granted the demons' request, so that the destruction of the pigs would provide an occasion for salvation to humans. For the shepherds, seeing these things, immediately reported them to the city. Let the Manichaean be ashamed. If the souls of men and beasts were of the same substance and from the same author, how could two thousand pigs be drowned for the salvation of a single man? Nonetheless, in their destruction, unclean men are figuratively represented, who lack voice and reason, who feed on the mountain of pride, and delight in filthy acts.

Indeed, demons can dominate such individuals through the worship of idols. For unless someone lives like a pig, the devil will never gain power over him, or even if he receives it, it will only be for testing, not for destruction.

[Luke 8:33] -- Therefore, the demons went out from the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. This signifies that with the Church now glorified, and the people of the Gentiles liberated from the dominion of demons, they who refuse to believe in Christ conduct their sacrilegious rites in hidden places, submerged in blind and profound curiosity. And it should be noted that the unclean spirits would not have gone even into the pigs unless the kind Savior himself had granted their petition, who certainly could have sent them into the abyss. He wanted to teach us a necessary lesson, namely that we should know that they can harm humans even less by their own power, who could not even harm any animals. However, this power, the just and good God can give to us with hidden justice, but not unjustly.

[Luke 8:34] -- When they saw what had happened, those who were feeding the pigs fled and reported it in the city and in the villages. That the pig herders, fleeing, announced these things indicates that even some leaders of the impious, although they flee from the Christian law, nevertheless preach its power among the nations, in awe and wonder. [Luke 8:35] -- Those who came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, at His feet, and they were afraid, etc. This signifies the multitude delighted with ancient sweetness, honoring indeed, but unwilling to endure the Christian law, while they say that they cannot fulfill it, yet admiring the faithful people healed from their formerly lost conduct. For to sit at the feet of the Lord is to gaze upon the footprints of the Savior, supported by the rational examination of someone’s mind, which he should follow. To resume being clothed is to be adorned with the studies of virtues, which he had lost by being deceived.

[Luke 8:37] -- And all the multitude of the region of the Gerasenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. The Gerasenes, conscious of their fragility, judged themselves unworthy of the Lord’s presence, not grasping the word of God, nor being able to sustain the weight of wisdom with their still infirm mind. This is also read to have happened to Peter himself, when he saw the miracle of the fish, and the widow of Zarephath, who perceived she was blessed by hosting the blessed Elijah, nonetheless thought herself burdened by his presence. ”What have I to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquities to remembrance, and to kill my son?” (III Kings [I Kings] XVII).

[Luke 8:37] -- But he himself, boarding the ship, returned. He had said above that the Lord, having left his parents, boarded the ship, and with the waves calmed together with the wind, immediately upon disembarking, he cured the demoniac who met him. By this, we taught that leaving behind the people of Judea, from

which he took his origin according to the flesh, he provided for the salvation of the Gentiles after the storm of his passion had passed. Having done these things, he returned to his homeland, because blindness has happened in part to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in; and thus all Israel will be saved (Rom. XI). He boarded the ship, yet neither is he seized by sleep, nor is the ship struck by a storm, because Christ, rising from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has dominion over him (Rom. VI). However, his trophy of passion and the glory of resurrection will be proclaimed to the believing tribes of Judea, and when the preacher of his death, by which he conquered death with the standard, begins to be believed by the Hebrews, he will return to the homeland with the ship in which he had slept, as if repeating.

[Luke 8:38] -- And the man from whom the demons had gone out begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ”Return to your home, and tell how much God has done for you.” These words can be rightly understood from the Apostle’s sentiment when he says, ”My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is necessary on your account” (Philippians 1). Thus, one should understand that after the forgiveness of sins, he must return to a good conscience and serve the Gospel for the salvation of others as well, so that afterward he may rest with Christ. Otherwise, if someone wishes prematurely to be with Christ, he may neglect the ministry of preaching, suited for the redemption of his brothers. [Luke 8:38-39] -- As for Matthew saying that two were cured from the legion of demons, while Mark and Luke mention only one, understand that one of them was a more notable and famous person, whom that region especially grieved for and whose salvation they greatly desired. The two evangelists, wanting to signify this, judged that only this one should be commemorated because the fame of this deed had spread more widely and clearly. But even in the highest concord of allegory, it is concordant because just as one possessed by a demon represents the Jews, so also two represent the types of Gentile peoples not inappropriately. For while Noah had three sons, only one’s family was taken into possession by God: from the other two, diverse nations who served idols were born.

[Luke 8:40] -- And it happened, when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And I said above that at the end of the age the Lord will mercifully return to the Jews and will be gladly received by them through the confession of faith. For the fact that they were all waiting for him is certainly what the prophet speaks to the synagogue: ”You will wait for me many days, you will not be unfaithful, and you will not belong to another man” (Hosea 3). Now indeed, neither subjected to the man Christ nor committing idolatry, in the long expectation of her former spouse, that is, the Lord Christ, she awaits the embrace to come by grace. [Luke 8:41] -- And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. To the earlier reading, in which we interpreted

about the rejection of the synagogue and the faith of the Church, and again about the restoration of the synagogue, is consequently added the dying daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. As the Lord was hastening to raise her, that woman with the hemorrhage intervened, obtained health, and thus by anticipating, she was the first to obtain salvation. For Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God (Psalm LXVII). And when the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then all Israel shall be saved. Therefore, the ruler of the synagogue is understood to be none other than Moses himself. Hence, Jairus is well called, that is, ”illuminating,” or ”illuminated,” because he receives the words of life to give to us and by these he illuminates others, and he himself is illuminated by the Holy Spirit, by which he can write or teach vital instructions.

[Luke 8:41] -- And he fell at the feet of Jesus, begging him to enter his house. If the head of Christ is God, the feet consequently are the incarnation, by which He touched the land of our mortality. Therefore, the ruler of the synagogue fell at the feet of Jesus, because the lawgiver, with the whole lineage of the fathers, acknowledged that Christ appearing in the flesh was to be preferred far above himself in the glory of dignity, affirming the apostle’s statement with diligent devotion: Because the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Cor. I). He begged Him to enter his house, because with continuous prayers of joy he desired to see His coming. And my soul (says the Prophet) shall exult in the Lord, and shall delight in His Jesus. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee (Psalm XXXIV)? And this is to fall at the feet of Jesus, to confess Him with faithful piety as uniquely great above all.

[Luke 8:42] -- Because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. The Synagogue itself, which alone was composed by legal institution, as if it were the only daughter of Moses, as if in the twelfth year of age, that is, when the time of puberty was approaching, was dying; because, having been nobly brought up by the prophets, after reaching the age of understanding, after it ought to generate spiritual fruits for God, suddenly distressed by the languor of errors, despairingly omitted to enter the ways of spiritual life. And if it were not helped by Christ, it would have fallen into horrendous death in every respect. [Luke 8:42] -- And it happened, as he went, the crowd pressed against him. The Lord, going to heal the girl, was pressed by the crowd, because, providing salutary advice to the Jewish people, which would raise its conscience sick with vices, he was burdened by the harmful custom of carnal populations.

[Luke 8:43] -- And a certain woman was in the flow of blood for twelve years. The woman flowing with blood is the Church gathered from the gentiles, which, polluted by the inborn flow of carnal delights, had already been separated from the company of the faithful. But when the Word of God decided to save Judaea, it snatched away certain salvation from others with firm hope. It is also to be noted

that the daughter of the synagogue leader is twelve years old, and this woman had been flowing with blood for twelve years, that is, she began to be sick at the same time that the other was born. For almost at the same period of this age of the world, the synagogue was born among the patriarchs, and the nation of the gentiles began to be defiled by the filth of idolatry throughout the world. For the double flow of blood, that is, both over the prostitution of idolatry and over those things that are committed by the delight of flesh and blood, can be understood. Whence the sacred history beautifully refers that at the time when David, still a boy, slew the giant Goliath, the Philistines were encamped in the borders of Dommim, that is, of the bloods. Because evidently the Lord, appearing humble, found the peoples of the gentiles not only given to unfruitful works but also to the most filthy religion, in order to overthrow the prince of the world. Therefore, as long as the synagogue flourished, the Church toiled. The decline of that is the strength of this, because through their sin, salvation came to the gentiles.

[Luke 8:43] -- She had spent all her substance on physicians and could not be healed by any. By physicians, he either means false theologians, philosophers, or secular law doctors who, discussing virtues and vices with great subtlety, promised to provide useful teachings for mortals on seeing and believing, or he certainly means the unclean spirits themselves who, as if advising men, suggested that they should already be worshiped as God. The more Gentile civilization spent its strength on listening to these, the less it could be cured of its own filth of iniquity. Hence, Mark, writing about this woman, says: ”And she had suffered much from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.” But when she learned that the people of the Jews were sick, and recognized the true physician from heaven to be present, she also began to hope for and seek a remedy for her own ailment.

[Luke 8:44] -- She came up behind and touched the fringe of His garment, and immediately her flow of blood ceased. The Church approaches and touches the Lord, who draws near to Him through the truth of faith. She comes up behind Him, either according to what He Himself said: ”If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me” (John 12), and elsewhere it is commanded: ”You shall walk after the Lord your God”; or because, not seeing the Lord present in the flesh, after the sacraments of the temporal dispensation were accomplished, she began to follow His footsteps through faith. She touches the fringe of His garment and restrains the flow of blood because blessed and truly to be purified is he who touches even the hem of the word with the hand of faith. For it is very rare to find one who deserves to recline on His chest or anoint His head with pure nard, since even that great one deemed himself unworthy to carry His sandals; and great too was she who merited to anoint His feet and wipe them with her hair.

[Luke 8:45] -- And Jesus said: ”Who touched Me?” Not to be taught what He did not know, but so that the power of faith, which He knew and indeed gave to the woman, might be manifested, He asked. [Luke 8:45-46] -- But with everyone denying it, Peter and those who were with him said: ”Master, the crowds are pressing on you and afflicting you, and you say, ’Who touched me?’” The crowds press on all sides unpredictably, but one believing woman touches the Lord. For one who is afflicted by the various heresies amassed disorderly only seeks the one with a faithful heart of the Catholic Church. For, just as some see but do not see, and hear but do not hear, so too, those who touch do not touch, who do not faithfully touch Christ. Hence, to a certain one who loves indeed but who has not yet fully believed, he says: ”Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father” (John XX); clearly teaching what it means to truly touch Him, that is, to believe Him equal to the Father.

[Luke 8:46] -- And Jesus said: ”Someone touched me. For I know that power has gone out from me,” etc. Let Pelagius say, if he pleases, that he is saved by his own effort. But let us say that the salvation of man is vain, in God we shall do virtue. For He also knows that the power, which is propitious to all our iniquities and heals all our infirmities, goes out not from ourselves but from Him. Therefore, He does not ignore the one who has touched the hem of His garment, that is, the mysteries of the incarnation, until he reaches the greater truths, having believed perfectly by fully loving. [Luke 8:48] -- But he said to her: ”Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.” Therefore, daughter, because your faith has made you well. Nor did He say, your faith will make you well, but has made you well. For in what you have believed, you are now made well.

[Luke 8:49] -- While he was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue ruler, saying to him: ”Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher.” As the woman was healed from the issue of blood, immediately the death of the synagogue ruler’s daughter is announced, because while the Church is cleansed from the stain of vices and, due to the merit of faith, is called a daughter, immediately the synagogue, which is of infidelity and envy, is dissolved by the law. Of infidelity indeed, because it did not want to believe in Christ; of envy truly, because it grieved that the Church believed. For it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: On the following Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicted the things spoken by Paul, reviling the way before the multitude (Acts XIII).

[Luke 8:49] -- ”Do not trouble the Teacher,” is said even today by those who see the state of the synagogue so destitute that they do not believe it can be restored, and therefore do not think it should be interceded for its resurrection. But what is impossible with men is possible with God (Luke XVIII). Hence it follows: [Luke

8:50] -- But when Jesus heard this, he answered the father of the girl, ”Do not be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved.” The father of the girl is taken as the assembly of the doctors of the law, about whom the Lord said: The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat (Matt. XXIII). If they themselves would believe, the synagogue subjected to them would also be saved. [Luke 8:51] -- And when he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Previously, the son of the widow was publicly raised, here several witnesses are removed. Therefore, I think that the kindness of the Lord is again shown in this, because the widow, being the mother of an only child, did not suffer delays, and therefore, to avoid further affliction, maturity is added. It is also a form of wisdom, in that the son of the widow quickly believed in the Church, in the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, indeed, the Jews will believe, but fewer of the many.

[Luke 8:52] -- They all wept and mourned for her. ”Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?” he asked. ”But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.” Therefore, the synagogue, because it lost the joy of the bridegroom, by which it might live, lies as if dead among mourners, not even understanding this itself, why it is mourned. [Luke 8:52] -- But he said: Do not weep. She is not dead, but sleeps. Dead to men, who could not raise her, she was sleeping to God, in whose power her soul was received and lived, and her body, to be resurrected, rested. Hence, the Christian custom has prevailed that the dead, who are undoubtedly to be resurrected, are called sleepers, just as the Apostle: ”We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, about those who sleep, so that you do not grieve like the rest who have no hope” (1 Thess. IV). But even in the part of the allegory, when the soul which has sinned itself dies, yet it can be said to have slept to us, for it merited to be raised by Christ.

[Luke 8:53] -- And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. Because they preferred to mock the word of the one raising than to believe, they were deservedly excluded outside, unworthy to see the miracle of the resurrection. [Luke 8:54] -- But he, taking her hand, called out saying: ”Girl, arise.” In Mark, it is written: He said to her: ”Tabitha cumi”, which is interpreted, ”Girl, I say to you, arise”; and immediately she arose (Acts IX). Where a diligent reader may inquire why the truthful Evangelist, explaining the saying of the Savior, added from his own, ”I say to you”, when in the Syrian language which he used, it was said no more than ”Girl, arise.” Therefore, holding the girl’s hand, Jesus healed her, because unless the hands of the Jews, which are full of blood, are first cleansed, their dead synagogue will not rise. [Luke 8:55] -- And her spirit returned, and she immediately got up. Mark says it this way: And immediately the girl got up and walked. And spiritually it teaches that whoever recovers from the death of the soul with Christ strengthening him by the hand, ought not only to rise from the filth of vices, but also immediately progress in good deeds.

[Luke 8:55] -- And He commanded that she be given something to eat. He ordered her to eat, given as a testimony of life resurrected, so that it would be believed as truth and not a phantom. But if someone has risen from spiritual death, it is necessary that they soon be satiated with heavenly bread, and of course become a partaker of the divine word and the sacred altar. For according to moral understanding, those three dead ones whom the Savior raised in the bodies signify three kinds of the resurrection of souls. Indeed, some by giving in to the consent of evil delight, with the sin's thought hidden, bring death upon themselves. But indicating that he brings such to life, the Savior raised the daughter of the synagogue leader, who was not yet carried outside but was dead inside the house, as if concealing vice secretly in the heart. Others, not only by consenting to noxious delight but also by performing the very evil they delight in, bring their dead almost outside the gates. And demonstrating that He brings these to repentance, He raised the young son of a widow carried out outside the gates and restored him to his mother. For He restored the soul repenting from the darkness of sin to the unity of the Church, as we have also taught before. However, some, not only by thinking or acting illicitly, but by the habit of sinning itself, almost corrupt themselves by burying.

Yet, neither is the power and grace of the Savior less in raising them if there are solicitous thoughts watching over their health, as devoted sisters to Christ. For indicating this, He raised Lazarus, already four days in the tomb, and attested by his sister as already stinking. For the worst deeds often accompany a harmful reputation. It should be noted, however, that the more severe the death of the soul that comes upon it, the more persistent the fervor of repentance must be that it deserves to rise. Secretly wishing to show this, the Lord resurrects the dead girl lying in the room with a modest and gentle voice, saying: "Child, arise. And because of the ease of resurrection, He denied that she had already died. The young man carried outside, He strengthens with more words so that he must revive, saying: "Young man, I say to you, arise. But the one dead for four days, to be able to release the long-sealing tomb, Jesus groaned in spirit, troubled Himself, shed tears, groaned again, and cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11). And thus at last, he who was in despair, with the weight of darkness dispelled, is returned to life and light. But it should also be noted that since public guilt requires a public remedy, but minor sins can be erased by lighter and private repentance, the girl lying in the house rises with few witnesses, who are also instructed not to divulge the miracle.

[Luke 8:56] -- And his parents, he says, were amazed, and he commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened. The young man was raised outside the gate, with a large crowd accompanying and watching. Lazarus, called forth from the tomb, became so widely known to the people that due to the witness of those who saw it, many crowds met the Lord with palms, and many from among the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. The Lord recognized a fourth dead man, as

informed by the disciple; but since there were no living ones to beseech the Lord for his rescue: ”Let the dead bury their own dead,” he said (Matt. 13); that is, let the wicked weigh down the wicked with harmful praises, and since there is no righteous person present to correct in mercy, let the sin of the sinner anoint their head.

Chapter 9

[Luke 9:1] -- But Jesus, having called together the twelve apostles, gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. First granting them the power of signs, he sent them to preach the kingdom of God so that the greatness of the works would also attest to the greatness of the promises, and the power shown would give faith to the words, and they would do new things, who preached new things. Hence now also, as the number of the faithful has increased, there are many within the holy Church who maintain a life of virtues, but do not have the signs of virtues. Because a miracle is shown in vain externally if it lacks what is at work internally. For, according to the voice of the master of the Gentiles, tongues are a sign not to the faithful, but to the unbelievers.

[Luke 9:3] -- And he said to them: Take nothing for the journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money, nor have two tunics. It is usual to inquire how Matthew and Luke mentioned that the Lord told the disciples not to carry a staff, when Mark says, and he commanded them not to take anything for the road except a staff only. This is resolved in such a way that we understand the staff mentioned under a different meaning which, according to Mark, should be carried, and a different one that, according to Matthew and Luke, should not be carried. Just as temptation is understood under a different meaning when it is said: God tempts no one, and under another when it is said: The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love him. One denotes seduction, the other probation. Therefore, both statements must be taken as said by the Lord to the apostles, both to not carry a staff, and to carry only a staff. For when, according to Matthew, he told them: Do not possess gold or silver (Matthew X), and other things, he immediately added: For the laborer is worthy of his food(Bidad). Hence he sufficiently showed why he did not want them to possess and carry these things. Not because these things were not necessary for the sustenance of this life, but because he sent them in such a way as to show that these things were due to them from those to whom the Gospel believers were announcing.

However, it is clear that the Lord did not command in such a way that the Evangelists should live from other sources than those who provide for them, to whom they announce the Gospel. Otherwise, the Apostle went against this precept, who earned his living from the labor of his hands, so as not to be a burden to anyone. But he gave authority, wherein they knew these things were due to them. However, when something is commanded by the Lord, if it is not done, it is a fault of disobedience. When authority is given, it is permissible for anyone not to use it, and as if to give up their right. Therefore, the Lord ordained this, which the Apostle says he ordained, that those who announce the Gospel should live from the Gospel, he spoke to the apostles, that secure they should neither possess nor carry the essentials of this life, neither great nor small. Therefore, he said, Nor a staff, showing that from their faithful ones, all things are due to his ministers, requiring nothing superfluous. And therefore adding: For the laborer is worthy of his food (Matthew X), he thoroughly opened and illustrated wherefrom he spoke these things. Thus, he signified this authority by the name of the staff when he says, not to take anything for the road, except a staff only. It is understood that by the authority accepted from the Lord, which is signified by the name of the staff, even those things that are not carried will not be lacking.

This must also be understood about two tunics, so none of them would think to carry another, besides the one they were wearing, worried it might be needed, as they could receive from that authority. But according to Mark, not to carry or have two tunics, but more expressively not to be clothed in two tunics, saying: And they were not to put on two tunics (Mark VI): what does he advise them except to walk not doubly but simply? Otherwise. In two tunics, they seem to me to show a double garment. Not that in the icy places of Scythia and snow, someone should be content with one tunic, but that in a tunic, we understand clothing, so we should not be dressed in one and reserve another for ourselves from fear of the future.

[Luke 9:4] -- And in whatever house you enter, stay there and do not go out from there. He gives a general command of constancy, so that they may uphold the laws of hospitable necessity, asserting that it is foreign to the preacher of the heavenly kingdom to wander through houses and change the inviolate laws of hospitality. Nor is it without reason that, according to Matthew, the house that the apostles enter is decreed to be observed, so that the reason for changing the hospitality and violating necessity does not suffice. [Luke 9:5] -- And whoever will not receive you, as you go out from that city, even shake off the dust of your feet as a testimony against them. The dust is shaken off their feet in testimony of their labor, in that they have entered the city, and the apostolic preaching has reached them. Or the dust is shaken off so that they may accept nothing from them, not even what is necessary for sustenance, who have spurned the Gospel. Allegorically, those who humbly attend to the word, if they are obscured by the spots of earthly levity as men, are soon purified by those marks of the evangelical preaching which they receive.

But those who scorn through unbelief, negligence, or even deliberate effort, are judged to have their communion to be avoided, their synagogue to be shunned, and the dust of their feet shaken off, lest the mind's chaste mark be stained by what is handled and compared to dust.

[Luke 9:6] -- But they went out and went about the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. What the Apostles preached, or how they healed, Mark explains more fully. He says, they preached that people should repent, and anointed many sick people with oil, and healed them. James also says: Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and if they have sinned, they will be forgiven (Mark 6). Hence it is clear from the apostles themselves that this custom of the holy Church was handed down, that with the oil consecrated by pontifical blessing, the sick are anointed. They preached that people should repent; and above, He says, He sent them to preach the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 1). For evidently they preached both, according to the example of John the Baptist, or the Savior Himself: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near (Matt. 3). For to draw near to the gates of the heavenly kingdom is to repent of those five sins from which one had departed from God.

[Luke 9:7] -- Now, Herod the tetrarch heard all that was done by Him, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead. How great was the envy of the Jews, who, with fury of malice against the Lord, we are taught in almost every place of the Gospel. Behold John, of whom it was said that he performed no sign, yet they believed he could have risen from the dead without any witness; but Jesus, proven by God with powers and signs, at whose death the elements trembled, and whose resurrection and ascension were declared by angels, apostles, and men and women alike, they preferred to believe was not risen, but was stolen away secretly. Nor should it be thought to contradict that Luke recounts that Herod was perplexed because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead: when Matthew and Mark report that Herod himself, having heard of Jesus' fame, said to his servants, This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him (Matt. 14); but it must be understood that after this perplexity, he confirmed in his mind what was being said by others.

[Luke 9:9] -- And Herod said: I beheaded John. But who is this about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him. These are the words of the hesitant Herod, mentioned above. Because he desires to see one whom he discovered to be great by reputation, perhaps to recognize if he might be John himself. The sequence and cause of his beheading, since the Evangelists describe it most fully, Luke in his manner prefers to mention to indicate the state of the times, rather than to repeat what he sees is abundantly said. However, because there is mention of John's beheading, it should be noted, that both John and the Lord declare their

own state and order both at the time of birth and by the order of their passion. For John was diminished by the head, the Lord was elevated on the cross. John was born when the days began to decrease, the Lord when they began to increase. As this appears too, it is that ”He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3), that is, it must be recognized that He, who was considered a prophet, is Christ: and I, who was thought to be Christ, must be understood as His forerunner.

[Luke 9:10] -- And the apostles, having returned, reported to him whatever they had done. Not only do the apostles report to the Lord what they themselves had done and taught but also what John, occupied in teaching, had suffered, or Christ, or the disciples of the same John relay to him, as Matthew indicates. Thus follows:

[Luke 9:10] -- And he withdrew, having taken them apart, to a deserted place called Bethsaida. He did not act out of fear of death, as some think, but sparing his enemies, lest they add murder to murder, and also waiting for the opportune time of his passion, for anyone who has carefully read the Gospels will find that the passions of John and the Lord were separated by more than a year. Indeed, the Lord performed the miracle of the loaves, according to three agreeing evangelists, after the beheading of John. John, about to describe this miracle, mentions that it was near the Passover, the feast day of the Jews; and after these events, Jesus is said to have gone up to the feast of their Tabernacles. There, while he was teaching in the temple, they sought to apprehend him, but no one laid hands on him because his hour had not yet come (John 7); and then during the time of the next Passover he completed the triumph of the cross. Thus, after John was killed, waiting for the time, he retreated apart to a deserted place called Bethsaida: mystically teaching that having left behind Judea, which, by not believing in prophecy, had lost its head, he would lavish the nourishment of the word in the desert of the Church, which had no husband. Hence, beautifully, Bethsaida is interpreted as the house of fruits. For it is the one about which Isaiah said: The desert and the parched land shall be glad; the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom like the lily (Isa. 35); and a little later: They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God (Isa. 35). Bethsaida is, however, in Galilee, the city of the apostles Andrew and Peter and Philip, near the lake of Gennesaret, as we find in the books of places.

[Luke 9:11] -- When the crowds learned of it, they followed him. And he welcomed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed care. The Lord tests the faith of the crowds, and rewards the proven faith with a worthy reward. By seeking the solitude, he explores whether they care to follow. These, by following and not using beasts of burden or various vehicles, but as some Evangelists tell, initiating the journey into the desert by the labor of their own feet, show how much they care for their salvation. Again, the Lord himself, as a powerful and merciful savior and healer, by welcoming the fatigued, teaching the ignorant, healing the sick, and feeding the hungry, suggests how much he delights

in the devotion of believers. According to the laws of allegory, Christ, seeking the deserts of the Gentiles, is followed by many troops of the faithful, leaving behind the walls of ancient life and neglecting the protection of various doctrines. And he who was first known as God in Judea, after the teeth of the Jews became weapons and arrows, and their tongue was made a sharp sword against him. ”Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and let your glory be over all the earth” (Psalm LVI).

[Luke 9:12] -- The day began to decline, and the twelve, approaching, said to him, ”Send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and countryside around and find food.” As the day declined, the Savior feeds the crowds, because either with the end of the ages approaching, or when the Sun of righteousness has set for us, we are saved from the wasting away of long spiritual famine. [Luke 9:13] -- But he said to them, ”You give them something to eat.” He challenges the apostles to the breaking of bread, so that, as they declare themselves not to have anything, the greatness of the miracle might become more known, at the same time suggesting that through them our hungry hearts are to be fed daily. For what does Peter do when he speaks through the Epistles, if not to fill our poorly hungry hearts with the nourishment of the word? What do Paul and John achieve by speaking through the Epistles, if not that our minds may perceive heavenly nourishment and overcome the revulsion of famine by which they were dying?

[Luke 9:13] -- But they said: We have no more than five loaves and two fish. The apostles did not yet have more than five loaves of the Mosaic law and two fish of both Testaments, which, for a longer time, were hidden in the mystery of things latent, as if covered and nourished by the waves of the abyss. However, it is well said in the Gospel of John that the loaves, which designate the law, were barley loaves, which is the food of draught animals and most rustic slaves: because to beginners and those not yet perfected, harsher and coarser precepts are to be entrusted. For the animal man does not receive the things of the spirit of God (1 Cor. II). And so the Lord, giving gifts to each according to their strength, and always provoking to greater perfection, first feeds five thousand with five loaves, then four thousand with seven loaves. Thirdly, he entrusts the mystery of his flesh and blood to his disciples. Finally, he grants the great gift to the elect, that they may eat and drink at his table in the kingdom.

[Luke 9:14] -- But there were about five thousand men. Because there are five senses of the outer man, the five thousand men who followed the Lord signify those who, still set in the secular state, have learned to use well the external things they possess. They are rightly nourished by five loaves, because such need still to be instructed by legal precepts. For those who renounce the world entirely are four thousand, and being nourished by seven loaves, that is, both elevated by the evangelical nourishment and taught by spiritual grace. For the sake of signifying this mystical distinction, I believe it was ordered to make five gilded columns at the

entrance of the tabernacle, and four before the oracle, that is, the Holy of Holies. Because evidently beginners are chastised by the law so that they do not sin, but the perfected are admonished by grace to live more devoutly to God.

[Luke 9:14] -- He said to his disciples, ”Make them recline in groups of fifty,” and they did so. The various groups of diners represent the various congregations of the Churches around the world, which compose the one catholic Church. They reclined not only in groups of fifty, but, as Mark attests, in groups of a hundred as well. Since the fiftieth psalm is one of repentance, and the number one hundred passes from the left to the right, those who recline at the Lord’s banquet in groups of fifty are positioned in repentance and hearing the word. Those who recline in groups of a hundred, having already presumed upon the hope of forgiveness, yearn solely for eternal life. [Luke 9:16] -- After taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to set before the crowd. The Savior, seeing the hungry crowds, does not create new food, but blesses what the disciples have brought, because, coming in the flesh, he preaches nothing other than what has been foretold, but demonstrates the sayings of prophecy filled with the mysteries of grace. He looks to heaven to teach that the gaze of the mind should be directed there, and that the light of knowledge is to be sought there. He breaks the loaves and distributes them to his disciples to set before the crowd, because he reveals the closed sacraments of the law and prophecy to those who will preach throughout the world.

[Luke 9:17] -- Twelve baskets of fragments were taken up that were left over. What was left over by the crowds is gathered by the disciples, because the more sacred mysteries, which the unrefined cannot grasp, should not be neglected but sought by the perfect. For by the twelve baskets, the apostles are symbolized, and through the apostles, all the subsequent choirs of teachers, who, though outwardly despised by men, are inwardly filled with the remnants of the saving food to nurture the hearts of the humble. For it is known that service works are commonly carried out with baskets, but it was he who filled the baskets with fragments of bread, who chose the weak things of this world to confound the strong. [Luke 9:18] -- And it happened, while he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. The disciples were present with the Lord, and followed him on the way, as Mark indicates, but he prayed to the Father alone, because the saints can be united with the Lord by faith and love; seeing him distinct from other mortals in the divine glory of majesty, also following humbly in the way he taught while he lived in the flesh: but the incomprehensible secrets of the Father’s plan only the Son penetrates. For nowhere (if I am not mistaken) is he found to have prayed with the disciples, everywhere he prays alone, because the counsels of God cannot be grasped by human desires, nor can anyone be a partaker of the interior with Christ.

[Luke 9:18] -- And he asked them, saying: Who do the crowds say that I am? But they answered and said, John the Baptist: others say Elijah, others that one of the old prophets has risen again. The Lord appropriately, intending to test the faith of the disciples, first asks the opinion of the crowds, lest the confession of the disciples, not having been tested by the acknowledgment of truth, seem to be established by popular opinion, and they may be thought to believe not from proven knowledge but to doubt from hearsay like Herod. Thus also he says to Peter, who confessed him as Christ, according to Matthew: Because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you (Matt. XVI), that is, human doctrine did not teach you the truth of faith. Also appropriately, those who hold different opinions about the Lord are noted by the name of the crowds, whose sense and speech are always doubtful, unstable, and wandering. From whom, to differentiate them, he immediately adds:

[Luke 9:20] -- But you, who do you say that I am? For the disciples of Christ are not of the crowd, those who walk alone with the Lord, who are worthy to see him praying privately; but even if anyone from the crowd believes in Christ, he will no longer be of the crowd. [Luke 9:20] -- Simon Peter answered, Christ of God. Although the other apostles knew, Peter nonetheless responded before the others. Therefore, he encompassed everything, who both expressed the nature and the name, in which is the highest of virtues. Are we indeed asking questions about God's generation? When Paul judged that he knew nothing except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2), Peter thought nothing more than to confess the Son of God, and when and how He was born, and how great He is. Shall we inquire out of human weakness? Therefore, the end of my faith is Christ, the end of my faith is the Son of God. I am not allowed to know the sequence of generation, however, I am not allowed to be ignorant of the faith of generation.

[Luke 9:21] -- But He, rebuking them, commanded that they should not tell anyone about this, saying; because it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and so on. Therefore, He did not want to be preached before the passion and resurrection, so that, after the sacrament of blood was completed, He might more opportunely tell the apostles: Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28). Because it would be useless to publicly preach Him, and to make His majesty known among the people, whom they will see in a little while being scourged and crucified, suffering many things from the elders and scribes, and the chief priests. And it should be noted that the one who must suffer many things and be killed and rise again, is called the Son of Man: because while Christ suffered in the flesh, divinity remained impassible. It should also be noted that He calls Himself the Son of Man, but Peter confesses Him as the Christ, the Son of God, so that from both sides He is proven to be true God and true man.

[Luke 9:23] -- He said to all: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself. He aptly added, to all, because the previous matters about the faith of the Lord's birth or passion, he dealt with only with his separate disciples. But then we deny ourselves when we avoid what we have been through oldness, and strive for what we are called through newness. Therefore, let Truth say, let it say: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself. For unless one fails from oneself, one does not approach him who is above oneself; nor can one grasp what is beyond oneself, if one does not know how to slay what one is. But now, one who denies oneself from vices must seek the virtues in which one may grow. For it is immediately added: [Luke 9:23] -- And let him take up his cross daily, and follow me. For the cross is borne in two ways, when either the body is affected through abstinence, or the soul is afflicted through compassion for a neighbor. Let us consider how Paul bore his cross in both ways, who said: I buffet my body, and bring it into servitude, lest after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected (I Cor. IX). Behold, in the affliction of the body, we heard the cross of the flesh; now in the compassion for the neighbor, let us hear the cross of the mind. He says: Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn (II Cor. XI)? But in both cases of bearing the cross, it is to be noted that we are commanded to bear it daily, and having taken it up, to follow the Lord.

[Luke 9:24] -- For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Thus it is said to the faithful: Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it, as if it is said to the farmer: If you keep the grain, you lose it; if you sow it, you renew it. For who does not know that grain, when it is sown, perishes from sight and disappears in the earth? But from where it decays in the dust, it sprouts anew. For the holy Church has a time of persecution and a time of peace, our Redeemer indicated these times in his teachings. For in the time of persecution, the soul is to be sacrificed, but in the time of peace, earthly desires which might dominate more must be broken. Hence it is now said:

[Luke 9:25] -- For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses himself, and suffers damage to himself? When persecution from adversaries is absent, the heart must be guarded more diligently. For in times of peace, it is lawful to live, and also to be ambitious. Thus we often despise all fleeting things, but yet we are still hindered by the habit of human decency, such that the rectitude we keep in mind we are not yet able to express in words. But to this wound too a fitting remedy is added, when the Lord says: [Luke 9:26] -- For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But behold, now men say among themselves: We are now not ashamed of the Lord and his words, because we openly confess him with our voice. To whom I respond that in this Christian assembly there are some who confess Christ because they see that all

are Christians. Therefore, the voice of profession is not sufficient for the testing of faith, as the profession of generality defends it from shame. Yet there is a place where each one may question himself, so that he may truly test himself in the confession of Christ. Certainly, in the time of persecution, the faithful could be ashamed of being stripped of their possessions, cast down from dignities, afflicted with scourges: but in the time of peace, since our persecutions are absent, there is another where we may be shown to ourselves. We often fear being despised by our neighbors, we disdain to tolerate verbal injuries: if perhaps a quarrel occurs with a neighbor, we are ashamed to make amends first. For the carnal heart, while seeking the glory of this life, rejects humility.

[Luke 9:27] -- But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God in this place is called the present Church; and because some of the disciples were to live in the body to such an extent that they would see the Church of God constructed and raised against the glory of this world, it is now said with a comforting promise: There are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. But since the Lord was giving so many precepts of undergoing death, what was necessary that He suddenly came to this promise? Except that something also had to be promised to the unlearned disciples concerning the present life, so that they could be more firmly established in the future, for which He promised them to see the kingdom of God on earth, so that this might be more faithfully presumed by them in heaven. But if we wish to accept the kingdom of God in this sentence as the future blessedness in heaven, even this some of those standing there saw not many days later on the mountain, namely so that by the contemplation of enduring joy, even if briefly experienced, they might more modestly endure the adversities of the passing present age. With a most fitting word, indeed, He testifies that the saints taste death, by whom the death of the body is, of course, tasted by sipping, and the life of the soul is held by possessing.

[Luke 9:28] -- And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took Peter and James and John. On the eighth day, the Lord manifests to the disciples the glory of the promised future blessedness, so that, with the sweetness of heavenly life shown, he may refresh the hearts of all who can hear these things, and with the number of eight days, he may teach that the true joy of the resurrection is to come. For he himself rose from the dead on the eighth day, that is, after the sixth day of the Sabbath, on which he ascended the cross, and the seventh day of the Sabbath, on which he rested in the tomb. And we too, after the six ages of this world, in which we rejoice to suffer and labor for the Lord, and the seventh age of the rest of souls, which is meanwhile in another life, will rise again in a kind of eighth age. For that which Matthew and Mark say of the Lord being transfigured after six days does not result in the order of time, nor in the reason of the mystery. Because they only place the intermediate days, therefore they say absolutely that it happened

after six days: he here includes both the first and the last, and thus more fittingly mentions about eight days. And this one signifies that the saints must rest from labor after six ages of the world, while the other one designates that we shall rise in the eighth time.

Hence also fittingly the sixth psalm is inscribed For the eighth, whose beginning is, O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger. Because indeed after the six ages in which it is permitted to work, it is necessary to insist in prayers that in the eighth time of retribution we are not rebuked by an angry judge. Which indeed the Lord himself wanted to teach us in this place by the example of his prayer being shown, about which it follows:

[Luke 9:28] -- And he went up into the mountain to pray. He indeed went up into the mountain to pray, and thus to be transfigured, to show that those who expect the fruit of the resurrection, who desire to see the king in his beauty, ought to dwell in mind in the heights and devote themselves to continuous prayers. He takes only three disciples with him, because many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew XX). And those who here keep the faith with which they are imbued, with an incorrupt mind of the Holy Trinity, deserve to rejoice there in its eternal vision.

[Luke 9:29] -- And it came to pass, while he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became white and dazzling. The Savior transfigured did not lose the substance of true flesh, but showed the glory of future resurrection, either his or ours. Just as he appeared then to the apostles, so shall he appear to all the elect after judgment. For in the very time of judging both the good and the evil, he will be seen in the form of a servant, so that the impious who spurned him, the Jews who denied him, the soldiers who crucified him, Pilate and Herod who judged him, may recognize the judge. The clothing of the Lord, however, is taken to mean the chorus of his saints, whom the Apostle glorifying says: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3). This same attire, while the Lord remained on earth, appeared humble and similar to others, but as he sought the mountain, it shone with new whiteness, for now we are sons of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3). Hence Mark, describing these clothes well, says: such as no launderer on earth can whiten (Mark 9). For the launderer to be understood here is the one whom the penitent Psalmist prays to: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51), he cannot give his faithful on earth the brightness, which remains preserved for them in heaven.

[Luke 9:30] -- And behold, two men were speaking with him. They were Moses and Elias, of whom we read that one died, and the other was taken up into heaven. Unless this signifies the future glory of all the saints with the Lord in majesty, who at the time of judgment will reign with him, either found alive in the flesh or res-

urrected from death tasted long ago. For as the Apostle testifies, ”The dead who are in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. IV). Alternatively, Moses and Elias, that is, the lawgiver and the greatest of the prophets, appear and speak with the Lord to show that he is the one whom all the writings of the law and the prophets foretold. They appear, however, not in the lowlands, but on the mountain with him, because only those who seek the divine heights with their minds will perceive the majesty of the holy Scripture fulfilled in the Lord. Consequently, even the Jews saw Moses, but they did not merit to follow him as he ascended to God on the mountain. They see him also when he returned, but not without a veil. They knew Elias, but only Elisha with the sons of the prophets beheld the triumph of his ascent, because many of us read the words of Scripture here and there, but very few understand how lofty it shines in the mysteries of Christ.

[Luke 9:31] -- And they spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. And to this day, the law and the prophets teach in mutual voices the mystery of the Lord’s dispensation to whomsoever they find on the summit of true faith. [Luke 9:32] -- Peter, and those who were with him, were heavy with sleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw His majesty and the two men standing with Him. Not by mere chance, but by the reason of the mystery were the disciples heavy with sleep, namely, that they might see a representation of the resurrection after physical rest. Those who are awakened to the glory of the saints will see the majesty of the Lord more truly, the more they will rejoice in the immortality of their own flesh, in which they had conquered death. Then they will behold Moses and Elijah in glory, because they will better understand how not one jot or one tittle got passed from the law, nor the Lord came to dissolve the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matthew V).

[Luke 9:33] -- And it happened, while they were departing from Him, that Peter said to Jesus: Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tents, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said. Oh, what great happiness it would be to be present perpetually at the vision of the Deity among choirs of angels, if the transfigured humanity of Christ and the company of two saints seen even momentarily delighted enough for Peter to want to hold them in service so they wouldn’t depart! Though in human condition he did not know what to say, he nevertheless showed a sign of the fervor instilled in him. For he did not know what he was saying, who forgot that the kingdom promised by the Lord to the saints was not in some place on earth, but in the heavens, nor could he or his fellow apostles, still burdened with mortal flesh, enter the state of immortal life, nor was a house made with hands necessary in that age. But even now, ignorance is marked by anyone who wishes to make three tents for the law, the prophets,

and the Gospel, since these cannot at all be separated from each other, having one tabernacle, that is the Church of God.

[Luke 9:34] -- While he was speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them. He who sought a material tabernacle received the shadow of the cloud, so that he might learn that in the resurrection, the saints are to be protected not by the covering of houses, but by the glory of the Holy Spirit. About which the Psalmist says: But the sons of men shall hope in the covering of your wings (Psalm 56). And in his Apocalypse, John says: And I did not see a temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21).

[Luke 9:35] -- And they were afraid as they entered into the cloud, and a voice came from the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, hear him. Human fragility cannot bear the sight of greater glory, and trembling with the whole mind and body, it falls to the ground. The more one seeks greater things, the more he collapses to lower things, if he does not know his own measure. Indeed, the voice of the Father speaking from heaven is heard, which bears witness to the Son, and teaches Peter the truth, removing his error, and indeed teaches the other apostles through Peter. This is (he says) my beloved Son, it is he who should have a tabernacle built, it is him who should be obeyed. This is the Son; Moses and Elijah are servants to him, they too should prepare a tabernacle for the Lord in the inner rooms of their hearts along with you. And note, just as when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, so also on the glorified mountain, the mystery of the whole Trinity is declared, whose glory we confess in baptism, and which we will see in the resurrection. Nor is it in vain that the Holy Spirit appears here in a bright cloud, there in a dove, because he who now keeps the faith which he perceives with a simple heart, will then behold what he had believed with the clear light of vision, and by the same grace will be protected forever.

[Luke 9:36] -- And while the voice was being spoken, Jesus was found alone. When the Son began to be designated, the servants immediately departed, lest the paternal voice be thought to be addressed to them. Alternatively: as the voice was made over the Son, He was found alone, because when He reveals Himself to the chosen, God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15), indeed He with His own, Christ through all will be one, that is, the head will shine with the body. For which unity He said elsewhere: And no one has ascended into heaven, except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven (John 3). [Luke 9:36] -- And they were silent, and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. The premeditation of the future kingdom and the glory of the conqueror had been shown on the mountain. Therefore the disciples are silent, and, at the Lord’s command, tell no one of the vision until the Son of Man is risen from the dead, lest the magnitude of the matter be incredible, and after such glory, the subsequent cross creates scandal among unrefined minds.

[Luke 9:37] -- And it happened on the following day, as they were descending from the mountain, a great crowd met Him, and behold, a man from the crowd shouted out, saying: Master, I beseech You, look upon my son, for he is my only one. The places match the events: On the mountain, the Lord prays, is transformed, reveals to the disciples the secrets of His majesty; descending to the lower places, He is met by the crowd, struck by the lamentation of the wretched. Above, He reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to the disciples; below, He reproaches the crowds for the sins of unbelief. Above, He discloses the Father's voice to those who could follow Him; below, He expels wicked spirits from those who were being tormented. Even now, according to the quality of merits, He ceases not to ascend and descend for some. For those who are still earthly and beginners, as if seeking the low places, He strengthens, teaches, and corrects; but the perfect, whose conversation is in the heavens, He glorifies by exalting more highly, instructs more freely about eternal things, and often teaches those things which the crowds cannot even hear.

[Luke 9:39] -- And behold, a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it convulses him and scatters him with foam, and scarcely departs tearing him. This demoniac, whom the Lord healed descending from the mountain, Matthew describes as lunatic, Mark as deaf and mute. They signify those of whom it is written: "The fool changes like the moon" (Eccl. XXVII), who never remain in the same state, now changed to these, now to other vices, waxing and waning, mute in not confessing their faith, deaf in not in any way hearing the word of faith. [Luke 9:40] -- And I asked your disciples to cast him out, and they could not. In this saying he secretly accuses the apostles, for the impossibility of healing is sometimes attributed not to the weakness of the healers, but to the faith of those who are to be healed, the Lord saying: "Let it be done to you according to your faith."

[Luke 9:41] -- But Jesus answering, said: O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Not that the gentle and meek one, who did not open his mouth like a lamb before its shearer (Is. LIII), overcame by weariness, nor did he break out in words of fury; but because in the likeness of a physician, if he sees a sick person acting against his prescriptions, he may say: How long shall I come to your house? How long shall I spend the effort of my art, while I command one thing, and you do another? But he was not angry at the person, but at the vice, and through one man he reproached the Jews for disbelief, so he immediately added: [Luke 9:41] -- Bring your son here. And as he was coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. For as Jesus approached, the demon convulsed and scattered the boy, because often those who turn to God after sins are attacked by greater and new snares of the old enemy, acting, evidently, either to instill hatred of virtue, or to avenge the injury of his expulsion. Hence (to move from the specific to the general) what great struggles he inflicted on the beginnings of the Church, as he grieved suddenly the losses inflicted on his kingdom.

[Luke 9:42] -- And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. He does not rebuke the boy, who was suffering the attack, but the demon which was causing it, because one who desires to correct a sinner must drive away the vice by surely reproving and hating it, but ought to restore the man with love, until he can be returned healthy to the spiritual fathers of the Church. [Luke 9:44] -- And all were marveling at all that he did, he said to his disciples: Let these words sink into your ears. For the Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men. Among the great works of divine power, he often impresses and reiterates the abasement of his human suffering, so that his sudden coming would not cause terror, but be endurable by a mind prepared in advance. Surely, what he said: “Let these words sink into your ears,” should be read with emphasis and greater force, addressed to you, who more familiarly adhere to my discipleship and to whom the hidden and uncertain elements of my wisdom I have more plainly revealed (Ps. L), while others only marvel at the divine deeds, you should deeply ponder the event of the precious blood, by which the world is to be redeemed.

[Luke 9:45] -- But they did not understand this saying. This ignorance of the disciples arises not so much from slowness as from love, because they, still being carnal and ignorant of the mystery of the cross, could not believe that he, whom they knew as the true God, could die. And because they were accustomed to hear him frequently speaking in figures, they thought even those things which he spoke concerning his being delivered up referred figuratively to something else.

[Luke 9:46] -- But a thought entered among them about who was the greatest among them. Because they had seen Peter, James, and John being taken up the mountain separately, and believed some mystery was revealed to them there; and also because the keys of the kingdom of heaven had been promised to Peter earlier, and that the Church was to be built upon him, they thought either these three were preferred over the others, or among all the apostles, Peter was preeminent. There are those who think this thought was stirred in the disciples by the fact that the Lord, according to Matthew, took a coin from the mouth of a fish and gave it to those who collected the tribute for himself and Peter, as if implying that they were superior to the others, since Peter was equated with the Lord in the obligation to pay the tribute. However, a diligent reader will find this question among them happened even before the tribute coin was collected. Matthew records this event in Capernaum. But Mark says: ”And they came to Capernaum. When they were in the house, he asked them, ’What were you discussing on the way?’ But they were silent. For on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest” (Mark IX). Whether this was the occasion or some other, or both, possibly prompted, Jesus, seeing their thoughts and understanding the causes of their error, wants to heal their desire for glory with the remedy of humility.

[Luke 9:48] -- Taking a child, he set him beside himself, and said to them: ”Whoever receives this child in my name receives me.” Either simply teaching that the poor of Christ should be received with honor by those who wish to be the greatest, or certainly advising that they themselves be like little children, preserving simplicity without arrogance, charity without envy, and devotion without anger, just as children display innocence. Hence, when he said, ”Whoever receives this child,” he added, ”in my name.” So that they would follow the example of virtue that a child naturally observes, with the help of reason’s industry, for the sake of Christ’s name. But because he taught that he himself was received in the child, since he himself was born as a child for us, lest it be thought to mean only what appeared, he added and said: [Luke 9:48] -- And whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. Wishing to be believed such as the Father is in size and worth. For he says, there is no difference at all between him and me, so that whoever receives me, receives him who sent me.

[Luke 9:49] -- But answering, John said: Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. John, loving the Lord with special devotion and thus worthy to be loved back, thought he should be excluded from the benefit who did not use his service. But he is taught that no one should be excluded from the good he has in part, but rather to be encouraged towards what he does not yet have. [Luke 9:50] -- And Jesus said to him: Do not forbid him. For whoever is not against you is for you. Taught by this saying, the Apostle says: But whether in pretense or in truth Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice (Philippians 1). But although he rejoices even in those who proclaim Christ insincerely, such people sometimes doing signs in the name of Christ are considered not to be prohibited for the sake of others’ salvation, however, their own conscience is not made secure through such signs. Rather, on that day when they say: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? they will receive a reply: I never knew you, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness (Matthew 7). Therefore, in heretics and evil Catholics, it is not the common sacraments, which are with us and not against us, but the division contrary to peace and truth, which is not with us and they do not follow the Lord with us, that we ought to detest and prohibit.

[Luke 9:51] -- But it came to pass, when the days of his assumption were accomplished, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. By ’day of assumption,’ he means the time of his passion, which drawing near, he gradually approaches Jerusalem. Let the pagans cease, therefore, to mock as if he were merely a crucified man, as the time of his crucifixion was foreseen as God, and determined to go to the place where he was to be crucified with a firm face, that is, with resolute and fearless mind. [Luke 9:53] -- And they did not receive him, because his face was set to go to Jerusalem. Because the Samaritans saw he was going to Jerusalem,

they did not receive the Lord. For the Jews do not associate with Samaritans, as the Evangelist John shows.

[Luke 9:55] -- But when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, ”Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” And he turned and rebuked them, and said, ”You do not know what kind of spirit you are of. Great and holy men, who already knew very well that this death, which separates the soul from the body, is not to be feared, according to their spirit who feared it, punished some sins with death, so that fear might be instilled in the living, and to those who were punished with death, death itself would not harm them, but the sin, which could increase if they lived, was not recklessly judged by those to whom God had given such judgment. From this it is that Elijah put many to death, both by his own hand and by fire called down from heaven. In his example, when the apostles wanted to call fire from heaven to consume those who would not give them lodging, the Lord rebuked in them not the example of the holy prophet, but the ignorance of vindicating, which was still in the novices, observing that they desired vengeance not out of love but out of hate. Therefore, after he had taught them to love their neighbor as themselves, and after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, such acts of vengeance were still found, although much more rarely than in the Old Testament. For there, serving more under fear, they were pressed; but here, being nurtured more in love, they were made free. For even at the words of the apostle Peter, Ananias and his wife fell down dead, nor were they raised up, but buried, and Paul says of a certain sinner: ”Whom I have delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved” (1 Corinthians 5).

[Luke 9:56] -- The Son of Man did not come to destroy souls, but to save them. And you, therefore, he says, by whose Spirit you are signed, follow His deeds, now advising piously, but justly judging in fury. [Luke 9:57] -- It came to pass, as they walked on the way, a certain man said to him: I will follow you wherever you go, and so on. Both wonderful and dreadful is the righteous dispensation of the secret judgment. The Samaritans are asked to receive the Lord, and not wanting to, are forbidden to be struck. This man promises to follow him and is removed, another desires first to bury his father and is compelled to evangelize. Another, intending to follow the Lord, wishes to announce this at home, but is not permitted. Someone who does not follow Christ works miracles in Christ’s name and is commanded not to be prevented. But in each of these instances, the words of the Apostle are applicable to us: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways (Rom. XI)! And with Samuel: Man sees what is apparent, but the Lord looks on the heart (I Reg. XVI).

[Luke 9:58] -- And Jesus said to them: Foxes have dens, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man does not have a place to lay his head. From the words

of the Lord, it is shown that this man who promises service is rejected because, seeing the magnitude of the signs, he wished to follow the Savior, seeking profits from the miraculous works, desiring the same thing that Simon Magus had wished to buy from Peter. Therefore, such faith is justly condemned by the Lord's sentence, and it is said to him: Why do you desire to follow me for wealth and worldly profits when I am of such poverty that I don't even have a place to stay and do not use a roof of my own? Otherwise, it is understood that he wished to follow, moved by the Lord's miracles, for vain boasting, which the birds signify. However, the feigned service of the disciple is signified by the name of foxes. By the reclining of his head, he signified his humility, which had no place in that deceitful and proud man.

[Luke 9:59] -- But he said to another: Follow me. But he said: Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father. He did not reject discipleship, but first, with the piety of completing his father's funeral, he desired to follow him more freely, worthy in all things in whom the Son of Man may lay his head, that is, in whose humble heart divinity may rest with a certain familiar dwelling. [Luke 9:60] -- And Jesus said to him: Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. It must be noted in this sentence that sometimes in our actions, lesser goods should be omitted for the sake of greater goods. For who does not know the merit of good work is to bury the dead? And yet, he who asked to be allowed to bury his father was told: Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. For the duty of this service was to be postponed for the duty of preaching. For with that, he would bury the dead in flesh in the earth, but with this, he would raise the dead in soul to life. But how can the dead bury their dead unless you understand a double death? One of nature, the other of guilt; one by which the soul is separated from the body, the other by which God is separated from the soul. Or he says the dead, meaning unbelievers. But their dead, who likewise without faith depart from the body.

[Luke 9:61] -- And another said: I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me to say farewell to those who are at home. If a disciple of the Lord, because he wishes to say this farewell at home, is reproved, what will happen to those who, with no purpose of usefulness or of building faith, often do not fear to revisit the homes of those relatives they left in the world? [Luke 9:62] -- And Jesus said to him: No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. To put one's hand to the plow, is as if with a kind of instrument of compunction, with wood and iron to grind down the hardness of one's heart in the passion of the Lord, and open it to bring forth the fruits of good works. If anyone, having begun to cultivate this, in delight looks back at the vices he left behind with Lot's wife, he is deprived of the gift of the future kingdom.

Chapter 10

[Luke 10:1] -- After these things, the Lord appointed another seventy-two. Just as the twelve apostles clearly represented and foreshadowed the role of bishops, it is to be understood that these seventy-two represented the figure of presbyters, that is, priests of the second order. Although in the earliest times of the Church, as the Apostolic Scripture bears witness, both groups were called presbyters, and both were called bishops. One term signifies the maturity of wisdom, the other the diligence of pastoral care. The fact that seventy-two are sent out is appropriate. Either because the Gospel was to be preached to the same number of nations in the world, just as twelve tribes of Israel were to be embodied with respect to foreign peoples, or that by the very number of preachers, the whole world was to be illuminated by the Gospel of the supreme and indivisible Trinity. Just as it is established that the sun breathes its light's course upon the world through seventy-two hours over three days. For indeed, the Lord Himself calls Himself the day, and His apostles the hours, saying: "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble" (John XI). And it is well commanded in the Psalms: "Declare His salvation from day to day" (Psalm XCV), that is, light from light, true God from true God (John I). Moreover, in many places in Holy Scripture, the mystery of the Trinity is shown through three days, especially because the Lord rose from the dead on the third day. And in the Old Testament, the people arriving at Mount Sinai received the law on the third day. Similarly, they crossed the Jordan River, to which the grace of baptism is commended, on the third day after they reached it.

[Luke 10:1] -- And he sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to come. For there are two precepts of charity, namely, the love of God and of neighbor, and charity cannot be less than between two (for no one properly says he has charity for himself, but his love reaches out to another, so that charity may exist). The Lord sends the disciples two by two to preach, so that he may silently imply to us that anyone who does not have charity towards another should by no means undertake the duty of preaching. But it is well said that he sent them before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to come. For the Lord follows his preachers, because preaching goes before, and

then the Lord comes to the habitation of our mind. Words of exhortation precede, and through these, the truth is received in the mind.

[Luke 10:2] -- And he said to them: The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send laborers into his harvest. The great harvest signifies a multitude of peoples. The few laborers signify a scarcity of teachers. These are the laborers spoken of by the Psalmist: Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going forth they went and wept, carrying their seeds. But coming back they will come with exultation, carrying their sheaves (Psalm 126). And to speak more clearly, the great harvest is the whole crowd of believers. The few laborers are the apostles and their imitators who are sent into the harvest. [Luke 10:3] -- Go, behold I send you as lambs among wolves. He calls the wolves the scribes and Pharisees, who are the clergy of the Jews.

[Luke 10:4] -- Do not carry a purse, nor a bag, nor sandals, and greet no one on the road. Such must be the preacher's confidence in God that, though he does not foresee the necessities of this present life, he must most certainly know that they will not be lacking for him. So that, while his mind is occupied with temporal matters, he may be less able to foresee the eternal for others. It is also permitted for him to greet no one on the road, to show how urgently he must continue on his journey of preaching. If anyone wishes to understand these words even allegorically, in the purse money is enclosed. Hidden money is hidden wisdom. Therefore, he who has the word of wisdom but neglects to dispense it to his neighbor is as if he holds money tied up in a purse. And it is written: "Hidden wisdom and hidden treasure, what use is there in both?" But what does the bag signify if not the works of the world? And what do sandals signify in this context if not the examples of dead works? Therefore, he who undertakes the office of preaching is not worthy to carry the burden of worldly affairs, lest, while this weighs down his neck, he fails to rise up to preach the heavenly matters. Nor should he look at the examples of foolish works, lest he believes that his own works, as if from dead skins, are fortified. Anyone who greets on the way greets from the occasion of the journey, not from the pursuit of obtaining that same greeting. Therefore, he who preaches salvation to listeners not out of love for the eternal homeland but out of greed for rewards, greets as if on a journey, since he wishes salvation to listeners out of occasion and not out of intention.

[Luke 10:5] -- In whatever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace will rest on him. But if not, it will return to you. The peace which is offered from the mouth of the preacher either rests in the house if there is a son of peace there, or it returns to the same preacher, for everyone is either predestined to life and follows the heavenly word that he hears, or if no one wants to listen, the preacher himself will not be without fruit, because the peace returns to him, since it is recompensed to him by the Lord for the labor

of his work. Behold, however, he who prohibited carrying a purse and bag, grants expenses and sustenance from the same preaching. For it follows: [Luke 10:7] -- In the same house, remain, eating and drinking what things they have. If our peace is received, it is fitting that we remain in the same house, eating and drinking what things they have, so that we may receive earthly provisions from them, to whom we offer the rewards of the heavenly homeland. Therefore Paul, also receiving these things as of little value, says: If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things (1 Corinthians 9)? And it should be noted what follows:

[Luke 10:7] -- For the worker is worthy of his wages. Because now the wages of the work itself are the supports of sustenance, so that here the reward of the labor of preaching begins, which there is perfected by the vision of truth. In this matter it is considered that two rewards are due for one work of ours, one on the journey, the other in the homeland: one that sustains us in labor, the other that rewards us in the resurrection. [Luke 10:8] -- And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you, etc. Having described the various entertainments of different houses, he teaches what they ought to do even in cities, namely, to communicate with the pious in all things, but to separate themselves entirely from the society of the impious.

[Luke 10:11] -- Into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, going out into its streets, say: Even the dust that clings to us from your city, we wipe off against you. Either as a witness to the earthly labor they undertook for them in vain, or to show that they sought nothing earthly from them, to the extent that they would not allow even the dust from their land to adhere to them. Alternatively: The feet of the disciples signify the very work and journey of preaching. The dust with which they are sprinkled is the lightness of earthly thought, from which even the highest teachers cannot be exempt when they incessantly attend to the healthful cares for the listeners, and as if along the roads of the world, they gather the dust of the earth scarcely with a single heel. Therefore, those who receive the word turn the afflictions and cares of the teachers, which they endured for them, into a testament of humility. But those who spurn the teaching transform the labors and dangers and weariness of the solicitude of the teachers into a testimony of their condemnation. And this is the dust that is wiped off against those who scorn the Gospel, and from which the feet of the evangelists are commanded to be washed by good listeners, or even narrated to be washed by the Savior himself.

[Luke 10:12] -- But I say to you that it will be more bearable for Sodom in that day than for that city. The Sodomites, indeed, amidst so many flagrant vices of flesh and soul, with which they insatiably burned, were also inhospitable, as testified by Ezekiel, but they had no such guests among them as the prophets among the Jews, nor apostles. And Lot indeed was just in sight and hearing, but he is not reported

to have taught anything or performed any signs there. And therefore, to whom much is given, much will be required from him (Luke 12), and the powerful will suffer powerful torments (Wisdom 6). [Luke 10:13] -- Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, also Tiberias, which John names, are cities of Galilee, situated on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, which is formed by the flowing Jordan, and even by the evangelists is also called the sea of Galilee, or the sea of Tiberias. The Lord therefore laments the cities which, after so many miracles and powers, did not repent. And worse than the Gentiles, who destroyed only the natural law, after the contempt of the written law, did not fear to trample also on the Son of God, and to despise grace with ingratitude.

[Luke 10:13] -- For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes. We see today the fulfillment of the Savior's saying, because indeed Chorazin and Bethsaida did not want to believe with the Lord present. Tyre and Sidon, however, were once friendly to David and Solomon, and later believed in the disciples of Christ who were preaching. And they accepted the faith with such devotion, that all the citizens of Tyre, accompanying Paul the apostle as he was leaving, with their wives and children, followed him outside the city, and in a most beautiful spectacle, such a multitude of people escorted a very few guests, but the most illustrious for Christ's faith, up to the ships to bid farewell. But why the gospel was not preached to those who could believe earlier, truly it is to know for those to whom it was preached, while the Jews did not want to believe, it is to know for Him, whose all ways are mercy and truth (Psalm XXIV). Surely what the Lord says: Sitting in sackcloth and ashes they would have repented: in sackcloth, which is woven from goat hairs, signifies the harsh memory of the pricking sin, with which the left part is to be dressed on the day of judgment; in ashes, however, demonstrates the consideration of death, through which the whole mass of the human race is to be reduced to dust. Moreover, in the sitting denoted the humiliation of own conscience. Of which the Psalmist: Arise after you have sat (Psalm CXXVI), which is to say: Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in the time of visitation (1 Peter V).

[Luke 10:15] -- And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to hell. There is a double meaning in this sentence. Either you will be brought down to hell because you have most arrogantly resisted my preaching; or because, having been exalted to heaven by my residence, from my signs and miracles having had such privilege, you will be punished with greater torments, since you refused to believe even these. And lest anyone think that this rebuke applies only to those cities or persons who, seeing the Lord in the flesh, despised Him, and not to all who even today despise the words of the Gospel, He added, saying: [Luke 10:16] -- He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me. So that anyone, by hearing or despising the preacher of the Gospel,

would learn that he is not scorning lowly persons, but the Lord the Savior, and indeed the Father Himself. For it follows:

[Luke 10:16] -- But he who despises me despises Him who sent me. For without doubt the master is heard in the disciple, and the father is honored in the son. It may also be understood this way: He who despises you despises me. He who does not show mercy to one of my least brothers, does not do it to me, because I too took the form of a servant and the condition of a poor person for their sake. But he who despises me, unwilling to believe in God, and trampling on the Son of God, despises Him who sent me, because I and the Father are one. [Luke 10:17] -- Now the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. They indeed confessed rightly, giving honor to the name of Christ, but because they were still rejoicing in the miracles with weak faith, see what they hear.

[Luke 10:18] -- And he said to them: I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Not only do I see it now, but I saw it before, when he fell. What he said, ”like lightning,” either signifies a precipitous fall from high to low, or because, having been cast out, he still transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, because he saw the disciples elevated over their performance of signs, he frightens them by example and recalls them to humility by one who first fell by pride, so that they, remembering him cast out of heaven for pride, may understand that they, made from the earth, will be much more humbled if they become proud. [Luke 10:19] -- Behold, I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you; that is, the power to cast out every kind of unclean spirit from possessed bodies. Although, even literally, it can be rightly understood; for instance, Paul, attacked by a viper, suffered no harm. And John, as history reports, being given poison, was not harmed. I indeed reason that this distinguishes between serpents, which harm with their bite, and scorpions, which harm with their tail; that serpents openly rage, while scorpions secretly lay traps, signifying either men or demons. Serpents, who present the poison of wicked persuasion against the virtues at the outset; scorpions, who seek to corrupt consummated virtues at the end.

[Luke 10:20] -- However, do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you. They are forbidden to rejoice over the subjection of spirits, being flesh, because casting out spirits, like performing other virtues, is sometimes not a merit of the one doing it, but the invocation of Christ’s name does this, given for the condemnation of those who invoke, or for the benefit of those who see and hear it, so that although men may despise those who perform the signs, they still honor God, at whose invocation such great miracles are done. For also, in the Acts of the Apostles, the sons of Sceva appeared to cast out demons, and Judas the apostle, with the intention of a traitor, is narrated to have performed many signs among the

other apostles. [Luke 10:20] -- Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. If Satan (he said) through pride lost the seat of heaven with his companions, it is not fitting for you to rejoice over their humiliation, but over your own exaltation, so that where they fell from, humbled, you may ascend. Additionally, it must not be foolishly supposed that God inscribes the good in heaven and the wicked on earth as a remedy for forgetfulness, as Jeremiah says: All who abandon you shall be ashamed; those who turn away shall be written in the earth (Jer. XVII). But it must be understood beneficially that whether celestial or terrestrial deeds one has performed, he is, as it were, recorded by these deeds, eternally fixed in the memory of God.

[Luke 10:21] -- At that very hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Confession does not always signify penitence but also thanks, as we very often read in the Psalms. Let those who falsely claim that the Savior was not born but created hear that he calls his Father the Lord of heaven and earth. For if he were also a creature, and a creature could call its creator father, it would have been foolish not to similarly call his own and the Lord of heaven and earth Father. [Luke 10:21] -- Because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to infants. He gives thanks, rejoices in the Father, that he has revealed the mysteries of his arrival to the apostles, which the scribes and Pharisees, who consider themselves wise and prudent, and wisdom justified by her children (Luke VII), have ignored. Where he beautifully opposed infants, that is, the humble, to the wise and prudent, not as foolish and dull but to show he condemned pride, not intellect. For this is the key about which he says elsewhere: You have taken away the key of knowledge, that is, the humility of faith in Christ, by which you could have arrived at the recognition of his divinity, but you preferred to despise and reject it.

[Luke 10:21] -- Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. In these words of the Lord, we receive examples of humility, so that we might not rashly discuss the heavenly counsel concerning the calling of some and the rejection of others. For when He mentioned both, He did not immediately give a reason but said it was pleasing to God in this way. He thus showed that it cannot be unjust what is pleasing to the Just. Hence, in rewarding the workers in the vineyard, when he made some laborers equal in reward despite their unequal work, and one who sweated more in labor sought more reward, he said: Did you not agree with me for a denarius? But I want to give to this last one as I give to you. Or is it not lawful for me to do what I wish? (Matt. XX). In all these things arranged outwardly, the hidden justice of the will is the open cause of reason.

[Luke 10:22] -- All things have been handed over to me by my Father. When you read all things, you recognize the almighty, not discolored, not degenerate from the Father. When you read handed over, you confess the Son, to whom by nature

all things of one substance are rightfully proper, not granted as a gift by grace. However, all things which he says were handed over to him are not to be understood as the elements of the world, which he himself created, but as those to whom the Father revealed the sacraments of the Son, being humble in spirit, and concerning whose salvation the same Son, when he spoke these things, rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. Of all these, he says elsewhere: All that the Father gives me will come to me (John VI). [Luke 10:22] -- And no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. This is not to be understood as though the Son could be known by no one except the Father alone, and the Father not only by the Son but also by those to whom the Son reveals him, but it refers to both when he says: And anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him, so that we may understand both the Father and the Son being revealed by the Son.

[Luke 10:23] -- And turning to his disciples, he said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see, etc. Not the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees, who see only the body of the Lord, but those blessed eyes that can recognize his mysteries, about which it is said: And you have revealed them to little children. Blessed are the eyes of the little ones, to whom the Son is worthy to reveal both himself and the Father. [Luke 10:24] -- For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Abraham rejoiced that he might see the day of Christ, and saw it, and was glad. Isaiah also, and Micah, many other prophets saw the glory of the Lord, who for that reason are called seers. But all these seeing from afar and greeting (Him) saw through a glass and in a riddle (1 Cor. 13), but the apostles having the Lord in the present time, eating with Him, and learning by asking whatever they wished, by no means needed to be taught through angels or various visions. While Luke calls many prophets and kings, Matthew more explicitly calls them prophets and the righteous. For they are truly great kings, because they know how to not succumb by giving in to the impulses of their temptations, but to command by ruling over them.

[Luke 10:25] -- And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what shall I do to possess eternal life? The lawyer, who tests the Lord by asking about eternal life, as I think, took the occasion of testing from the very words of the Lord, where he said: But rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. But by his very temptation he declares how true is that confession of the Lord, with which he speaks to the Father: You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to little children. [Luke 10:26] -- But he said to him: What is written in the law? How do you read it? He answered, saying: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. As

the lawyer responds, our Savior shows us the perfect path to heavenly life. To the one proposing the writings of the law about the love of God and neighbor, He says:

[Luke 10:28] -- You have answered correctly: Do this, and you will live. Then, after introducing a parable responding that the one who showed mercy to the wounded was the neighbor, He adds: Go, and do likewise, that is, remember to love and support your neighbor who needs such mercy. Very clearly declaring that love alone, and not merely shown in word but proven by the execution of deeds, leads to eternal life. [Luke 10:29] -- But he, wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? What a great madness of vain glory! The lawyer, to capture the favor of the people, so that he might be seen to have responded wisely, first confesses that he does not know the command of the law, truly according to the Savior's judgment, wise and prudent in the law, but because he does not desire to humble himself with the little ones of Christ, but to justify himself, refusing to receive the blessed eyes of doves washed in the milk of innocence, with which he might see Christ's secrets. Indeed, to him the Lord thus tempered his response, teaching that anyone who shows mercy to another becomes his neighbor, and yet this same parable particularly signifies the Son of God himself, who deigned to become our neighbor through his humanity. For we should not interpret so the neighbor whom we are commanded to love as ourselves so above Christ, as to try to diminish and remove the moral teachings of mutual brotherhood under the rules of allegory.

[Luke 10:30] -- But Jesus, looking up, said: A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. This man is understood to be Adam in the human race. Jerusalem, that heavenly city of peace, from whose happiness he fell into this mortal and miserable life. How well Jericho, which is interpreted as the moon, signifies, variously, indeed, labors of sins and errors, always uncertain. [Luke 10:30] -- And he fell among robbers. Understand the robbers to be the devil and his angels, upon whom, because he was descending, he fell. For unless he was first internally swollen, he would not so easily fall by external temptation. For it is a very true saying, which says: Before ruin, the heart is exalted (Proverbs 16). [Luke 10:30] -- And they stripped him. Namely, they deprived him of the glory of immortality and the garment of innocence. For this is the first robe with which, according to another parable, the prodigal son, returning through repentance, is adorned, and which the first parents lost, realizing they were naked, and clothed themselves with tunics of mortal nature.

[Luke 10:30] -- And after inflicting wounds, they went away, leaving him half-dead. The wounds are sins, by which, violating the integrity of human nature, they implanted a kind of seedbed of increasing death (so to speak), into the wearying bowels. But they went away, not ceasing from ambushes at all, but by concealing the frauds of the same snares. They left him half-dead because they could strip

away the happiness of immortal life, but could not abolish the sense of reason. For in that part where he can understand and know God, man is alive. But from that part where he decays in sins and fails in misery, he is dead and defiled with a deadly wound. [Luke 10:31] -- It happened that a certain priest was going down the same way, and upon seeing him, he passed by. Similarly, a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. The priest and the Levite, who, seeing the wounded man, passed by, are the priesthood and ministry of the Old Testament, where through the decrees of the law the wounds of the languishing world could only be shown, but not healed, because it was impossible (as the Apostle says) for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Hebrews 9).

[Luke 10:33] -- However, a certain Samaritan, as he was traveling, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. The Samaritan, which means ”guardian,” signifies the Lord, about whom the prophet most rightly prays, so that he may not fall upon these robbers. He says, ”Guard me from the snare they have set for me, and from the traps of those who work iniquity” (Psalm 140). Who, for us men and for our salvation, descending from heaven, undertook the journey of this present life, and came near to him who was languishing with inflicted wounds, that is, being made in the likeness of men and found in human form (Philippians 2), became close to us by taking on our compassion and was made a neighbor through the consolation of mercy. [Luke 10:34] -- And approaching, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Sins, which he found in men, he restrained by reproving, instilling hope of pardon in those who repent, and terror of punishment in those who sin. For he binds up the wounds when he commands: ”Repent,” he pours oil when he adds: ”for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3). He also pours wine when he says: ”Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (ibid.).

[Luke 10:34] -- And setting him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. His beast is the flesh, in which he deigned to come to us. And he set the wounded man on it because he bore our sins in his body on the wood (1 Peter 2); and according to another parable, having found the sheep that had strayed, he placed it on his shoulders and brought it back to the flock (Luke 15). Therefore, to be set on the beast is to believe in the very Incarnation of Christ, to be initiated into his mysteries, and simultaneously to be protected from the enemy’s attack. The inn is the present Church, where travelers are refreshed, returning from this pilgrimage to the eternal homeland. And rightly so, he brought him to the inn, having set him on the beast, for no one will enter the Church unless baptized, unless united to the body of Christ.

[Luke 10:35] -- And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, and said: Take care of him. The next day is after the Lord’s resurrection. For even before, through the grace of his Gospel, he had enlightened those who sat

in darkness and in the shadow of death (Luke 1), but more so, after the celebration of the resurrection, the splendor of perpetual light shone forth. The two denarii are the two Testaments, in which the name and image of the eternal King is contained. For Christ is the end of the law (Romans 10). The two denarii were given to the innkeeper the next day: because at that time he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24). The next day the innkeeper received the denarii, by whose value he would heal the wounded, because the Holy Spirit came and taught the apostles all truth (John 16), so they might steadfastly teach the nations and preach the Gospel.

[Luke 10:35] -- And whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I return. The innkeeper spends more than he received in the two denarii, when the Apostle says: Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my advice (1 Corinthians 7). And likewise: The Lord ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9). But we did not use this power, lest we should hinder any of you (1 Thessalonians 2). To whom, returning, the debtor will repay what he promised, because the Lord, coming in judgment, says: Because you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord (Matthew 25). [Luke 10:36] -- Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? And he said: The one who showed mercy towards him. According to the letter, the Lord’s judgment is clear: no one is more our neighbor than the one who shows mercy, if to a citizen of Jerusalem, neither the priest nor the Levite from the same people, indeed born and raised in the same city, but a resident of a foreign nation, because he showed more mercy, became a neighbor. In a more sacred understanding, since no one is more a neighbor than the one who healed our wounds, let us love him as the Lord our God, let us love him as a neighbor. For nothing is so close as the head to the members. Let us also love him who is an imitator of Christ. This is indeed what follows:

[Luke 10:37] -- And Jesus said to him: Go and do likewise. That is, so that you may truly show that you love your neighbor as yourself, perform with devotion whatever you can to help his spiritual necessity. [Luke 10:38] -- It happened, as they were going, that he entered a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary. This reading is beautifully connected to the preceding one. For as that one designates love of God and neighbor through words and parables, this one designates it through deeds and truth. These two beloved sisters of the Lord demonstrate the two spiritual lives by which the present holy Church is exercised. Indeed, Martha represents the active life, by which we are united to our neighbor in charity; Mary represents the contemplative life, by which we long for the love of God. For the active life is to give bread to the hungry, to teach the ignorant the word of wisdom, to correct the erring, to bring back the proud to the way of humility, to take care of the sick,

to dispense what is expedient to each one, and to foresee how those entrusted to us may be able to subsist. The contemplative life, however, is to retain the love of God and neighbor with the whole mind, but to rest from external action, adhering solely to the desire of the Creator, so that one no longer wishes to act but, having cast aside all cares, the soul burns with the desire to behold the face of its Creator, so that it regrets to bear the burden of the corruptible flesh and with all its desires aspires to join the hymnic choirs of angels, to be mixed with the heavenly citizens, to rejoice in the eternal incorruption in the sight of God.

[Luke 10:39] -- And she also, sitting beside the feet of the Lord, listened to His word, but Martha was distracted by frequent ministering. No one doubts that these things suit both lives. And the uniform perfection of the contemplative life is indeed to have a mind stripped of all earthly things, and, as much as human weakness allows, to unite with Christ. But the frequent ministry of active life is taught by the Master of the nations, who in the numerous statements of his Epistles, recounts his labors by land and sea for Christ, his dangers. In which, also commending the visions and revelations of the Lord, he signifies that he was also completed in the speculative virtue, which is imitable by very few. Hence he says: For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we are sober, it is for your cause (II Cor. V).

[Luke 10:40] -- And she stood and said: Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her therefore to help me. He speaks from the perspective of those who, still ignorant of divine contemplation, consider that the work of brotherly love alone is pleasing to God, and therefore think that all who wish to be devoted to Christ should be bound to this. And it is well described that Martha stood while Mary sat beside the feet of the Lord, because the active life toils in laborious struggle, while the contemplative life, with the tumults of vices pacified, enjoys the desired repose of the mind in Christ. [Luke 10:41] -- And the Lord answered and said to her: Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but only one thing is necessary. And blessed David, defining this one thing necessary for man, desires to continually cling to God, saying: But it is good for me to cling to God, to put my hope in the Lord God (Psalm LXXII). And elsewhere: One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple (Psalm XXVI). Therefore, one and only theology, that is, contemplation of God, to which all merits of justifications and all studies of virtues are justly postponed.

[Luke 10:42] -- Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken away from her. Behold, the part of Martha is not blamed, but Mary’s is praised. For he does not say that Mary has chosen a good part, but the best, so that Martha’s part may also be indicated as good. But why the part of Mary is the best is explained when

it is said: Which will not be taken away from her. For the active life ceases with the body. For who will give bread to the hungry in the eternal homeland, where no one is hungry? Who will give drink to the thirsty, where no one thirsts? Who will bury the dead, where no one dies? Therefore, with the present age, the active life is taken away. But the contemplative life begins here, so that it may be perfected in the heavenly homeland. For the fire of love that begins to burn here, when it sees the very one whom it loves, burns more intensely in love. Therefore the contemplative life is by no means taken away, because it is perfected with the light of the present age being withdrawn.

Chapter 11

[Luke 11:1] -- And it happened that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. After the story of the sisters who signified the two lives of the Church, it is not without reason that the Lord is described as having prayed and having taught his disciples to pray. For the prayer he taught contains the mystery of both lives in itself, and the perfection of these lives is not to be attained by our own strength, but by prayers. And because Luke often described the Savior as praying, he suggests what he did in prayer, who surely supplicated not for himself, but for us, when, after finishing his prayer, he reports that the disciples asked him how they should pray.

[Luke 11:2] -- And he said to them: When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. According to the evangelist Matthew, the Lord's Prayer seems to contain seven petitions. Of which in three eternal things are requested, in the remaining four, temporal things, which nevertheless are necessary for the sake of attaining the eternal. For what we say: Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; which some have not absurdly understood as in spirit and body, must be retained entirely without end, and begin here, and the more we progress, are increased in us: and perfectly (which is to be hoped for in the other life) they will always be possessed. But what we say: Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; who does not see that it pertains to the need of the present life? Thus, in that eternal life, where we always hope to be, both in the sanctification of the name of God, and his kingdom, will remain perfectly and immortally in our spirit and body.

But daily bread is called so, because it is necessary here as much as should be given to soul and flesh, whether understood spiritually or corporeally, or both ways. Here too is the forgiveness we seek, where there is the commission of all sins. Here are the temptations, which allure or drive us to sin. Finally, here is the evil, from which

we desire to be delivered. But in that life, there is none of these. The evangelist Luke, in the Lord's Prayer, not seven, but five petitions are comprised. Nor did he differ from the other, undoubtedly, but by how these seven are understood, he recommended by their brevity. For the name of God is hallowed in the spirit, but the kingdom of God is to come in the resurrection of the flesh. Therefore, showing that Luke considered the third petition to be a kind of repetition of the two preceding ones, he made it more understood by omitting it. Then he adds those three, concerning the daily bread, the forgiveness of sins, and the avoidance of temptation. And what the former put at the end: But deliver us from evil, the latter did not include for us to understand that it pertains to what was said above about temptation. Therefore, he indeed said: but deliver; he did not say: and deliver, as if demonstrating it to be one petition, saying not this, but that, so that everyone may know that he is delivered from evil, by not being led into temptation.

[Luke 11:5] -- And he said to them: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come from a journey to me, and I have nothing to set before him. When asked by his disciples, the Savior not only gave the form of prayer but also the perseverance and frequency of praying. The friend, therefore, to whom one comes at midnight is understood to be God Himself. To whom we must pray in the midst of tribulation and beg for three loaves, that is, the understanding of the Trinity, by which the labors of this present life are comforted. The friend who comes from the journey is our own mind, which departs from us each time it wanders outside to pursue earthly and temporal things. He returns and desires to be refreshed with heavenly nourishment when he, having turned back to himself, begins to meditate on higher and spiritual things. It is fitting that the one who asked adds that he has nothing to set before him. For the soul, longing for God after the darkness of the world, wants to think of nothing, speak of nothing, look upon nothing except Him, and only contemplate the joy of the supreme Trinity which it has recognized and strives to more fully understand.

[Luke 11:7] -- And he from within shall answer: Do not bother me, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give to you. The door of the divine friend is the understanding of the word, which the Apostle prays to be opened for speaking the mystery of Christ. And it is closed in the time of the famine of the word when understanding is not given. And those who, like bread distributors, preached gospel wisdom throughout the world, the children of the master of the house, are now in secret rest with the Lord. Yet through prayer, it is accomplished that he who desires understanding receives it from God Himself, even if a man is not present through whom wisdom is preached.

[Luke 11:8] -- And if he persists in knocking, I tell you, even if he will not give him rising because he is his friend, still because of his impudence, he will rise and give

him as many as he needs. And I tell you: Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. It is a comparison from the lesser. For if a human friend rises from bed and gives not out of friendship but compelled by weariness, how much more will God give, who grants generously without weariness what is asked? But He wishes to be asked so that those who seek may be made capable of His gifts. Therefore, so that the friend arriving from the journey does not perish from hunger, that is, so that a soul recently recovering from its vanity of error does not languish in spiritual desire for want, let us ask for the feast of the word by which it may be nourished, let us seek the friend who gives, let us knock on the door where the hidden things are kept. For He who promises does not deceive, and has given and gives great hope.

[Luke 11:10] -- For everyone (he says) who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Therefore, according to the previous parable of the requesting friend, perseverance is required so that we may receive what we ask, find what we seek, and have opened what we knock on. For if it is given to the one who asks, and the seeker finds, and it is opened to the one who knocks, therefore, to whom it is not given, who does not find, and to whom it is not opened, it is clear that he did not ask, seek, or knock properly. [Luke 11:11] -- Which of you is there, who, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Bread is understood as charity due to its greater desirability and so necessary that without it, everything else is nothing, just like a table is impoverished without bread. Its contrary is the hardness of heart, which he compared to a stone.

[Luke 11:11] -- Or if he asks for a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? A fish represents faith in invisible things, either because of the water of baptism or because it is taken from invisible places. Since faith is also not broken by the waves of this world, it is rightly compared to a fish. Its contrary he set as the serpent because of the poison of deceit, which by evil persuasion also first sowed in man. [Luke 11:12] -- Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? In the egg hope is indicated. For the egg is not yet a perfect offspring but is hoped by nurturing. He opposed a scorpion to this, whose venomous sting is feared from behind, just as looking back is contrary to hope, since hope for the future stretches to what is ahead.

[Luke 11:13] -- If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to those who ask him? How do the evil give good? But he called them evil, lovers still of this world and sinners. Truly, the goods they give according to their sense are to be called good because they regard them as such for us, although in nature these are good things, but temporary, and pertaining to this frail life, and whoever gives them, being evil, does not give them from what is his own. For the earth is the Lord’s, and its fullness, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them (Psalm

24). How much then should we expect God to give us good things when we ask, and not be deceived to receive something else when we ask from Him, since even we being evil know how to give that which is asked! For we do not deceive our children, and whatever good things we give, we give not from our own, but from His. Alternatively: The apostles, who by the merit of election had exceeded the goodness of the human race in many ways, are called evil in the view of supernal goodness, because nothing is stable by itself, nothing unchangeable, nothing good, except the Deity alone. All creatures indeed obtain the blessedness of eternity or immutability not by their nature, but by participation and grace of their Creator. That it is said:

How much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to those who ask Him? for which Matthew put: Will give good things to those who ask Him (Matthew 7), it shows that the Holy Spirit is the fullness of God's goods and those which are divinely administered do not subsist without Him. Because all benefits, which are received by the grace of God's gifts, emanate from this source.

BOOK FOUR. PROLOGUE. Exulting in the Holy Spirit, the Lord (as it is written above): I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to the little ones. This saying, conscious of the secret judgment, never ceases to display the power of its application. For it is shown both generally in the rejection of the Jews and the election of the Gentiles, and specifically in individuals according to the varying quality of their minds. Hence, to touch briefly on the recent, a lawyer wanting to justify himself approached the Lord to test Him but departed in confusion; whereas Mary, humbly bowing at His feet, chose the best part of heavenly philosophy. Likewise, the little ones of Christ, who learned to rely not on their own righteousness but on the grace of their Redeemer, inquire in what manner of prayers they should seek that grace, and they immediately hear with what words they should pray, with what insistence they should persevere, and for which things they should most urgently plead—namely, faith, hope, and charity—that perfectly seeking, they receive the good Spirit from the Father, the giver of these things. Against the wise and intelligent, because not only do they fail to ask, seek, or knock for the Spirit of grace but even strive to blaspheme it, they suffer the irremissible punishments of their obstinacy both here and in the future. And even unto the end of the Gospel, whoever reads, indeed until the end of the world, whoever prudently examines, will understand that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (I Peter 5).

INVOCATION. Wherefore, beginning the fourth book of the exposition of the Gospel from the reading wherein the spirit of pride is cast out by the finger of God, I humbly beseech your mercy, Christ, that your good Spirit may lead me into the right way, and make far from me the one who is from the North, so that, with the wicked ones cast out from me, I may search the commands of my God, and with the eyes

of my mind unveiled to consider the wonders of your most holy law, I may enter as a devoted reader. [Luke 11:14] -- And Jesus was casting out a demon, and it was mute. And when He had cast out the demon, the mute spoke, and the crowds marveled. This demon-possessed man is narrated in Matthew to have been not only mute but also blind, and it is said that he was healed by the Lord, so that he spoke and saw. Therefore, three signs were accomplished simultaneously in one man. The blind sees, the mute speaks, the one possessed by a demon is freed. This was indeed done physically at that time, but it is also completed daily in the lives of believers, so that, with the demon first expelled, they may behold the light of faith, and then the mouths previously silent may be opened to praise God.

[Luke 11:15] -- But some of them said, ”In Beelzebub, the prince of demons, He casts out demons.” Not some from the crowd, but the Pharisees and scribes were slandering, as other evangelists testify. Indeed, to the crowds who seemed less educated, always marveling at the deeds of the Lord, those people, on the contrary, either tried to deny these things or to pervert what they could not deny with sinister interpretation, as if these were not the works of divinity but of an unclean spirit, that is, Beelzebub, who was the god of Ekron. For Beel is indeed Baal. Zebub, however, is called a fly. Nor is the letter l or d to be read at the end of the name according to certain erroneous copies, but b. Therefore, Beelzebub means Baal of the flies, that is, the lord of the flies, or the one having flies, supposedly because of the filth of sacrificial blood, from whose most foul rites or name they called the prince of demons.

[Luke 11:16] -- And others, testing Him, sought a sign from heaven from Him. Either they wished for fire to come down from above in the manner of Elijah, or, similarly to Samuel, for thunder to roar, lightning to flash, and rains to fall in the summer, as if those could not also be slandered and said to have happened from hidden and varied passions of the air. But you, who slander those things which you see with your eyes, hold with your hands, feel with their benefit, what will you do with those things that have come from heaven? Surely, you will answer that the magicians in Egypt also performed many signs from the heavens. [Luke 11:17] -- But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself will be desolated, and house will fall upon house. He responded not to what was said, but to what was thought, so that they might be compelled to believe in his power, who saw the hidden things of the heart. But if every kingdom divided against itself is desolated, then the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is not divided, which, without any contradiction and not by any impulse, is destined to be desolated, but will remain in eternal stability. But if the kingdom of the holy and indivisible Trinity remains indivisible, indeed because it remains indivisible, let the Arians desist from saying that the Son is lesser than the Father, and the Holy Spirit lesser than the Son. Because where there is one kingdom, there is also one majesty.

[Luke 11:18] -- But if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand, because you say that I cast out demons in Beelzebub? By saying this, he wanted it to be understood from their own confession that by not believing in him, they had chosen to be in the kingdom of the devil, which certainly could not stand divided against itself. Therefore, let the Pharisees choose what they wish. If Satan cannot cast out Satan, they could find nothing to say against the Lord. But if he can, let them be much more cautious and withdraw from his kingdom, which cannot stand divided against itself. By what means the Lord Christ casts out demons, let them consider what follows, so that they do not think him to be the prince of demons.

[Luke 11:19] -- But if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges. He said this, indeed, about his disciples, the sons of that people, who certainly being disciples of Lord Jesus Christ, were well aware that they had learned nothing of evil arts from the good teacher to cast out demons by the prince of demons. Therefore (he says) they shall be your judges, they (he says) the ignoble and contemptible ones of this world, in whom not an artful malignity, but a holy simplicity of my virtue appears, they shall be my witnesses, they shall be your judges. Alternatively: He signifies the sons of the Jews, the exorcists of that people according to custom, who cast out demons through invocation. And he compels them with a prudent question, so that they confess it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. But if (he says) the expulsion of demons in your sons is attributed to God, not to demons, why should the same work in me not have the same cause? Therefore they shall be your judges, not by power, but by comparison, while they assign the expulsion of demons to God, you to Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

[Luke 11:20] -- Moreover, if I cast out demons by the finger of God, indeed the kingdom of God has come upon you. This is the finger which even the magicians who opposed Moses and Aaron confessed, saying: This is the finger of God (Exod. VIII), by which also the stone tablets were written on Mount Sinai. Therefore, the Son is the hand and arm of God, and the Holy Spirit is His finger. The substance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one. Do not let the inequality of the members scandalize you, while the unity of the body builds you up. Alternatively: The Holy Spirit is called the finger of God because of the distribution of gifts which are given in it to each one individually, whether of men or angels. For there is no greater display of distribution in our members than in the fingers. But what he said, The kingdom of God has come upon you, means now the kingdom of God by which the impious are condemned, and are now separated from the faithful who are repenting of their sins.

[Luke 11:21] -- When a strong man fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. By the strong man, he means the devil; and by his palace, he means the world which is set in evil, where until the coming of the Savior, he ruled with

a malevolent but unchallenged authority, because he rested in the hearts of unbelievers without any opposition. Hence elsewhere he is called the prince of this world, as the Lord says: ”For the prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me” (John 14). And again: ”Now the prince of this world will be cast out” (John 12), and the reference here too is to that casting out. [Luke 11:22] -- But if a stronger man comes upon him and overcomes him, he will take away his armor in which he trusted, and will divide his spoils. He is speaking of Himself, that He would not by a deceitful harmonious operation, as some were falsely alleging, but by a stronger power, victoriously free men from the devil. The armor in which the wickedly strong man trusted are the wiles and deceits of spiritual wickedness. The spoils, however, are the men themselves, whom he deceived. These victorious Christ distributes, which is the emblem of triumph, because leading captivity captive, He gave gifts to men, appointing some as apostles, others as evangelists, these as prophets, those as pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4).

[Luke 11:23] -- He who is not with me is against me. And he who does not gather with me, scatters. Let no one think that this refers to heretics and schismatics, though by extension it can be so understood, but from the context, the subject of the discourse refers to the devil, and that the works of the Savior cannot be compared to the works of Beelzebub. He desires to hold the souls of men captive, the Lord to liberate them; he preaches idols, the Lord preaches the knowledge of the one God; he draws to vices, the Lord calls back to virtue: how then can there be concord between them, whose works are divided? [Luke 11:24] -- When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he walks through dry places. Although it can be simply understood that the Lord added these things for the distinction between His works and those of Satan, namely that He always cleanses the defiled, while Satan hurries to defile the cleansed with even graver filth, it can nevertheless also be aptly taken to refer to any heretic, schismatic, or even a bad Catholic. From the time of baptism, the unclean spirit that had previously inhabited him is driven away by the confession of Catholic faith and the renunciation of worldly ways, and it wanders through dry places, that is, the hearts of the faithful which have been purged of the laxity of fluid thoughts. The cunning adversary sees if he can fix his wicked steps anywhere there. But it is well said:

[Luke 11:24] -- ”Seeking rest and finding none, for, fleeing chaste minds, the devil can only find a pleasant rest in the heart of the wicked.” Hence the Lord says of him: ”He sleeps under the shadow, in the covert of the reed, and in moist places.” The shadow, that is, dark consciences; in the reed, which, shiny on the outside, is empty within, being a hypocrite; in moist places, insinuating himself into lascivious and soft minds. [Luke 11:24] -- He says: ”I will return to my house from which I came out.” This verse should be feared, not expounded upon, lest through careless neglect, the sin we believed extinguished in us should crush us. [Luke 11:25] -- And when he comes, he finds it swept and garnished, that is, cleansed by the grace of

baptism from the stain of sins, but not filled with the industry of good works. Hence Matthew rightly says that he finds the house empty, swept, and garnished: swept, namely from past vices through baptism, empty of good deeds through negligence, and garnished with simulated virtues through hypocrisy.

[Luke 11:26] -- And then he goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there. By the seven evil spirits, he designates all vices. For whoever after baptism is seized by either heretical depravity or worldly cupidity, will soon be cast into the depths of all vices. Hence the spirits are then rightly said to be more wicked entering him. Because he will not only have those seven vices, which are contrary to the seven spiritual virtues, but also through hypocrisy, he will pretend to have those virtues themselves.

[Luke 11:26] -- And the last state of that man is worse than the first. For it would have been better for him not to know the way of truth than after knowing it to turn back. This we read particularly fulfilled in Judas the betrayer, or Simon the magician, and others of the kind. But as to where this parable generally tends, the Savior himself according to Matthew explained, where, having finished it, he immediately added, saying: So shall it be also to this wicked generation. That is, what I have told about any one in particular being usually carried out, this generally continues to be carried out in the whole nation of this people. For the unclean spirit went out from the Jews when they received the law. And he walked through dry places, seeking rest for himself. Expelled indeed by the Jews, he walked through the wilderness of the Gentiles. Which, when afterward they had believed in the Lord, he not finding a place among the nations said: I will return to my former house, whence I came out. I will have the Jews, whom I had left before. And coming, he found it empty, swept, and garnished. For the temple of the Jews was empty, and did not have Christ as a guest, saying: Your house shall be left to you desolate.

Because therefore they did not have the protection of God and angels, and were adorned with the superfluous observances of the Pharisees, the devil returns to them, and with the addition of seven demons, inhabits his former house and the latter state of that people becomes worse than the first. For they are now possessed by a much larger number of demons, blaspheming Christ Jesus in their synagogues, than they were possessed in Egypt before the knowledge of the law. Because it is one thing not to believe in the one to come, another not to receive him who has come. But understand the number seven added to the devil, either because of the Sabbath or because of the number of the Holy Spirit. So just as in Isaiah, over the rod out of the root of Jesse, and the flower that rises from the root, the seven spirits of virtues are narrated to have descended, so also conversely the number of vices in the devil is consecrated.

[Luke 11:27] -- It happened that, as he was saying these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifted up her voice and said to him: ”Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you. This woman is shown to be of great devotion and faith, who, while the scribes and Pharisees were testing and blaspheming the Lord, recognized his incarnation with such sincerity above all, confessed with such confidence, as to confound the calumny of the present nobles and the perfidy of future heretics. For just as the Jews then, by blaspheming the works of the Holy Spirit, denied the true and consubstantial Son of God to the Father, so later heretics, by denying that Mary, ever a virgin, ministered the material of flesh to the only-begotten God born from human members by the operation of the Holy Spirit’s power, said that the Son of Man should not be confessed as truly consubstantial to his mother. But if the flesh of the Word of God, born according to the flesh, is proclaimed foreign to the flesh of the virgin mother, the womb that bore him and the breasts that nursed him are blessed in vain. For by what logic is he believed to have been nourished by her milk, whose seed is denied to be conceived? Since both liquids are proven, according to the natural philosophers, to emanate from the origin of one and the same source.

Unless perhaps it is thought that the virgin could supply the material of her flesh to nourish the Son of God in the flesh through a lesser and familiar miracle, but could not do so for the incarnation through a greater and unusual miracle. But the Apostle counters this opinion, saying: ”God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. IV). Nor should we listen to those who believe it should be read as ”born of a woman, made under the law,” but rather, ”made of a woman. For conceived from the virgin’s womb, he drew flesh not from nothing, not from elsewhere, but from maternal flesh. Otherwise, he could not truly be called the Son of Man, who would not have originated from a human. And so, in these words spoken against Eutyches, let us lift up our voice with the Catholic Church, of which this woman was a type, lifting up our minds from the midst of the crowds, and let us say to the Savior: ”Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you” (Luke XI). For truly blessed is the mother, who, as someone said, gave birth to the childbearing King. Who holds heaven and earth through the ages, whose divinity and eternal embrace encompasses all things, his empire remaining without end; who, with a blessed womb, having the joys of a mother with the honor of virginity, has neither been seen to have a first like her nor having a second to follow her.

[Luke 11:28] -- But he said: Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. The Savior beautifully agreed to the testimony of the woman, meaning not only her who was worthy to physically bear the Word of God, but also all those who spiritually, by the hearing of faith, conceive the same Word, and in the custody of good works strive either to bear it in their own heart or in the hearts of others, and as if to nurture it, asserting that they are blessed. For even the mother of God, and

indeed she was blessed because she became the minister of the Word made flesh temporally, but much more blessed because she remained the eternal guardian of the same Word always to be loved. With this sentence, he silently strikes the wise of the Jews, who sought not to hear and keep the Word of God, but to deny and blaspheme it.

[Luke 11:29] -- But as the crowds were gathering, he began to say: This generation is an evil generation: it seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. He had been attacked with a double question. Some indeed were slandering him for casting out demons by Beelzebul, to whom this has been answered. And others, testing him, were seeking a sign from heaven from him, to whom he begins to respond, not giving them a sign from heaven which they were unworthy to see, but instead granting a sign from the depths of hell, like the prophet Jonah who, shipwrecked, swallowed by a whale yet freed from the abyss and the jaws of death, both received and gave, namely the sign of the incarnation, not divinity, of the passion, not glorification. But to his disciples, he gave a sign from heaven, revealing to them the glory of eternal blessedness, first figuratively transformed on the mount, and then truly lifted to heaven.

[Luke 11:30] -- For just as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. He showed that the Jews, like the Ninevites, were overwhelmed with grave sins and close to destruction if they did not repent. Yet, just as punishment was announced to the Ninevites and a remedy was shown, so too should the Jews not despair of mercy if they are willing to do penance. But see what follows: [Luke 11:31] -- The Queen of the South will rise in the judgment with the men of this generation, and will condemn them. She will indeed condemn not by the power of judgment, but by the comparison of a better act. But if the Queen of the South, who is undoubtedly chosen, will rise in the judgment with the reprobates, it is shown that there is one resurrection of all mortals, namely the good and the bad, and that not according to the fables of the Jews a thousand years before judgment, but to be in the very judgment.

[Luke 11:31] -- For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.--Here in this place it signifies not a pronoun, but an adverb of place, that is, he is conversing among you in the present, who is incomparably superior to Solomon. Scripture, however, recounts how the Queen of Sheba, with her people and empire abandoned, came to Judea to hear Solomon’s wisdom through so many difficulties, and bringing many gifts, received even more from him. She, therefore, will condemn the Jews in judgment, because she sought him from the farthest ends of the earth, whom she recognized to be famous upon receiving the gift of wisdom. They, however, having him among them who is not wise from elsewhere, but is wisdom and the power of God Himself, preferred not only not to listen but to blaspheme and act with treachery.

[Luke 11:32] -- The men of Nineveh will rise in judgment with this generation and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. Jonah preached for a few days, I for so long a time. He to the Assyrians, an unbelieving nation; I to the Jews, the people of God. He to strangers, I to citizens. He spoke with a simple voice and, doing no signs, was accepted; I, doing so many signs, endure the calumny of Beelzebub. Thus, there is something greater than Jonah here, that is, in your midst preaching. And therefore, in the same way the queen of the south, the men of Nineveh will condemn the generation of Jews, that is, they will accuse them of infidelity. Otherwise: In the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south, the faith of the Church is preferred to Israel, which is reconciled to the Lord not less through repentance of past foolishness than through the industry of learning wisdom. For the unity of the Church is certainly gathered from two parts, namely, from those who do not know how to sin and from those who cease to sin. For repentance abolishes the crime, wisdom guards against it.

[Luke 11:33] -- No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel. The Lord speaks these words about himself, showing that even though he previously said no sign would be given to the wicked generation except the sign of Jonah, he would not at all conceal the brightness of his light from the faithful. Indeed, he himself lights a lamp, who filled the vessel of human nature with the flame of his divinity. Certainly, he did not wish to hide this lamp from believers, nor to put it under a bushel, that is, to confine it under the measure of the law or to restrain it within the boundaries of the single nation of Judea. [Luke 11:33] -- But on the lampstand, He said, so that those who enter may see the light. He calls the Church the lampstand, upon which He has placed the lamp, because He has affixed the faith of His incarnation on our foreheads, so that those who wish to sincerely enter the Church may openly see the light of truth. By this sentence, He condemns the leaders of the Jews as well, who, seeking signs outwardly, were unwilling to enter through the open door of light by believing. Thus, He commands us to cleanse and chasten not only our deeds but also our thoughts and the very intentions of our heart; for it follows:

[Luke 11:34] -- The lamp of your body is your eye. By body, He means the works that appear openly to all; indeed, the eye itself performs the intention of the mind, and by its merit, these works are discerned as works of light or darkness, as He Himself subsequently explained, saying: [Luke 11:34] -- If your eye is simple, your whole body will be full of light. But if it is evil, your body also will be full of darkness. He said, if you strive to do good with a pure and upright intention, the works that you do are indeed works of light, even if they seem to have some imperfection in the sight of men. Because for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. But if the preceding intention is perverse, every work that follows is of little value, even if it seems to be correct.

[Luke 11:35] -- Therefore, see to it that the light in you is not darkness. This means that the very intention of the heart, which is the light of the soul, should not be darkened by the fog of sins, but should be carefully considered with diligent discernment. As it is commanded elsewhere: With all vigilance, guard your heart, for from it flows the springs of life (Prov. IV). [Luke 11:36] -- If therefore your whole body is full of light, not having any part dark, it will be all bright, and as a lamp shining will illuminate you. Our whole body means all our works, because the Apostle calls certain works our members, which he condemns and orders to be mortified, saying: Mortify therefore your members which are on earth: fornication, impurity, lust (Col. III), and such things. If therefore you yourself perform good with good intention, not having in your conscience any part of dark thought, even if it happens that one of your neighbors is harmed by your good action, for example, either by the money he had received from you out of need and asked for, doing or suffering something evil, or by the word of exhortation with which you wanted to correct the erring one, perhaps erring more harmfully, nevertheless, you, for your simple and bright heart, both here and in the future, will be endowed with the grace of light. These words were specifically said against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees cunningly seeking signs, may they instruct us generally according to the moral sense.

[Luke 11:37] -- And while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him, and he went in and reclined. Luke carefully does not say, ”And when he had spoken these things,” but ”While he was speaking,” to show that he was invited to dine by the Pharisee not immediately after finishing the words he had set out, but after some others were interposed. Matthew explains what these are, who, after concluding this speech of the Lord, which Luke records partly more briefly and partly more extensively, immediately added, ”While he was still speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him.” ”While he was still speaking,” he said, so that you might understand, ”while he was speaking these things,” which he had indicated above. But Mark also, after he had related what the Lord said about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, said, ”And his mother and brothers came.” However, Luke did not follow the order of these events but preemptively narrated this event, having recalled it earlier. For he inserted it in such a way that it appears disconnected from the context both of the preceding and the following. Therefore, after he was informed that his mother and brothers were standing outside and he said, ”Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3), it is implied that he entered the Pharisee’s house to dine, having been invited.

[Luke 11:38] -- The Pharisee began to think to himself why he had not washed before the meal. The evangelist Mark revealed the reason for the Pharisee’s thought, saying, ”For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands frequently, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the

marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash" (Mark 7). [Luke 11:39] -- And the Lord said to him: Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. And Mark indeed reports that they are accustomed to observe the washing of cups and pots, couches, and vessels of bronze, but under the guise of such vessels, they themselves are accused of the pretense of hypocrisy, because they show one thing to men outwardly, and do another thing at home, having the form of godliness outwardly, but inwardly they are deformed by the filth of vices. For the Lord wishes to explain more fully what he had briefly stated above about cleansing the eye of the heart.

[Luke 11:40] -- Fools, did not he who made the outside make the inside also? He who, he says, made both natures of man desires both to be cleansed. This is against the Manichaeans, who think that the soul is created by God, but the flesh by the devil. This is against those who detest bodily sins, namely fornication, uncleanness, lust, theft, robbery, and such like, as very grave; but the spiritual sins which the Apostle also condemns no less, that is, bitterness, wrath, indignation, clamour, blasphemy, pride, and avarice which is idolatry (Colossians 3), they regard as trifling.

[Luke 11:41] -- "However, what remains, give as alms, and behold, everything is clean for you. What remains necessary for food and clothing, give to the poor. According to what John also commands: He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none (Luke 3). For he is not commanded to do almsgiving in such a way that you consume yourself in poverty, but so that after fulfilling the care of your own body, you sustain the needy as much as you can. Or it should be understood in this way: 'what remains,' what is the only remedy left for those preoccupied with so much sin, give alms. This speech applies to all things done out of useful mercy. For not only does he who gives food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, shelter to the stranger, and similar things, give alms, but also he who forgives the sinner gives alms. And he who corrects with a rod him over whom he has authority, or disciplines in some way, and yet forgives from the heart the sin by which he was harmed or offended, or prays for it to be forgiven to him, not only in that he forgives and prays, but also in that he rebukes and punishes with some corrective penalty, gives alms, for he shows mercy.

There are indeed many forms of alms, which when we do, we are helped so that our sins may be forgiven to us, but there is nothing greater than that by which we forgive from the heart what anyone has sinned against us. Or truly what he said: 'Give alms, and behold, everything is clean for you,' are we to understand it such that to the Pharisees who do not have faith in Christ, even if they do not believe in Him, nor have been reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, everything is clean, only if they give alms, as some think they should be given, since all those whom the faith of Christ does not cleanse are unclean, about which it is written: 'Purifying

their hearts by faith'? And yet it is true what they heard, 'Give alms, and behold, everything is clean for you.' For he who wants to give alms properly must begin with himself, and give it first to himself. For alms is a work of mercy, and it is very truly said: 'Have mercy on your soul, pleasing God' (Sirach 30). Because of this we are reborn, so that we may please God, to whom what we contracted by being born displeases with reason. This is the first alms we gave to ourselves, because we sought ourselves miserable by the mercy of the merciful God. For this order of love it was said: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Mark 12).

Therefore, when he rebuked them for washing themselves outwardly, but being full of plunder and wickedness internally, admonishing them of a certain alms that a man should first give to himself, and to cleanse the interior: 'However,' he says, 'what remains, give as alms, and behold, everything is clean.' Then to show what he had admonished and what they did not care to do, lest they think he was unaware of their alms."

[Luke 11:42] -- But woe to you, he said, Pharisees. As if he said, I indeed warned you to give alms, by which everything would be clean to you: but woe to you, [Luke 11:42] -- Because you tithe mint and rue and every herb; for I know these as your alms, so do not think that I now admonish you about them. [Luke 11:42] -- And you neglect justice and the love of God. By this alms you might be cleansed of all inner impurity, so that the bodies you wash might also be clean to you, for this is indeed everything, both the inner and the outer, as it is read elsewhere: Cleanse what is inside, and what is outside will be clean (Matthew XXIII). But lest it seem that he rejects those alms made from the fruits of the earth, he says: [Luke 11:42] -- These things, however, you ought to have done. That is, justice and the love of God, so that judging rightly of our own misery and loving the charity of God that He has bestowed, we may live piously and rightly, confessing His righteous judgment, which the Apostle says, Judgment came through one to condemnation: and giving thanks to His great charity (Romans V), of which the same grace preacher says: But God commends His charity in us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Ibid.).

[Luke 11:42] -- These things you ought to have done, and not leave the others undone, that is, alms from the fruits of the earth. Therefore, let them not deceive themselves who think that by giving the most generous alms from their fruits, or any money, they are buying impunity while remaining in the enormity of crimes and the wickedness of disgraces. [Luke 11:43] -- Woe to you Pharisees who love the foremost seats in synagogues, and the greetings in the market. Woe to us miserable ones, to whom the vices of the Pharisees have passed, who, in the brief and uncertain course of our life in which we ought to have humbly lamented our sins, by proudly contending with each other for priority, we did not fear to burden ourselves further with sins. [Luke 11:44] -- Woe to you who are like unseen tombs,

and men walking over them do not know it. And this challenges the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who outwardly present an appearance of correct doctrine, but within conceal what filth they carry, like tombs which, while showing the common surface of the earth outwardly, are filled within with the stench of rotting corpses. Of these the Psalmist said: Their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalm 5); and he immediately clarified what he said by adding: They dealt deceitfully with their tongues.

[Luke 11:45] -- But one of the lawyers, answering, said to him: Teacher, in saying these things you also reproach us. How miserable a conscience that, hearing the word of God, thinks itself reproached, and always understands itself to be condemned by the mentioned punishment of the faithless. Hence, for me and my kind, the only refuge remains to supplicate the Lord with the prophet: May my ways be directed to keep your statutes. Then I shall not be ashamed, while I have regard for all your commandments (Psalm 119). [Luke 11:46] -- But he said: Woe to you lawyers also, because you load men with burdens that cannot be carried, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one finger. The burdens of the law cannot be carried in the way these lawyers imposed them on the people. Hence, they rightly hear that they do not touch the burdens with one finger, that is, they would not fulfill them even in the smallest part, which they presumed, contrary to the custom of the fathers, to keep and hand down to be kept without the faith and grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they attempted to cast away and exterminate the yoke of Christ which is sweet and His burden which is light, where there is rest for souls, since it is written: The righteous shall live by faith (Romans 1). And the apostle Peter, to those who were teaching that Gentile believers should be circumcised, protested and said: Now therefore why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15).

[Luke 11:47] -- Woe to you who build the tombs of the prophets, but your fathers killed them. It is a crime not to adorn the tombs of the prophets, but to imitate the murderers of the prophets. Therefore, the Jews, by building the tombs of the prophets, were accusing the deeds of their fathers who killed them; but by emulating the deeds of their fathers, while they persecuted Christ and his apostles, they were turning the judgment upon themselves, committing the same deeds which they condemned in their parents. [Luke 11:48] -- Indeed you testify that you approve the deeds of your fathers. For they killed them, and you build their tombs. They pretended indeed, to win the favor of the masses, to abhor the treachery of their fathers, adorning the memorials of the prophets who were killed by them with great splendor. But by their very actions, they testify how much they agree with the wickedness of their fathers, injuring the Lord who was foretold by the same prophets. Thus they declare themselves both sons of murderers and, to the augmentation of their own damnation, knowingly sinning. Whence it is rightly added:

[Luke 11:49] -- Therefore also said the wisdom of God: I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall kill and persecute. He calls himself the wisdom of God, for he is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. 1). Accordingly, in Matthew, you have it thus: Therefore behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes. If, however, the same wisdom of God sent prophets as well as apostles, let the heretics cease to ascribe Christ's beginning to the Virgin, and let them not proclaim a different God of the law and the prophets, different from the God of the New Testament, although often even the apostolic Scripture calls prophets not only those who foretold Christ's incarnation but also those who proclaimed the joys of the heavenly kingdom to come. The two or three prophets (it says) should speak, and the others should judge. But I would by no means believe these should be preferred to the apostles in the order of the catalog.

[Luke 11:50] -- That the blood of all the prophets that was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation. The question arises how the blood of all the prophets and the righteous may be required of one generation of the Jews, since many saints, both before the incarnation and after the death and resurrection of the Savior, were killed by other nations, and the Lord Himself was crucified by a Roman governor and Roman soldiers, though with the Jews shouting. But it is the custom of the Scriptures often to reckon two generations of men, namely, the good and the evil, that is, those who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1); and those to whom it is said: You are of your father the devil (John 8). And elsewhere: Serpents, generation of vipers (Matt. 23).

[Luke 11:51] -- From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple. Why from the blood of Abel, who suffered the first martyrdom, is not surprising, but why up to the blood of Zechariah is queried, since many after him, until the birth of Christ, and immediately after His birth, the innocent children in Bethlehem were killed by this generation, unless perhaps because Abel was a shepherd of sheep, Zechariah a priest, and one was killed in the field, the other in the temple courtyard, He wished to indicate the martyrs of both ranks, of the laity and of those dedicated to the service of the altar, under the name of both. [Luke 11:52] -- Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering. The key of knowledge is the humility of Christ, which the lawyers neither wished to understand in the law and the prophets, nor wished others to understand. For to enter is not to be content with the surface of the letter, but to penetrate to the secrets of more sacred understanding. Alternatively: Every teacher who scandalizes the listeners whom he edifies by word with his example neither enters the kingdom of God himself, nor allows those who could enter to do so.

[Luke 11:53] -- When He said these things to them, the Pharisees and the experts in the law began to fiercely oppose Him and to press upon His mouth, laying traps for Him about many things, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, so that they might accuse Him. The crimes of their perfidy, simulation, and impiety they themselves attest to have truly heard, who, at such a thundering storm, do not repent themselves, but plan to attack the teacher of truth with treachery.

Chapter 12

[Luke 12:1] -- Meanwhile, as many crowds gathered so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. All the things He had disputed earlier while reclining at the Pharisee's dinner pertain to this leaven. About which the Apostle also commands: Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Cor V). For just as a little leaven corrupts the whole lump of dough into which it is thrown, and soon taints the entire mixture with its flavor, so indeed simulation, once it has imbued the mind of anyone, will rob it of all sincerity and truth of virtues. [Luke 12:2] -- Nothing, however, is covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. And how in the present age does the hypocrisy of many long remain hidden? Therefore, it must be understood about the future time, when God will judge the hidden things of men. For just as one of the friends of blessed Job very truly said: The praise of the wicked is brief, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. If his arrogance rises to the heavens, and his head touches the clouds, he will be lost in the end like dung (Job. XX). In the end, he says, he will be lost, who appeared to flourish at the beginning. Therefore, the sense is: Beware of emulating simulators, because surely the time will come, when both your virtue will be revealed to all, and their hypocrisy. But what follows:

[Luke 12:3] -- For what you have spoken in darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the ear in chambers will be proclaimed on the rooftops, not only in the future, when all hidden things of the heart will be brought to light, but also in the present time it can be suitably interpreted. For the things which the apostles once spoke or suffered in the darkness of oppressions and shadows of prisons are now proclaimed publicly throughout the world by the Church, now made glorious by their acts being read. Indeed, what he says 'will be proclaimed on the rooftops' refers to the custom of the province of Palestine, where they are accustomed to sit on rooftops. For they do not make their roofs elevated to peaks in our manner, but they make them flat in a level form. Hence, the law commanded that he who built a new house should build a parapet around the roof, so that blood-shed may not occur there if someone were to fall and be precipitated down. And

in the construction of the temple, we read: He also covered the house with cedar boards, and built a story over the entire house five cubits in height. Therefore, it will be proclaimed on the rooftops, and it will be said openly for all to hear.

[Luke 12:4] -- But I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do nothing more. If the persecutors of the saints, having killed their bodies, can do nothing more against them, then they rage with futile madness, who throw the dead bodies of martyrs to be torn apart by beasts and birds, or to be dissolved into the air, or to be dissolved in the waves, or to be reduced to ashes by flames, since they can in no way hinder the omnipotence of God from bringing them back to life by resurrection. [Luke 12:5] -- Fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast into Gehenna. For there are two kinds of persecutors: one openly raging, the other deceitfully and fraudulently flattering: wishing to arm and instruct us against both, the Savior commands us above to beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and here not to fear the slaughter of executioners, because evidently after death neither the cruelty of the former nor the deceit of the latter is able to endure. Rather, it is the Lord, who always sees, that must be pleased, the Lord, who is always able to punish or liberate, that must be feared.

[Luke 12:6] -- Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria, and not one of them is forgotten before God? If, he says, the smallest of animals, and those birds that fly through the air everywhere, cannot be forgotten by God, you who are made in the image of the Creator should not be frightened by those who kill the body, because he who governs the irrational does not cease to care for the rational. An assarius, which sells five sparrows, that is, they are sold for, is a type of very light weight, composed of two asses. Perhaps someone may ask how the Apostle says: Does God care for oxen? (1 Cor. 9) when certainly an ox is more valuable than a sparrow. But care is one thing, and knowledge is another. Lastly, the number of hairs, about which he consequently says:

[Luke 12:7] -- But even the hairs of your head are all numbered, not actually in the act of counting, but understood in the capacity of knowledge. For God does not direct a watchful solicitude in tedious counting, but to whom all things are known, as if all things were numbered. Nevertheless, they are well said to be numbered, because we count the things we want to keep. Here he shows the immense providence of God towards men, and marks the ineffable affection that nothing of ours escapes God’s notice, and that even small and trivial things spoken do not elude His knowledge. Those who deny the resurrection of the flesh deride ecclesiastical understanding in this place, as if we were to say that the same earthly matter, which becomes a corpse when the soul departs, is to be restored in the resurrection in such a way that the things which decay and are transformed into different shapes and forms of other things must necessarily return not only to the body from which

they dissolved but also to the same parts of the body where they were. Otherwise, if the hair of the head returns, which frequent cutting has removed, if to the nails, which frequent trimming has taken off, it appears excessive and indecent to those who think about it, and thus the resurrection of the flesh does not present itself acceptably to those who do not believe.

But just as if a statue of any soluble metal were either melted by fire or ground into powder or reduced to a mass, and the artist wished to restore it again from that quantity of material, it would make no difference to its integrity which particle of material is restored to which member of the statue, provided that all from which it was constituted is reconstituted: so God, wonderfully and ineffably the artist, from all that our flesh was constituted, will restore it with wonderful and ineffable speed, nor will it matter for its reconstitution whether hairs return to hairs and nails to nails, or whether whatever of them had perished is transformed into flesh and recalled to other parts of the body, with the providence of the artist ensuring that nothing indecent happens.

[Luke 12:7] -- Therefore, do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Not 'you are many,' which pertains to the comparison of numbers, but 'you are worth more,' that is, you are of greater merit, dignity, and esteem before God than countless sparrows, whether bodies or kinds. [Luke 12:8] -- But I tell you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will also confess him before the angels of God. But whoever denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. He looks at what was said before, where it was stated that any covered and hidden things are to be revealed, concluding that this revelation will take place not in any lowly meeting, but in the sight of the heavenly city and the eternal king and judge. And lest it be thought that because he says those who deny him will be denied, the condition of all, that is, of those who deny out of zeal and those who deny out of weakness or ignorance, is the same, he immediately adds:

[Luke 12:10] -- And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him. He who is scandalized by my flesh, considering me only a man because I have James, Joseph, and Judas as brothers, and that I am a human glutton and wine drinker, such opinion and blasphemy, though not free from the guilt of error, has pardon because of the benefit of the body. But he who, clearly understanding the works of God since he cannot deny their power, yet stirred by envy, slanders them, and says that Christ and the works of the Holy Spirit are of Beelzebub, this one will not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come. Not that we deny that even he, if he were able to repent, could be forgiven by Him who wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, but we believe this blasphemer, due to his deserving merits, will never reach forgiveness nor the fruits of worthy repentance. As the evangelist John truly wrote about some who were blinded due

to the merit of their blasphemy: Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them (John XII).

Some indeed say that he who speaks the word or blasphemes against the Holy Spirit resists with an impenitent heart the unity of the Church where the forgiveness of sins is effected by the Holy Spirit, saying it is a remedy lest the blasphemy be irremissible, that an impenitent heart should be avoided. Of whom, many consider their opinion by no means firm, because obviously anyone who resists the unity of the Church with an impenitent heart, whether he is a Jew or a Gentile or even a heretic, can certainly have the remission of sins in the Holy Spirit, if he flees with a repentant heart to the unity of the Church. But they say that as long as someone resists the Spirit of grace with an impenitent heart, he does not have forgiveness. But the others object that this condition applies to all crimes. For as long as someone commits fornication, idolatry, adultery, male concubinage, theft, and other crimes, he does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God; but once these crimes have been forsaken, he can be washed, sanctified, justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God; so, they say, an impenitent person as long as he has an impenitent heart cannot have forgiveness; but as soon as he repents, he will also obtain forgiveness. And impenitence is found to be no more binding or irremissible than any other sins, which, remaining until repentance, will be erased once repentance is performed.

However, only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, by which someone in the likeness of the devil and his angels does not shudder to attack the majesty of the Deity against his own conscience, does not have forgiveness eternally, but will be guilty of an eternal offense. As the evangelist Mark clearly explains, who, having placed this testimony of the Lord, added and said: Because they were saying, He has an unclean spirit. For neither those who do not believe that the Holy Spirit exists, nor those who believe that He exists but is not God, nor those who believe that He is God but inferior to the Father and the Son, because they act out of human ignorance rather than diabolical envy, are held by this crime of irremissible blasphemy. Therefore, the leaders of the Jews, and all those corrupted by a similar plague of envy, blaspheme the majesty, and will perish without end. Read the first book of the blessed Augustine on the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount.

[Luke 12:11] -- When they bring you into the synagogues, and to the rulers, and authorities. For He had said before: I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute. [Luke 12:11] -- Do not worry about how or what you are to answer, or what you are to say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. Therefore, when we are brought before judges for Christ’s sake, we should only offer our will for Christ; for Christ Himself

who dwells in us, speaks for Himself, and the grace of the Holy Spirit in responding will be provided.

[Luke 12:13] -- But someone from the crowd said to him: Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him: Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? Justly is this brother rebuked, who, while the teacher is commending the joys of heavenly peace and unity, wishes to bring in the trouble of earthly division. Justly is he noted by the term 'man'. For whereas there is among you, he says, jealousy and contention, are you not carnal, are you not men, and walking according to man? And the Lord denies that He is a divider of men, to whom he had come to bring peace both with Himself and with the angels. For God is not the author of disorder but of peace. And the multitude of believers was of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common (Acts IV). But the only divider of fraternity and author of dissension is he of whom it is said above: And he who does not gather with me scatters. And concerning his members: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and house upon house falls (Matt. XII).

[Luke 12:15] -- And he said to them: "Take heed and beware of all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Just as earlier the Lord had spoken much against blasphemers and hypocrites, so here, on the occasion of this foolish petition, he strives to fortify both the crowds and his disciples against the pestilence of greed, by means of precepts and examples. And it is noteworthy that he did not say, "Beware of covetousness," but added, "of all," because some things seem to be done by men simply, but the internal judge, who sees with what intention they are done, judges. For who would consider it a crime to divide an inheritance with a brother or store the fruits grown in one's own field in granaries? But he himself is the witness and judge, as it is written. [Luke 12:16-21] -- Then he spoke a parable to them, saying: "The land of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest, and he thought to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' And he said, 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' This rich man is not condemned for having cultivated the land or for having stored the fruits that came from it in barns, but for placing his entire life's trust in the very abundance of things, considering the surplus fruits that the land yielded as belonging to him and his goods, without distributing to the poor, according to the Lord's command saying, 'What is left over give as alms,' but rather making larger storehouses to reserve for his future luxury.

[Luke 12:19-20] -- 'Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' Something similar is read in Ecclesiastes: 'There is one who becomes rich by being sparing and his reward is a part of it in saying: I have found rest for myself, and now I will eat of my goods alone,' and he does not

know that the time passes and he will leave everything to others" (Eccl. XI). [Luke 12:20] -- But God said to him: Fool, this night they will demand your soul from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? You who promised many delights for yourself foolishly in life, snatched away by death this very night, will leave what you have gathered to others. This is what it means for God to speak to a man, to restrain his wicked schemes with sudden reproof. Alternatively: The soul is taken away in the night, which is in the darkness of the heart, and wretched. It is taken away in the night, which did not wish to have the light of reflection, to foresee what it could endure. Hence well does the Apostle Paul say to the disciples considering the future: But you, brothers, are not in darkness, that that day might overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of light and children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of the darkness (1 Thess. V). For the day of departure catches like a thief in the night, when it casts out the souls of the foolish who do not meditate on the future.

[Luke 12:21] -- Thus it is for the one who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God. If he who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God is a fool and to be taken away in the night, then he who wishes to be rich toward God should not treasure up for himself, but distribute his possessions to the poor. Thus he will rightfully be considered wise and a son of the light. Hence the Psalmist rightly prefaces, concerning any greedy rich man: But in vain does he become troubled; he treasures up and does not know for whom he gathers (Ps. XXXVIII), then at once reveals the treasury of his heart, saying: And now, what is my expectation? Is it not the Lord? And my substance is with you (ibid.). [Luke 12:22] -- And he said to his disciples: Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will wear. When he says, Therefore I say, he looks back to the previous, that is, I forbid the anxiety of temporal things, so that you are not convicted with the world's rich for treasuring up for yourselves. Hence, what nature gives to all, and what is common to cattle, beasts, and humans, we are completely freed from the concern for it, but we are instructed not to be anxious about what we shall eat. And because we prepare bread for ourselves by the sweat of our brow, labor is to be exercised, anxiety is to be taken away.

[Luke 12:23] -- The soul is more than food, and the body more than clothing. It reminds us to remember that God has given us much more in creating and composing us from soul and body than food and clothing, so that you understand that he who gave the soul will much more easily give food. Likewise, he who gave the body will much more easily give clothing. In this place, it is usually asked whether this food reaches the soul, since the soul is incorporeal, but this food is corporeal. But we should know that in this place the soul is put for this life, for which this corporeal food is the support. According to this meaning, it was also said: Whoever loves his soul will lose it (Matthew 10). If we do not understand this as referring to this life, which must be lost for the sake of the kingdom of God, which the martyrs

have shown to be possible, this command will be contrary to the statement where it was said: What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul (Matthew 16)?

[Luke 12:24] -- Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn, but God feeds them. If the birds, without care and toil, are fed by God's providence, which are here today and will not be tomorrow, whose soul is mortal, and when they cease to exist, will never be again, how much more so humans, to whom eternity is promised, are governed by God's rule! [Luke 12:24] -- How much more valuable are you than they! That is, you are worth more. For just as a rational animal like man is more highly ordered in the nature of things than irrational beings like birds. [Luke 12:25] -- Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then cannot do even that which is least, why are you anxious about the rest? That is, by whose power and dominion was it done that your body was brought to this stature, by his providence also can it be clothed. It can be understood that it was not done by your own care that your body came to this stature from this: if you try and wish to add one cubit to this stature, you cannot. Therefore, also entrust the care of clothing the body to him, by whose care you see it was done that you have a body of such stature. Therefore, he says, if you then cannot do even that which is least, for this is minimal, but to God it is to make bodies. Moreover, an example had to be given also for clothing, just as it was given for nourishment. Hence, it follows, and he says:

[Luke 12:27] -- Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither labor nor spin. But these examples should not be discussed as allegories, so that we might seek what the ravens or the lilies signify; for they were set forth so that from lesser things greater could be persuaded. [Luke 12:27] -- But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. And truly, what silk, what royal purple, what tapestry of weavers, can be compared to flowers? What blushes like the rose? What glows as the lily? The purple of violets truly surpasses any murex dye, more evident to the eyes than to words. [Luke 12:28] -- If then God so clothes the grass in the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O you of little faith? In the Scriptures, tomorrow is understood as a future time, as Jacob says: And tomorrow my righteousness will answer for me (Gen. XXX). And in the vision of Samuel, the witch speaks to Saul: Tomorrow you shall be with me (1 Sam. XXVIII).

[Luke 12:29] -- And you, do not seek what you shall eat, or what you shall drink. Note that he did not say, Do not seek or be anxious about food, or drink, or clothing, but more expressively, He said, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink. And above, neither for the body, what you shall clothe yourselves with. Where it seems to me those are censured who, having despised common food or clothing, seek more luxurious or more austere food or clothing than those with whom they live

their lives. [Luke 12:29] -- And do not be lifted up. He, having prohibited anxiety about food, consequently admonished that they should not be exalted. For at first, man seeks these things to fulfill a necessity. But when these things have become abundant, he begins also to take pride in them. This is like someone wounded boasting because he has many bandages in his house, although it would be good for him not to have wounds and not to need even one bandage.

[Luke 12:30] -- For all these things the nations of the world seek. But your Father knows that you need them. Nevertheless, seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you. Here he most evidently shows that these are not to be sought as our ultimate goods, for the sake of which we should do good if we do anything, but that they are necessary. For what is the difference between a good which ought to be sought, and a necessity which ought to be used, he declared by this saying, when he said: Nevertheless, seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Therefore, the kingdom of God is our good and it is to be sought, and therein we should establish our end, for which purpose we should do all things whatever we do. But because in this life we struggle, that we may be able to reach that kingdom, which life cannot be lived without these necessities, He says, These things shall be added unto you, but you seek the kingdom of God. For he did not say, They shall be given, but they shall be added, surely indicating that there is another thing which is primarily given, another thing which is superadded. Because eternity should be in our intention, and temporality in our use, and that is given, and this is unquestionably superadded from abundance.

[Luke 12:32] -- Do not fear, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. He calls the small flock the chosen ones, either in comparison to the larger number of the reprobate, or rather for the devotion of humility. Although He has already extended His Church to some size, He still wants it to grow until the end of the world and to reach the promised kingdom through humility. Therefore, He consoles its labors gently, commanding it to seek only the kingdom of God, and with a delighted kindness, promises that the kingdom will be given to them by the Father. [Luke 12:33] -- Sell what you possess, and give alms. He says, do not fear that those who fight for the kingdom of God may lack the necessities of this life; indeed, sell what you possess for almsgiving. This is done worthily when, after having forsaken all things for the Lord, one nonetheless works with one's hands to earn a living and to give alms. Hence the Apostle boasts, saying: "I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak" (Acts 20).

[Luke 12:33] -- Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old. Namely, by performing almsgiving, the reward of which remains forever. It should not be understood from this command that the saints reserve nothing of their money, whether

for themselves or for the use of the poor: since the Lord Himself, though ministered to by angels, is read to have kept purses to instruct His Church. He conserved what was offered by the faithful and provided for the needs of His own and others who were in need: but it should not be that service to God is done for these things or that justice is abandoned out of fear of poverty. [Luke 12:33] -- A treasure unfailing in the heavens, where a thief does not approach, nor moth corrupts. Either simply taken that money kept fails, or namely, snatched by a thief from treasures, or in treasures itself spoiled by its own fragility, but given for Christ it bestows an everlasting fruit of mercy in the heavens; or certainly it should be understood that the treasure of good work, if it is stored for the sake of earthly gain, easily corrupted perishes, but if gathered solely with a heavenly intention, it is neither corrupted by external human favor nor ruined by the stain of empty glory within. For a thief steals from outside, a moth destroys from within. The thief has taken away the riches of those about whom the Lord says, They have received their reward (Matt. VI). The moth corrupts their clothes, of whom the Psalmist reproving says: For God scatters the bones of men who please themselves (Psalm LII). For bones he calls the strength of virtues.

[Luke 12:34] -- For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. This is to be understood not only about money, but about all passions. The glutton's god is the belly. Therefore, there he has his heart where his treasure is. The luxurious man's treasures are feasts, the wanton's amusements, the lover's lust, hence each one serves from whom he is conquered. [Luke 12:35] -- Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands: and you be like unto men waiting for their lord. For he had shown many, either those subject to the world in all things, or those serving the Lord with a view to worldly benefit, beautifully and briefly he instructs his own, both to gird their loins for the sake of abstaining from the love of worldly things, and to have burning lamps, so that they may do this with true purpose and right intention. Otherwise, we gird our loins when we restrain the luxury of the flesh through abstinence. And we hold burning lamps in our hands, when through good works we show examples of light to our neighbors. For to our Redeemer, one without the other can by no means be pleasing, if either the one who does good yet has not abandoned the impurities of luxury, or the one who excels in chastity has not yet exercised himself in good works. But if both are done, it remains for any such person to strive with hope toward the heavenly homeland, by no means restraining himself from vices for the sake of this world's honor, but placing all his hope in the coming of his Redeemer. Hence it immediately follows:

[Luke 12:36] -- And you be like men waiting for their lord, when he returns from the weddings. For the Lord went to the weddings, because rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, the new man united to himself the supreme multitude of angels. He then returns when he is now manifested to us through judgment. And well is it added concerning the waiting servants: [Luke 12:36] -- That when

he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. For he comes when he approaches for judgment; indeed, he knocks when he indicates that death is near through the afflictions of illness. To whom we open immediately, if we receive him with love. For he does not want to open to the knocking judge who trembles to leave the body; and he fears to see the judge whom he remembers having scorned. But he who is secure in his hope and action opens to the knocking judge immediately, because he joyfully waits for the judge; when he recognizes the time of imminent death, he rejoices at the glory of the reward. Hence it immediately follows:

[Luke 12:37] -- Blessed are those servants whom the Lord will find watching when He comes. One watches who keeps the eyes of the mind open to the sight of the true light. One watches who fulfills by action what he has believed. One watches who drives the darkness of sluggishness and negligence away from himself. Hence Paul says: Awake to righteousness, and sin not (I Cor. XV). Hence he also says again: It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep (Rom. XIII). But let us hear what the Lord, upon His coming, will offer to those vigilant servants. [Luke 12:37] -- Amen, I say to you that He will gird Himself and have them sit at table, and He will come and serve them. He girds Himself, which means He prepares their reward; He has them sit at table, which means they are refreshed in eternal rest. Our sitting at table surely means resting in the kingdom. Wherefore the Lord again says: They will come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. VIII). The Lord, passing by, ministers because He satisfies us with the illumination of His light. Truly, passing by, it is said, He returns from judgment to the kingdom. Or certainly, the Lord passes to us after judgment because He elevates us from the form of His humanity to the contemplation of His divinity. And His passing by is to lead us into the vision of His brightness, for when we see Him in humanity at judgment, we also see Him in divinity after judgment.

[Luke 12:38] -- And if he comes in the second watch, or if he comes in the third watch, and finds them so, blessed are those servants. The first watch is the time of youth, that is, childhood. The second is adolescence or youth. As the sacred word says in one authority: Rejoice, young man, in your youth (Eccl. XI). But the third is understood as old age. Therefore, he who did not wish to be watchful in the first watch, let him at least guard the second, so that he who neglected to turn away from his wickedness in childhood may awaken to the paths of life at least in his youth. And he who did not wish to be watchful in the second watch, let him not lose the remedies of the third watch, so that he who did not awaken to the paths of life in his youth may at least come to his senses in old age. But to shake off the sloth of our mind, external losses are also deduced through analogy, so that by these the mind may be roused to self-guarding; for it is said:

[Luke 12:39] -- But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have allowed

his house to be broken into. From this preceding analogy, an exhortation is also implied when it is said: [Luke 12:40] -- Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. For while the master of the house is unaware, the thief breaks into the house: because while the spirit sleeps, neglecting self-guarding, an unexpected death comes, breaks into the dwelling of our flesh, and if it finds the master of the house sleeping, it kills. For when the spirit does not foresee future harms, death snatches it unaware to punishment. The master would resist the thief if he kept watch, because by anticipating the coming of the judge who secretly takes the soul, he would confront him by repenting, lest he perish impenitent. Our Lord wanted the final hour to be unknown to us so that it always might be suspected, and since we cannot foresee it, we may always be prepared for it.

[Luke 12:41] -- But Peter said to him: Lord, are you telling this parable for us, or for everyone? The Lord indeed had previously warned through a parable, both that he would come suddenly, and that they should expect him prepared; but of which of these matters Peter asked, or about both, whom he compared with himself and his companions, when he said, Are you telling this to us, or to everyone? It is not easily clear. And indeed in that which he says, us and everyone, he is supposed to signify no others but either apostles and those similar to apostles, and the other faithful, or those who individually dying daily receive the coming of their judge willing or unwilling, and those who are to be found alive in the flesh when the universal judgment comes. But it would be a marvel if blessed Peter doubted, or to all who wish to live soberly, righteously, and piously, expecting the blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God, who wants all men to be saved, whether the judgment will be unexpected for each and everyone, the great and the small, both the faithful and the unfaithful. Whence it remains to understand that, with these matters well understood, he found it more worthy to ask about those things which he might possibly be ignorant of, as namely whether those lofty precepts of heavenly life, by which he commanded to sell possessions, make purses that do not grow old, store up treasure in heaven, gird your loins, burn lamps and watch, and wait for the Lord, pertain solely to apostles and those like them, or even to all who are to be saved. This sense of the inquirer is declared (if I am not mistaken) by the Lord’s very response.

[Luke 12:42] -- The Lord said: Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord shall make ruler over his household? Answering the questions of the Savior, he first teaches that judgment is present for all, and that individuals will receive rewards or punishments according to the merit of their work and the capacity of their understanding. Then, in addressing what was especially asked, he shows that the grace of virtues which he brought to the world is to be pursued by each as much as they can. ”I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?” Certainly, in saying ”who then is,” he suggests the difficulty,

not the impossibility, of achieving virtue, just as the Psalmist says: ”Who is wise, and will observe these things?” (Psalm 106). He signifies not no one, but the rarity. For elsewhere the same term is used not for difficulty, but for impossibility. ”Who is like unto thee, O God?” (Psalm 82), that is to say, none. ”For thou alone art the most High over all the earth” (Psalm 82).

[Luke 12:42] -- To give them their portion of wheat in due season. By the portion of wheat is expressed the measure of the word. For lofty matters ought to be covered before many listeners, and scarcely disclosed to a few, lest when something beyond the ability of a narrow heart is given, it be cast aside. Here, Moses, coming forth from the secret presence of God, veiled his shining face before the people, because surely, he did not reveal the secrets of innermost clarity to the crowds. Therefore, the speech of teachers ought to be formed according to the quality of the listeners, so that it suits each individually and yet never departs from the art of common edification. [Luke 12:43] -- Blessed is that servant whom, when the Lord comes, He finds so doing. Truly I say to you that He will set him over all His possessions. Just as there is a great difference in merits between good listeners and good teachers, so too is there in rewards. For when He comes and finds these watching, He will make them sit down to eat, and passing by, He will serve them. But those whom He finds faithfully and wisely dispensing the word of food to the family entrusted to them, He will set over all that He possesses, that is, over all the heavenly joys of the kingdom, not that they alone may hold the Lord, but that they may more abundantly enjoy eternal possession with the other saints. For those who are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and those who instruct many to righteousness as the stars for endless eternities (Dan. XII). And the Apostle says: The elders who rule well are worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine (I Tim. V).

[Luke 12:45] -- But if that servant shall say in his heart, ’My Lord delays to come,’ and shall begin to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink, and to become drunken. Just as in a faithful and wise steward the entire order of good things is taught, how he should live and be rewarded, so also in this most wicked servant is shown the work and damnation of all condemned overseers, who, neglecting the fear of the Lord, not only indulge in luxury themselves, but also incite their subordinates to wrongdoing. Although symbolically it can be understood that beating the male and female servants means corrupting the hearts of the weak, who are not yet strengthened in faith, hope, and charity, by showing them an example of bad behavior or speech. Eating, drinking, and becoming drunk means being occupied with all crimes and worldly pleasures, which dement the mind and lead it astray. Note certainly among the vices of the bad servant that he believed his lord’s return to be slow, but not counted among the virtues of the good that he hoped for it quickly, but only that he gave his fellow servants the measure of wheat in time, that is, he showed them either the word of the Lord or the rule of his own example.

Indeed, we also read that some good servants were reproved by the Apostle for trembling and anxiously believing the day of the Lord to be imminent, which he himself promised would come unexpectedly. Hence it is proven best, although we fervently desire to know when the Desired One for all nations shall come, to bear patiently not knowing what cannot be known, and just in the example of the good servant, whether he is near or far, to be ready to await and love his coming.

[Luke 12:46] -- The lord of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and appoint his part with the unbelievers. He will cut him not by beheading, but by separating him from the fellowship of the faithful and associating him with those who never belonged to the faith: for he who does not care for his own, and especially for his household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, as the Apostle says. [Luke 12:47] -- But that servant who knew his master's will and did not prepare or act according to his will, will be beaten with many blows. Many, misinterpreting this sentence, do not want to know what they should be doing and ostensibly think they will be beaten less if they are ignorant of what they should have done. But it is one thing not to know, another to be unwilling to know. For he who wishes to learn but is unable does not know; but he who turns his ear away from the voice of truth so that he may remain ignorant, this one is condemned not for ignorance, but for contempt.

[Luke 12:48] -- But the one who did not know and did things deserving of punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked. Therefore, after saying, "To whom much is given," he added, "And from whom much is demanded," understanding, divine judgments. Unless perhaps through this he wanted to indicate both the order of the faithful, namely of the rulers and subordinates, because much is often given even to certain individuals to whom both the knowledge of the Lord's will and the ability to execute what they know is imparted. Much is also entrusted to him to whom, along with his own salvation, the care of pastoring the Lord's flock is entrusted. Therefore, the powerful will suffer powerful torments, and stronger torture awaits the stronger, that is, those endowed with greater grace, if they sin, greater vengeance will follow. However, the mildest of all penalties will be for those who, apart from the original sin they inherited, have not added any additional sin; and among the other sins they have added, each will have a more tolerable condemnation to the extent that he had less iniquity here.

[Luke 12:49] -- I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what do I wish except that it be kindled? This sentence responds particularly to the question of the blessed Peter inquiring whether the state of a stricter life should be sought by all. Indeed, he says fire is the fervor of the Holy Spirit, which, illuminating the secrets of the heart,

provokes with continuous motions towards heavenly things, burns away the vices of carnal desire like thorns and thistles, improves by refining the golden vessels of the Lord's house, and consumes the wood, hay, and stubble; which, as soon as it was sent to the earth, fertilized those hundred and twenty lamps found in the stronghold of Zion with an intimate sprinkling of its light. Of which, when he said above, "Let your loins be girded" (Luke XII), he added, "And your lamps burning." Therefore, you ask (he says) whether I advise all to await the Lord's coming with loins girded and lamps burning: but since for this reason alone I came forth from the Father's bosom and came into the world, that I might kindle men from earthly desires to heavenly desires, what do you think I wish other than that the radiance of this fire illuminates all regions of the world, that the flame of this devotion always grows in the hearts of the faithful until the end of the age, and that it is neither extinguished by any incursions of the faithless nor by waves or gusts?

[Luke 12:50] -- But I have a baptism to be baptized with. With the staining (he says) of my own blood I must first be washed, and thus inflame the hearts of the believers with the fire of the Spirit, by which they are able to despise or even hate all earthly things simultaneously and their own souls. For the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (Thess. III), that is, the victory of passion. About which elsewhere he says: Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? (Mark X). [Luke 12:50] -- And how am I distressed until it is accomplished? Some manuscripts have, And how am I anguished. Thus, the Lord's dignity is so great that he testifies that the zeal for infusing devotion in us, for completing perfection in us, and for ripening the passion's zeal for us is within himself; for he, who had nothing in himself to cause suffering, yet was distressed or constrained by our afflictions, and at the time of passion displayed sorrow, which he had assumed not from fear of his own death, but from the delay of our redemption. As he says: And how am I anguished until it is accomplished? Certainly, he who is anguished until perfection is secure about the perfection.

[Luke 12:51] -- Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. How the earth will burn after the baptism of his passion, after the coming of the spiritual fire, is declared. Indeed, the whole world is divided against itself for faith in Christ; every household has both unbelievers and believers, and therefore a good war has been sent, so that bad peace may be broken. Which Isaiah also prophetically foretold under the guise of Egypt, saying: Behold, the Lord will ascend upon a light cloud, and will enter Egypt, and the idols of Egypt will be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt within it, and I will stir Egyptians against Egyptians (Isa. XIX), with some fighting against the faith and others for the faith. [Luke 12:52] -- For from now on, in one house, there will be five divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter

against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

[Luke 12:53] -- It should be noted how he speaks of the five divided, when it seems he has mentioned six persons: father and son, mother and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. And it should be understood that the same woman is designated as both mother and mother-in-law, because she who is the mother of the son is also the mother-in-law of his wife, and thus, she is said to be divided both against her own daughter and against her daughter-in-law. If anyone seeks to interpret these divisions allegorically, three are divided against two, and two against three, because the good oppose the evil, and the evil oppose the good. No one doubts that three pertains to those who maintain faith in the highest Trinity. It is also found fitting that two relates to those who dissent from the unity of faith, and in many places in Scripture, this is proven; notably, unclean animals in the ark are held under this number, and only in Genesis is it said that the works of the second day are not seen by God as good.

[Luke 12:53] -- The father against his son, and the son against his father. Here, the father is the devil, whose sons we once were, not by his creation, but by imitating him, as the Lord said: You are of your father the devil (John VIII). But after we heard the voice of admonition, Forget your people and the house of your father's (Psalm 45:10), that fire came, that is, the spiritual grace that separated us from one another, showing us another father, to whom we would say, Our Father who art in heaven (Matthew VI). [Luke 12:53] -- The mother against her daughter, and the daughter against her mother. The mother is the synagogue, the daughter is the early Church, which both endured the persecution of faith from that synagogue from which she derived her lineage, and also contradicted the synagogue in the truth of faith. [Luke 12:53] -- The mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law is the synagogue, the daughter-in-law is the Church of the Gentiles, because the groom of the Church, Christ, is the son of the synagogue, as the Apostle says: "Of whom are the fathers, and from whom Christ is according to the flesh" (Rom. IX). Therefore, the mother-in-law, that is, the mother of the groom, is divided against her daughter-in-law and daughter, as we said before, because the carnal synagogue persecutes those who believe from the circumcision and from the uncircumcision without ceasing. But these are also divided against their mother-in-law and mother, unwilling to receive carnal circumcision, as the Acts of the Apostles teach.

[Luke 12:54] -- Moreover, he said to the crowds: When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, A storm is coming, and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say there will be heat, and it happens. The cloud rising from the west signifies his flesh rising from death. For from that, the rain of the Evangelical preaching has been poured upon all lands. The south wind blowing

before the heat signifies lighter tribulations before the judgment. [Luke 12:56] -- Hypocrites, you know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. But how is it that you do not know how to interpret this time? We have briefly touched upon what is mystically signified by the cloud and the south wind. But the literal sense is also clear, because those who from the change of elements could easily predict the state of the weather as they wished, could also, if they wanted, understand this time, that is, the first or second coming of the Lord (for he had warned about both) from the words of the prophets, who have clearly indicated both with the most evident signs, either of things or of years. And lest anyone from the crowd perhaps flatter themselves with their ignorance and plead that they, being unlearned and ignorant of the prophetic readings, could not interpret the course of the times, he vigilantly adds.

[Luke 12:57] -- But why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? Showing them, as rational creatures, and even if they are illiterate, they can by natural instinct discern, either that one who has done works among them which no one else could have done should be understood as beyond human and therefore believed to be God, or that after so many injustices in this age, the just judgment of the Creator is going to come. No one, therefore, from what has been said above, should presume that a servant ignorant of the master's will shall receive few stripes, while in sinning, he avails himself of the excuse of ignorance. For, if I keep silent about other things, from the very fact that he is human, he can neither be ignorant of the evils which he must avoid, nor of the goods which he must seek.

[Luke 12:58] -- When you go with your adversary to the ruler, on the way, make an effort to be delivered from him, lest perhaps he deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. These things, like the previous admonitions, teach us to trample the allurements of the world underfoot, and to await the coming of the fearful judge with constant expectation. Indeed, our adversary on the way is the word of God opposed to our carnal desires in this present life. One who submits himself humbly to its precepts is thereby delivered from it. Otherwise, he is given over to the judge, and the judge delivers him to the officer, because from the despised word of the Lord, the sinner shall be held guilty in the judgment. The judge delivers him to the officer because he permits him to be dragged by the evil spirit to punishment, so that the spirit may exact the compelled soul to punishment from the body, which voluntarily consented to guilt. The officer throws him into prison because he is thrust back into hell by the evil spirit until the day of judgment comes, from which point onwards he will be tortured along with it in the fires of hell.

[Luke 12:59] -- I tell you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last penny. That is, until you have paid for even the smallest sins. Because you will always be able to pay the penalties by suffering, but never able to obtain

forgiveness in return (for there will be no place for forgiveness there), you will never come out from where you will bear the eternal penalties for your deeds.

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.